



Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2021

Meeting of the Gender Equality Commission
28 April 2016

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Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child

- Adopted by Committee of Ministers on 2 March 2016
- „Sofia Strategy“, launched at High-level Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria, 5-6 April 2016
- 6 years duration: 2016 - 2021
- Mid-term evaluation after 3 years
- Implementation guided by Ad-hoc Committee on the Rights of the Child (CAHENF)



Drafting process

- 3rd Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child
- Committee of Experts, 3 meetings in 2014 and 2015
- Consultation with member States, ombudspersons for children, NGOs, and international organisations
- Report on children's views based on > 100 studies
- Intrasecretariat Task Force



General principles (in line with UNCRC):

- Non-discrimination (including on the basis of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity)
- Best interests of the child
- Right to life, survival and development
- Right to be heard



Challenges identified:

1. Poverty, inequality and exclusion
2. Violence against children
3. A justice system made for adults
4. Challenges for families and parents
5. Racism, hate speech and radicalisation
6. Growing up in a digital world
7. Migration



Priority areas:

1. Equal opportunities for all children
2. Participation of all children
3. A life free from violence for all children
4. Child-friendly justice for all children
5. Rights of the child in the digital environment



Delivering the Strategy through :

Within the Council of Europe

- Council of Europe Intersecretariat Task Force

With the member States

- Ad Hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child



Delivering the Strategy:

- Clear definition of expected **impact, outcomes, outputs** and **risks** under each priority area
- Action plan and performance indicators to be developed by **CAHENF** and the **Intersecretariat Task**
- **Mainstreaming approach** : a challenge in itself especially when working with other strategies
- Increased focus on **co-operation activities**
- **Communication** and outreach, including to children



Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF):

- 47 members, observes, NGOs
- 1st meeting 28-29 September 2016, 2 in 2017
- Oversees the implementation of the Strategy
- Ensures that the rights of the child are mainstreamed into all relevant CoE committees and bodies
- Facilitates exchange of experiences and provides expertise on implementation of standards



Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF):

- Develops action plan for implementation of the Strategy and defines performance indicators
- Enhance implementation of COE standards
- Promotes European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (18 Nov)
- Develops Guidelines on children's safe access to their rights on the Internet
- Promotes effective participation of children
- Ensures co-operation and synergies with UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, EU, other int. org. and civil society



Gender Equality in the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child

Challenges: Violence

15. Despite significant advances in addressing violence against children, progress is still too slow and fragmented. The risk of violence against children, especially girls, remains present in every setting, including in the digital environment and in places where children should be safest – in schools, in all forms of care, in justice institutions, during leisure activities, sports and in the home. (...).



Priority Area 1 – Equal opportunities for all children

35. To fight discrimination on the grounds of gender and promote equality between girls and boys, the Council of Europe will continue to address stereotypes and sexism, notably in media^[54] and education^[55], as well as oversexualisation.

[54] CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media.

[55] CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education.



Challenges: Families and parents

19. The family, whatever its form, is the fundamental unit of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of children. (...). Families can, however, be confronted with numerous challenges: the economic crisis has exposed many families to unemployment and insecurity about the future. Reconciling work and family life remains difficult for many parents and in particular for single parents, who are mostly women. (...).



Priority Area 1 – Equal opportunities for all children

34. Action will be undertaken in particular to evaluate the effective implementation of Roma children's rights, to address the issue of early/child marriage, to strengthen access of Roma children and in particular girls and children with disabilities to inclusive education (...).



Priority Area 3 – A life free from violence for all children

49. The Council of Europe will encourage all its member States to sign, ratify and implement effectively the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), in particular through the work of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), with a view to protecting girls from gender-based violence, preventing, prosecuting and eliminating such violence, as well as to apply the convention to all child victims of domestic violence.



Priority Area 5 – Children’s Rights in the digital environment

59. Council of Europe conventions provide a solid basis for the protection of children from potential risks to their safety, security and privacy in the digital environment. The Council of Europe will promote, monitor and support the implementation of (...) the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (...).



Mainstreaming gender equality in our work on children's rights

- Ensure equal numbers of girls and boys in child participation projects (e.g. Sofia conference)
- Ensure boys and girls are equally represented in visibility material (e.g. girl and boy in video „[Tell someone you trust](#)“)
- Special attention on multiple discrimination of girls in vulnerable situations (e.g. Roma girls, girls with disabilities, girl refugees)



Ideas for cross-cutting themes on children and gender equality 2016-2021

- Violence against girls:
 - Lanzarote Convention: wording gender-neutral, but aware that most victims of sexual abuse are girls
 - European Day on the Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse (18 November): Annual topic?
 - Domestic violence / Istanbul Convention: Data collection or awareness raising corporal punishment?
 - Migration: Violence against refugee girls?



Ideas for cross-cutting themes on children and gender equality 2016-2021

- „He for she“ approach: working with boys to promote gender equality and addressing gender stereotypes (www.heforshe.org)
- „Let toys be toys“: address gender stereotypes in the toys and media industry (lettoysbetoys.org.uk)
- Sexuality Education – Pestalozzi work?



Ideas for cross-cutting themes on children and gender equality 2016-2021

- You have already done a lot on education ! Well done
- Empower girls who have experienced discrimination
- Empower boys to change the discourse on gender equality
- Child participation: Work with [CATS](#) (Children as Actors Transforming Societies) on children's views on gender equality
- Oversexualisation: consult children and young people on their perception and ways to deal with it?



Co-operation between CAHENF and GEC – let's get concrete and deliver a result

- Gender equality rapporteur will be appointed in CAHENF
- Appointment of children's rights rapporteur in GEC?
- GEC member / rapporteur to attend 1st CAHENF meeting?
- Common identification of thematic focus or projects on gender equality and children's rights?



Thank you for your attention!

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