

Results of the survey on Search for Origins (SfO) in Intercountry Adoption (ICA)

Section involving the Central Authorities (CAs)



Governo Italiano
Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri



Commissione per le Adozioni Internazionali
Autorità Centrale per la Convenzione de L'Aja del 29/05/93

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Joseph Moyersoen

Focal point on External relations and International Cooperation

Office III - Technical Secretariat - Commission on Intercountry Adoption,

Istituto degli Innocenti consultant

Florence, June 4, 2026

Introduction

Given the general **lack of uniformity in procedures**, regulatory frameworks, and operational methods for implementing Search for Origins (SfO), the need has emerged to collect **systematic information** on the practices adopted in the main Origin Countries (OC) and Receiving Countries (RC) in the context of intercountry adoption (ICA) procedures, in order to understand their **convergences and divergences**.

The Survey was **promoted** by the **CAI** and **carried out** by a team from the **Istituto degli Innocenti**, coordinated by Lucia Fagnini and of which I was a member.

Survey Scope

- **Receiving Countries (RCs):** Canada (4 Provinces), France, Germany, Spain, Sweden
- **Origin Countries (OCs):** Burkina Faso, Colombia, Vietnam
- **Questionnaires** completed by CAs:
 - the **regulatory context**;
 - the **methods** of archiving and **managing** archives;
 - the **administrative and judicial procedures available** in the selected OCs; and any **psychological and post-adoption support** provided in the selected RCs;
 - **Governmental and non-governmental support** for the SfO.

Why Search for Origins Matters

- **Identity and personal history**
- **Fundamental rights perspective**
- **Transparency and accountability**
- **Lifelong adoption support**

Common Legal Foundations

- **The 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption (HCICA)**
- **Best Interests of the Child (BICs)**
- **Growing recognition** of the right to origins
- **International cooperation**



Origin Countries (Burkina Faso, Colombia and Vietnam)

- **Central role** of public authorities
- **Controlled access** to records
- **Strong privacy** safeguards
- **Administrative management** of requests



Receiving Countries

- **Rights-based** approach
- **Formalized access** procedures
- **Data protection** safeguards
- **Different levels** of decentralization

Comparative Snapshot

- **Canada:** provincial diversity
- **France:** balance between identity and privacy
- **Germany:** access from age 16
- **Spain:** strong identity-right orientation
- **Sweden:** transparency with safeguards

Information Preservation

- **Archives** are essential for access rights
- **Centralized vs decentralized** systems
- **Permanent or long-term** retention
- **Increasing** digitization



Search Procedures

- **Identity** verification
- **Formal request** process
- **Access** to records
- **Family tracing** and **mediation**
- **Cross-border** cooperation



Support Services

- **Psychological** counselling
- **Preparation** for reunions
- **Cultural** mediation
- **Post-adoption** support

Role of NGOs and Peer Networks

- **Adoptee** associations
- **Accredited Bodies** on ICA
- **Return journey** support
- **Informal emotional** support

Main Challenges

- **Balancing** identity and privacy
- **Archive** quality and accessibility
- **Cross-border** coordination
- **Uneven** support services

Policy Implications

- Need for **harmonized practices**
- Improved **archive management**
- Enhanced **international cooperation**
- **Lifelong support** models

Conclusions

- **Shared principles** but **different implementation** models
- **Right to origins** is increasingly recognized
- **Archives, procedures and support** are interconnected
- **Future focus:** cooperation, transparency and support



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Thank you for your attention



Joseph Moyersoén
Florence, June 4, 2026