



Building a Europe
for and with children

Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 30 May 2024

CDEFN(2024)AR01

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDEFN)

Abridged report of the 9th plenary meeting (Strasbourg, 28-30 May 2024)

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDEFN) held its 9th plenary meeting in Strasbourg (France) on 28-30 May 2024, with Rosário Farmhouse (Portugal) in the Chair.

The agenda of the meeting is contained in the Appendix. The full meeting report including the list of participants will be available on the CDEFN website.¹

List of items for information of the Committee of Ministers

At its plenary meeting, the CDEFN:

- **took note of and approved** its workplan for 2024 – 2025, to be updated as appropriate by the Secretariat in advance of the next plenary meeting;
- **took note of** the information provided on the preparation towards the midterm review of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022–2027) and in this context agreed that it should take the form of a Mid-term review Conference taking stock and paving the way for further action under the Strategy, to be organised back to back with the CDEFN Plenary meeting in April of 2025 under the auspices of the Presidency of Luxembourg to the Committee of Ministers;
- **instructed** the Secretariat to proceed with the organisation of the Mid-term review Conference in consultation with the Bureau of the CDEFN;
- **adopted** its Opinion on PACE Rec 2274 (2024) – “The protection of children against online violence” to be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers;
- **approved a concept note** on development of thematic guidance notes on topical issues under the Strategy for the Rights of the Child, following up on its annual thematic exchanges and identified topical issues to address in this context;
- **elected:**
 - o Ružica Boškić (Slovenia) as its Chair for a first term of office of one year, starting on 1 July 2024;
 - o Solvor Bäcklund (Norway) as its Vice-Chair for a first term of office of one year, starting on 1 July 2024;
 - o Rareş Petru Achiriloaie (Romania) as member of the Bureau to complete the term of office of Solvor Bäcklund, from 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2025, renewable once.
- **took note** of the relevant information and updates provided by the representatives of:
 - o the Council of Europe Children’s Rights Division Co-operation Unit;
 - o the Secretariat of the Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU);

¹ www.coe.int/cdefn

- the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
 - the Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Committee);
 - the Secretariat of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence;
 - the Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (ADI-SOGIEESC)
 - the Secretariat of the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO)
 - the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
 - the Child Rights International Network (CRIN);
- **took note** of the following dates for upcoming meetings:

CDENF Plenary meeting

- Strasbourg, 3-5 December 2024, 10th CDENF plenary meeting (joint session with CDCJ on 3 December);
- Strasbourg, 2-4 April 2025, 11th CDENF plenary meeting and mid-term review Conference;

CDENF Bureau meeting

- Strasbourg 2-3 October 2024;

Strategic Objective 1: Freedom from violence for all children

- **took note** of the information presented by Maria Vargova (Slovakia), Chair of the Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE), on the progress achieved by the ENF-VAE;
- **welcomed** the feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children, including sexual violence and harmful behaviour as approved by the ENF-VAE **and instructed** the ENF-VAE to continue its work in preparing a Council of Europe Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children, together with an Explanatory memorandum, on the basis of the feasibility study;
- **took note** of the intention to carry out child consultations to feed in the drafting of a recommendation and invited delegations who wish to contribute to the process to flag their interest to the Secretariat;
- **instructed** the Secretariat to launch a call among national delegations for the proposal of an expert to fill the vacancy in the Committee of Experts ENF-VAE and entrusted the Bureau to preselect the new member among the candidates;
- **held a thematic exchange** on “Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content” and **instructed** the Secretariat to prepare a Thematic Guidance Note on this topic, to be presented at its 10th plenary meeting;
- **invited** delegations to send information on relevant promising practices to feed into the Thematic Guidance Note before **28th June 2024**;

Strategic Objective 2: Equal opportunities and social inclusion for all children

- **examined and approved** the draft mapping study on children’s access to quality mental health care subject to last editorial adjustments. Responding states wishing to clarify reference to national frameworks or to propose further promising practices were invited to submit concrete drafting proposals by **14th June 2024**;
- **instructed** the Secretariat to integrate last changes proposed by respondent states and to circulate the finalised report with the CDENF prior to publication;

Strategic Objective 3: Access to and safe use of technologies for all children

- **took note** of a presentation of the new Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law and on the ongoing work of the CAI on a methodology for the risk and impact assessment of artificial intelligence systems from the point of view of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (HUDERIA);
- **examined and approved** a Mapping Study on the rights of the child and artificial intelligence: Legal Frameworks that Address AI in the Context of Children’s Rights subject to last adjustments; responding states wishing to clarify reference to national frameworks were invited to submit concrete drafting proposals by **14th June 2024**;

- **instructed** the Secretariat to integrate last changes proposed by respondent states and to circulate the finalised report with the CDENF prior to publication;
- **instructed** the Secretariat to prepare a concept note for future action to be examined at the 10th Plenary meeting in view of the feasibility, timeliness and pertinence of elaborating a Child rights impact assessment tool on artificial intelligence;

Strategic Objective 4: Child-friendly justice for all children

- **took note** of the information provided by the Secretariat on the progress of the work of the Committee of Experts on the Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Parental Separation and in Care Proceedings (CJ/ENF-ISE, jointly with CDCJ) and in particular:
 - o **agreed** that the Implementation tools on the draft Recommendation on the best interest of the child in parental separation and in care proceedings should take the form of checklists for policy-makers;
 - o **took note** of the progress made in the elaboration of the draft Recommendation on the rights and the best interests of the child in care proceedings and its draft Explanatory Memorandum and of the ongoing consultation process with the CDENF and CDCJ together with key stakeholders with a deadline of **31st July 2024**;
- **examined and approved** the Concept note including the methodology for the Thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice and **instructed** the Secretariat to take the necessary steps for the preparation of a report covering international and European law developments and case-law analysis with regard to child-friendly justice, with concrete proposals for suggested updates, as well as to propose follow up on the further actions in the Concept note;

Strategic Objective 5: Giving a voice to every child

- **took note of** the online publication of the Guide to children's participation in decisions about their health, of steps taken in view of the preparation of a child-friendly version of the guide and of the possibility to translate the guide into other national languages;
- **took note of** the publication of the Report on children as defenders of human rights and of the preparation of a child-friendly version of the Guide.

Strategic Objective 6: Children's rights in crisis and emergency situations

- **examined** the first draft of an implementation review report of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration, and agreed to share the draft report and its updated version with the CGU;
- **took note** of the information provided by the consultant on the outcome of the child consultation process;
- **agreed** to send written comments on the draft implementation review report by **28th June 2024**;
- **instructed** the Secretariat to revise the report in view of the comments received and integrate elements from the child consultation in view of its presentation for adoption at its 10th Plenary meeting;
- **thanked** the outgoing CDENF Chair, Rosário Farmhouse, for her dedicated work for the Rights of the Child and the CDENF;
- **adopted** this abridged report at the end of the meeting.

Resource implications

The financing of the activities in this report are assured. The CDENF expressed thanks to national delegations that have provided extra budgetary resources to the Programme "Building a Europe for and with Children" and expressed their thanks to the Polish Government for having seconded a national official to the Secretariat of the CDENF for a duration of one year.

Appendix

Agenda

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1. **Opening of the meeting**

 2. **Adoption of the agenda and order of business**

 3. **Statement of the Chair and Secretariat**

 4. **CDENF workplan: Overview of main activities, priorities and meetings**

 5. **Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022–2027)**
Mid-term review of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)
Main deliverable 8 and main task (iii)
- 5.1 Strategic Objective 1: Freedom from violence for all children**
- 5.1.1 **Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE)**
 - a. Draft feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for *inter alia* preventing and combatting violence against children, including sexual violence and harmful behaviour.
Main deliverable 4
- for approval -
 - b. Implementation review report of Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10 on Council of Europe policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence.
Main deliverable 5 and main task (ix)
- for information -
 - 5.1.2 **Thematic exchange: Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content**
Main deliverable 17 and main task (v)
- 5.2 Strategic Objective 2: Equal opportunities and social inclusion for all children**
- Mapping study on children’s access to quality mental health care**
Main deliverable 5 and main task (xiv) – previous Terms of Reference 2022-2025
- for adoption -
- 5.3 Strategic Objective 3: Access to and safe use of technologies for all children**
- a. Draft report on the rights of the child and artificial intelligence
Main deliverable 6
- for approval -
 - b. Exchange on follow-up to the report
(*child rights impact assessment tool on artificial intelligence, main deliverable 7*)
- 5.4 Strategic Objective 4: Child-friendly justice for all children**
- 5.4.1 **Thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice**
Main deliverable 13
 - 5.4.2 **Committee of Experts on the rights and best interests of the child in the context of parental separation and in care proceedings (CJ/ENF-ISE)**
 - a. Draft Recommendation on the protection of the rights and the best interests of the child in care proceedings and its draft Explanatory Memorandum
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- b. Implementation tool(s) on the protection of the best interests of the child in parental separation and in care proceedings
Main deliverables 1 and 2 and main task (xi)

5.5 Strategic Objective 5: Giving a voice to every child

Finalised activities and follow-up

- a. Guide to children's participation in decisions about their health
- b. Children as defenders of human rights: a study on Council of Europe member states
Main deliverables 3 and 4

5.6 Strategic Objective 6: Children's rights in crisis and emergency situations

First examination of the implementation review report of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration

Main deliverable 3 and main task (ix)
- for information -

6. Transversal issues:

- a. Transversal approaches as promoted by the Strategy (gender-sensitivity, anti-discrimination, child participation)
- b. Contribution to the UNSDG Agenda 2030
Main task (xx)

7. Co-operation with other relevant Council of Europe bodies and other institutions and observers

- a. Council of Europe bodies and sectors
- b. International organisations
- c. INGOs

8. Opinions requested by the Committee of Ministers

9. CDENF Working methods

Thematic guidance notes on topical issues under the Strategy for the Rights of the Child
Main deliverable 17

10. Elections to the Bureau

11. Any other business

12. Date and place of next meetings

13. Approval of the abridged meeting report