

exact age, and if the authorities are unsure about your age you should be treated as if you were a child.

- You should not be detained just because you are a separated child. If you break the law you should be treated the same as other children in your new country.
- Finding your family should only happen if you agree to it and it will not make you or your family unsafe. Only specialist family tracing organisations should attempt to find your family for you.
- Your care placement should be decided on your individual situation and what is best for you. You should have the opportunity to live with a family but if it is better for you, you should live with other children in group houses supported by care workers. You should not be placed with adults. You are entitled to see the doctor, go to hospital and attend school just like other children who live in your new country. Older children, who want to work, go to training courses or who need social assistance should also get these opportunities and support in the same way as other children.
- You should always have your situation looked into so that decisions about what is best for you can be made. This is the main process for deciding if you can stay in your new country. If you turn 18 whilst what is best for you is still being decided the decision when it comes should be made as if you were still a child.
- You should have a lawyer, for free, to help you with everything to do with your claim to stay in your new country.
- Decisions on your claim should only be made by people who know about asylum and migration and children's rights. You should be able to appeal if you think the decision is wrong. If you have to meet with the authorities you should have your lawyer

or someone else you trust accompany you and you should be allowed to tell what has happened to you in a way that is comfortable for you, perhaps by writing it down or by making drawings if this helps you.

- When the authorities make a decision on your claim to stay in your new country they must think about your age and that it might be difficult for you to explain about what has happened to you and your family. The authorities should allow you to stay in your new country if they are unsure about what will happen to you if you were not allowed to stay.
- The government in your new country must try to reunite you with your family if this is best and safe for you.
- You should be allowed to remain in your new country if this is best for you. This may be because it is not safe for you to return to your own country or because there is nobody there who can take care of you. You should be helped to make a new life for yourself in your new country.
- You should only return to your country or move to another country if this is best for you. If this happens to you someone who you trust should accompany you on the journey. Before this can happen the government in your new country must make sure that it would be safe for you and that when you arrive someone will look after you whilst you are still a child.

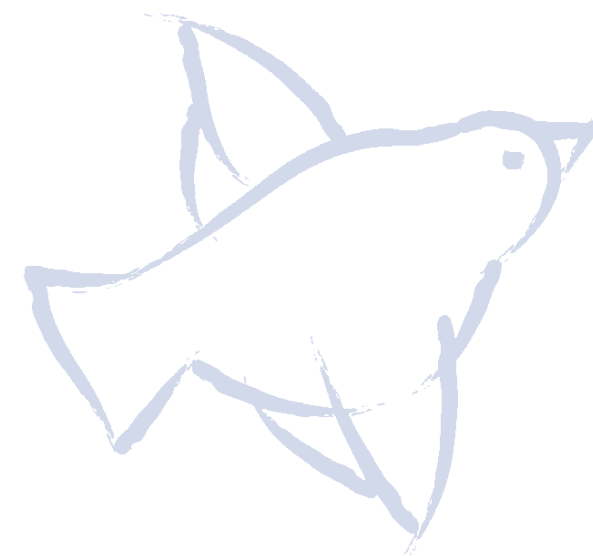
For more information, contact

Separated Children in Europe Programme
www.separated-children-europe-programme.org



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GOOD PRACTICE FOR SEPARATED CHILDREN



SCEP YOUTH NETWORK

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Separated Children in Europe Programme

Based on Statement of Good Practice, 2009

A separated child has left his or her own country and is not with either parent or an adult who they know well and who can take care of them. There are many reasons why a child has had to leave their own country, examples include; they need to seek asylum, they are desperately in need of an opportunity for a better life; they have been moved to a country by adults who want to use them for their own profit. They all need protection.

The Separated Children in Europe Programme (SCEP) is a group of European organisations who want separated children to be protected and have their rights met. There is also a SCEP youth network. This leaflet tells you what SCEP believes is the best care and treatment for separated children – although this might not be what you experience. SCEP and the SCEP youth network suggest that you should find out about your rights that are in the child's rights convention – www.unicef.org.

You might find it helpful to read this leaflet with your guardian or with someone else who you trust.

Important principles that the adults who care for you or meet with you as part of your immigration process must remember

- Adults have a responsibility to make sure that what they do is the best thing for you. Every child is different and what is best for one child might not be best for another child.
- You have the right to be alive. Whatever country you have come from the government in your new country must make sure you are safe and that you have everything you need to live and develop.
- You must not be treated differently or unfairly because you come from another country.
- You have the right to say what you think should happen to you and adults must consider your views

when making decisions. You may need help with explaining your views to adults.

- You must be told about your rights, your responsibilities and what is happening concerning your stay in your new country. You should be told in a way and in a language that you understand.
- You should have an interpreter whenever you need one. Adults must make sure that the interpreter speaks your language and that you understand what is said.
- Adults must make sure that personal information about you is not shared with others unless this is to keep you or another child safe.
- You should be helped to keep your culture and language and practice your religion.
- The different organisations that are involved in your life must work together so that they can make the best decisions for you.
- Adults working with you have to know about your culture and know how to talk to you and ask you questions in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
- The decisions that adults make about you should be expected to last so that it is possible for you to make plans for your future.
- The decisions that are made about you must not be delayed and should be done as soon as possible whilst allowing time for them to be considered carefully.

Because you are a separated child

- You have the right to claim asylum and you should be allowed to stay in your new country whilst your asylum claim is being looked at. Children and adults may have different reasons for needing asylum.
- If you are not claiming asylum you should be allowed to stay in your new country until a decision has been

made about what is best for you.

- Governments must protect you if you have been brought into your new country by people that force you to do things that are bad for you or are against the law. If this has happened to you, you must not be treated as if you were a criminal and you must not be forced into helping to catch the people who brought you into your new country by being told that you have to help if you want to stay. You must be allowed to stay in your new country until a decision has been made about what is best for you.

How you should be treated and cared for

- When you arrive at the border you must be allowed to enter your new country.
- The border authorities need to be sure that you are a separated child so that you can be better protected.
- You should have a guardian appointed who will be involved in all the decisions that are made about you. The guardian will help you have your views heard and ensure that you get the services that you should have. The guardian will also take care of the contact you have with authorities and above all should ensure that the decisions made are the best for you.
- The authorities in your new country need to know that you have arrived there. They also need to know about your background so that you can be properly looked after and protected. The authorities will need to talk to you about your situation and this should be done in a way that makes you feel comfortable. You can have someone you trust with you when you meet with the authorities.
- If the age you say you are is not believed you do not have to agree to any process the authorities want you to go through to try to work out your age. If you don't agree you cannot be forced to go through the process. Age assessments cannot tell