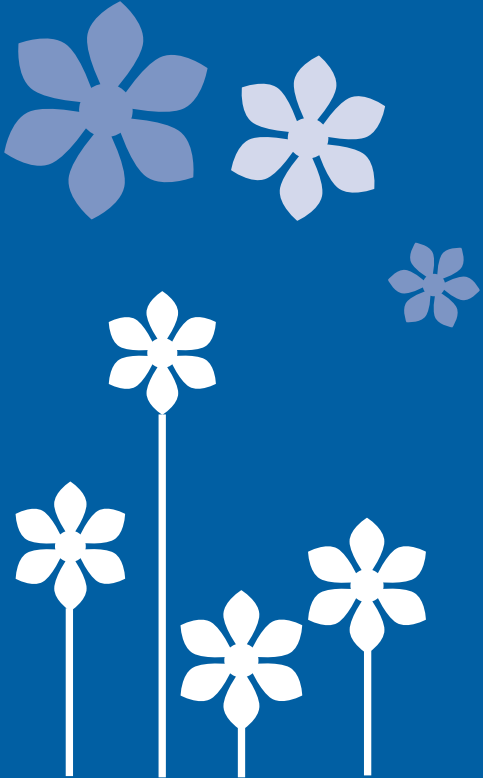




18 NOVEMBER

Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

2026 Edition
**Ethical media reporting
on sexual violence
against children**

The 2026 edition of the Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (#EndChildSexualAbuseDay) highlights the crucial role of the media in protecting children from sexual violence.

States Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse ([Lanzarote Convention](#)) are required to encourage the media to provide appropriate information concerning all aspects of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, with due respect for the independence of the media and freedom of the press. States are also required to prevent the public dissemination of any information that could lead to the identification of victims.

Journalists and media professionals shape how society understands and responds to sexual violence against children. Ethical reporting can drive positive change, but insensitive coverage may cause harm. This year, we focus on supporting the media to report ethically, prevent secondary victimisation and always put children's rights at the centre.

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Ethical media reporting on sexual violence against children

■ Ethical reporting puts the best interests of the child first. It avoids re-traumatisation and blame, relies on expert sources, and frames sexual violence as a systemic human rights violation, not just isolated incidents.

■ **How cases are reported matters.** Ethical media reporting avoids sensationalism and applies a child-rights perspective to:

- ▶ Protect victims and survivors from further harm;
- ▶ Protect their identity;
- ▶ Provide context, reliable data and sources;
- ▶ Raise awareness about sexual violence: how to prevent it and support services available;
- ▶ Challenge taboos and stereotypes;
- ▶ Encourage support and reporting.

■ **Upholding children's rights in media coverage is vital for child protection and a healthy democracy.** Respectful and accurate media reporting builds public understanding and action and fosters a culture where children's rights and ending sexual violence are a collective priority.

■ On 18 November 2026, the Council of Europe will launch **Media Guidelines** as a practical tool for ethical reporting on sexual violence against children, which can be translated and adapted to any national context.

■ Rooted in **10 key principles for ethical reporting**, these Guidelines include:

- ▶ Essential strategies for conducting interviews with adult survivors, those in a child's environment, and expert sources;
- ▶ Guidance on responsibly incorporating children's perspectives;
- ▶ Tips for using language, headlines, and visual materials;
- ▶ Information on support services, such as helplines or Barnahus-type services;
- ▶ Guidance on the appropriate use of key terms, following the [Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#);
- ▶ Practical resources, including lists of specialist organisations, official data sources, and pre-publication checklists.

■ States are encouraged to adapt and widely disseminate these Guidelines.

■ Every word matters. Ethical reporting can shape a safer future for children.

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