



Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan

Building and Expanding
the European Youth Diversion Network

2026-2030

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Executive Summary



The BRIDGE project (Building a Resourceful International Youth Diversion Group for Exchanging Best Practices Across Europe) was established in response to growing recognition that diversion should be a central component of child-friendly justice systems. Although international and European standards consistently promote diversion as the preferred response to children in conflict with the law wherever appropriate, its interpretation and implementation remain highly uneven across Europe.

Through cooperation between Stichting Halt (the Netherlands), Foróige (Ireland) and Terre des hommes Hellas (Greece), BRIDGE facilitated comparative learning between three distinct diversion models. The project produced a comparative Needs Assessment, an Evaluation & Research Report and a Policy Brief, while bringing together practitioners, researchers, policymakers and young people with lived experience during an international exchange meeting held on Universal Children's Day in The Hague.

A key conclusion of BRIDGE was that Europe currently lacks a dedicated platform for organisations and professionals to exchange knowledge, compare diversion systems, strengthen professional practice and jointly advance research and policy on youth diversion. While several European networks address related themes such as child-friendly justice, restorative justice and children's rights, none focus specifically on youth diversion.

This Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan presents a roadmap for formalizing and expanding the European Youth Diversion Network between 2026 and 2030. The network aims to become a sustainable European platform for cooperation, knowledge exchange, professional development and policy dialogue by bringing together practitioners, youth workers, researchers, policymakers, child rights organisations and young people with lived experience.

Guided by shared principles including children's rights, child-centred practice, youth participation, restorative justice, youth work, proportionality and evidence-informed practice, the network pursues six long-term strategic objectives: developing a shared European understanding of diversion; strengthening professional capacity; facilitating knowledge exchange and comparative learning; supporting evidence-informed policy development; embedding meaningful youth participation; and ensuring sustainable European cooperation beyond individual projects.

The network is designed as a collaborative partnership. During BRIDGE II, the founding partnership will expand to include new European organisations representing youth diversion, child rights, youth work and research. As part of this expansion, the Child-Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN) will become the long-term home of the European Youth Diversion Network by hosting its Community of Practice and digital knowledge platform, providing a sustainable infrastructure and substantially extending the network's European reach.

The Sustainability & Growth Strategy sets out how the network will remain active through continuous knowledge exchange, strategic growth, policy advocacy and future European collaboration. Many of these ambitions are already being implemented through BRIDGE II, including the development of a shared European framework on youth diversion, an EU-wide mapping of diversion systems,

professional training programmes, transnational exchanges, advocacy activities and the establishment of the Community of Practice.

Implemented through a phased roadmap extending to 2030, the plan aims to transform the European Youth Diversion Network into a permanent hub for cooperation, innovation and comparative learning. By strengthening collaboration across Europe, the network seeks to improve diversion policy and practice, contribute to more child-friendly justice systems and ensure that more children have access to constructive, rights-based and development-oriented responses when they come into conflict with the law.

1. Introduction



1.1 Background

Across Europe, there is growing recognition that diversion should form an integral part of child-friendly justice systems. International and European legal frameworks increasingly recognise that children should, wherever appropriate, be diverted away from formal criminal proceedings and offered responses that promote accountability, reintegration and pedagogically sound, preferably community-based intervention while safeguarding their rights. This principle is reflected in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), General Comment 24 of the UNCRC Committee, but also in the Beijing Rules, the Riyadh Guidelines, the Havana Rules, the Council of Europe's Guidelines on Child-

friendly Justice, and, within the European Union, Directive (EU) 2016/800 on procedural safeguards for children suspected or accused in criminal proceedings. Despite this well-established international and European recognition of diversion as the preferred approach, its interpretation and implementation remain highly uneven across European jurisdictions. Significant differences exist in legal frameworks, eligibility criteria, intervention models and their underpinning philosophies, procedural safeguards, child participation, restorative justice practices and the role diversion plays within broader child justice systems.

The Erasmus+ BRIDGE project (*Building a Resourceful International Youth Diversion Group for Exchanging Best Practices Across Europe*) was established to respond to this challenge. Through a partnership between Stichting Halt (the Netherlands), Foróige (Ireland) and Terre des hommes Hellas (Greece), the project investigated how three different diversion models operate in practice and facilitated structured exchange between practitioners, policymakers, researchers and young people with lived experience through its international exchange meeting on 20 November 2025 in The Hague, the international day of Children's Rights. The partnership intentionally brought together organisations with complementary expertise. **Stichting Halt** contributes over four decades of experience delivering one of Europe's longest-established statutory diversion programmes and plays a central role in the Dutch youth justice system. **Foróige**, one of Ireland's leading youth organisations, delivers Youth Diversion Projects on behalf of the Irish youth justice system, bringing extensive expertise in community-based prevention, youth work and positive youth development. **Terre des hommes Hellas** complements these operational perspectives through its work on child rights and child participation, and advocacy for child-friendly and child centred justice, including its efforts to strengthen diversion and child-friendly justice in Greece and abroad. Together, the partners represent three distinct diversion models and provide complementary expertise spanning practice, policy, research and child rights advocacy. The project produced a comparative Needs Assessment, an Evaluation & Research Report and a Policy Brief, while also laying the foundations for what participants envisaged as a permanent European Youth Diversion Network.

One of the project's most important findings was that, although there is considerable interest in and demand for European cooperation on youth diversion, no permanent platform currently exists through which organisations can continuously exchange knowledge, develop common standards, improve practice and professionalism across borders, advocate for policy reform and collaborate on future initiatives on the transnational or European level. The exchanges also demonstrated that professionals are seeking greater conceptual clarity regarding diversion, more opportunities for peer

learning, and practical tools that can be adapted to different national contexts. At the same time, participating young people highlighted the importance of embedding meaningful youth participation within discussions on diversion policy and practice.

These findings confirmed that the outcomes of BRIDGE should not conclude with the end of the project, but instead provide the foundation for a long-term European collaboration dedicated to strengthening rights-based youth diversion across Europe.

1.2 Why a European Youth Diversion Network?

Youth diversion is increasingly recognised as an effective and child-centred response to offending behaviour. However, while many European countries have introduced diversionary measures, there remains no shared European understanding of what constitutes high-quality diversion or how diversion should be implemented in practice. Countries vary considerably in their legal frameworks, organisational models, use of restorative practices, involvement of victims, procedural safeguards, and the role of youth work within diversion.

These differences present valuable opportunities for mutual learning but also create challenges for policymakers and practitioners seeking to develop evidence-informed diversion systems. Many organisations work in relative isolation, often reinventing practices that have already been successfully developed elsewhere. Opportunities for structured exchange between practitioners, researchers, policymakers and youth organisations remain limited, and existing European networks generally focus on broader child justice or adjacent themes, like restorative justice or child participation, rather than diversion specifically.

The BRIDGE consortium therefore identified the need for a dedicated European Youth Diversion Network that brings together organisations committed to promoting diversion as a rights-based, child-centred and evidence-informed response to offending. Rather than replacing existing networks, the initiative seeks to complement and connect them by providing a specialised platform focused exclusively on youth diversion and the exchange of knowledge, experience and innovation in this field.

The network aims to foster long-term collaboration between youth justice professionals, researchers, policymakers, youth organisations and advocacy groups. By facilitating continuous learning, supporting joint research, strengthening professional capacity and coordinating advocacy efforts, the network seeks to contribute to more coherent, accessible and effective diversion practices across Europe. This vision will be translated into reality within the follow-up Erasmus+ project in *BRIDGE II – Just Pathways for Children & Youth: A Cooperation Partnership for Advancing Rights-Based Youth Diversion Across Europe*, which aims to develop a shared European framework on youth diversion, an EU mapping of diversion practices, strengthen professional capacity for professionals and referrers, establish a European Community of Practice and translate comparative learning into sustainable policy development.

1.3 Purpose of this Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan

This Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan provides the strategic roadmap for ensuring that the outcomes of the BRIDGE project continue to generate impact beyond the project's lifetime. It sets out how the European Youth Diversion Network will be formalized, strengthened and expanded in the coming years through continued collaboration between project partners and the gradual inclusion of new organisations across Europe.

More specifically, the plan aims to:

- define the mission, vision and long-term objectives of the European Youth Diversion Network;

- establish a sustainable structure for collaboration, governance and membership;
- outline a strategy for expanding the network through partnerships with practitioners, researchers, policymakers and European organisations;
- facilitate continuous knowledge exchange through meetings, research, training activities and digital collaboration;
- strengthen joint advocacy efforts to promote evidence-informed and rights-based diversion policies at national and European level;
- provide a roadmap for future European cooperation.

In addition to serving as a strategic roadmap, this document represents the shared commitment of the BRIDGE partners to continue investing in the development of the European Youth Diversion Network beyond the duration of the project.

1.4 From BRIDGE to BRIDGE II

The ambitions described in this Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan are already being translated into concrete action through the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership *BRIDGE II – Just Pathways for Children & Youth* (2026–2029). While BRIDGE established the foundations for European cooperation on youth diversion, BRIDGE II is designed to expand and operationalise this work by broadening the partnership, deepening the evidence base and strengthening long-term collaboration across Europe. Through five interconnected work packages, BRIDGE II will develop a shared European framework on youth diversion, map diversion practices across EU Member States, organise transnational exchange activities, strengthen the capacities of professionals through a modular European training programme, establish a European Community of Practice, produce national policy briefs and a joint EU advocacy paper, and further embed youth diversion within European policy discussions. These activities provide the first implementation phase of the sustainability strategy presented in this document and create the foundation for a self-sustaining European network capable of continuing beyond individual project cycles.

2. The European Youth Diversion Network



2.1 Mission

The European Youth Diversion Network brings together organisations, professionals, researchers, policymakers and children and young people with lived experience committed to expanding and improving youth diversion across Europe. The network exists to promote diversion as a rights-based, child-centred and evidence-informed response to offending by facilitating European cooperation, knowledge exchange, professional development and policy dialogue across Europe and the EU.

By connecting expertise from different legal systems and practice contexts, the network seeks to improve the quality, accessibility and legitimacy of diversion,

ensuring that children and young people are offered meaningful alternatives to formal criminal justice proceedings wherever appropriate while guaranteeing respect for their rights and procedural safeguards.

The network serves as a platform where research, policy and practice reinforce one another, enabling members to jointly develop innovative approaches and projects, exchange promising practices and advocate for diversion and youth work as an essential component of child-friendly justice systems. This mission reflects the overarching ambition of BRIDGE II to strengthen European youth work by increasing the legitimacy, accessibility and sustainability of youth diversion across Europe.

2.2 Vision

The consortium envisions a Europe in which every child has access to high-quality diversion that respects their rights, supports their development and promotes accountability without unnecessary stigmatization and exclusion.

To contribute to this vision, the European Youth Diversion Network seeks to become a recognizable and trusted European platform for information and cooperation on youth diversion by bringing together expertise from practice, research and policy. Through sustained collaboration, the network aims to foster greater consistency and coherence in the understanding and implementation of diversion across Europe in line with international standards while recognising the diversity of national legal systems and youth justice traditions.

In the longer term, the network aspires to contribute to a European landscape in which diversion is recognised not as an exceptional measure, but as a core element of child-friendly justice that promotes rehabilitation, meaningful participation and social inclusion through both the enforcement of legal norms and the provision of tailored support.

2.3 Strategic objectives

To this end, the network pursues six long-term strategic objectives.

1. **Promote a shared European understanding of youth diversion.**

Develop and continuously refine a common conceptual framework that links diversion to its foundation in children's rights, youth work, restorative justice and evidence-informed practice, while respecting differences between national legal systems.

2. Strengthen professional knowledge and capacity

Support practitioners through European training opportunities, mutual learning, exchange visits, webinars, the Community of Practice and the development of practical resources that improve diversion practice across Europe.

3. Facilitate knowledge exchange and comparative learning

Create sustainable mechanisms through which members can exchange research findings, innovative practices, implementation experiences and lessons learned from different national contexts. This includes developing an interactive EU Diversion Map, a comparative overview of youth diversion systems, legal frameworks and practices across Europe, thereby accelerating learning and supporting evidence-informed policy development.

4. Strengthen policy development and advocacy

Translate research and practice into evidence-informed policy recommendations that support the further development of diversion at both national and European levels, while actively engaging European institutions, governments and relevant stakeholders in dialogue on youth diversion.

5. Embed meaningful youth participation

Promote the active involvement of children and young people with lived experience in the design, implementation and evaluation of diversion policies, programmes and research, ensuring that participation is ethical, meaningful and appropriately safeguarded.

6. Ensure long-term European cooperation

Develop a sustainable European network that continues beyond individual funding cycles through new partnerships, collaborative projects, shared resources and joint advocacy efforts.

2.4 Core Principles

The activities of the European Youth Diversion Network are guided by a number of shared principles that underpin all collaborative activities.

Child Rights

The network promotes diversion in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and European child rights standards, recognising children as rights holders and ensuring that their best interests, participation rights and procedural safeguards remain central.

Safeguarding and Do No Harm

All network activities should protect the physical, emotional and digital safety of children and young people. Activities involving children or their lived experiences should follow clear safeguarding procedures, protect privacy and confidentiality, and minimise risks of re-traumatisation, stigmatisation, exploitation or other unintended harm. Safeguarding approaches should be age-appropriate, trauma-informed and consistent with applicable national standards.

Child-Centred & Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Diversion should respond to the individual circumstances, strengths and developmental needs of each child, supporting positive development rather than punishment.

Participation

Children and young people should be meaningfully involved in shaping diversion policy, research and practice. Their lived experiences provide valuable expertise that strengthens the relevance and quality of the network's work.

Evidence-Informed Practice

Policy and practice should be informed by research, comparative learning and continuous evaluation, while recognising the importance of professional experience and local contexts.

Collaboration

Improving diversion requires cooperation across sectors, professions and countries. The network promotes mutual learning, openness and the exchange of knowledge between practitioners, researchers, policymakers and civil society organisations.

Respect for National Diversity

The network recognises that diversion is implemented within different legal, institutional and cultural contexts. The goal is not to promote a single standardized model for diversion, but to identify common principles and effective elements while supporting national adaptation and innovation.

Minimum Intervention and Proportionality

Formal criminal justice interventions should be used only where necessary. Diversion should offer proportionate responses that avoid unnecessary criminalisation or net-widening while protecting children's rights and public safety.

Equity and Inclusion

Diversion should be accessible to all children without discrimination. The network promotes inclusive approaches that recognise diverse backgrounds, vulnerabilities and individual needs while seeking to reduce inequalities in access to diversion.

Youth Work and Positive Development

The network recognises youth work as an important partner in diversion. Youth work approaches foster voluntary engagement, trust, empowerment and social inclusion, complementing legal responses and supporting children's development within their families and communities.

Restorative Justice

Where appropriate and proportionate, diversion should seek to repair harm, promote accountability and strengthen relationships by actively involving children, victims and communities in constructive responses to offending. Restorative approaches should complement children's rights and support long-term reintegration.

From principles to positive change

How the **European Youth Diversion Network** strengthens diversion across Europe



OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

Children's Rights

Children are rights holders; their best interests, participation and safeguards remain central

Meaningful Participation

Young people help shape policy, research and practice

Minimum Intervention & Proportionality

Avoid unnecessary criminalisation, stigmatisation and net-widening

Safeguarding & Do No Harm

We protect physical, emotional and digital safety and protect from re-traumatisation or stigma

Respect for National Diversity

Shared principles support national adaptation and innovation

Equity & Inclusion

Diversion should be accessible to all children who stand to benefit from it

Child-Centered Development

Responses reflect each child's circumstances, strengths and developmental needs

Evidence-Informed Practice

We learn from research, comparison, evaluation and professional experience

Youth Work & Positive Development

Youth work is an important partner in diversion. Support, empowerment and voluntary participation are crucial.

Collaboration

We share knowledge across sectors, professions and countries and learn from each other

Respect for National Diversity

Shared principles support national adaptation and innovation

Restorative Justice

Diversion can provide opportunities for accepting responsibility, repairing harm, and strengthening relationships

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH DIVERSION NETWORK



Partnership and innovation

Exchange and learning

Research and evidence

A European network of practitioners, researchers, politicians and young people.

Youth participation in action

Training and capacity-building

Policy and advocacy

What we do:

- Map & compare diversion systems
- Share knowledge and resources
- Build capacity through learning and training
- Influence policy through strategic advocacy
- Sustain cooperation and innovative projects on youth diversion

STRONGER DIVERSION ACROSS EUROPE

Children's Rights Realised

Diversion protects rights, dignity and the best interests of the child

Positive Development & Reintegration

Diversion helps children build skills, social resilience and opportunities for a positive future

Appropriate Responses

Children receive proportionate, supportive responses tailored to their unique needs and circumstances

Stronger Systems & Professionals

Practice is better coordinated, evidence-informed with specialized professionals responsive to children's needs

Reduced Criminalisation

Fewer children enter formal justice systems and unnecessary net-widening is prevented

More Equal & Inclusive Access

All children in conflict with the law, including those most at risk of exclusion, can access diversion

Reparation & Accountability

Diversion is paired with voluntary and constructive restorative practices where appropriate

Lasting European Cooperation

A permanent platform sustains innovation, learning and joint action on diversion across countries

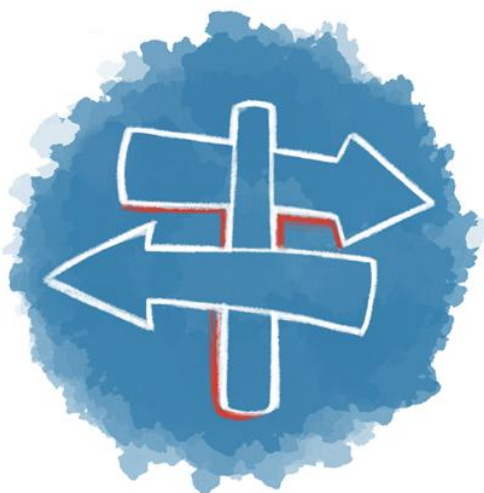


Our collective impact

Through shared learning, strategic collaboration and sustained policy dialogue, the network advances high-quality, rights-based and developmentally-oriented diversion for children in conflict with the law across Europe.



3. Network Structure & Membership



3.1 Network Structure

The European Youth Diversion Network is established as a collaborative European platform that brings together organisations and individuals committed to strengthening youth diversion through cooperation, knowledge exchange and joint advocacy. For the foreseeable future, the network does not operate as a formal legal entity, but a flexible partnership built on shared objectives, mutual commitment and active participation of its members and partners.

The network aims to connect expertise from across Europe, bringing together youth justice practitioners, youth workers, policymakers, researchers, civil society organisations, educational institutions and young people with lived experience. This multidisciplinary approach recognises that effective diversion requires collaboration across sectors and encourages dialogue between those involved in policy development, research and frontline practice.

During the initial implementation phase, the BRIDGE II consortium partners will jointly coordinate the development of the network. As the network expands, additional organisations will be invited to contribute to its activities, expertise and strategic development.

The network's activities will be organised around four complementary functions:

- **Knowledge Exchange & Dissemination** – facilitating the exchange and dissemination of research, promising practices and implementation experiences between members and stakeholders of the network.
- **Professional Development** – supporting learning through training activities, webinars, exchange visits and the Community of Practice.
- **Policy & Advocacy** – translating evidence into recommendations and promoting diversion within national and European policy discussions.
- **Collaboration & Innovation** – stimulating joint research, European projects and the development of new initiatives that strengthen diversion across Europe.

During BRIDGE II, the first activities corresponding to each of these four functions will be implemented through:

- the facilitation of four transnational exchange meetings between partners, the development of a shared European framework and a Community of Practice on the CFJ-EN Platform where information and resources can be disseminated to members and stakeholders;
- the delivery of trainings across five jurisdictions (Ireland, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, and Estonia), the development of training packages for professionals and referrers and five European webinars aimed at improving professional capacity;
- the organisation of advocacy events in three jurisdictions, the production of four national policy briefs and an EU advocacy paper as well as a conference in Brussels on youth diversion for EU stakeholders.
- The development of an interactive EU diversion map, a shared framework for youth diversion, four learning briefs from the exchange meetings, an in-depth comparative overview of the

best practices, challenges and opportunities concerning diversion in Ireland, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Estonia, as well as a roadmap for follow-up projects and network scaling post BRIDGE II.

3.2 Membership

The European Youth Diversion Network seeks to build a broad and diverse community of organisations and individuals committed to improving youth diversion across Europe. To ensure continuity, accountability and clear organisational representation, formal membership of the network is open to organisations that share its mission and are willing to actively contribute to its objectives.

Potential members include:

- youth diversion providers;
- youth justice agencies;
- youth work organisations;
- child rights organisations;
- restorative justice organisations;
- universities and research institutes;
- professional training providers;
- governmental and other public bodies;
- European networks working on child-friendly justice and related fields;
- civil society organisations active in youth justice and children's rights.

Individual professionals, researchers, policymakers and other experts may participate in the network's activities as professional participants or expert contributors. They may contribute to the Community of Practice, meetings, webinars, research, training and policy development, either independently or as representatives of a member organisation. Their participation does not in itself constitute formal organisational membership.

Children and young people, including youth panels and individuals with lived experience of youth justice or diversion, will be involved as youth participants and advisory contributors. They may contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of network activities, research, training and advocacy. Their participation should be meaningful, appropriately supported and safeguarded, and organised in accordance with the network's principles on child participation, privacy and do no harm.

This distinction between organisational membership and individual participation is intended to maintain clear responsibility for the network's governance and long-term commitments while enabling broad multidisciplinary involvement. The network particularly encourages participation from different legal traditions, professional backgrounds and diversion models, recognising that this diversity is one of its principal strengths.

3.3 Current & Future Network Members

The European Youth Diversion Network is being developed through a phased expansion. The founding partnership established through BRIDGE I provides the initial core of the network, while BRIDGE II significantly broadens its geographical reach and multidisciplinary expertise by bringing together organisations with complementary experience in youth diversion, child rights, restorative justice, youth work and research.

The table below provides an overview of the current and planned founding members.

Phase	Joining Member Organisations	Country	Primary expertise
BRIDGE I	Stichting Halt	Netherlands	Youth diversion, restorative justice, prevention and policy development
	Foróige	Ireland	Youth Diversion Projects, youth work, positive youth development
	Terre des hommes Hellas	Greece	Child rights, diversion and access to justice advocacy, child participation
BRIDGE II	Child-Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN)	Belgium / Europe	European child-friendly justice network, international policy development and advocacy, dissemination
	Defence for Children International Italia (DCI Italia)	Italy	Child rights, legal advocacy, youth justice
	SA Omanäolise Kooli Arenduskeskus (OKA)	Estonia	Youth work, prevention, youth participation

By the end of 2026, the network will therefore consist of organisations representing six European jurisdictions and a pan-European child-friendly justice network, bringing together complementary expertise in youth diversion practice, youth work, children's rights, restorative justice, policy development and research. This multidisciplinary foundation provides a strong basis for the continued expansion of the European Youth Diversion Network in the coming years.

3.4 Membership Principles

Membership is based on a shared commitment to promoting youth diversion as a rights-based, child-centred and evidence-informed approach to responding to child offending behaviour.

Members are expected to:

- support the mission and objectives of the network;
- actively contribute to knowledge exchange by sharing experiences, research or promising practices;
- participate in network meetings, webinars or other collaborative activities where possible;
- contribute to the development of European projects, policy initiatives or joint publications where relevant;
- respect the diversity of national legal systems while engaging in constructive dialogue;
- promote meaningful youth participation whenever appropriate;
- contribute to maintaining an open, collaborative and respectful learning environment.

Membership is voluntary and intended to encourage active engagement rather than passive affiliation. Detailed Terms of Reference will be developed during Phase 1. The network seeks to build a community of organisations that contribute according to their expertise and capacity while benefiting from collective learning and cooperation.

3.5 Strategic Partnerships

To maximise its European impact, the network will actively collaborate with existing European organisations and initiatives working in related fields. Rather than duplicating existing structures, the network seeks to complement them by providing a specialised platform dedicated exclusively to youth diversion.

As part of an initial scan of potential strategic partnerships, the **Child-Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN)** has already committed to becoming the home of the European Youth Diversion Network through its participation in BRIDGE II. For the foreseeable future, the European Youth

Diversion Network will continue to be hosted on the CFJ-EN platform, with its information, resources and activities made available and disseminated through a dedicated **Community of Practice** on the CFJ-EN website. Embedding the network within an established European platform with wide reach will provide a sustainable infrastructure for future collaboration while significantly expanding its visibility and reach through the CFJ-EN's extensive network of child-friendly justice practitioners, researchers, policymakers and organisations across Europe.

Building on this foundation, the network will pursue additional strategic partnerships with organisations that contribute complementary expertise in child rights, youth justice, restorative justice, youth participation, research and policy development. Potential partners include:

- the European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ);
- Eurochild;
- the International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO) and related youth justice initiatives;
- universities and research institutes specialising in youth justice;
- European and national youth participation networks.

These partnerships will facilitate joint events, collaborative research, dissemination of project results, mutual capacity building and coordinated advocacy efforts, while strengthening the visibility, sustainability and long-term impact of the European Youth Diversion Network. This approach reflects the commitment made in BRIDGE I to establish lasting partnerships with existing European networks and institutions, ensuring that the network continues to grow beyond individual funding cycles and becomes an enduring European hub for youth diversion knowledge and practice.

3.6 Coordination and Review

To ensure a critical assessment of its work, the network will periodically review its activities and priorities to ensure that it remains responsive to developments in youth justice across Europe.

To support this, the consortium intends to:

- organise regular coordination meetings among network partners;
- periodically review the network's priorities and work programme;
- evaluate opportunities for new collaborations and funding;
- identify emerging themes requiring European cooperation, alternating between partners to present on new developments for recurring sessions;
- ensure that the network continues to evolve in response to the needs of its members.

This light-touch governance approach provides sufficient structure to maintain momentum while allowing the network to remain flexible, collaborative and responsive to future developments.

4. Sustainability & Growth Strategy



The long-term success of the European Youth Diversion Network depends on both maintaining collaboration between the founding partners, and on continuously expanding its reach, strengthening its expertise and creating opportunities for new organisations and professionals from other jurisdictions to contribute. This Sustainability & Growth Strategy sets out how the network will remain active, relevant and influential beyond the lifetime of the BRIDGE project.

Building on the foundations established through BRIDGE, and further operationalised through BRIDGE II, the strategy focuses on four mutually reinforcing pillars: knowledge exchange, network growth, policy influence and long-term collaboration.

4.1 Knowledge Exchange & Professional Learning

Continuous learning lies at the heart of the European Youth Diversion Network. The network will provide a permanent platform in the form of its *Community of Practice*, hosted on the CFJ-EN website through which practitioners, researchers, policymakers and youth organisations can exchange experiences, discuss emerging developments and jointly strengthen diversion practices across Europe.

Instead of limiting cooperation to project meetings, the network aims to develop ongoing opportunities for professional learning. Activities will include European webinars, exchange meetings, study visits and participation in international conferences. Members will be encouraged to share innovative practices, implementation experiences and research findings, creating an environment of mutual learning and continuous professional development.

The network will also promote the development and dissemination of practical resources that support diversion practice. These resources will include a shared European framework on youth diversion, an interactive EU map of diversion practices, modular training materials, national adaptations of training content, practical guidance documents and thematic policy papers. Together, these outputs will contribute to a growing European knowledge base that remains accessible to both existing and future members and external stakeholders.

To facilitate continuous collaboration between meetings, the network intends to also use its Community of Practice on the CFJ-EN website to provide a platform where members and stakeholders can access publications, training materials, research outputs, recordings of webinars and information on upcoming events. The platform will also serve as a repository for project results and provide opportunities for members to connect, exchange questions and develop new collaborative initiatives. This directly builds on the commitment made in BRIDGE I to create a digital platform supporting research-sharing, training materials and policy updates.

4.2 Growth & Network Expansion

The European Youth Diversion Network is intended to evolve into an increasingly representative European platform. While initially established by the BRIDGE consortium, the network aims to

gradually expand by welcoming organisations from across Europe that share its mission and commitment to child-centred diversion.

Expansion will focus on strengthening both geographical representation and multidisciplinary expertise. Particular attention will be given to engaging organisations from countries where diversion is still developing, thereby promoting mutual learning between more established and emerging diversion systems.

Growth will be pursued through several complementary strategies, including:

- inviting organisations and stakeholders participating in BRIDGE II activities to become active network members (e.g. the organisations and researchers who will be interviewed for the EU-wide mapping of youth diversion);
- engaging universities, research institutes and professional training organisations doing relevant research or work related to diversion;
- strengthening cooperation with the aforementioned child rights, restorative justice and youth work organisations and networks;
- presenting the network at European conferences and professional events as was already done at the European Forum for Restorative Justice's 13th international conference in Poznań where network members co-presented a workshop on youth diversion and impact assessment;
- encouraging existing members to identify and introduce new partners from their national and international networks.

As the network expands, it will continue to value diversity of experience and recognise that effective diversion can take different forms depending on national legal, cultural and institutional contexts.

4.3 Policy Development & Advocacy

Beyond facilitating professional exchange, the European Youth Diversion Network seeks to contribute to the further development of youth justice policy across Europe. The network aims to strengthen the legitimacy and visibility of diversion by translating research, comparative learning and practical experience into evidence-informed recommendations for policymakers.

Building on the comparative work initiated in BRIDGE in the needs assessment and policy brief, and expanded through BRIDGE II, the network will produce national and European policy briefs, thematic position papers and joint advocacy documents that promote rights-based diversion in line with international children's rights standards. Members will contribute national perspectives while jointly identifying common European challenges and opportunities for reform.

The network will actively engage with European institutions, national governments, justice agencies and professional organisations through conferences, consultations and policy dialogues. The first advocacy events in Estonia, Italy, Greece and the European Diversion Conference in Brussels will serve as the first learning opportunities to this effect. Collaboration with established European networks will further strengthen the dissemination of events and recommendations and promote greater recognition of diversion as an essential component of child-friendly justice systems.

Through these activities, the network seeks to improve diversion practices while also contributing to a broader European conversation on children's rights, restorative justice and humane responses to offending behaviour. These ambitions of the network are directly reflected in the objectives of BRIDGE II's INFLUENCE work package, which focuses on policy uptake, advocacy and long-term sustainability.

4.4 Long-Term Collaboration & Future Projects

Sustaining a European network will require the utilization of opportunities for continued collaboration that generate new knowledge, strengthen professional capacity and secure future investment.

The BRIDGE consortium therefore views this Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan as the beginning of a longer-term development process. BRIDGE II represents the first major implementation phase of this vision by expanding the partnership, broadening European representation and developing concrete products that can benefit diversion systems across Europe.

Beyond BRIDGE II, the network will continue exploring opportunities for joint European initiatives through Erasmus+, CERV, Horizon Europe and other relevant national, European and international funding programmes. Future projects may focus on areas such as implementation research, accessibility, specialised training, youth participation, restorative practices, digital innovation, procedural safeguards, evaluation methodologies and comparative policy development.

The network will also encourage collaborative research between universities and practice organisations, support joint publications and facilitate cross-border pilot projects that test innovative approaches to diversion in different national contexts.

By embedding collaboration within a long-term European partnership instead of individual projects, the network aims to create lasting relationships that generate knowledge, strengthen professional practice and influence policy well beyond the lifetime of any single funding programme.

4.5 Looking Ahead

The Sustainability & Growth Strategy presented in this chapter is intended to guide the continued development of the European Youth Diversion Network over the coming years. Many of the activities described will be initiated through BRIDGE II, while others will emerge through future collaborations and the active engagement of network members.

Ultimately, the sustainability of the network will not depend on a single organisation or project, but on the willingness of its members to continue learning together, sharing expertise and collectively promoting diversion as a rights-based and child-centred response to offending across Europe.

Phase	Focus	Main Activities
BRIDGE I (2025–2026)	Foundation	Comparative learning, Needs Assessment, Policy Brief, establishment of the network and its founding partners
BRIDGE II (2026–2029)	Expansion	European framework, Community of Practice, training package, advocacy, new members
Beyond 2029	Consolidation	New (EU-)projects, working towards a recurring diversion conference, permanent knowledge platform, policy leadership

In the unlikely event that no follow-up funding is secured in the desirable timeframe, the CFJ-EN will maintain the network webpage and core repository, founding partners will convene at least two online meetings annually, and existing resources will remain openly accessible.

5. Action Plan (2026-2030)



The Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan will be implemented through a phased approach that gradually strengthens the European Youth Diversion Network. The network will not invest in creating a large number of standalone activities, but utilize the structures, partnerships and outputs developed through BRIDGE and BRIDGE II to continuously expanding its reach and impact.

The implementation of this roadmap is intended to remain flexible. Activities may evolve in response to new opportunities, emerging policy developments and the interests of network members, while remaining aligned with the network's long-term mission and objectives.

Phase 1 – Establishing the Formalized Network (2026-2027)

Objective

Consolidate the partnerships established through BRIDGE and prepare for the formal launch of the European Youth Diversion Network.

Key activities

- Launch the European Youth Diversion Network with its partners and create a dedicated webpage on the CFJ-EN.
- Formalise the shared mission, vision and objectives with the new partners of BRIDGE II.
- Have all members through BRIDGE II sign the revisited Partnership Commitment.
- Establish initial governance arrangements and recurring meetings.
- Develop the network's communication channels.
- Begin expanding membership through existing European contacts.
- Initiate implementation of BRIDGE II activities.

Expected outcomes

- Foundation for European Youth Diversion Network and webpage on CFJ-EN.
- Shared strategic direction.
- Active founding partnership.
- Initial member recruitment.

Phase 2 – Expanding Knowledge & Collaboration (2027-2028)

Objective

Strengthen professional learning, increase membership and develop the network as the leading European platform on youth diversion.

Key activities

- Develop the shared European Framework on Youth Diversion.
- Complete the mapping of diversion across EU Member States.

- Organise transnational exchange meetings in four countries and disseminate their learning briefs.
- Deliver the European training package and national adaptations.
- Launch the European Community of Practice on the CFJ-EN website.
- Organise webinars and thematic learning sessions.
- Publish policy briefs and advocacy materials.
- Recruit additional organisations from across Europe through BRIDGE II activities and CFJ-EN Network.
- Strengthen cooperation with existing European networks.

Expected outcomes

- Growing European membership.
- Increased professional capacity.
- Greater visibility within European youth justice.
- Stronger policy influence.

These activities are directly aligned with the implementation of BRIDGE II.

Phase 3 – Consolidation & Long-Term Sustainability (2029-2030 & beyond)

Objective

Ensure that the network continues beyond individual project funding and becomes a permanent European platform for cooperation on youth diversion.

Key activities

- Evaluate the network's first years of operation.
- Continue holding regular meetings and regularly updating the Community of Practice and its digital knowledge platform.
- Develop new European and other funding applications.
- Expand strategic partnerships.
- Promote collaborative research.
- Continue producing joint advocacy outputs.
- Explore opportunities for organising a recurring European conference on youth diversion.

Expected outcomes

- Sustainable European collaboration.
- Long-term professional learning.
- Continued policy engagement.
- New collaborative (European) projects.

5.1 Overview of Planned Actions

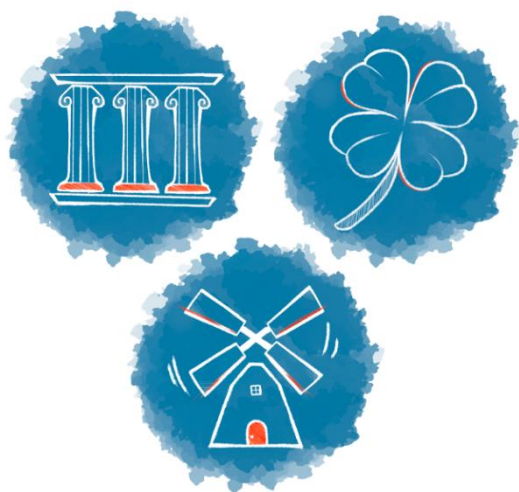
Strategic objective	Main activities	Timeline
Establish the formalized network	Formally launch network, webpage on CFJ-EN, governance, revisit and sign partnership agreement with new partners	2026-2027
Strengthen knowledge exchange	Community of Practice and digital platform, webinars, exchanges, disseminate resources from BRIDGE I & II	2026-2029
Build professional capacity	Training package, learning resources, study visits	2027-2029
Expand membership	Recruitment, partnerships, conferences	2027-2030
Influence policy	Policy briefs, advocacy paper, national & EU advocacy events	2027-2029
Ensure sustainability	Community of Practice and digital platform hosted by the CFJ-EN, signed commitment of members, collaborate on new funding proposals, research, strategic partnerships	2026-2030

5.2 Implementation Responsibilities

The successful implementation of this Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan depends on the shared commitment of all network members. During the initial implementation period, the founding BRIDGE consortium will collectively coordinate the network's activities, with responsibilities distributed according to each partner's expertise and role within BRIDGE II, after the partnership agreement as described in this document has been revisited with input from all new partners (the Child Friendly Justice European Network, OKA and DCI Italia).

As the network expands, new member organisations will be encouraged to actively contribute by hosting events, sharing expertise, participating in the Community of Practice, contributing to policy development and initiating collaborative projects. In this way, responsibility for sustaining the network will gradually become shared across the wider European membership, ensuring that the network evolves as a collaborative community instead of remaining dependent on a single coordinating organisation.

6. Partnership Commitment & Next Steps



6.1 Our Shared Commitment

The European Youth Diversion Network was established with the shared ambition of strengthening youth diversion across Europe through cooperation, knowledge exchange and collective action. While the BRIDGE project has laid the foundations for this collaboration, its long-term success depends on the continued commitment of the organisations and individuals involved.

By endorsing this Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan, the founding partners affirm their intention to continue working together beyond the lifetime of the BRIDGE project. They recognise that improving diversion

across Europe requires sustained collaboration between practitioners, researchers, policymakers, civil society organisations and young people, and that meaningful change can only be achieved through the continuous exchange of knowledge, experience and innovation.

The partners further recognise that no single organisation or country possesses all the answers. Each diversion system reflects its own legal, cultural and institutional context, yet all share a common objective: ensuring that children and young people are offered fair, constructive and development-oriented responses when they come into conflict with the law. By working together, the partners seek to learn from these differences, build upon shared values and contribute to stronger child-friendly justice systems across Europe.

6.2 Partnership Commitment

The founding partners of the European Youth Diversion Network commit to:

- **Promote** youth diversion as a rights-based, child-centred and evidence-informed response to offending behaviour.
- **Actively contribute** to the European Youth Diversion Network through participation in meetings, exchanges, collaborative activities and the sharing of expertise.
- **Support knowledge exchange** by sharing promising practices, research findings, training materials and implementation experiences that may benefit other members.
- **Strengthen professional capacity** by contributing to learning opportunities, the Community of Practice and professional development activities.
- **Promote meaningful youth participation** by involving children and young people, wherever appropriate, in the development, implementation and evaluation of diversion policy and practice.
- **Collaborate on advocacy efforts** aimed at strengthening diversion within national child justice systems and at the European level.
- **Seek and share opportunities for continued European cooperation**, including the development of joint projects, research initiatives and funding applications that could contribute to the objectives of the network.
- **Contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth** of the European Youth Diversion Network by encouraging new partnerships and supporting the continued development of the network.

These commitments are intended to express a shared ambition rather than create legally binding obligations. They provide a common framework for collaboration and reflect the collective responsibility of the partners to maintain the momentum initiated through BRIDGE.

6.3 Future of the Network

The Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan marks an important milestone in the development of the European Youth Diversion Network. It provides the strategic direction for the network's continued evolution and establishes a shared vision for future cooperation over the next five years.

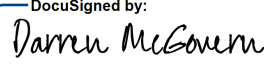
The next phase of this journey will be realised through the implementation of BRIDGE II, which will expand the network, strengthen professional capacity, deepen comparative learning and translate shared knowledge into practical tools and policy recommendations. Beyond BRIDGE II, the partners aspire to continue building a sustainable European community dedicated to improving diversion through research, innovation, advocacy and collaboration.

As the network grows, new organisations, professionals and young people will be invited to contribute their expertise and perspectives. By working together across disciplines, sectors and national boundaries, the network aims to strengthen child-friendly justice systems and ensure that every child in Europe has access to fair, constructive and development-oriented responses when they come into conflict with the law.

The partners therefore regard this document as the first step in a long-term European collaboration dedicated to advancing youth diversion for the benefit of children, young people and society as a whole.

6.4 Signatories

By signing below, the BRIDGE I founding partners endorse this Sustainability & Scale-Up Plan and express their shared commitment to the continued development of the European Youth Diversion Network.

Organisation	Representative	Position	Signature	Date
Stichting Halt (Netherlands)	Janet ten Hoope	Director		27-07-2026
Foróige (Ireland)	Darren McGovern	Senior Youth Officer	DocuSigned by:  672D5E6BDB56463...	28-07-2026
Terre des hommes Hellas (Greece)	Leda Avgousti	Director		27/07/2026