



Updated 4 May 2015

**The local and regional dimensions of
The Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign
to stop sexual violence against children**

**A Strategic Action Plan
for the
Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
of the Council of Europe**

Framework for the Congress' contribution to the ONE in FIVE Campaign

While penal and most civil procedures are usually the responsibility of the state, some crucial issues in the field of child protection may come under the remit of local and regional authorities, such as the regulation and organisation of social and health services and the adoption of specific quality standards for childcare services. Because of this, and due to their proximity to victims, towns and regions are on the front line of the fight to stop sexual violence against children, and must develop and implement action plans and strategies to halt it.

In 2009, the Congress adopted texts on preventing violence against children which are relevant to the Congress' contribution to the ONE in FIVE Campaign in relation to the:

- setting up of mechanisms and action plans, co-operating with the state and other agencies;
- establishing quality management systems for child care services and benchmarks for agencies;
- developing regional guidelines for detection, assessment, protection and response;
- evaluating and monitoring plans and policies.

The challenge to local and regional authorities in cases of sexual violence against children is to develop and implement community-based action plans and strategies, and to invest in better services that respect children's rights in order to deliver locally what children and families need, to stop sexual violence and to bring perpetrators to justice. Awareness-raising and political will at these governance levels is extremely important.

Aims of the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children

The main aims of the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign are to:

- achieve further signature, ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention, CETS 201);
- to equip children, their families/carers and societies at large with knowledge and tools to prevent and report sexual violence against children.

The Lanzarote Convention contains all the measures needed to prevent sexual violence, to protect children and to prosecute the abusers.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will promote the ONE in FIVE Campaign and raise awareness of local and regional elected representatives and civil servants on how they can stop sexual violence against children living in their towns and regions and strive to gain their political commitment to the cause.

Aims and specific objectives of the local and regional dimensions of the ONE in FIVE Campaign

The overall aims of the ONE in FIVE Campaign at local and regional levels are to associate Congress members, local and regional authorities and their associations, as well as other partners (NGOs, civil society organisations, officials, professionals, decision-makers, media) with the promotion of the Campaign and to raise awareness of the Lanzarote Convention among local and regional authorities. By doing so, the Congress aims to bring about the adoption of child-friendly local and regional services, to protect children and help prevent sexual violence within the community. The Current Affairs Committee will follow the implementation of the Campaign.

The specific objectives for the Congress will be to:

- 1 raise awareness amongst Congress members, local and regional authorities, associations of local and regional authorities and other partners of the Campaign's aims;
- 2 promote the use of the Council of Europe's legal standards and instruments (Lanzarote Convention and Child Friendly Justice Guidelines) when setting up structures and mechanisms for protecting children from all forms of violence;
- 3 encourage local and regional authorities to launch campaigns, develop awareness-raising tools to prevent sexual violence against children, in particular disseminate and adopt campaign awareness-raising materials (in particular the Council of Europe's Underwear Rule and other campaign material) to assist parents and carers to talk to children about sexual violence in a child-friendly manner;
- 4 promote a multi-stakeholder approach and encourage local and regional authorities to develop coordinated multi-disciplinary structures, processes and mechanisms to tackle sexual violence against children;
- 5 develop a culture whereby towns and regions are more child-friendly and enable children and young people to participate meaningfully in the development of safe communities free from sexual violence.

Pact of towns and regions to stop sexual violence against children

The aims and objectives of this Strategic Action Plan will be promoted and achieved principally through the Congress's Pact of Towns and Regions to stop sexual violence against children, endorsed by the Congress Bureau in September 2012.

The Pact proposes a four-pronged approach of **P**revention, **P**rotection, **P**rosecution and **P**articipation - the four "Ps" - to be adopted by local and regional authorities in their efforts to combat sexual violence against children. The challenge to Europe's towns and regions when dealing with these cases is to raise awareness of the issue, to develop and implement community-based action plans and strategies to address the four "Ps", and to invest in better services. All services and actions must be respectful of children's rights, put the child's best interest first, and enable children's voices to be heard, in order to deliver locally what children and families need to stop sexual violence and sexual abuse, as well as to bring perpetrators to justice.

The Congress's Pact contains a list of possible actions that local and regional authorities may take in all of these four "P" domains and aims to get as many towns and regions as possible to sign up for it. As the governance level closest to the victims of child sexual exploitation and abuse, local and regional authorities are best placed to set up structures which implicate all actors in the chain of care and ensure that the best support and assistance possible is given to children. They also have a duty to serve not only the needs of the child victims, but also the family system and the community as a whole. This is why the Pact invites local and regional authorities to adopt the multidisciplinary approach promoted by the Lanzarote Convention and to develop coordinated structures, processes and mechanisms to tackle sexual violence against children. Aware that implementing the type of strategies and structures proposed by the Convention could require substantial investment, and considering that in a time of economic and financial crisis many local authorities see their resources cut, the Congress's Pact also suggests action that requires very little, if any public spending, for example putting a link on towns' homepages to the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE website.

A programme of awareness-raising of the Pact was launched in 2013 to achieve as many signatures from towns and regions from as many Council of Europe member states as possible. A "Pact Platform" has been set up on the Congress ONE in FIVE website (www.coe.int/congress-pact) where towns and regions can sign up and provide information on their initiatives and structures to stop sexual violence against children. This Platform will also serve as a database of good practices.

A toolkit is available which offers to local and regional authorities, associations, NGOs and other stakeholders, proposals for policies, strategies and tools that they can implement. It comprises a leaflet about the ONE in FIVE campaign and the Pact; the Pact itself; a leaflet presenting the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention); and an A3-sized poster which can be customised by the stakeholders participating in the ONE in FIVE campaign to contain their message and logo.

Action for 2011 - 2015

1 Raise awareness amongst Congress members and local and regional authorities on the Campaign's aims:

- organise debates during Congress sessions and seminars for local and regional elected representatives on aspects of the fight against sexual violence and abuse against children and the ONE in FIVE Campaign;
- set up a dedicated page on the Congress's Internet site with news, information about best practices, interviews, etc;

- present the Pact, wherever possible, at seminars and conferences related to child protection and children's rights;
- encourage local and regional authorities to join the national campaign teams in their respective Council of Europe member states;
- undertake visibility trips to the mayors and presidents of certain towns and regions to present the Pact and invite them to sign up.

2 Promote the use of Council of Europe legal standards and instruments (Lanzarote Convention and Child Friendly Justice Guidelines):

- propose, in Resolution 350(2012) and Recommendation 332(2012) adopted at the 23rd Congress session, ways in which regions with legislative powers can transpose the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention into their own legal frameworks;
- invite local authorities to examine their bylaws, to identify any shortcomings and to implement the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention in local bylaws and acts;
- invite members to cooperate with national parliamentarians members of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians set up by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, including cooperating to lobby national governments to sign and ratify the Lanzarote Convention;
- co-operate with Council of Europe experts;

3 Develop awareness raising tools to prevent sexual violence against children and disseminate information on the Campaign:

- encourage local and regional authorities, as well as national associations of local and regional authorities, to organise, in co-operation with civil society, awareness-raising and empowerment campaigns and seminars locally, in particular in schools, to raise awareness on the issue of the prevention of sexual violence against children and on the help and assistance available;
- encourage local and regional authorities to adapt and produce locally, as well as distribute widely the ONE in FIVE Campaign awareness raising materials to schools, crèches, and other establishments which welcome children (youth clubs, youth associations such as guides, scouts, etc), including clinics, hospitals, legal aid centres, etc;
- distribute as widely as possible the Congress ONE in FIVE campaign toolkit;

4 Promote a multi-stakeholder approach by promoting dialogue and co-operation:

- encourage authorities to use a holistic, integrated approach based on a multi-agency strategy, including prevention, planning, preparation, coordination, communication and halting further illegal activity of perpetrators, and involving all relevant local actors including children's social care services, health services, education sector, police, judicial authorities, voluntary organisations, etc;
- promote exchanges between local education and child protection officials, decision-makers, the media and parents on best practices, preventive measures, ethical and practical guidelines for reporting sexual violence by child protection authorities, the role of health and social service professionals in preventing and reporting sexual violence, etc (a so called network approach);

5 Develop child-friendly structures, processes, mechanisms and culture and promote the participation of children and young people:

- promote the setting up of multi-agency, multi-disciplinary “one-stop” centres where all professionals involved in the investigation of child abuse cases work under one roof to ensure that child victims of sexual violence are not subject to further abuse (the concept of Child Friendly Houses);
- encourage local and regional authorities to organise teaching and vocational training of professionals.

Main dates 2011 - 2015

16 September 2011, approval of the Strategic Action Plan by the Congress Bureau

18 October 2011, debate in the frame of the 21st Congress session

20 October 2011, nomination by the Congress Bureau of a Thematic Rapporteur on Children

7 February 2012, launch of the Congress website

9 February 2012, seminar organised by the Congress Current Affairs Committee “Combating child sexual exploitation at local and regional levels”

20 March 2012, approval by the Current Affairs Committee of the draft resolution, recommendation and explanatory memorandum on “Regional action and legislation to combat sexual exploitation and abuse of children”

13 September 2012, working session during the IVth general meeting of the national associations of local and regional authorities of Council of Europe member states to the Campaign to introduce the Pact

14 September 2012, endorsement of the Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children by the Congress Bureau

18 October 2012, adoption by the Congress at its 23rd session of Resolution 350(2012) and Recommendation 332(2012) on regional action and legislation to combat sexual exploitation and abuse of children

14 March 2013, participation of Congress Vice-President Clemens Lammerskitten in the meeting of the Network of contact parliamentarians of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on “national strategies to fight sexual violence against children” in the German Bundestag

16 April 2013, meeting between Herwig van Staa, President of the Congress, and Sergei Sobyenin, Mayor of Moscow, during which the Pact was presented

25 April 2013, meeting between Congress Vice-President Clemens Lammerskitten and Ralf Wieland, President of the Berlin Parliament to present the Pact

3 June 2013, presentation of the Pact by Johan van den Hout, member of the Current Affairs Committee, to the Congress Governance Committee

11 June 2013, participation of Congress Vice-President Clemens Lammerskitten in the meeting of the PACE Network of contact parliamentarians in Baku on “the well-being of children as an indicator for the well-being of society”, and meeting with Hajibala Abutalybov, Mayor of Baku (Azerbaijan) to present the Pact

4 and 5 September 2013, visit to the Netherlands, in particular Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor of Rotterdam, and Amy Koopmanschap, Mayor of Diemen, as well as to various structures dealing with child sexual exploitation and abuse by Johan van den Hout, acting Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, to raise awareness of the Pact

29 September 2013, confirmation by the Congress Bureau of Johan van den Hout as Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children

7 - 8 October 2013, participation of Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, in a conference on the “Inclusion and Protection of Children in and through Sport”, organised by the European Partial Agreement on Sport and the Hungarian Secretariat of Sport, in co-operation with the ONE in FIVE Campaign

14 October 2013, participation of Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, in the meeting of the Steering Group of the Parliamentary Assembly’s project to strengthen national policies to stop sexual violence against children in Cyprus

13 – 15 November 2013, participation of Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, in the meeting of the PACE network of contact parliamentarians on "Taking the fight against sexual violence against children to the world – sharing the European experience"

5 and 6 December 2013, visit to the United Kingdom by Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, to raise awareness of the Pact

28 and 29 January 2014, visit to Belgium by Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, to raise awareness of the Pact

9 and 10 April 2014, visit to Austria by Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, to raise awareness of the Pact

9 to 11 September 2014, visit to the Czech Republic by Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, to raise awareness of the Pact

27 January 2015, Eupen (Belgium), signature by Antonios Antoniadis, Minister for Family, Health and Social Affairs, German-speaking Community of Belgium, of the Pact in the presence of Josef Neumann, first vice-Chair of the Congress Current Affairs Committee, and presentation of a guide for professionals who work with children on what to do when abuse is suspected

6 February 2015, Edinburgh (UK), meeting with Councillor Douglas Chapman, Spokesperson on Education, Children and Young People of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss raising awareness of Scottish municipalities of the Campaign

7 February 2015, Edinburgh (UK), participation of Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, in the final mile of Matthew McVarish’s Road to Change march across Europe to raise awareness of sexual violence against children and of the need to abolish the statute of limitations, www.roadtochange.eu

20 April 2015, Strasbourg (France), meeting of Congress Vice-President Clemens Lammerskitten and John McGurk and 20 other runners to launch their charity run “Benefizlauf 1 in 5” across Germany to raise awareness of sexual violence against children and to invite visited municipalities to sign the Congress Pact

20 May 2015, Chisinau (Republic of Moldova), participation of Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, in the meeting of the PACE network of contact parliamentarians for an exchange of views on “Strategies and mechanisms to protect children from sexual abuse, trafficking and sexual exploitation”

30 June 2015, 's Hertogenbosch, Province of Noord-Brabant (NL), seminar entitled “Europe’s towns and regions joining forces to fight sexual violence and abuse of children”, for the attention of the national associations of local and regional authorities on the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children

1 July 2015, s Hertogenbosch, Province of Noord-Brabant (NL), approval by the Congress Current Affairs Committee of the draft resolution, recommendation and explanatory memorandum on “Championing children’s rights in times of austerity: Local and regional authorities’ responsibilities”

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