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EU Journalism Prize Honours Investigation into Missing Migrant Children

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The 2024 Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize for Journalism has been awarded to the investigation “Lost in Europe” for uncovering the disappearance of over 51,433 unaccompanied migrant minors who “disappeared” between 2021 and 2023.

The prize, established by the European Parliament, honours outstanding journalism that promotes the core values of the European Union, such as human rights and the rule of law. It is named after Daphne Caruana Galizia, a Maltese journalist who was assassinated in 2017 for her anti-corruption reporting.

"Lost in Europe," a collaborative investigation by media outlets across several European countries, revealed the staggering scale of missing migrant children, with an average of 47 children vanishing each day after arriving in Europe.

Regarding the scale of the problem, in 2016, Europol estimated that 10,000 children "disappeared" in a year.

Data collected from 31 European countries, including Austria, Germany,, and Italy shows that tens of thousands of children, most of them fleeing violence and poverty, have gone missing after arriving on European soil.

Poor documentation and uneven data collection in some countries mean that actual numbers may be greater. It is feared that many of these children may have fallen victim to human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

The findings build on the previous work of Lost in Europe, which revealed that more than 18,000 migrant children had gone missing between 2018 and 2020.

Recent data suggest that about 25,000 children “disappear” every year. This latest research highlights the ongoing nature of this crisis, which is likely to be just the “tip of the iceberg," according to Aagje Leven, Secretary General of Missing Children Europe.

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola praised the winning investigation. Daphne’s legacy continues through the work of journalists who strive to tell the truth and refuse to be silenced,” she said in her address. “Press freedom is non-negotiable. Seven years after Daphne’s assassination, we continue to honour her memory with a prize that reflects this Parliament’s steadfast commitment to these fundamental values” she added.

The Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize was established in 2019 in memory of the anti-corruption investigative journalist, who was assassinated in 2017. The €20,000 prize was selected by an independent jury of press and civil society representatives from the 27 EU member states. The award ceremony was held in the European Parliament's Daphne Caruana Galizia Press Room in Strasbourg.

The publishing partners for this investigation were De Standaard, (Belgium), Small Stream Media (the Netherlands), RBB (Germany), Knack (Belgium), ANSA (Italy), Domani (Italy), CNN (UK/US), VRT (Belgium), fimerida ton Syntakton (Greece), The Journal (Ireland), Tagesschau (Germany), and NRC (the Netherlands).