In a letter to Iceland’s Parliamentary Committee on Judicial Affairs and Education , the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights raised concerns and urged lawmakers to amend the proposed bill establishing a 'Departure Centre' for foreign nationals (Frumvarp til laga um brottfararstöð, Parliamentary Document 293, Item 230) and to prohibit detaining children based on the status of their migration proceedings.

According to the Commissioner's letter, while the bill proposal improves conditions and bans the detention of unaccompanied minors, it still allows families with children to be detained for up to 9 days without requiring proof that no alternative measure is possible. Citing the European Court of Human Rights and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, he called for non-custodial measures, prioritising the best interests of the child.

Source(s)

- Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights (17 February, 2026), [Iceland: Commissioner encourages amending the bill on “Departure Centre” to avoid detention of children], https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-the-parliament-of-iceland-by-michael-o-flaherty-council-of-e/48802aab82

Related development(s)
Draft bill on departure terminal law
Date of development
17.02.2026
Country
Iceland
Thematic area(s)
Detention, Applicants with special needs, Unaccompanied minors
Development type
Practice

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