



Reaching the heights for the rights of the child

**Council of Europe Strategy
for the Rights of the Child
2016-2021**

**High-Level Launching Conference
Sofia, 5-6 April 2016**

Draft programme

Last updated 21 March 2016



Bulgarian Chairmanship
Council of Europe
November 2015 – May 2016
Présidence de la Bulgarie
Conseil de l'Europe
Novembre 2015 – Mai 2016



Introduction

It's been 10 years since the Council of Europe has set up the Programme "Building a Europe for and with Children" to enhance its commitment to children and their human rights. Since 2009, this work has been guided by two consecutive Strategies on the Rights of the Child: The Stockholm Strategy (2009-2011) and the Monaco Strategy (2012-2015). A mid-term conference took stock of the latter in Dubrovnik in 2014.

This conference in Sofia, entitled "Reaching the heights for the rights of the child", launches the third Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child. The "Sofia Strategy", adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 March 2016, will guide the 47 member States over the next six years in addressing the following five priority objectives on the rights of the child:

- 1. equal opportunities for all children;**
- 2. participation of all children;**
- 3. a life free from violence for all children;**
- 4. child-friendly justice for all children;**
- 5. the rights of the child in the digital environment.**

The Conference is organised in the framework of the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and hosted by the State Agency for Child Protection and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Bulgaria. It provides an opportunity for high-level representatives of member States and other international organisations to express their commitment to the Strategy and present their vision on its implementation.

There are nine thematic sessions proposed at the conference, where participants can learn about and discuss recent developments regarding some of the most acute challenges covered by the Strategy. The number and length of presentations is kept to a minimum in order to provide enough time for discussion. Participants can find more space for networking and exchanges during the Fair of Ideas, where more than 20 organisations will display their latest publications and stand ready to talk about their work.

A group of 10 children and young people from different member States are taking part in the conference. All these young people are experts on one or several topics signalled in the Strategy and experienced in advocacy work. They will contribute to the discussions, act as observers during the thematic sessions and report back to the plenary in a variety of ways. Many thanks go to the young people, their accompanying persons, the facilitators, as well as to Eurochild and the National Network for Children Bulgaria for making this possible.

All participants are invited to take active part in the discussions at this conference and share experiences and setbacks, challenges and opportunities, problems and solutions, in short, anything where others can learn.

It is only together that we can reach the heights for the rights of the child.

Conference overview

| Monday 4 April | |
|------------------|---|
| 16.00 | Early registration |
| 18.30 | Welcome reception hosted by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria |
| Tuesday 5 April | |
| 8.00 | <i>Registration</i> |
| 9.00 | Opening Ceremony |
| 9.30 | Keynote speech |
| 9.45 | High level plenary session |
| 10.15 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 10.45 | High level plenary session (continued) |
| 13.00 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 14.30 | Three parallel thematic sessions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upholding the rights of children on the move: learning from the “refugee crisis” 2. Child-friendly justice: hearing children in judicial procedures 3. The right to be heard: taking child participation to a new level |
| 16.00 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 16.30 – 18.00 | Fair of ideas |
| 16.30 – 17.15 | Two parallel side events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handbook on European law relating to the rights of the child ▪ Strategies in action – the Bulgarian experience |
| 18.00 | <i>End of first conference day</i> |
| 19.30 | <i>Dinner</i> |

| Wednesday 6 April | |
|-------------------|---|
| 9.15 | Plenary session: Reporting back from thematic sessions 1-3 |
| 10.30 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 11.00 | Three parallel thematic sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Children’s rights in the digital environment: designing a co-ordinated approach through national strategies 5. Radicalisation of children: finding the rights-based approach 6. Taking monitoring results forward: follow-up to the Lanzarote Committee’s first implementation report |
| 12.30 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 14.30 | Three parallel thematic sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The UN study on violence against children +10: progress and challenges in Europe 8. Public spending and the rights of the child: child budgeting 9. Non-discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) young people |
| 16.00 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 16.30 | Plenary session: Reporting back from thematic sessions 4-9 |
| 17.30 | Closing session |
| 18.00 | <i>End of Conference</i> |

Conference programme

Monday 4 April

- 16.00** Arrival of participants and early registration in Hotel Sofia Balkan
- 18.30** Welcome reception hosted by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria **Mr Rosen Plevneliev** at the National Archaeological Institute and Museum, 2 Saborna Street.

Tuesday 5 April

- 8.00** Registration in Hotel Sofia Balkan
- 9.00** **Opening ceremony**
- Moderator: Ms Deyana Kostadinova, Chief of the Cabinet to the President of the Republic of Bulgaria*
- H.E. Mr Rosen Plevneliev**, President of the Republic of Bulgaria
- Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe
- H.E. Ms Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca**, President of Malta
- Mr Ivailo Kalfin**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria
- 9.30** **Keynote speech**
- Mr Nils Muižnieks**, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
- 9.45** **High level plenary session**
- Moderator: Ms Regina Jensdottir, Council of Europe Co-ordinator on the Rights of the Child*
- H.E. Mr Daniel Mitov**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Chair of the Committee of the Council of Europe
- Mr Margus Tsahkna**, Minister of Social Protection, Estonia
- Mr Benyam Dawit Mezmur**, Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

10.15 *Coffee break*¹

10.45 **High level plenary session** (continued)²

High level representatives are invited to deliver short statements on progress, challenges and their commitment to strengthening children's human rights. The session will focus on the five priority areas of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child:

1. Equal opportunities for all children
2. Participation of all children
3. A life free from violence for all children
4. Child-friendly justice for all children
5. Rights of the child in the digital environment

Moderator: **Ms Regina Jensdottir**, Council of Europe Co-ordinator on the Rights of the Child

Member States:

Albania: **Mr Blendi Klosi**, Minister of Social Welfare and Youth

Andorra: **Ms Esther Fenoll Garcia**, State Secretary of Social Affairs and Labour

Azerbaijan: **Ms Hijran Huseynova**, Chairperson of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs

Croatia: **Ms Bernardica Juretić**, Minister of Social Policy and Youth

Cyprus: **Ms Zeta Emilianidou**, Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance

Czech Republic: **Ms Michaela Marksová**, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs

Finland: **Mr Jari Partanen**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Transport and Communications

Georgia: **Mr David Sergeenko**, Minister of Health, Labour and Social Affairs

Hungary: **Ms Katalin Novák**, Minister of State for Family and Youth Affairs

Latvia: **Mr Jānis Reirs**, Minister of Welfare

Lithuania: **Mr Algirdas Šešelgis**, Deputy Minister of Social Security and Labour

Malta: **Mr Michael Farrugia**, Minister of the Family and Social Solidarity

Monaco: **Mr Gilles Tonelli**, Government Counsellor for External Relations and Co-operation, Minister of Foreign Affairs

¹ During the coffee break, a family picture will be taken of all participants of the high-level session.

² The alphabetical order by country and names (for international organisations and Council of Europe bodies) does not reflect the final arrangement of speeches. The session may be structured according to the priority areas of the Strategy.

Montenegro: **Ms Zorica Kovačević**, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare

Norway: **Mr Kai-Morten Tarning**, State Secretary, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

Poland: **Ms Renata Szczęch**, Deputy Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy

Portugal: **Ms Ana Sofia Antunes**, Secretary of State for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Romania: **Ms Claudia-Ana Costea**, Minister of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly

Sweden: **Ms Pernilla Baralt**, State Secretary to the Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality

Ukraine: **Mr Serhii Ustymenko**, Deputy Minister for European Integration

International organisations:

Ms Maud de Boer-Buquiccio, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

Mr Michael O’Flaherty, Director, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Ms Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Ms Marie-Pierre Poirier, Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Special Coordinator, Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe

Council of Europe Bodies:

Ms Stella Kyriakides, Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Mr Apolonio Ruiz Ligeró, Vice Governor for the Social Development Strategy, Council of Europe Development Bank

13.00

Lunch

14.30 Three parallel thematic sessions

SESSION 1 UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN ON THE MOVE: LEARNING FROM THE “REFUGEE CRISIS”

As a result of recent crises and war in several countries, unprecedented numbers of children and families are on the move towards the core of Europe. The extent and diversity of human rights abuses of children which are reported in this context is particularly worrisome. Lessons learnt from the ground from governmental and non-governmental actors, national human rights bodies involved in migration-related issues, and international organisations, are essential for considering collectively additional strategic roles and responses to ensure that these children are adequately protected, and that they are able to exercise their rights.

What particular difficulties do children face in this context? How can the principle of the best interests of the child be secured throughout the migratory process, and which safeguards must be implemented to protect these children from further harm? How do States move away from child detention for immigration purposes and implement suitable alternatives? Which monitoring mechanisms and accountability measures should be in place to effectively address any identified violations of these children’s rights?

This session will provide insight into the current situation of migrant children in Europe. It will discuss lessons learnt, outstanding challenges with regard to an effective child protection response in Europe, and will reflect upon key priorities and ways forward.

Moderator: **Mr George Moschos**, Deputy Ombudsman for Children, Greece

Speakers:

Mr George Tyrikos-Ergas, volunteer from NGO “Agkalia”, Lesvos, Greece

Ms Anna Austin, Deputy Jurisconsult, Registry of the European Court of Human Rights

Mr Tomáš Boček, Special Representative of the Secretary General for migration and refugees, Council of Europe

Mr Jean Claude Legrand, Senior Regional Advisor on Child Protection, UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Mr Helmut Sax, member of the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)

Discussants:

Mr Fredrik Malmberg, Ombudsman for Children, Sweden; co-author of “The first report of the ENOC Task Force on Children on the Move”

Ms Antigoni Angelakis, NGO METAction, Greece

SESSION 2 CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE: HEARING CHILDREN IN JUDICIAL PROCEDURES

Yearly, thousands of children in Europe are in contact with the justice system, whether as victims, witnesses, offenders or complainants. Access to justice is a fundamental human right in itself. The right of the child to be heard is one of the four guiding principles of the UNCRC. The Council of Europe's 2010 Guidelines on child-friendly justice set out a series of recommendations to member states to assist its implementation.

In recent years, there is evidence that the respect and fulfilment of this right has improved in Europe, and children have been given a more active role in judicial proceedings. With this in mind, "hearing" the child within the framework of a judicial process remains nonetheless difficult to conduct in practice. For instance, a child may have difficulties to express him or herself properly or to understand the conditions under which he or she is being "heard". Differing ages, maturity and levels of understanding require well-trained professionals who adapt to the needs of the individual child.

This session will give policy makers and practitioners an opportunity to discuss: (i) the specific needs of a child in contact with the justice system in the context of hearings; (ii) the key outstanding difficulties faced by professionals in practice; and (iii) how good practices could be integrated into their own legal systems.

Moderator: **Ms Velina Todorova**, Associate Professor, Institute for the State and the Law, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria

Speakers:

Mr Benoît van Keirsbilck, Director, Defence for Children International

Ms Verginia Micheva-Russeva, Deputy Minister of Justice, Bulgaria

Ms Margaret Tuite, European Commission Coordinator for Rights of the Child

Ms Zuzana Fišerová, Chair of the Council of Europe's European Committee on Legal Co-operation

Discussants:

Ms Renata Szredzińska, Nobody's Children Foundation, Poland

Ms Astrid Podzialowski, Head of Sector Rights of the Child, Equality and Citizens' Rights Department, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

SESSION 3 THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD: TAKING CHILD PARTICIPATION TO A NEW LEVEL

Children’s right to be heard as granted by Article 12 of the UNCRC is widely accepted as a principle. Is it also widely applied in practice? Many organisations, schools, municipalities, governments and other people working with children involve children in projects, in events, and other initiatives. Often, though, these are one-off activities, which do not generate the outcome and sustainability expected by the involved children and adults.

How can we move from piecemeal projects to institutionalised child participation? How can we make sure that children are heard systematically whenever their interests are at stake? What are the barriers to child participation “by default” and how can they be overcome?

The session seeks to find answers to these questions within the three domains identified in the Council of Europe Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18: Protecting the right to participate, promoting and informing about participation, and creating spaces for participation.

Moderator: **Ms Anne Crowley**, Policy and Research Consultant, United Kingdom

Speaker:

Ms Gerison Lansdown, International Children’s Rights Consultant, United Kingdom

Experts for working groups:

Ms Kiira Gornischeff, Project Manager and Advisor, Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Estonia

Ms Elise Nikonov, Chief Specialist, Department of Children and Families, Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia

Ms Laura Lundy, Professor of Education Law and Children’s Rights, Queen’s University, Belfast, United Kingdom

Mr Plamen Dinov, National Network for Children, Bulgaria

Ms Yoana Zaharieva, Deputy chair of Child Council at the State Agency For Child Protection, Bulgaria

Ms Mia Marta Ruus, Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Estonia

N.N., young person, Ireland

16.00

Coffee break

16.30 – 18.00 Fair of Ideas

20 organisations, networks and other promoters of the rights of the child will display information material and stand ready to answer questions. Participants are welcome to take a stroll, interact, engage and create new ideas on how to make the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2021 a reality.

Participating organisations:

- Caritas Europa
- Children of Prisoners Europe
- ChildPact (Regional Coalition for Child Protection)
- Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)
- Council of Europe HELP Network (European Human Rights Training Network)
- Defence for Children International (DCI), Belgium
- Dubit Limited, United Kingdom
- ECPAT Luxembourg
- Eurochild
- End Immigration Detention of Children Campaign, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- Estonian Union for Child Welfare
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- International Children’s Center Association
- International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO)
- Lumos
- Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)
- Save the Children Finland
- Save the Children Sweden
- SOS Children’s Villages International
- Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children
- The National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), UK
- UNICEF Hungary
- World Health Organization (WHO)

New publications and reports launched on the occasion of the conference:

- Council of Europe: The best interests of the child – A dialogue between theory and practice
- Council of Europe: Contribution of the European Committee of Social Rights on economic insecurity and children’s rights
- Council of Europe: Children’s Rights and Social Services – Report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on children’s rights and social services friendly to children and families
- SOS Children’s Villages: Realising Children’s Rights - A training manual for care professionals working with children in alternative care

16.30 – 17.15 Two parallel side events**SIDE EVENT 1** Handbook on European law relating to the rights of the child

The Handbook on European law relating to the rights of the child, edited by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Council of Europe, and the European Court of Human Rights is the first comprehensive guide to European law in the area of child rights. It takes into account both the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union. It provides information on relevant EU Regulations and Directives, the European Social Charter, decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights, other Council of Europe instruments, as well as on the UNCRC and other international instruments.

The handbook is designed to assist lawyers, judges, prosecutors, social workers, non-governmental organisations and other bodies confronted with legal issues relating to the rights of the child. The publication covers issues such as equality, personal identity, family life, alternative care and adoption, migration and asylum, child protection against violence and exploitation, as well as children's rights within criminal justice and alternative proceedings.

Moderator: **Mr Gianluca Esposito**, Head of the Human Dignity and Equality Department, Council of Europe

Speakers:

Mr Ton Liefwaard, UNICEF Chair and Professor of Children's Rights, Leiden University, The Netherlands

Ms Anna Austin, Deputy Jurisconsult, European Court of Human Rights

Ms Maria Amor Estebanez, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Mr Luis Jimena Quesada, Professor of Law at the University of Valencia, former President of the European Committee of Social Rights

SIDE EVENT 2 Strategies in Action – the Bulgarian experience

The objective of the workshop is to demonstrate the Bulgarian experience in elaborating national strategies on the rights of the child, concrete mechanisms for their implementation and monitoring, and to identify successful practices and work models.

The session is structured to mimic the process of constructing a building, composed of a foundation, columns and a roof. The foundation of the building is the Bulgarian Strategy for the Child 2008-2018 and basic data on child poverty, child population, family patterns, education, health, and risk groups. On this basis, Bulgaria has built "columns" which are consistent with the priorities of the Bulgarian Strategy for the Child and those of the Council of Europe Strategy.

- The child's right to live in a family;
- The child's right to health;
- The child's right to education;
- Children and justice;
- Participation of all children.

Each column has a few basic levels – “building blocks” – that are the main elements of the development and implementation of national policies, namely:

- Establishing an adequate legal and administrative framework;
- Adopting relevant policies and demonstrating political leadership;
- Regulating, developing and contracting services;
- Promoting quality and impact with appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools.

18.00 *End of the first conference day*

19.30 *Conference dinner at the Central Military Club, 7 boulevard Tsar Osvoboditel*

Wednesday 6 April

9.15 **Plenary session**

Key messages and open questions of the three thematic sessions are presented by moderators, rapporteurs and the group of children and young people.

10.30 *Coffee break*

11.00 Three parallel thematic sessions

SESSION 4 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT: DESIGNING A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH THROUGH NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The growing use of digital technologies by children creates many new opportunities. Digital technologies enable children to access content and exercise their rights, including the right to receive and impart information, and provide for innovative ways of interacting digitally. At the same time, these opportunities go hand in hand with risks towards children's rights. These risks include violations of their right to privacy, potential exposure to illegal or harmful content, and to predators seeking to abuse or recruit them; as well as situations where children may themselves come into conflict with the law or inflict harm on others through the Internet.

What progress has been made in Europe to support children's rights in the digital age? What are the pressing challenges concerning children, as Internet and media users in need of protection, and as digital citizens? Which frameworks and partnerships can best address these challenges? How can national strategies ensure the delivery of children's rights in the digital environment?

This session will look at the digital world from the child's perspective. It will take stock of the impact of new media and technologies on children's rights, and discuss what kind of policies and actions best support children's rights to protection, provision and participation in the digital environment.

Moderator: **Ms Elfa Ýr Gylfadóttir**, Chair of the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Media and Information Society

Speakers:

Ms Sonia Livingstone, Professor of Social Psychology, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom

Mr Georgi Apostolov, Programme Coordinator, Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre

Mr Liubomir Tulev, Cybercrime Department, General Directorate "Countering Organized Crime", Ministry of Interior, Bulgaria

Discussant:

Mr John Carr, Technical Adviser, European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online

SESSION 5 RADICALISATION OF CHILDREN: FINDING THE RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Extremism and radicalisation have emerged in recent years as one of the social realities affecting more and more children in Europe, as well as their rights. In several European countries, daily media reports highlight deeply worrying situations and actions involving children. These concern not only teenagers being lured into extremist movements or joining war-zones abroad, but also children, sometimes very young, who accompany their family members abroad. Recent research also points to a growing number of young girls being radicalised and recruited, providing evidence of their role in violent extremism.

How can we better understand the existing processes and trends in radicalisation of children in Europe? What is the human rights impact of anti-radicalisation policies with respect to children? What interventions and strategies can provide realistic and successful outcomes in steering children away from extremist paths? How can we ensure the reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees?

This session will discuss the challenges linked to the prevention of radicalisation as well as the de-radicalisation of children. It aims to look beyond traditional legal tools of counter-terrorism, with a focus on positive measures to prevent radicalisation of children, while striking the correct balance between safety and respect for the rights of the child. It also aims to discuss strategies which focus on civil society action, engagement with extremist narratives, and dissemination of counter-narratives, as well as how to address the grievances perceived by those vulnerable to, or experiencing, radicalisation.

Moderator: **Mr Bernard de Vos**, General Delegate (Ombudsman) for Children's Rights in the French Community of Belgium

Speakers:

Ms Sevinj Fataliyeva, General Rapporteur on Children, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Mr Mario Janecek, Bureau member of the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Terrorism

Discussant:

Mr Pat Dolan, UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement, University of Galway, Ireland

SESSION 6 TAKING MONITORING RESULTS FORWARD: FOLLOW-UP TO THE LANZAROTE COMMITTEE'S FIRST IMPLEMENTATION REPORT ON "THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE CIRCLE OF TRUST"

Based on the data provided by national authorities and several NGOs, the Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Committee) adopted in December 2015 its first implementation report on "Protection of children against sexual abuse in the circle of trust – the framework". This report compares and assesses the criminal law framework and judicial procedures of the 26 reviewed States Parties to the Convention, highlighting promising practices and identifying shortcomings. Recommendations to improve the national situations are also made.

How can the Lanzarote Committee findings on sexual abuse in the circle of trust enhance protection of child victims of sexual violence? How and by whom can the authorities be helped to transform the Lanzarote Committee's findings in concrete actions for the benefit of children? How can the identified promising practices be shared and become relevant to others?

This session will feature a presentation of the report's main findings and any known initiatives or strategies agreed by Parties to take the recommendations forward. Presentations and the ensuing discussion are expected to identify specific suggestions to concretely and effectively take the monitoring results forward. Special focus will be on actions that may be offered by representatives of civil society and through child participation projects.

Moderator: **Mr Claude Janizzi** Chairperson of the Lanzarote Committee

Speakers:

Ms Susanna Greijer, Project Manager, ECPAT, Luxembourg

Ms Helen Veitch, Oak Fellow on Children's Participation in Preventing Sexual Violence, International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking, Bedfordshire University, United Kingdom

Discussant:

Ms Turid Heiberg, Head of Unit, Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States

12.30

Lunch

14.30 Three parallel thematic sessions**SESSION 7 THE UN STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN +10: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN EUROPE**

The Council of Europe has acted as the regional driver in the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children prepared by Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro in 2006. The efforts of the Council of Europe and its member States have triggered a change of mindsets and can be accounted for through the adoption of numerous legal standards, monitoring mechanisms, awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives. 10 years later, target 16.2 of the post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against children by 2030.

How can Europe move forward to fulfill the promises of the Global Study? Which achievements can we build on? What are the loopholes and the reasons for sometimes slow and fragmented progress? How can Council of Europe member States meaningfully contribute to the follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the area of violence against children?

The session will provide an insight into the opportunities generated at global level and discuss concrete ways how Europe can use these to effectively address all forms of violence against all children.

Moderator: **Mr Ton Liefwaard**, UNICEF Chair and Professor of Children's Rights, Leiden University, The Netherlands

Speakers:

Ms Elda Moreno, Director, Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Ms Susan L. Bissell, Director a.i., The Global Partnership to End Violence against Children

Discussants:

Ms Gabriela Coman, President of the National Authority for Child Protection and Adoptions, Romania (tbc)

Mr Per-Anders Sunesson, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden

Ms Maya Manolova, Ombudsperson of the Republic of Bulgaria

SESSION 8 PUBLIC SPENDING AND THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: CHILD BUDGETING

Public spending on children is an international human rights priority. It is the focus of a recent UN Human Rights Council Resolution, the EU Commission Recommendation “Investing in Children” as well as the subject of a forthcoming general comment of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Child budgeting involves three elements: (i) visibility – providing transparency on what is spent on children; (ii) sufficiency - ensuring that adequate public spending is available for the realisation of children’s rights; and (iii) participation – ensuring that children are provided with meaningful opportunities to influence spending decisions.

How do we know how much money is spent to secure children’s rights? Are we spending enough and if not, why? How can children participate in the budgeting process?

This session will try to find answers to these questions in a participatory way. Attendees will discuss the challenges and opportunities of children’s budgeting in small groups with experts, including young people, who share good practices in the area. Participants will then take part in a ‘walking session’ where they will post their learning and outstanding questions on notice boards and at the same time meet and interact with other attendees.

Moderator: **Ms Laura Lundy**, Professor of Education Law and Children’s Rights, Queen’s University, Belfast, United Kingdom

Speakers:

Mr Jorge Cardona Llorens, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Mr Luis Jimena Quesada, Professor of Law at the University of Valencia, former President of the European Committee of Social Rights

Mr Johan van den Hout, Thematic Spokesman on Children, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

SESSION 9 NON-DISCRIMINATION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX (LGBTI) YOUNG PEOPLE

LGBTI children and young persons face many human rights violations arising from discrimination on the basis of their actual or perceived sexuality, gender identity or sex characteristics. They are often victims of bullying and violence, which has a serious effect on their well-being and prevents openness about their personal identity. Children, LGBTI children included, are entitled to enjoy human rights and require a safe environment in order to participate fully in society.

How can governments take systematic action to improve the safety and equality of LGBTI children and young persons and protect them from violence and bullying at home, in schools, in public and private services, on the Internet, in sports and in public spaces? How can we support the empowerment of LGBTI young persons, and what lessons can be learned from them?

The session seeks to explore good practices across Council of Europe member States, and identify policy gaps in safeguarding non-discrimination and the human rights of young LGBTI people.

Moderator: **Mr Yuri de Boer**, Policy Advisor, Council of Europe

Speakers:

Ms Maria Amor Estebanez, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Mr Michael Barron, Council of Europe Expert, Ireland

Mr Nick Vlijn, Young and Out and Gay-Straight Alliances, The Netherlands

Ms Gudrun Jevne, Advisor, Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, Norway

16.00

Coffee break

16.30 **Plenary session**

Key messages and open questions of thematic sessions 4-9 are presented by moderators, rapporteurs and the group of children and young people.

17.30 **Closing session**

Ms Eva Zhecheva, Chairperson of the State Agency for Child Protection

Mr Gianluca Esposito, Head of the Human Dignity and Equality Department, Council of Europe

18.00 *End of the conference*