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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)

Eleventh plenary meeting Meeting Report

Strasbourg 1-2 April 2025

Prepared by the CDENF Secretariat and approved by the CDENF in written proceedings
on 15 May 2025

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Meeting Report

1. Opening of the meeting

1. The Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) held its 11th plenary meeting in Strasbourg (France) on 1-2 April 2025, with Ružica Boškić (Slovenia) in her capacity of 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. The Chair informed the CDENF of the upcoming meeting with the Secretary General and the Chairs of all Council of Europe intergovernmental committees, taking place in Strasbourg in April. This important meeting, in the framework of the implementation of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy, will explore the Steering Committees' contributions to the development of a new Democratic Pact.

5. On behalf of the Secretariat, Agnès von Maravić, newly appointed Head of the Children's Rights Division, warmly welcomed Delegations and introduced the core CDENF Secretariat team. She informed the committee that Katrin Uerpmann, Secretary of the CDENF, will be replaced by Anne Kayser-Attuil as of 1 April 2025.

6. Ms von Maravić provided an overview of the Secretary General's vision for the new Democratic Pact, underlined the CDENF's leading role in the field of children's rights within the Council of Europe, and congratulated the Committee on major milestones achieved, notably the adoption—together with the CDCJ—of draft Recommendations on the best interests of the child in parental separation and care proceedings. Delegations were invited to liaise with their Permanent Representations to support the adoption of these texts by the Committee of Ministers. With a rich agenda ahead, the CDENF was encouraged to engage fully in exchanges on:

- national implementation of the Strategy,
- transversal cooperation,
- comprehensive sexuality education,
- the Child rights impact assessment tool on Artificial Intelligence CRIA+, and
- the forthcoming review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice.

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

7. The CDENF took note of and approved the revised workplan without particular comments.

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

8. The CDENF Secretariat provided an overview of the written approval process for the thematic guidance note on safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content. The approval report, including Italy's explanation of vote, is appended to the plenary meeting report.

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. Anne Kayser-Attuil, Secretary of the CDENF, outlined the milestones regarding the drafting of a Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education. She highlighted the consultations of children which informed the drafting process (late 2024), the approval of a preliminary draft by the ENF-VAE in February 2025, the stakeholder consultations on this draft in March-April 2025, and a stakeholder hearing on [Protecting children from violence through age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education](#) during the mid-term review conference. The next ENF-VAE meeting (4–5 June) will work on revising the text in the light of the comments received through the stakeholder consultation, and to start drafting its explanatory memorandum, with adoption expected by the end of 2026.

5.1.2 Presentation on the Pathfinding Global Alliance to end all forms of violence against children.

10. The CDENF held an exchange of views with Najat Maalla M'jid, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children. She introduced the Pathfinding Global Alliance to end all forms of violence against children, launched in November 2024 during the first Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children in Bogota, as a tool for collaboration and knowledge sharing to end violence against children.

11. Ms Maalla M'jid emphasised the economic and social cost of violence against children, highlighting the urgent need to treat child protection as a national investment. She called for financial planning and practical, context-specific implementation of services, avoiding fragmented efforts. Key priorities include linking online and offline protection, strengthening family-based care, improving social protection beyond cash aid, and ensuring child participation. She also underscored the importance of prevention over punishment in addressing child recruitment into gangs.

5.2 Strategic Objective 3: Access to and safe use of artificial intelligence

5.2.1 Child rights impact assessment tool on artificial intelligence

12. The Chair welcomed the designation of Célia Chamiça as the internal reference person supporting the important strand of work on children's rights in the digital environment and Artificial Intelligence, and for her role as moderator of the related session at the upcoming mid-term review conference of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child.

13. Vadim Pak, from the Secretariat of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI), provided a brief update on their ongoing work, notably on the Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law Impact Assessment (HUDERIA).

14. Manon Baert from the 5Rights Foundation presented first elements of the Child rights impact assessment (non-binding) tool on artificial intelligence (CRIA+), designed to assess and mitigate the potential impact of digital technologies and policies on children's rights and to promote a child-centred and rights-respecting digital environment.

15. Justine Vizier, from the CDENF Secretariat, informed the Committee that four children and young people from Ireland and Italy received accessible explanations on the CRIA+ to meaningfully join the session on [Children's rights in the era of digital technologies and artificial intelligence](#) during the Mid-term review Conference and take part in the CRIA+ stakeholder consultation, including a dedicated child consultation on AI following the conference.

5.3 Strategic Objective 4: Child-friendly justice for all children

5.3.1 Thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice. *Main deliverable 13*

16. The CDENF took note of the presentation by Maria Andriani Kostopoulou, Consultant on the draft report on the thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-friendly Justice, covering international and European law developments and case law analysis in relation to child-friendly justice. Views on the first draft were exchanged with the Consultant.

17. The CDENF took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the steps taken towards the written consultation process on the thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on a Child Friendly Justice, to be launched no later than 28 April 2025, to which CDENF members were invited to participate.

18. The CDENF was informed that the revision process would be concluded through a joint adoption by the CDENF, and the other committees involved in this process (European Committees on Legal Co-operation - CDCJ, and on Crime Problems - CDPC) in 2027.

5.3.2 Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and interagency services (ENF-JUS). *Main deliverable 12*

19. The CDENF took note of the information provided by Magdalena Bochińska, Secretary of Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and Interagency services (ENF-JUS), on the mandate and preliminary work plan of the new ENF-JUS Working Group and its forthcoming first meeting scheduled for 14-15 May 2025.

6 Transversal issues

6.1 Mainstreaming of gender, youth, rights of persons with disabilities and of Roma and Traveller issues. *Main task (xvii)*

6.2 Contribution to the UNSDGs. *Main task (xx)*

7 Co-operation with other relevant Council of Europe bodies

20. The CDENF took note of the following updates on their respective children-related activities by representatives of relevant Council of Europe bodies and observers, contributing to the implementation of the CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027):

- Pierre-Alain Fridez, PACE Rapporteur on [Child Abuse in Institutions in Europe](#), acknowledged CDENF's and Lanzarote Committee's work to address the persistence of violence against children, including in institutions. He underlined the importance of political recognition for victims, underlining the [Swiss good practice](#) to include substantial compensation and removing statutes of limitation for such crimes. Mr Fridez insisted that institutional abuse must remain on the agenda and highlighted that, while some children thrive best with their families, others require specialised care within institutions.
- Sophio Gelashvili, from the European Committee on Legal Cooperation (CDCJ) presented the new [Committee of Experts on Access to Origins](#) (CJ-OR), inviting a CDENF member to actively contribute to the development of a new Recommendation.

- Julie Devys, also from (CDCJ), presented the activities of the working group on migration (CDCJ-MIG) regarding the revision of the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2009\)13 on the nationality of children](#), to be complemented with a checklist for policy-makers by the end of 2026. This work results from the findings of the [feasibility study on a non-binding legal instrument on stateless children's access to nationality](#) (February 2025).
- Ardita Abdiu, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Pompidou Group, introduced the newly established [Drafting Committee on Human Rights in Drug Policies \(DH-PDA\)](#), which aims to complete a Draft recommendation bringing human rights to the heart of drug and addiction policies, based notably on the "[Guidance for aligning drug and addiction policies with human rights](#)" (November 2024). Among its 13 members, the Committee comprises one expert designated by CDENF.
- Laurence Lwoff, Secretary of the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CD-BIO), highlighted ongoing work on [Children's participation in decisions about their health](#) (carried out in cooperation with the CDENF). She also emphasized the importance of visibility on issues such as mental health and access to care, SOGIESC, and the use of health data—including from children—especially in the context of Artificial Intelligence.
- Charlotte Gilmartin, from the Secretariat of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), presented the [draft Recommendation on Equality and Artificial Intelligence](#), developed jointly with the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) under the expert committee GEC/ADI AI. She invited members to take part in the public consultation open until 28 April 2025.
- Elena Casero, from the Enlarged Agreement on Sport (EPAS), presented the "[Start to Talk](#)" project which assists national authorities responsible for sport and sports organisations to develop child safeguarding in sport policy, organise awareness-raising campaigns and train relevant stakeholders, thanking the Bulgarian member for their participation. She also presented the Council of Europe's Pool of international experts on safe sport.
- Flurina Frei, co-Secretary of the [Committee of Experts on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls](#), informed CDENF about the progress towards (GEC/PC-eVIO) adopting a recommendation on this topic by the end of 2025. The draft focuses on accountability and the need for legal, institutional, and regulatory responses to tech-facilitated violence. It calls for a child-friendly approach to prevent and combat such violence, addressing both girls as victims and perpetrators, while emphasizing the importance of effective justice systems, age-appropriate digital controls, and educational initiatives on digital literacy and support services.
- Ellsworth Camilleri, [Co-Secretary of the Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics](#) (ADI-SOGIESC), shared updates on the timeline for the finalisation of a Draft Recommendation on the equality of rights of intersex persons, by the end of 2025. The CDENF is set to receive the consolidated text for final comments by mid-April, and final readings and approvals are scheduled for May (ADI-SOGIESC), July (CDADI), and possible adoption by the Committee of Ministers in September-October 2025.

7bis Co-operation with other institutions and observers

21. The CDENF took note of the updates on activities by participants and observers, namely:

- Astrid Podsiadlowski, Head of Social Rights Sector Equality, Roma and Social Rights Unit at the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), provided an update on FRA activities, including the presentation of a recently published report entitled '[Towards integrated child protection systems – challenges, promising practices and ways forward](#)'. She also informed CDENF that the FRA has recently established a youth advisory panel with young people, both

to provide a framework to ensure meaningful, safe and participatory engagement of young people in the work of the FRA, and to integrate the views of young people into the activities of the FRA.

- Marie-Cécile Rouillon, Coordinator for the rights of the child of the European Commission, highlighted ongoing cooperation with the Council of Europe and support for national implementation efforts, including child participation initiatives, digital policy developments, and upcoming funding opportunities. She also confirmed the dates of the next European Forum on the Rights of the Child, which will take place on 24 and 25 June 2025.
- The observer delegation from Mexico presented the outcomes of a bilateral cooperation project with the Pompidou Group aimed at supporting children whose parents are affected by substance use and expressed willingness to expand similar cooperation initiatives.
- The representative from the Lanzarote Committee reported on future events in Malta and the Republic of Moldova, and ongoing work on terminology and data collection.
- Representatives from Eurochild, Missing Children Europe, SOS Children's Villages, Defence for Children International, and the Conference of INGOs shared recent activities, including flagship reports, field projects, and advocacy efforts on digital safety, environmental rights, and child participation. CRIN encouraged engagement on child participation in climate and AI governance, and Benoit van Kiersblich DCI Director and UNCRC member highlighted new guidance on children's access to justice. The financial sustainability of UN treaty bodies was noted as a concern.

7ter Exchange on the national implementation of the Strategy in 2024-2025

22. Delegations provided updates on the progress made at national level in implementing the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022–2027) reflecting a strong and continued commitment to promoting children's rights across the member States, under all six pillars of the Strategy.

23. The updates complemented the replies to the second questionnaire on the Implementation of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child and will be reflected in the second report on the Implementation Strategy.

8 Elections to the Bureau

24. The CDENF was invited to elect or re-elect their Chair and Vice-Chair for a one-year term of office starting on 1 July 2025. Ružica Boškić (Slovenia) was re-elected as Chair for a second term of office of one year, starting on 1 July 2025. Solvor Bäcklund (Norway) was re-elected as Vice-Chair for a second term of office of one year, starting on 1 July 2025.

25. Rares Petru Archiriloaie has left the CDENF to move to another assignment, opening a vacancy in the Bureau. The seat will be left vacant until the election of the full Bureau in November.

9 Appointments

26. The CDENF designated Maria João Fernandes (Portugal) as expert member of the Drafting Committee on Human Rights and Drug Policies (DH-PDA) from among proposals made by national Delegations.

27. The CDENF designated Marino di Nardo (Italy) as CDENF representative to be an observer to the Committee of experts on access to origins (CJ-OR).

10 Any other business

28. Participants did not raise any additional issues.

11 Date and place of next meeting

29. The CDENF took note of the dates suggested for its 12th Plenary meeting (18-20 November) as well as of concerns expressed by members and observers regarding the overlap with the Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (18 November). *The Secretariat therefore proposes to hold the next CDENF plenary meeting on **19-21 November 2025**, following approval by the CDENF Bureau.*

12 Approval of the abridged meeting report

30. The CDENF adopted the abridged report at the end of the meeting.

Appendix I

Agenda of the 11th CDENF Plenary

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)
5.1	Strategic Objective 1: Freedom from violence for all children
5.1.1	Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE)
12.1	Draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter-alia preventing and combating violence against children
	<i>Main deliverable 9</i>
5.1.2	Presentation on the Pathfinding Global Alliance to end all forms of violence against children
5.2	Strategic Objective 3: Access to and safe use of artificial intelligence
5.3.1	Child rights impact assessment tool on artificial intelligence
5.3	Strategic Objective 4: Child-friendly justice for all children
5.4.2	Thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice
	<i>Main deliverable 13</i>
5.4.3	Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and Interagency services (ENF-JUS)
	<i>Main deliverable 12</i>
6.	Transversal issues:
a.	Mainstreaming of gender, youth, rights of persons with disabilities and of Roma and Traveller issues
	<i>main task (xvii)</i>
b.	Contribution to the UNSDGs
	<i>main task(xx)</i>
7	Co-operation with other relevant Council of Europe bodies
7bis.	Co-operation with other institutions and observers
	<i>Exchange on the national implementation of the Strategy in 2022-2024</i>

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| 8. | Elections to the Bureau |
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| 9. | Appointments |
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| 10. | Any other business |
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| 11. | Date and place of next meeting |
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| 12. | Approval of the abridged meeting report |
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Appendix II

CDENF (2025)PV1add
Strasbourg, 10 March 2025

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)

Report on the outcome of the written approval proceedings of the Thematic Guidance note on Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content

Prepared by the CDENF Secretariat

1. During its 10th plenary meeting, (Strasbourg, 3 – 5 December 2024) the CDENF examined and reviewed a Thematic Guidance Note on “Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content” prepared and presented by Maree Crabbe, consultant, expressed its overall satisfaction with the content of the draft, instructed the Secretariat to integrate eventual last comments submitted by 15 January 2025, then to circulate the finalised text for adoption in written proceedings and proceed with the publication of the note.
2. Following these instructions, the Secretariat circulated a finalised draft on 21 February 2025 to all national Delegations for vote in written procedure with a deadline of 7 March 2025.
3. On 10 March 2025 the two CDENF Secretaries counted the ballots received and took note of the consensual approval of the text, with one abstention.
4. The Draft Guidance Note on “Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content” has thus been approved by the CDENF in written proceedings.
5. Following the request of one Delegation (Italy) an explanation of their vote has been appended as an annex to this report.
6. This report will be added as an addendum to the full report of the 11th CDENF plenary meeting (Strasbourg 1-2 of April 2025).

Declaration annexed to the report:

Italy has declared its abstention on the vote concerning the Guidance Note. Indeed, while expressing its general appreciation for the document, Italy cannot support the possibility – as stated in the Note - for Member States to contribute to safeguarding children from the risks of exposure to online pornographic content through the development of age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to be provided to children in formal, non-formal, and informal educational settings, this including school-based comprehensive sexuality education.

Indeed, Italy considers family as the primary educational entity in matters related to sexual and reproductive health, and therefore education related to this topic cannot be entrusted to the school system. Furthermore, there do not appear to be sufficient reliable and comparable data demonstrating a causal link between the provision of comprehensive sexuality education and a reduction in violence against children or in the risks of accessing online pornographic content in the Council of Europe member States.