

Welcome and Introduction:

- Welcome participants to this important stakeholder consultation.

Context and Objective of the Session:

- The goal of this consultation is to gather insights and expertise that will contribute to shape a well-informed recommendation on comprehensive sexuality education.
- The Council of Europe (CoE) has long emphasized the necessity of age-appropriate CSE as a key preventive tool for protecting children and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to prevent, or at least halt sexual abuse.
- Highlight the starting point of our work:
 - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), particularly Article 19, which enshrines children's right to be free from violence, and 1st Strategic objective of the CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child (Freedom from violence for all children).
 - The Lanzarote Convention, specifically Article 6, which obliges states to provide children with information on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse within formal education curricula or alternative educational settings.

Relevant Council of Europe work highlighting the importance of CSE:

- Reference the Lanzarote Committee's monitoring work about the protection of children in the circle of trust and emphasize the need to integrate information about **online risks** and ICT-facilitated abuse within sexuality education.
- Underline the role of CSE in **challenging sexism and promoting gender equality**, as highlighted in the Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029), the Council of Europe Recommendation on Preventing and Combating Sexism, and the Guidelines on the role of men and boys in gender equality policies.
- Highlight the work of the CoE **Commissioner for Human Rights**, namely its 2020 Human Rights [Comment](#) which underscores the wide-ranging benefits of comprehensive sexuality education beyond reproductive health, and its 2024 report "[Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Europe: Progress and Challenges](#)," which reinforces the importance of quality sexuality education.
- Mention the CoE report "[Safe at School: Education Sector Responses to Violence Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity/Expression, or Sex Characteristics in Europe](#)," encouraging member states to include SOGIESC issues in curricula.
- Work of CoE's Parliamentary Assembly, namely reports on "Gender Aspects and Human Rights Implications of Pornography," (2021) which stresses the need for CSE

in schools to counter harmful misinformation from pornography, and report on "Protection of Children Against Online Violence," (2024) advocating for CSE to address online relationships, violence in sexual contexts, and homophobic bullying.

- Last but not least: the CDENF assessed the need for this Recommendation through a **feasibility study**. It concluded that sexuality education is an appropriate means to meet the obligation of protecting children's right to life, to health, to education, to equality, and to be free from violence. Subsequent work underlined that sexuality education, adapted to children's evolving capacities, is also needed to address the surge in sexual violence among peers.

All these publications are available on [the resources page](#) of the conf. website

- Our resolve to promote this issue through a new recommendation is based on CM's mandate, but first and foremost on evidence highlighted in this extensive preparatory work. Sexuality education correlates with better outcomes in terms of sexual health (e.g. drop in teenage pregnancies and abortions), mental health, and protection from sexual violence. Also, school children who have participated in such programmes are more likely to disclose sexual abuse than those who did not.

Presentation of the Session and Next Steps:

- Briefly outline the structure of the session, emphasizing the importance of open dialogue and expert contributions:
- First we will listen to key speakers sharing their experiences regarding CSE, including the children consulted on the issue.
- Then we will have an open dialogue with stakeholders, through questions posed by young delegates to national representatives, parliamentarians, researchers, etc.
- Invite everyone to be mindful that there are young delegates present in this session and to make an effort to ensure that the questions and discussion are adapted to all those present in the room.
- We also have participants present who are or have been directly impacted by some of the topics under discussion, including lived experience of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.
- Remind everyone that if anyone feels affected by the discussion, please feel free to step out of the room or contact a Council of Europe staff member if you would like to speak with our safeguarding team.
- Remind that participants cannot take pictures where a young delegate can be recognised. Only parents, child facilitators and authorized CoE staff can do so.
- Introduce the first speaker, Mária Vargová, Chair of the Council of Europe Committee on Prevention of Violence (CDENF) and representative of Slovakia, who will set the scene for the discussion.