



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



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Strasbourg, 23 November 2025

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)

CONCEPT NOTE on CDENF's work on Child Participation

- Implementation Review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18 (Deliverables 10 CDENF's terms of reference).
- Draft guidelines for developing a national children's participation strategy (Deliverables 11 of CDENF's terms of reference).

Draft prepared by the Secretariat, in cooperation with by Raluca Verweijen-Slammescu and Prof. Cath Larkins, independent consultants to the Council of Europe, approved by the CDENF during its 12th Plenary meeting on 19-21 November 2025.

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I. Background and CDENF action required

In line with the [Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2022-2027\)](#), in particular Pillar 4 “Giving a voice to every child” the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) shall complete two deliverables:

- an “Implementation review report of Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18” and
- “Draft guidelines for developing a national children’s participation strategy”.

These activities correspond to deliverables Nos. 10 and 11 under [CDENF Terms of Reference \(2024-2027\)](#) with delivery dates originally foreseen for the end of 2026. In view of preparing a meaningful contribution to ongoing developments both within the Council of Europe and beyond in this very dynamic area, the revised terms of reference approved by the Committee of Ministers, propose to finalise these deliverables by the end of 2027. The present concept note outlines the proposals of the Secretariat for initiating and structuring the work process related to this activity.

At its 17th meeting on 25-26 September 2025, the bureau of the CDENF considered the proposals below. The CDENF is now invited to approve the approach proposed and to have an exchange of views, guided by the questions under point V below.

II. The overall approach proposed

Children have the right to be heard and have a say in all decisions affecting them, be that at home, in the community, at school, or in individual legal and administrative matters, including online. The Council of Europe places the participation of children at the core of its children’s rights agenda. Child participation is a key strategic objective in the promotion of children’s rights and a cross-cutting approach that is mainstreamed into the organisation’s standard-setting, monitoring and sector specific work.

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2012\)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18](#) was developed following comprehensive reviews of the reality of child participation in a number of member states and with the direct involvement of children in the work of the drafting Committee. The recommendation covers the rights of children and young people to be heard in all settings, including in schools, in communities, and in the family, as well as at the national and European level. It also contains guidelines that member states are encouraged to follow in implementing the Recommendation, such as protecting children and young people’s right to participate, promoting and informing children and young people about participation, and creating spaces for participation. Thirteen years after its adoption, the CDENF is invited to review the implementation of this Recommendation by its Member States, as well as to develop guidelines for the development of a national strategy for child participation.

It is proposed to complete this work on the basis of existing experience and resources of the Council of Europe on the topic of child participation, such as the [Child Participation Assessment Tool \(CPAT\)](#), and the [Handbook “Listen – Act – Change” on children’s participation](#) developed by the Children’s Rights Division. Due consideration should also be given to documents developed under the [EU-CoE Joint Project CP4 Europe - Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe](#) such as [Let’s decide together! Guide to meaningful and effective engagement of children in decision-making processes](#) and the [Guidelines for developing a National Children’s Participation Strategy or a Participation Strategy within a National Children’s Rights Strategy](#). In order to ensure full coherence with the work recently finalised during the CP4Europe project, the Secretariat suggests requesting

the expertise of two consultants who previously assisted the Council of Europe on this issue (Raluca Verweijen-Slamnescu et Prof. Cath Larkins).

III. Workplan

6. The work on the implementation review report and the guidelines for developing a national children's participation strategy spans nearly two years. The table below indicates the timeline proposed for completing all relevant tasks:

Timeline suggested	Steps to be taken
August – mid October 2025	Drafting of a detailed concept note and workplan by the consultants, in cooperation with the secretariat.
October - December 2025	Desktop research and mapping by the consultants, including on relevant action undertaken by member states, international or civil society organisations and other Council of Europe bodies, as well as from existing child-consultations on the issue.
20 November 2025	Presentation of the concept note, methodology, and workplan to the CDENF at its 12 th plenary meeting and engage in an exchange with CDENF members.
December 2025 – January 2026	Planning and preparation of children and national consultations on the basis of the gaps identified during the desktop research.
February – August 2026	Organising, supervising and co-ordinating child consultations.
March - April 2026	Preparation and organisation of national consultations.
June 2026 (13 th CDENF Plenary meeting)	Presentation of the state of play on the work carried out to the 13 th plenary meeting.
June – November 2026	Collection of data from Member States, including through questionnaires or interactive tools (as appropriate), and preliminary analysis of the data collected.
November 2026 (14 th CDENF Plenary)	Organisation and moderation of interactive exchanges/ workshops among the CDENF members on selected relevant areas for discussion during the CDENF's 14 th plenary meeting.
December 2025 – March 2027	Based on the outcomes of the consultations, drafting of the implementation review report by the consultants in close collaboration with the Secretariat. Either simultaneously or successively, drafting the guidelines for developing a national children's participation strategy.
Spring 2027 (15 th CDENF meeting)	Presenting the draft implementation review report and the draft guidelines for developing children's participation strategies to the CDENF at its 15 th plenary meeting.

IV. Questions to the CDENF

In order to steer the work, the CDENF is invited, during its 12th Plenary meeting on 19-21 November 2025 to hold an exchange while replying to the following questions:

1. What do you hope for from this work on child participation? Are there any specific loopholes and needs in this area?
2. We wish to build on existing data that has been collected and fed back (including CPAT reports). Has relevant data already been collected on child participation in your country, and if so, how can we find it?

3. Learning from previous feedback on using online surveys and questionnaires, we understand the wish to limit their use, while we need to collect information. Would you agree to have an easily sharable survey that could be completed by relevant stakeholders within your country to collect information about national practices and possible data already collected? Could this complement an interactive exchange during a CDENF plenary meeting?
4. Would you like to be more closely involved in the drafting process by providing feedback on tools and data collection instruments we would develop?