

Conclusions delivered by Mr Claude Janizzi, Chairperson of the Lanzarote Committee on the occasion of the conference "Ending sexual exploitation and abuse of children: Towards a world of trust" (Strasbourg, 24-25 October 2017), celebrating the 10th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Lanzarote Committee

Distinguished guests,
Dear colleagues,

I'm proud to be the chairman of this Committee composed by colleagues and friends committed to the protection of children and trying to make a difference.

We had a very interesting conference with great interventions from all speakers, witnesses and participants in the room and with rich discussions. Personally I learned a lot. Thank you very much for this.

Ten years is a good moment to look back and see our achievements.

But it is also a good moment to be critical and reflect on how to improve the Committee's efficiency.

- How can we improve the functioning of the Committee?
- How can we improve the impact of our work?
- What questions still need to be addressed?

How to improve the functioning of the Convention and of the Lanzarote Committee?

We've been physically meeting survivors. This has been very string moments that reminded us why we are here. Obviously these live witnessing are retraumatising for the victims and we should be very conscious of this and be grateful for our guests accepting this retraumatisation in order to help us better understand the human impact of abuse and exploitation. It was interesting to hear that a psychological support of survivors at a conference is essential.

In public awareness raising survivors telling the story of their suffering are very important but this should be done in respect of the privacy and the vulnerability of survivors.

In our work we should integrate the voice of survivors and invite them on a regular basis to our Committee to be able to have their input.

We also need to think about how to integrate children and youngsters voices in our work. We all know the paternalistic principle « I know better than you what is good for you », but do we remember the Child's right to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child.

Direct involvement of children in the Lanzarote Committee monitoring process should be possible. This should be put in place, as far as possible, at all stage of the monitoring process, from the consideration of the issue to be addressed in the next monitoring round, to the drafting of the questionnaire, the replies to be given to it and their analysis and measures to be put in place.

I would also like to take up the idea of assessing the reservations to the Lanzarote Convention: Why are they there and what is their scope?

The follow-up of our recommendations is another important subject. Neither the Convention nor the rules of procedure refer to the follow up. So we have to discuss how we can organise this essential element of our work. If we formulate recommendations we need to organise a follow-up of these recommendations, may be with the help of local civil society or the media?

How could we create a link to the private internet providers? How could we associate them on a voluntary basis to our aim of protecting children?

Finally the richness of information we could reach at our first country visit in July in Hungary should make us reflect on how to define in which case we organise a visit, how we organise it technically and what outcomes we expect from these visits.

How to improve the impact of the work carried out by the Lanzarote Committee on others' work?

The role of civil society and other stakeholders at the national level could be further developed: They could be involved at an earlier stage (e.g. through national debates) than it is currently the case.

Maybe the Lanzarote Committee should be given a more participative role when initiatives are developed in other Council of Europe Departments, for example through an automatic consultation of the Lanzarote Committee.

Speaking about participation, what about a better connection of our Committee to the UN 2030 agenda? These are questions that need to be discussed.

Issues which should be addressed in the coming years

We all know one of the principles of public policy: No data, no problem, no problem, no budget!

If we want to know at the national level as well as on the international level where we are going and what are our results, we need to work on improving our data collection. Our monitoring rounds have shown that data collection and data processing is a common weakness of almost all our countries.

Some problems are reported frequently and need an answer:

- Statute of limitation: How can we help survivors that are prosecuted by perpetrators for fake accusations to address the situations where perpetrators prosecute their victims for false accusation;
- protection with a whistle blower status of adults reporting about what they hear and see;
- Better regulation of the voluntary sector (incl. sports): Most stakeholders in this sector do currently not have the expertise to deal with sexual abuse cases. Awareness raising and training should be encouraged. Screening should be put in place for voluntary workers as well as for professionals, for a better protection of our children.

These are just a few examples to show you that the task is huge.

With more than 40 countries we need to be aware that the cruising speed of our boat might be slowed down by the size of information that needs to be processed at every monitoring round. So we need to keep our themes at a reasonable scope and we hope for sufficient resources from the Council of Europe but also, through secondments and subsidies, from the member states.

Thank you again for your active participation at this conference and your interest in the subject.

I can assure you that we will continue to do all we can to improve the protection of children against sexual abuse and exploitation.

Thanks for your attention!