



Building a Europe
for and with children
Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants



Strasbourg, 2 July 2024
CDENF(2024)PV01

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)

Ninth plenary meeting Meeting Report

Strasbourg, 28-30 May 2024

Prepared by the CDENF Secretariat

Meeting Report

1. Opening of the meeting

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

2. The Chair welcomed all members, participants and observers to the meeting, and invited new members of the CDENF to introduce themselves.

2. Adoption of the agenda and order of business

3. The CDENF adopted its agenda as it appears in Appendix I.

3. Statement of the Chair and Secretariat

4. Roberto Olla, Head of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, welcomed all members, participants and observers and informed the CDENF of the recent restructuring of the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DG II), and notably of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, which is now bringing the CDENF Secretariat more closely together with the Secretariats of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), the Group of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). This new vicinity should certainly prove to be beneficial in further facilitating the existing exchange of information and expertise between different bodies in areas of common interest. He further underlined the importance of the work of the CDENF, as reflected in the Secretary General's 2024 annual report "Our Rights, Our Future", where ample reference was made to the work of the CDENF and its subordinate bodies.

5. Regina Jensdottir, Head of the Children's Rights Division, thanked Delegations for their support of the Council of Europe's work in the area of the Rights of the Child, including through voluntary contributions under the Project "Protecting Children from Human Rights violation of all forms and in all settings", which had allowed the implementation of important action promoting the rights of the child in 2022-2023 (Andorra, Cyprus, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Slovenia), and invited Delegations to consider supporting the subsequent project "Promoting children's rights, including through the Children's Rights' Strategy 2022-2027 (Project number 3556)", by agreeing to transfer unspent amounts (*reliquats*) from the previous project to the current one. She also expressed her gratitude to the Polish Government for having seconded Magdalena Bochinska as a seconded official to the Secretariat of the CDENF for a duration of one year.

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

6. The CDENF 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.

5. Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022–2027) - Mid-term review of the Strategy

7. The CDENF took note of the information provided on the publication of the first implementation report of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), which had been prepared based on information provided by Delegations via a survey. A new survey collecting data on the implementation of the Strategy in 2024 will be circulated among Delegations during the second half of the year allowing the Secretariat to prepare an update on any legislative or policy changes for the implementation of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child and for the programme and budget exercise of the Council of Europe.

8. The CDENF took note of the information provided on the preparation towards the mid-term review of the Strategy and in this context agreed that it should take the form of a conference taking stock of progress and paving the way for further action under the Strategy, to be held on 3 and 4 April 2025, back to back with the CDENF Plenary meeting (1-2 April 2025) under the auspices of the Presidency of Luxembourg to the Committee of Ministers, and instructed the Secretariat to proceed with the organisation of the mid-term review conference in consultation with the Bureau of the CDENF.

5.1 Strategic Objective 1: Freedom from violence for all children

5.1.1 Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE)

9. The CDENF took note of the information presented by Mária Vargová (Slovakia), Chair of the Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE), on the progress achieved by the Committee of Experts, and of a presentation by Meghan Campbell, consultant, on the content of 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.

10. The CDENF held an exchange of views and welcomed the feasibility study. The CDENF instructed the Committee of Experts 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.

11. Following a request made by the Delegation of Türkiye, a written statement of the Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye referring to issues, concepts and definitions which are included in the documents prepared by CDENF, and notably in the 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, has been attached to this meeting report (see Appendix II).

12. The CDENF took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the intention to conduct a child consultation to feed in the drafting of a recommendation and invited delegations wishing to contribute to the process to express their interest to the Secretariat.

13. The CDENF took note of the vacancy in the ENF-VAE following the departure of one expert, 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 to be proposed by Delegations, giving due regard to qualifications, geographical representation, different legal systems, and periodic rotation of member States.

5.1.2 Thematic exchange: Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content.

14. The CDENF held a thematic exchange on Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content, with participation of the following experts:

- Maree Crabbe, Director of "It's time we talked", expert on the impact of pornography on young people and their relationships (online);
- Julia Cooke, International Policy Manager at Ofcom UK;
- Andrea Tognoni, Head of EU Affairs at 5Rights Foundation;
- Joseph O'Reilly, Senator and member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (online);
- Eric Munch, Legal Analyst at the European Audiovisual Observatory.

15. The CDENF took note of the information provided and exchanged with the experts on the impact of mainstream pornography on children and young people as well as their relationships, on the importance of advancing children's rights in digital and regulatory policies, and on the complementarity of tools such as age assurance technologies, media literacy, and comprehensive sexuality education to mitigate the adverse effects of easy online access of pornography on children. A comprehensive report of this exchange has been attached as Appendix III to this meeting report.

16. The CDENF instructed the Secretariat to prepare a Thematic Guidance Note on the topic "Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content" to be presented at 10th

plenary meeting and agreed to submit written information on relevant promising practices to inform the Guidance Note by 28 June 2024.

5.2 Strategic Objective 2: Equal opportunities and social inclusion for all children - Mapping study on children's access to quality mental health care

17. The CDENF examined and approved a Mapping study on children's access to quality mental health care and agreed that responding states wishing to clarify reference to national frameworks or to propose further promising practices should submit concrete drafting proposals by 14 June 2024. The CDENF instructed its Secretariat to integrate last changes proposed by respondent states and to circulate the finalised text with the CDENF prior to publication.

Two Delegations (Azerbaijan, Türkiye) expressed reservations with regard to the last sentence of para. 54 referring to adolescents' sexual orientation and health status. A further reservation by Türkiye is contained in the written statement attached (see Appendix II).

18. The CDENF heard a presentation by Ovidiu Majina, Children's Rights Cooperation Projects Unit, on collaborative project activities developed to improve the skills of professionals in the treatment of child trauma in emergency situations, especially for children from Ukraine.

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

19. The CDENF took note of a presentation by Morgan Briggs, consultant of the Alan Turing Institute, on the contents and conclusions of the draft mapping study on "The rights of the child and artificial intelligence: Legal Frameworks that Address AI in the Context of Children's Rights", held an exchange of views on the conclusions, and approved the study subject to last adjustments. Responding states wishing to clarify references to national frameworks were invited to submit concrete drafting proposals by 14 June 2024. The CDENF further instructed its Secretariat to integrate last changes proposed by respondent states and to circulate the finalised report with the CDENF prior to publication.

20. The CDENF extended its warm thanks to the Morgan Briggs and her colleagues from the Alan Turing institute for this important contribution to the work of the CDENF.

21. The CDENF took note of a presentation by Vadim Pak, Secretariat of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI), on the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, as adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 May 2024, and on the ongoing work of the CAI on a methodology for the risk and impact assessment of artificial intelligence systems from the perspective of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (HUDERIA).

22. The CDENF underlined the importance of understanding the benefits and challenges of artificial intelligence in relation to children's rights, and how to address those. In view of the ongoing work by the CAI on the risk assessment tool (HUDERIA), and other relevant developments at regional and international level, the CDENF instructed the Secretariat to prepare a concept note for future action in view of the feasibility, timeliness, and pertinence of elaborating a Child rights impact assessment tool on artificial intelligence, to be examined at the 10th plenary meeting.

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

23. The CDENF took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the Concept note and proposed methodology for the thematic review of the Guidelines on child-friendly justice, to be carried out in close collaboration with the European Committee for Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) for the civil and administrative law part and the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) for the criminal law part.

24. The CDENF examined and approved the Concept note including the methodology for the Thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice (2010) 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 to the further actions in the Concept note.

25. The CDENF took note of information provided by Anne-Laure Baulieu and Frederique Privat De Fortunié, Cooperation Projects Unit, on the Joint European Union-Council of Europe Child-friendly Justice Project - Children's Rights aiming to improve the protection of children in contact with the law in Europe through the implementation of the Guidelines on Child-friendly Justice and on the progress of the project "Ensuring the best interests of the child in civil court proceedings in Slovenia", relevant outcomes of which would feed into the thematic review process.

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)

26. The CDENF 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), welcomed the progress achieved, and agreed that the implementation tools on the draft Recommendation on the rights and best interests of the child in parental separation and in care proceedings should take the form of checklists for policy-makers, bearing in mind the complementary work being carried out by the CEPEJ Working Group on Quality of Justice (CEPEJ/GT-QUAL) on tools dealing with child-friendly justice.

27. The CDENF also took note of the ongoing consultation of CDENF, CDCJ and selected key stakeholders on the draft Recommendation on the rights and best interests of the child in care proceedings and its draft Explanatory Memorandum with a deadline for written comments of 31 July 2024. Based on all comments received, CJ/ENF-ISE would then finalise the drafts prior to their submission to CDENF and CDCJ for approval/adoption at a joint plenary session on 3 December 2024 (in person for CDENF, online for CDCJ Delegations).

5.5. Strategic Objective 5: Giving a voice to every child

28. The CDENF took note of the information provided by Aurélie Pasquier, Secretariat of the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO), on the online publication of the [Guide to children's participation in decisions about their health](#), the steps taken to prepare a child-friendly version of the guide and the possibility of translating the guide into other national languages.

29. The CDENF took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the publication of the Report on children as defenders of human rights and on the preparation of a child-friendly version of the report.

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

30. The CDENF examined the first draft of an implementation review report of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration. The review was based on information provided by member states in response to a questionnaire to which 22 member states replied.

31. The CDENF heard a presentation by Paloma Torres and Isabel Diez, consultants from Medusa (Human Rights Law and Consulting Company), on the draft report, and shared views and comments.

32. The CDENF heard a presentation by Caterina Parodi, consultant from Defence for Children Italy, regarding the aims, methodology and first outcomes of the consultation process on elements of the Recommendation carried out with children and young persons having experienced the guardianship system as children in Cyprus and Portugal.

33. The CDENF agreed to send written comments on the draft implementation review report by 28 June 2024 and instructed the Secretariat to revise the report in the light of the comments received, as

well as to integrate elements from the child consultation with a view to presenting the reporting for adoption by the CDENF at its 10th plenary meeting.

34. The CDENF agreed to share the draft report and its updated version with the Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU) for information.

6. Transversal issues

35. The CDENF took note of the information provided by Gabi Calleja, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics Unit, on the ongoing work on a draft Recommendation on the Rights of intersex persons (ADI-SOGIESC).

36. The CDENF took note of the information provided by the Secretariat regarding the follow-up of other relevant activities, notably of the CDCJ limited working group on migration (CDCJ-MIG) on stateless children, which held its first meeting on 29 – 30 May 2024.

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

37. The CDENF took note of the following presentations by its observers and representatives of relevant Council of Europe bodies, and other organisations:

- a. Pierre-Alain Fridez, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, presented the recent work of the Assembly, including his own Reports and related Resolutions and Recommendations on [Eradicating extreme child poverty in Europe: an international obligation and a moral duty](#) and on [Child abuse in institutions in Europe](#). The aim of the latter was to raise awareness throughout Europe, as has happened in some countries, in order to free speech, to allow reconstruction and compensation for survivors, and to put in place tools to prevent such situations from ever happening again. He also referred to the report discussed within the Standing Committee on 24 May 2024 on [Children in the world of work: eradicating harmful child labour](#) and mentioned the report on ["The protection of children against online violence"](#) adopted in April 2024.
- b. Leo Ratledge, Child Rights International Network (CRIN), provided information on ongoing work on accountability and justice for sexual violence against children, in particular in the area of institutional sexual abuse of children, and on projects on access to justice for children's environmental rights, protecting children from harmful chemicals, and on the rights of children in armed conflict.
- c. Ruth Allen, Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe (CINGO), provided information about the mandate of the Civil Society Committee on the Rights of the Child in Europe, as adopted in April 2024, which will continue to contribute to the work of the CDENF and its subordinate bodies. She highlighted the CINGO's engagement in relation to children's rights in migration, children's rights and the environment, child-friendly justice and sharing best practices with civil society.
- d. Ekaterina Malareva, Secretariat of the Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Committee), provided an update on work on a draft opinion on Article 33 of the Lanzarote Committee on limitation periods for sexual offences against children, and on new work on an opinion on the legal age for sexual activity. The Lanzarote Committee would launch a compliance procedure to assess how States parties have implemented its recommendations on self-generated child sexual images and videos. The Guidelines for policy makers on engaging with victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse – "Nothing about us without us" had been published online. The 18 November would from now on be referred to as the "Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse", acknowledging the global outreach of that date.
- e. Jennifer Schuetze-Reymann, Secretariat of the Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU), explained the context, mandate, objectives and thematic scope of the Consultation Group and its different working groups, focusing notably on psychological support and trauma informed care; specific issues relating to guardianship; and transnational procedures and cooperation.

8. Opinions requested by the Committee of Ministers

38. The CDENF reviewed and adopted its opinion on PACE Rec 2274 (2024) – “The protection of children against online violence” and instructed the Secretariat to submit the adopted opinion to the Committee of Ministers.

9. CDENF Working methods

39. The CDENF approved a concept note on the 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 issues to possibly address in this context, including mental health issues in the digital world, support to families in developing parental skills, including though preparation for parenthood, children with disabilities, climate change, child participation and child friendly justice, and instructed its Bureau to consider the annual thematic exchange during its meetings.

10. Elections to the Bureau

40. The CDENF elected Ružica Boškić (Slovenia) as its Chair for a first term of office of one year, starting on 1 July 2024; Solvor Bäcklund (Norway) as its Vice-Chair for a first term of office of one year, starting on 1 July 2024; and 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.

11. Any other business

41. The CDENF warmly thanked its outgoing Chair, Rosário Farmhouse, for her dedicated work for the Rights of the Child and for the CDENF.

12. Date and place of next meetings

42. The CDENF took note of the following dates of the upcoming meetings:

CDENF

- 3 - 5 December 2024, Strasbourg, 10th CDENF plenary meeting (joint session with CDCJ on 3 December)
- 1 - 2 April 2025, Strasbourg, 11th CDENF plenary meeting
- 3 – 4 April 2025, Strasbourg, mid-term review Conference of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child

CDENF Bureau meeting

- 2-3 October 2024, Strasbourg

13. Approval of the abridged meeting report

43. The CDENF adopted the abridged report of this meeting at the end of the meeting.

Appendix I**Agenda**

-
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

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 (xxi)

7. Co-operation with other relevant Council of Europe bodies and other organisations (and other institutions)

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 meeting**

 13. **Approval of the abridged meeting report**

Appendix II

"Written Statement of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Family and Social Services for the Meeting Report of 9th Plenary Meeting of Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)"

The Republic of Türkiye has always given special importance to the protection of human rights and children's rights. Türkiye is among the countries that are most party to the United Nations (UN) international human rights documents. Türkiye has become a party to 16 of the 18 human rights documents of the UN. Türkiye actively participates in the work carried out in the field of children's rights by international bodies such as the Council of Europe and the Hague Conference, as well as the UN, and is a party to the documents prepared by the aforementioned institutions.

As stated in the human rights instruments drafted by the UN, the family is the foundation of society and an indispensable institution for the upbringing of children. Türkiye is a strong advocate of international efforts to protect children's rights, and believes that some of the recent changes that have occurred in the family institution and social structure in recent years will lead to negative consequences for children.

While Türkiye appreciates the work carried out by the Council of Europe on children's rights, it regrets that some issues, concepts and definitions that are controversial on a global scale are included in the documents prepared by CDENF.

The cultures, legal regulations and policies of the member countries of the Council of Europe may differ. In this context, it is essential to take into account the differences of the member countries in the documents prepared at the Council of Europe meetings.

In this context, we request the Secretariat to reflect Türkiye's opposing stance in the documents prepared and adopted by a majority vote by the Council of Europe, as the Republic of Türkiye does not accept the following points:

1. The Republic of Türkiye does not accept the use of concepts such as LGBTQI, LGBT children, LGBTQI+youth, sexual orientation, gender concept and its derivatives in documents related to children, as these concepts normalize non-traditional sexual relations and harm the concept of biological sex.
2. Türkiye is against all forms of discrimination regarding people's access to services. However, Türkiye expresses its reservations regarding any reference to LGBT and/or sexual orientation or gender identity in the context of children, due to the potentially harmful consequences.
3. The concept of gender and its derivatives (gender identity, gender equality, etc.) are not concepts agreed upon internationally. The Republic of Türkiye interprets the term "gender", as identical with "sex" pursuant to the binary concept of biological female and male sex. Türkiye does not accept the use of gender and its derivatives in documents regarding children's rights.

"Türkiye requests the Secretariat to include Türkiye's reservation on the concept of gender as a footnote in the relevant documents as follows:

- The Republic of Türkiye interprets the term "gender" and its derivatives, as identical with "sex" pursuant to the binary concept of biological female and male sex.

4. Some documents prepared under the coordination of the Council of Europe make reference to conventions to which Türkiye is not a party (e.g. the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence). Türkiye declares that it is not bound by conventions to which it is not a party.
5. Türkiye objected to some documents previously prepared by the CDENF and shared its views on them with the Council of Europe. (example: Draft Guide to Children's participation in Decisions about their Health" (CDBIO (2023)3_CDENF (2023)14), Children as defenders of human rights: a study on Council of Europe member states (draft))
6. In the document titled "Mapping study on children's access to quality mental health care" discussed at the 9th CDENF General Assembly meeting, in addition to the concept of sexual orientation, the expression that children make their own decisions about their health as autonomous individuals was included. Children are under the responsibility of their parents in Türkiye.
7. The study titled "Draft feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexual education to strengthen responses for- inter alia-preventing and combating violence, including risky or harmful sexual behaviour by children" includes many concepts that Türkiye opposes, such as

LGBT, sexual orientation, sexual and reproductive health, gender and its derivatives. Similarly, the Istanbul Convention, to which Türkiye is not a party, was taken as a reference in the aforementioned document. The document refers to the CEDAW Convention and claims that “Girls and women have the right to freely and responsibly decide the number and spacing of their children.” However, the term girl is not included in Article 16 (1) (e) of the CEDAW Convention. Although this was pointed out by our country representative at the 9th CDENF General Assembly Meeting, the representative who were in the preparation of the said document stated that women also include girls and that there is no problem in the text. Girls are individuals who have not yet reached the age of 18. The assertion that girls should be treated as adults and have the freedom to decide the number and spacing of their children contradicts legislation. In our country, pregnant girls under the age of 18 are protected by the Ministry of Family and Social Services. These children who are victims of sexual abuse receive care and psychosocial support services in specialized institutions. Moreover, such an approach has the potential to lead to numerous problems for children in the long term.

Türkiye has opposed the comprehensive sexuality education included in the 2022-2027 Council of Europe Strategy Document and does not approve the 'Draft feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexual education to strengthen responses for, inter alia, preventing and combating violence, including risky or harmful sexual behaviour by children' discussed at the CDENF General Assembly.

8. Türkiye values consulting children and promoting their participation. However, it does not accept the introduction of conceptualizations related to LGBTQI and gender other than male and female under the pretext of consulting children's opinions. In this context, Türkiye opposes questions 2 (How do you identify yourself? The answer choices are female, male, other, and I prefer not to say) and 3 (If you feel comfortable telling us, which of the following statements is true for you? and the answer choice including 'I am a member of the LGBTI community') in the document titled 'Children as Human Rights Defenders'.

Appendix III

Report of the thematic exchange *Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content*

Report prepared by Maree Crabbe, international consultant.

Purpose

1. The aim of the thematic exchange was to inform CDENF members about children's exposure to pornographic content online, the associated risks, and avenues for safeguarding children from these risks. The thematic exchange also aimed to offer an opportunity for members to exchange information on relevant national activities and to support shared reflection for future possible CDENF actions, such as the development of a guidance note for member states. This brief report provides an overview of the thematic exchange and the key themes, questions and challenges that emerged.

Outline of proceedings

2. In addition to the 60 members who attended the thematic exchange in person in Strasbourg, around 60 representatives also attended online.
3. Based on a concept note and draft programme, the thematic exchange included:
 - **Guest speaker presentations by:** Maree Crabbe, Director of *It's time we talked*; Julia Cooke, International Policy Manager at UK Ofcom; Andrea Tognoni, Head of EU Affairs at 5RightsFoundation
 - **Brief presentations on two related Council of Europe reports:** "The protection of children against online violence," presented by Joseph O'Reilly, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Irish Senator; "The protection of minors on video sharing platforms (VSPs): Age verification and parental control," presented by Eric Munch from the European Audiovisual Observatory
 - **Brief reports on relevant national activities** and discussion input from various members.

Guest speaker presentations

4. Maree Crabbe presented online from Australia. Drawing on international research, and using excerpts from her own interviews with young people, experts and pornography industry professionals, Maree Crabbe provided an overview of the issues across four key themes:
 - the extent and nature of children's exposure to pornography,
 - the kind of pornographic content to which children are exposed,
 - how pornography is impacting on children, and
 - strategies that can be taken to prevent pornography's harms to children.
5. She described how children's exposure to online pornographic content is widespread, occurs both intentionally and unintentionally, and is highly gendered, with boys and young men much more likely than girls and young women to view pornography and to do so frequently. She outlined how the most popular, free, and easily accessible pornography commonly depicts gendered aggression and non-consensual themes, including forced sex, hidden camera, and sex between family members.
6. She then described how pornography has become a default sexuality educator for many children and young people, with concerning consequences for their development and experiences. In particular, Maree Crabbe explored how pornography use is associated with sexual violence among children and young people, and is implicated in the recent increase in harmful sexual behaviour by children and young people. Finally, Maree Crabbe discussed how there is no single solution to preventing pornography's harms to children, but, rather, a range of complementary strategies are required. These include regulatory measures, such as age verification, to prevent or reduce children's pornography exposure and access, improved safety measures built into platform and device design, comprehensive sexuality education that specifically addresses pornography's influence, and parental interventions, including the use of parental controls, monitoring of device usage, and age-appropriate conversations.

7. Julia Cooke presented the implementation of UK online safety laws, with a focus on the UK's Online Safety Act 2023. Julia Cooke explained that this legislation includes requirements for online services to protect children, including preventing children's access to pornographic content, and for Ofcom to provide guidance on how to do this. Julia Cooke outlined measures that Ofcom has proposed to help ensure that online service providers' governance, design and operations support user safety. She also discussed different methods of age assurance and the criteria for effective age assurance, which include technical accuracy, robustness, reliability and fairness. Julia Cooke highlighted how the global nature of the online environment makes international regulatory coordination essential.
8. Andrea Tognoni's presentation included discussion of the opportunities and challenges associated with how efforts to keep children safe online are understood. He affirmed the importance of always putting children's rights at the centre, including their right to participate online in ways that are safe and beneficial. He also highlighted the value of seeing safety by design solutions holistically and avoiding unhelpfully polarising arguments and false dichotomies – for example, where children's rights are pitted against privacy or data protection. The community should be supported to understand efforts to keep children safe online, such as online age verification methods as just part of broader systemic approaches that need not be invasive for adults and aim not only to protect but also to empower children. Andrea Tognoni also reiterated the importance of multiple approaches. Calls for improved literacy education for children and parents and parental controls should be viewed as complementary strategies and not as alternatives or substitutes to making the online environment safer by default through measures such as age verification and safer design. He emphasised how online industries can be incredibly innovative and should be incentivised to apply these skills to preventing online harms to children and investing in providing them with age-appropriate experiences.

Country reports and discussion

9. Reports from various members affirmed that there is broad recognition that the online or digital environment includes many exciting and important opportunities for children, but that children should be protected from exposure to harmful content in the online world – including the risks associated with exposure to pornographic content – as they would be in the offline world. Member states' interventions underline that states are exploring and taking actions towards that aim.
10. Actions described by members included supporting parents to implement parental controls and monitor their children's online activities; the mandating of age verification, with one member advising a requirement for annual reporting on effectiveness; the drafting of industry safety codes; and cross-sectoral capacity-building, including among civil society. Members described the importance of consultation and of a collaborative approach, where stakeholders across a range of sectors – including regulators, industry and civil society – are supported to work together towards solutions. Members also noted the borderless nature of the issues and affirmed the value of working together across jurisdictions, with some members particularly citing the value of the international online safety regulators' network.
11. Several speakers described the importance of education, including the potential for comprehensive sexuality education to contribute to the prevention of pornography's harms to children. Members noted that the issue of children's exposure to pornographic content cuts across several areas of education, such as online safety education, and education to build digital literacy, safe sexual and intimate relationships, and prevent violence. One member noted that these intersections suggest the importance of addressing pornography's harms across each of these areas, rather than a focus solely on one area.
12. Members asked about examples of good practice in other countries. The presenters reported that there is no country that is currently implementing all of the strategies discussed, but that there are increasing efforts across at least some of these strategies, some good practice emerging, and important developments to watch and work on together.
13. Members raised several challenges. These included challenges associated with enforcement due to the global nature of pornography, the fact that many online services that include pornographic content are hosted in other jurisdictions, and the ease with which they can change their URL or hosting locations in an effort to evade law enforcement efforts. Two members also raised challenges associated with intervening to prevent offline offences that have their genesis in exposure to harmful online content, with one member specifically noting a particularly violent recent incident of this kind. Other challenges raised by members included the powerful lobbying capacity of the pornography and tech industries, the politicisation of the issues, and challenges associated with addressing the hesitations of human rights organisations. One member noted the concentrated power of the pornography industry – which is

dominated by a small number of huge companies that have an outsized influence on global sexual cultures.

14. The importance of language was discussed, particularly in relation to the language used to discuss sexual imagery that has been generated by children and young people. One participant pointed out that referring to this content as 'self-generated pornographic content' can contribute to the victimisation of children and young people who may be tricked, coerced, or forced into creating such imagery.
15. Members also raised questions about how to support children in vulnerable situations, such as unaccompanied minors or migrant children, children with disabilities etc.
16. Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing pornographic content online aligns with several existing Council of Europe objectives and priorities, as noted in the introductory comments of Regina Jensdottir, Head of the Children's Rights Division, and Council of Europe Coordinator for the Rights of the Child, and in the reports of other members of the CDENF. Many members expressed appreciation for the opportunity to explore this issue through the thematic exchange, which will be followed by the development of a guidance note to support a shared approach to the issue.