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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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LANZAROTE CONVENTION

Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

FOCUSED QUESTIONNAIRE

Protecting children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

SWEDEN

(Replies sent by the State)

Replies registered by the Secretariat on 22 September 2016

DATA (Lanzarote Convention, Chapter III)

1) How many migrant and asylum-seeking children (accompanied and unaccompanied)[1] are in your country as a result of the refugee crisis?
   a) Please provide estimates, if exact data is not available, for the period between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2016,[2] and specify how many of these children are victims or presumed victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;
   b) Describe how the victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse were identified or describe the challenges faced to identify them. Specify whether a distinction is made between victims of sexual exploitation/abuse prior to the entry on your territory (Group 1) and after entry (Group 2) and provide data/estimates of the two groups of victims. Please also explain how the age is determined in case of doubt;
   c) Indicate also how the data collected is used to offer a coordinated response between the different agencies in charge of the protection from, the prevention of and the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children;
   d) Identify the institution(s) responsible for the collection of above data.

- During the second half of 2015, more than 134 000 asylum seekers came to Sweden. More than 30 000 of them were unaccompanied minors. Under the first half of 2016 1 200 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in Sweden. The number of children who came to Sweden with their parents or other legal custodial parent was 29 700 in the second half of 2015, and 4 450 children until July 2016.

- As a result of this development, in average 58 156 children, per month, were staying in Sweden as asylum seekers during the mentioned period. Out of whom an average of 26 768 per month, were unaccompanied minors. The statistics for each month are as follows:

Month	Total number of children	Unaccompanied children
June 2015	22 199	6 566
July	24 000	8007
August	26 000	10 338
September	33 000	14 394
October	46 000	22 180
November	60 000	30 149
December	72 700	33 634
January 2016	71 000	33 568
February	70 000	33 112
March	69 000	32 534
April	68 000	31 969

[1] Please provide the definition of accompanied/unaccompanied children in your country and, if available, provide separate figures for accompanied and unaccompanied children. If such data is not available, please provide data on migrant and asylum-seeking children.

[2] If figures for this period are not available, please provide the most recent annual data.

May	66 000	31 290
June	64 500	30 626
July	63 632	29 851

- Of the unaccompanied minors who sought asylum in 2015, 90 percent were boys. Nearly all were young people aged 13-17 years (90 percent) and one-third was aged 16-17 years. Afghanistan has long been the most common country of origin, from which 60 percent came in 2015. Syria was the second most common country of origin of 10 percent. Other countries of origin are Somalia, Eritrea and Iraq.

- During the second half of 2015, there were 39 reported cases of suspected trafficking of asylum-seeking children. Twelve of these asylum-seeking children were suspected of having been subjected to sexual exploitation. Two of these asylum-seeking children were suspected of having been subjected to the sexual exploitation in Sweden, while the 10 remaining suspected cases had occurred in the country of origin or en route to Sweden. The remaining 27 cases of suspected trafficking during the period involving asylum-seeking children were for the purpose of forced labour or other purposes.

- During the first half of 2016, there were 53 suspected cases of trafficking involving asylum-seeking children. 19 of these asylum-seeking children claim that they have been subjected to sexual exploitation. Five out of 19 of these incidents are suspected to having taken place in Sweden, while 14 incidents are suspected to having taken place in the country of origin or en route to Sweden. The remaining 34 cases of suspected trafficking during the period involving asylum-seeking children were for the purpose of forced labour or other purposes.

- The suspected cases were detected or identified by the Swedish Migration Agency and relates to cases where sections within the Migration Agency have taken measures in accordance with the Migration Agency's Handbook. The staff of the Migration Agency are trained and sensitized to identify suspected cases of sexual exploitation in the context of registration, asylum, reception and other processes. Since 2014, the Agency has a National Coordinator for the work against Trafficking in Human beings and a working party which included Agency officials with special child competence. The working party shall continuously develop the Agency's work on these issues. Contact persons that specialize in human trafficking issues are placed in over 90 sections throughout the country. Standards and routines were improves during 2015 to focus on identifying children at risk and how to handle such cases. Internal reporting mechanisms and identification tools are in place. As regards challenges, the biggest obstacle is linked to the fact that victims are not always forthcoming with their experiences.

- One of the lessons learned is that stronger coordination is required to enable the actors taking part in dealing with the refugee situation – including central government agencies, municipalities, county councils, non-governmental organisations, faith communities and private actors – to work effectively together. The Government has therefore tasked the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency with coordinating the management of the current refugee situation at national level. The Agency is to produce national situation reports, with information on areas in need of measures that have not

yet been adequately taken. The Agency is also to identify and report on other circumstances that the Government should know about in order to assess the Government's need to take action.

- Within the Swedish Government, a State secretary at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs was appointed as the coordinator on the issue of unaccompanied children who have applied for asylum.

- If an asylum-seeker, an adult or a minor does not have any identification documents to prove his or her age the staff must have a conversation with the person about how old s/he is. The case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency will currently inform the person about the option to go to a doctor and do a medical age assessment (in practice a wrist or dental X-ray). The doctor will then estimate the person´s approximate age. The medical assessment is voluntary. The Swedish Migration Agency can change its assessment of the person´s age if the person submits approved identification documents or shows how old the person is in some other way.

- We have to mention that the national procedures on age assessment are currently under review: the National Board for Health and Welfare was instructed in 2016 to deepen the knowledge of methods of medical age assessment. As well, in May 2016, the government commissioned the National Board of Forensic Medicine to conduct medical age assessments based on current research and proven experience in the medical age assessments in the context of applications for residence permits. The National Board of Forensic Medicine will review methods for age assessment and will be studying how the neighbouring Nordic countries and some other EU countries, working with medical age assessments. By 15 November 2016, the National Board of Forensic Medicine will report for the government, among other things how medical age assessments are made.

- In Sweden, the Migration Agency is the authority that considers applications from people who want to take up permanent residence in Sweden, come for a visit, seek protection from persecution or become Swedish citizens. The Migration Agency is the authority in charge of collecting and publishing facts, statistics and projections on migration. The Swedish Migration Agency has also the responsibility to detect and report suspected instances of human trafficking to the national police authority. Moreover, the Swedish Government has delegated the coordination responsibility for combating and preventing human trafficking crimes to the Stockholm County Administrative Board in Stockholm who in this capacity work closely with the Swedish Migration Agency and partners.

PREVENTION (Lanzarote Convention, Chapter II)

2) What are the specific measures taken to prevent that children affected by the refugee crisis fall victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse?
   a) Highlight in particular the measures (e.g. awareness raising material, specialised training, screening of professionals, etc.) which have proven to be effective;
   b) Underline any lessons learnt from specific challenges (e.g. in raising awareness on sexual violence amidst other urgent priorities, etc.) that had to be faced to improve prevention.

- All unaccompanied refugee children are currently placed in a municipality, where they are processed by social services and placed in some form of appropriate accommodation under the Social Services Act. This may be a foster home or a home for care or residence. The Social Welfare Board in each municipality shall ensure that children and youth at risk receive the protection and support they need. The Social Welfare Board shall promptly initiate an investigation concerning what has come to the Board's knowledge and what that may cause action of the Board. If the board becomes aware about something which may mean that the Board may need to intervene to a child protection or support can an investigation be carried out regardless of the child's or the guardian's opinion.

- *Health and Social Care Inspectorate to strengthen capacity in permit application processing activities*: The sharp rise in the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Sweden is a major contributing factor to the increasing number of children and young people needing to be placed outside the home. In October 2015 the Government presented new measures in response to the refugee situation:
    a. Billion kronor investment in social services will strengthen social care services for children and young people;
    b. According to the Budget Bill for 2016, SEK 250 million will be allocated annually during 2016–2019 to strengthen and develop these activities. The funds will be devoted primarily to increased staffing, as well as to initiatives to promote skills and quality.

- *Assignment for the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society to inform young newly arrived immigrants about health and gender equality:* The Government has tasked the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society with creating a digital platform containing information in relevant languages about health and gender equality for newly arrived children and young people. Men in all social groups and age groups use physical, psychological and sexual violence against women. It is essential that newly arrived girls and boys have access to a good introduction to Swedish society, with knowledge about our society and values as important elements. This of course includes sex and relationship education. The assignment – for which SEK 5 million has been allocated – will be conducted in collaboration with the internet-based youth clinic.

- *How we are developing reception of unaccompanied minors and young people*: On 12 October 2015, the Government arranged the national action 'Sweden together'. Participants were invited to around ten seminars as part of the event. One of the themes was 'How we are developing reception of unaccompanied minors and young people'.

- A *website about social services*: On instructions from the Government, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden have developed a national website containing information tailored to children and young people about social services and what social services can offer children and young people in need of support and protection. The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden has been responsible for involving children and young people in the implementation of the assignment.

- *Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis to survey homes for care or residence*: The Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis is to survey and analyse homes for care or residence, as well as foster homes and emergency foster homes providing support from advisers. The Agency is conducting this work from the perspective of child protection and the rights of the child. Particular attention is to be given to the quality and costs of care.

- *National Board of Health and Welfare to analyse reception of unaccompanied refugee children*: The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with conducting an in-depth analysis of the consequences for social services of the current refugee situation and the increase in the number of unaccompanied minors. The vulnerability of girls, access to interpreters and the skills needs in social services are three areas that are included in the remit.

- *Supported accommodation – a new form of placement for children and young people*: The Government has presented the Government Bill 'Supported accommodation – a new form of placement for children and young people' to the Swedish Parliament. In the Bill, the Government proposes a new form of placement for children and young people aged 16–20 under the Social Services Act – supported accommodation. The Government wants to develop foster home care. In the Bill, the Government therefore clarifies the National Board of Health and Welfare's responsibility for its support and development. Developing foster home care should involve long-term, continuous and cohesive measures. Foster home care must maintain high standards and be sufficiently available. The experiences of foster parents and children placed in foster homes are important for developing this care. The legislative amendments entered into force on 1 January 2016.

- *New model to distribute unaccompanied minors fairly between municipalities*: Unaccompanied minors were not distributed fairly between municipalities, their reception was unpredictable and the conditions for planning could be improved. The Government has therefore instructed the Swedish Migration Agency to produce a new allocation model for unaccompanied children and young people. The model entered into force on 1 April 2016.

- *Integration of immigrants and their children*: In May 2016, the OECD presented its report Working Together: Skills and Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and their Children in Sweden. The report shows that Sweden has a highly developed and sustainable policy for reception and introduction, but that the large number of asylum seekers who arrived in 2015 has created new challenges. Despite the many initiatives taken, several major challenges remain, not least because Sweden has received a large number of asylum seekers in a short period of time. As the OECD points out in the report, the housing shortage and long waiting times for settlement pose a major challenge.

- *To strengthen the support for refugee women and girls* the Government allocated SEK 25 million in 2015, and thereafter SEK 100 million per year in order to contribute to greater long-termism and a better context for planning for women and girls refugees. The funds will be allocated to support women and their children living in sheltered

housing regarding areas including advice, talking support, practical support, professional development and the development of quality work, routines and documentation.

PROTECTION (Lanzarote Convention, Chapter IV)

3) Has a coordinated child protection approach been put in place to cater for the specific needs of migrant and asylum-seeking children victims of sexual exploitation and/or sexual abuse?
   a) Describe the measures taken to address the situation and cater for the children's specific needs (multiple traumas, language/cultural differences, etc.), including with respect to guardianship/placement;
   b) Indicate also what measures have been taken to protect the children concerned from further exploitation/abuse and to assist the victims in seeking redress (please highlight any differences between Groups 1 and 2 of children as outlined above);
   c) Underline any lessons learnt from specific challenges (in reporting suspicion of sexual exploitation and abuse, in tailoring assistance to the victims, etc.) that had to be faced to improve protection.

- *Talks with trade unions about security situation in homes for care or residence*: In February 2016, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality met the relevant trade unions. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about the security situation in homes for care or residence and supported accommodation.

- *Call function supports municipalities in their work with the refugee situation*: In October 2015, the Government tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with setting up a call function for the purpose of responding to questions from and providing support for the municipal social services in connection with the current refugee situation. The call function will be based on relevant legislation and available knowledge within the Board's areas of responsibility.

- *The National Board of Health and Welfare coordinates information on foster homes for children*: In October 2015, the Government tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with initiating and nationally coordinating initiatives to raise awareness of foster homes, emergency foster homes and legal representatives for unaccompanied minors and specially appointed custodians. The idea is to highlight the need for accommodation and increase knowledge about what the assignment involves in order to secure access to foster homes.

- In this period the Government has implemented an Action Plan to protect all children from human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse for the period 2014-2015 with measures in various policy areas. The action plan has contributed to a number of measures. For example, the National Board of Health and Welfare has revised and spread guidance aimed at social services, staff of homes for care or residence and guardians of unaccompanied minors. *The government adopted in June 2016 a new action plan for combatting human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse of all children for the period 2016–2018.* This new action plan contains even measures relevant in the context of this questionnaire:

- appointing a Swedish ambassador for international cooperation against human trafficking.
- funds to the Children's Ombudsman to listen to migrant children who have returned after having absconded, to understand more about the circumstances surrounding their disappearance.
- the Stockholm County Administrative Board has been commissioned to carry out an in-depth study of the groups of children judged to be particularly vulnerable, for example unaccompanied child asylum seekers, unaccompanied child migrants who are not applying for asylum and children whose parents or guardians are victims of human trafficking.
- the Government has commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to produce an information brochure for social services about investigating children's need for support and protection in transnational cases where children are victims of human trafficking and/or sexual abuse. The information brochure is to be spread to the profession.
- the Government has granted the Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden funding for a development project on the principle that all children who have been the victims of sexual abuse and/or physical violence have the right to an assessment and the right to support and rehabilitation according to need. The information to children about their right to support and rehabilitation is also translated into different languages, including Dari and Arabic, in order to make the information accessible for newly arrived children.

COOPERATION (Lanzarote Convention, Chapter IX)

4) Provide examples of successful cooperation with other Parties to the Lanzarote Convention for the purpose of:
   a) Preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children affected by the refugee crisis;
   b) Protecting and providing assistance to victims;
   c) Investigations or proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention.

- In the framework of the national Action Plan to protect children from human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse mentioned above, the government decided to take actions aimed to contribute to the cooperation of the Nordic governments and their agencies on questions concerning the exploitation or abuse of children. The Government will therefore arrange and participate in joint meetings focusing on these issues. The first meeting is planned for 16th of November 2016 in Stockholm for representatives of the governments in Denmark, Finland, Island, Norway and Sweden.

ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5) Please provide any other additional information which may be useful to identify areas for targeted cooperation aimed at ensuring that children affected by the refugee crisis are effectively protected from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and in guaranteeing their human dignity and physical and psychological integrity.