



T-ES(2016)RFG-ISL

LANZAROTE CONVENTION

Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

FOCUSED QUESTIONNAIRE

Protecting children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

ICELAND

(Replies sent by the State)

Replies registered by the Secretariat on 15 September 2016

DATA (Lanzarote Convention, Chapter III)

- 1) How many migrant and asylum-seeking children (accompanied and unaccompanied)¹ are in your country as a result of the refugee crisis?
 - a) Please provide estimates, if exact data is not available, for the period between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2016,² and specify how many of these children are victims or presumed victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;

According to the data provided by the Directorate of Immigration, the total number of children moving to Iceland was 118 of which 13 were unaccompanied. Since the beginning of 2016 unaccompanied children are referred to Barnahus for joint investigative interview arranged by the Directorate of Immigration and the Child Protection services. No disclosures of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse have been made by the 7 unaccompanied children that have been interviewed so far. However 5 of them disclosed having experienced physical abuse. Neither the Directorate of Immigration, The Police authorities nor the Government Agency for Child Protection have received notification on possible sexual exploitation or sexual abuse concerning child migrant as a result of the refugee crisis to Iceland.

- b) Describe how the victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse were identified or describe the challenges faced to identify them. Specify whether a distinction is made between victims of sexual exploitation/abuse prior to the entry on your territory (Group 1) and after entry (Group 2) and provide data/estimates of the two groups of victims. Please also explain how the age is determined in case of doubt;
 - The Directorate of Immigration and the Government Agency for Child Protection have made agreement on interviewing all children in Barnahus with the aim of enhancing the probability that the child will disclose as well as preventing the re-traumatisation of the child. No distinction is made between child victims in Group 1 or Group 2 and according to work procedures as all child victims should receive appropriate therapeutic services.
 - In cases where there are doubts as to the age of the child, the Directorate of Immigration may decide on an age assessment which then is conducted by a dentist who is specialised in dental age assessment. It should be noted that no one is coerced to undergo such a procedure.
 - c) Indicate also how the data collected is used to offer a coordinated response between the different agencies in charge of the protection from, the prevention of and the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children;

¹ Please provide the definition of accompanied/unaccompanied children in your country and, if available, provide separate figures for accompanied and unaccompanied children. If such data is not available, please provide data on migrant and asylum-seeking children.

² If figures for this period are not available, please provide the most recent annual data.

The different agencies that have a role to play with regard to the identified topics stated in this question have agreed upon collective work procedure with the aim ensuring the appropriate response.

- d) Identify the institution(s) responsible for the collection of above data.

The agencies involved are the Directorate of Immigration, the Government Agency for Child Protection and the local child protection services.

PREVENTION (Lanzarote Convention, Chapter II)

2) What are the specific measures taken to prevent that children affected by the refugee crisis fall victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse?

- a) Highlight in particular the measures (e.g. awareness raising material, specialised training, screening of professionals, etc.) which have proven to be effective;

New law on Foreigner has recently been passed in Parliament which will come into effect from 1st of January 2017. The law specifically stipulates that the Government Agency for Child Protection should assume responsibility for the safety as well as the appropriate services and support for unaccompanied children. This includes accommodation and other provisions which then are subject to the general provisions of the Act on Child Protection, including special training of staff and screening of professionals. Otherwise, there has been awareness raising work performed by the Red Cross and Unicef as well as dissemination of information on refugee children and asylum seekers.

- b) Underline any lessons learnt from specific challenges (e.g. in raising awareness on sexual violence amidst other urgent priorities, etc.) that had to be faced to improve prevention.

It is well known that children placed in residential institutions are more at risk to be subject to abuse, including sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. This applies of course also to asylum seeking children and unaccompanied children. This is the reason why the Government Agency for Child Protection decided on a campaign to recruit foster families for unaccompanied children earlier this year following a rise in unaccompanied children. This made it possible to place all unaccompanied children that so wished placement in family setting.

PROTECTION (Lanzarote Convention, Chapter IV)

3) Has a coordinated child protection approach been put in place to cater for the specific needs of migrant and asylum-seeking children victims of sexual exploitation and/or sexual abuse?

As stated in the reply to Q 2a) it is safe to say that this has been secured.

- a) Describe the measures taken to address the situation and cater for the children's specific needs (multiple traumas, language/cultural differences, etc.), including with respect to guardianship/placement;

The Directorate of Immigration notifies the Government Agency for the Child Protection and the local child protection services on each child that is identified at the boarder or where ever they may be found. The local child protection services is responsible for providing the appropriate services to the child's specific needs. The Government Agency for Child Protection monitors this in individual cases as well as provides the local child protection with specialised assistance, e.g. appropriate foster parents that have received training. Training programs for foster families are now under way.

- b) Indicate also what measures have been taken to protect the children concerned from further exploitation/abuse and to assist the victims in seeking redress (please highlight any differences between Groups 1 and 2 of children as outlined above);

As stated before the children receive appropriate support such as psychological therapy, trauma focused treatment if necessary, and safe accommodation without discriminating between Group 1 and 2.

- c) Underline any lessons learnt from specific challenges (in reporting suspicion of sexual exploitation and abuse, in tailoring assistance to the victims, etc.) that had to be faced to improve protection.

Iceland believes that professional forensic interviewing in child friendly setting is a prerequisite for obtaining disclosures, in particular in cases of trafficking. The child's narratives is the key to uncovering the case and the child is not likely to tell unless he/she trusts the interviewer/agency that is responsible for the interview.

COOPERATION (Lanzarote Convention, Chapter IX)

- 4) Provide examples of successful cooperation with other Parties to the Lanzarote Convention for the purpose of:

There is no collaboration that can be identified with regard to the items below.

- a) Preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children affected by the refugee crisis;
- b) Protecting and providing assistance to victims;
- c) Investigations or proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention.

ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5) Please provide any other additional information which may be useful to identify areas for targeted cooperation aimed at ensuring that children affected by the refugee crisis are effectively protected from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and in guaranteeing their human dignity and physical and psychological integrity.

It is important that the mechanism in place to prevent and protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation should be entrusted the extended responsibility to ensure the

safety of asylum-seeking and unaccompanied children in a non-discriminatory manner. Therefore the existing system of child protection should be provided with the necessary mandate and resources, including training, to address these issues.