

Conference
Preventing sexual abuse of children
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Policy and legal tools to prevent sexual abuse of children

Moderator: Ms Salomé Adroher Biosca,
General Director of Services for Family and Children,
Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality

Summary

The Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality believes it is imperative to harmonise child protection policies and co-operate with all the organisations focusing on the well-being of children, and with international institutions such as the Council of Europe.

We in the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality are actively taking measures to promote and uphold the rights of children, especially measures focusing on such a serious violation of their rights as sexual abuse. This is why Spain signed and ratified the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Convention (2007) on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. In addition, the 3rd Action Plan to combat the sexual abuse of children and adolescents is currently being implemented, with the involvement of all the competent authorities and the voluntary sector, with the aim of having a genuine impact on preventing and addressing the different forms of child sex abuse and exploitation and restoring the rights of the child victims of these crimes. In 2014, once the 3rd Action Plan to combat the sexual abuse of children and adolescents 2010-2013 has come to an end, we shall begin the process of assessment.

Similarly, the 2nd National Childhood and Adolescence Strategic Plan 2013-2016 (II PENIA), recently approved by the Council of Ministers, comprises numerous measures relating not only to the drafting, monitoring and assessment of the 3rd Action Plan to combat child exploitation, but also to promoting research into how to prevent the risks to and vulnerability of children and adolescents, with the transposition of the Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography and updating our legislation on child protection in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice.

In addition, I would point out that in the context of the Childhood Observatory, various initiatives have been taken in the field of preventing and taking action against child sex abuse, such as producing sheets for the identification and reporting of cases of child abuse – a fundamental component of the Unified Register of Child Abuse Cases – which are designed to help identify the initial phases of abuse of possible victims, and the approval of a formal procedure for dealing with abuse, which has resulted in considerable progress in co-ordinating the reporting mechanisms in various sectors:

education, health, police, social services, etc. Improvement of all these instruments is also one of the measures included in the 2nd Strategic Plan.

Moreover, this 2nd Strategic Plan also includes one specific measure, namely to encourage forums, such as this present one, for exchanging information on innovative and effective projects focusing on the prevention, identification and action against child abuse and sexual abuse, with special attention being directed towards children and adolescents with disabilities as a particularly vulnerable group.