



Building a Europe  
for and with children  
Construire une Europe  
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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## Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)

Twelfth plenary meeting  
Meeting Report

*Strasbourg, 19-21 November 2025*

Prepared by the CDENF Secretariat

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## Meeting Report

### 1. Opening of the meeting

1. The Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) held its 12<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting in Strasbourg (France) on 19-21 November 2025, with Ružica Boškić (Slovenia) in the Chair. On 19 November 2025 (afternoon), the CDENF held a joint session with the European Committee for Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) which marked the official launch of two new Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on the protection of the rights and best interests of the [child in parental separation proceedings](#) and in [care proceedings](#). Opening the event, Hallvard Gorseth, Director of Equal Rights and Dignity, underlined how these new standards contribute to rebuilding trust with institutions and resonates with the vision set forth in the Council of Europe's New Democratic Pact. Speakers included representatives of member States and international experts alongside the following high-level speakers: Bjørn Berge, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe; Ambassador Daniela Cujbă, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova and Chair of the Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe; Anne Louise Bormann, Judge at the European Court of Human Rights; and Ambassador Dastid Koreshi, Permanent Representative of Albania and Chair of the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Questions (GR-SOC).
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 the agenda as it appears in Appendix I.

### 3. Statement of the Chair and Secretariat

4. The Chair informed the CDENF about the recent announcement that Bragi Guðbrandsson, 'grandfather of the Barnahus model', has been selected as one of the laureates of the 2025 North-South Prize. The award, to be presented next year, was highlighted as an important recognition of the Barnahus model and its significant contribution to strengthening the protection of children's rights in Europe.
5. The Chair underlined the importance of mainstreaming children's rights across all areas of the Council of Europe's work, as well as in national settings. CDENF members were encouraged to reflect on how they could take a more active role in promoting children's rights within their respective sectors and ensure that a child-rights perspective is consistently applied.
6. On behalf of the Secretariat, Kayser-Attuil introduced the changes that occurred within the CDENF Secretariat team and called upon delegations to consider voluntary contributions to support the Council of Europe's work on children's rights, in particular to support child participation in the activities of the Children's Rights Division.

### 4. Review of progress

7. The Secretariat provided an overview of the progress made for each deliverable, the remaining work to be carried out, and the upcoming deadlines.

8. The CDENF held an annual exchange of views to evaluate its completed activities, taking due account of mainstreamed perspectives and other transversal issues (this exchange took place during the presentation of the implementation report of the Strategy).
9. The CDENF took note of its revised Terms of Reference, as adopted by the Committee of Ministers in November 2025, and approved its workplan for 2026 - 2027. The Secretariat recalled the ongoing work of the Council of Europe, under the initiative of its Secretary General, Alain Berset, concerning the New Democratic Pact for Europe, which is integrated into the work of the Children's Rights Division.
10. The CDENF took note of the information provided by Antoine Antonini, Head of Section, Department of Social Affairs and Health of the Government of Monaco, regarding a possible event on the impact of social media on children, to be organised under the aegis of the upcoming Presidency of Monaco of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers (May – November 2026) and in the margins of the 13<sup>th</sup> CDENF plenary meeting, on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

## **5. Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022–2027)**

11. The CDENF took note of the report of the Mid-Term Review Conference (3-4 April 2025).
12. Marie Stock, from the CDENF Secretariat, informed the CDENF about the draft Implementation Report of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022–2027), covering the period of 2024-2025. The CDENF exchanged views and instructed the Secretariat to transmit this report to the Committee of Ministers, for information.
13. Audrey Winum, from the CDENF Secretariat, informed the Committee about recent developments regarding changes to the CDENF website and newsletter, and provided an overview of the Children's Rights Division's social media accounts.
14. The CDENF also took note of updates on ongoing activities from CDENF members and from relevant Council of Europe bodies and observers, contributing to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) (see *infra*, point 8 and annex 2).

### **5.1 Strategic Objective 1: Freedom from violence for all children**

#### **5.1.1 Committee of Experts on the Prevention of Violence (ENF-VAE)**

15. The CDENF approved the Bureau's proposal to nominate Almudena Olaguíbel Echeverría-Torres (Spain) to fill the vacancy in the Committee of Experts on the Prevention of Violence (ENF-VAE).
16. The CDENF took note of the information presented by Marjo Malja (Finland), Chair of the ENF-VAE, on this Committee's work and welcomed the progress made. Marjo Malja outlined the participation of children, within the organisation of child consultations.
17. The CDENF took note of the information presented by Megan Campbell (consultant), who gave an overview of the new draft recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, as approved by the ENF-VAE during its last meeting on 7-8 October 2025.

18. Anne Kayser-Attuil, Secretary of the ENF-VAE, recalled that delegations were invited to submit comments on the first draft recommendation during the stakeholder consultations. The ENF-VAE, during its meetings in June and October 2025, reviewed and took these comments into account.
19. The CDENF exchanged views on the revised draft recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to provide further guidance to the ENF-VAE.
  - a. France requested that the elements on which sexuality education is based be defined in a less restrictive manner, to complete the definition of consent, that the offenses covered in the Lanzarote Convention appear more clearly in the definition of sexual violence, more explicit references to gender equality, pornography, female genital mutilation, and the inclusion of a definition of violence on grounds of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC). In response to Italy (b), France also emphasized bodily autonomy and SRHR as essential components and objectives of sexuality education.
  - b. Italy welcomed improvements and particularly the references to interpersonal and mutual respect and relationships, but maintained concerns about the term bodily autonomy, preferring bodily integrity.
  - c. Switzerland noted the importance of the focus on training of specialists and professionals and questioned the role to be given to parents.
  - d. Portugal proposed amending paragraph 4.1 to “recognise and **communicate** all forms of violence against children.”
  - e. Finland highlighted links with its new Non-Violent Childhood Action Plan and welcomed the flexibility for diverse national approaches.
  - f. Ireland emphasised the importance of teachers’ professional judgment in delivering sexuality education.
  - g. CINGO reiterated the importance of the draft recommendation and thanked the committee for their ongoing work and progress.
20. The Secretariat called for delegations to submit written comments on the draft by **15 January 2026**, in preparation of ENF-VAE’s next meeting in March 2026. in view of finalising the drafting and presenting a revised version of the draft recommendation and a draft explanatory memorandum at the next plenary meeting in June 2026.
21. Maria Asensio Velasco, from the Children’s Rights Division, presented the results of the recently completed [OCSEA \(Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse\)](#) project, and shared [materials for legal professionals](#) and [materials for frontline professionals](#) produced through the project.

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

22. The Secretariat updated the Committee on the ongoing dissemination of the Guide to children’s participation in decisions regarding their health, launched in April 2025, noting the availability of the [guide and/or its child-friendly version in several languages](#).

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

### **5.3.1 Child rights impact assessment tool (CRIA+) on artificial intelligence**

23. The CDENF took note of the presentation by Sophie Kiladze, Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, on the drafting process of a joint statement on Artificial Intelligence and the Rights of the Child, to be signed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNICEF and others.

24. Célia Chamiça, CDENF Reference Person for Digital Technologies and Artificial Intelligence, reported on her mission-related activities, including her participation in meetings on behalf of the CDENF, and other relevant contributions.
25. The Committee further took note of the presentation by Manon Baert from the 5Rights Foundation on the main elements of a possible Child Rights Impact Assessment tool on Artificial Intelligence (CRIA), designed to assess and mitigate the potential impact of Artificial Intelligence on children's rights and to promote a child-centred and rights-respecting digital environment.
26. Albina Ovcearenco, Secretary of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI), gave an overview of the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law; and the Methodology and Model 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).
27. The CDENF instructed the Secretariat to pursue its work on a CRIA in close co-operation with the CAI.

#### **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 (Joint session with the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) and European Committee on criminal Co-operation (CDPC)***

28. The CDENF and the CDCJ took note of the workplan provided by Tanja Gerwien, Co-Secretary of the CDENF and Gerald Dunn, Secretary of the CDCJ, for producing a Thematic Review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice.
29. The CDENF and CDCJ took note of the information provided by Susanna Greijer, one of the two independent consultants responsible for preparing the report on the Thematic Review of the Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice, who presented the ongoing work, and the progress made. Susanna Greijer also provided an overview of the main outcomes of the stakeholder consultation on the Thematic Review.
30. The CDENF and CDCJ shared their comments and guidance with Susanna Greijer and the Secretariat and instructed the Secretariat to proceed with the Report on the Thematic Review of the Guidelines in the light of the consultation and the discussion.

##### ***5.4.3 Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and interagency services (ENF-JUS)***

31. Tanja Gerwien, Secretary of the ENF-JUS, provided an overview of the first two meetings of the ENF-JUS, which took place in May and in October 2025.
32. The CDENF took note of the on-going work of the ENF-JUS. Susanna Greijer, independent consultant, presented the progress made in preparing a first draft recommendation on multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice, including guidelines.
33. The CDENF shared comments and provided guidance to the ENF-JUS in its on-going work on this draft recommendation.

34. Ivana Celio Cega, Independent Human Rights Expert, presented the EU-CoE Joint Barnahus Practical Guidance for national authorities on how to design and implement a reform to apply the Barnahus model, which outlines the strategic foundations and implementation pathway of the Barnahus model as an exemplary multidisciplinary and interagency approach.

## **5.5 Strategic Objective 5: Giving a voice to every child**

### **5.5.1 Implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18**

#### **5.5.2 Draft Guidelines for developing a national children's participation strategy**

35. The CDENF took note of the presentation by Professor Catherine Larkins on the state of play of work related to child participation, which includes the implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 and the development of Guidelines for a national children's participation strategy, highlighting that it will build on existing tools such as the child participation assessment tool (CPAT).
36. The Secretariat outlined the proposed methodology and timeline, which includes the preparation of a draft concept note in 2025; data collection (through desk review, a targeted online survey and interactive exchanges), analysis and piloting of consultation materials in 2026; and submission of draft deliverables to the CDENF in 2027.
37. The Secretariat encouraged States to identify existing children's groups or national mechanisms that could support voluntary child consultations in 2026 as a part of these activities. The Committee took note that consultations with children are planned for April-June 2026. Malta, Ireland and Romania expressed their interest to discuss what this entails and potentially provide support.
38. The Committee held an exchange of views to inform the next steps:
  - a. Switzerland referred to youth participation in the youth sector as a possible reference for children's participation and highlighted its relevance in the context of the New Pact for Democracy.
  - b. Ireland expressed strong support for the work, and shared information about their [national participation strategy](#) and its [youth friendly version](#), recently [launched eLearning module](#), and [further background](#), which may be of interest to the Committee.
  - c. Romania reported on recent legislative developments introducing designated child-participation focal points in all public authorities and ongoing efforts to develop methodological guidance, supported by UNICEF.
  - d. Croatia emphasised the need for clear mechanisms and accountability measures to ensure meaningful child participation in practice.
  - e. Portugal informed the Committee of data collected through the EU and CoE's joint project CP4Europe, including consultations with children and stakeholders that resulted in a [national White Paper on Child Participation](#), also available in a [child-friendly](#), bilingual version, noting that these materials may support the Committee's forthcoming work.

## **6. Mainstream perspectives and other transversal issues**

39. The CDENF Gender Equality Rapporteur, Panagiota Margaroni (Greece), noted that gender equality considerations are explicitly reflected in the CDENF's work, including the draft

recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education. The Rapporteur underlined that mainstreaming gender equality is a shared responsibility of the whole Committee and reminded and encouraged delegations to follow the Council of Europe Online HELP course on gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

40. The Secretariat called for rapporteurs on other mainstreamed perspectives or transversal issues, notably in the areas of youth, Roma and traveller inclusion and the rights of people with disabilities. Alternatively, the Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Bureau, will follow up on relevant transversal activities in the Council of Europe.

## **8. Co-operation with other relevant Council of Europe bodies and other institutions and observers**

41. 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 Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027):

- a. Ellsworth Camilleri, Co-Secretary of the [Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics](#) (ADI-SOGIESC), informed the Committee of the recent adoption of [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2025\)7](#) on the equal rights of intersex persons, which places bodily integrity, individual autonomy and the best interests of the child at its centre, and outlined next steps to support its implementation across member States.
- b. Carolina Lasen Diaz, Secretary of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of [PACE](#), presented the recent PACE [Resolution on sexual violence against men and boys](#), emphasising the need to address gendered perceptions and stigma, and ensuring coherence with CDENF's work on violence prevention through comprehensive sexuality education.
- c. Yanna Parnin, Secretary of the [Gender Equality Commission \(GEC\)](#) informed of the recent approval of the [Recommendation on equality and artificial intelligence](#) which provides practical guidance to prevent discrimination across the entire AI lifecycle and expressly recognises the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children and young people.
- d. Flurina Frei, also from GEC Secretariat, updated the Committee on the draft [combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls \(PCeVio\)](#), which includes child-friendly approaches to addressing technology-facilitated violence.
- e. Sophio Gelashvili, from the [European Committee on Legal Cooperation \(CDCJ\)](#), provided updates on the work of the [Committee of Experts on Access to Origins](#) relating to the rights of donor-conceived persons. She underscored the complexity of issues linked to identity and access to origins and appreciated active participation of CDENF representative Marino di Nardo.
- f. Philippe Krantz, also from the CDCJ Secretariat, reported on ongoing work relating to [statelessness](#), including follow-up to its feasibility study and development of a new recommendation aimed at reducing childhood statelessness and strengthening safeguards in nationality procedures.
- g. Jean-Marie Bouverat, CDENF member representing Switzerland, informed the Committee about the activities of the Youth Department, namely the adoption of the new European Charter on Youth Participation and the launch of [Compasito](#), a new online human rights education resource for children.
- h. Cesare Pitea, Secretary of the [Committee of Experts on online safety and empowerment of content creators and users \(MSI-eSEC\)](#) presented the outcome of the work on online safety and empowerment of content creators and users, explaining the

Recommendation's focus on content rules, intermediary liability and platform accountability. Children were recognised as a category requiring dedicated risk mitigation, and platforms and States retain primary responsibility for protection.

- i. The Lanzarote Committee reported on two implementation reports adopted in July 2025, on [data collection mechanisms on child sexual exploitation and abuse](#), also the theme of the annual day for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse on 18 November 2025 (request to share any activity carried out on this occasion), and on [protecting children from sexual abuse in the circle of trust](#). Key findings included the need for comprehensive criminalisation, protections against intrafamilial abuse, responses to harmful sexual behaviour, strengthened investigative safeguards and improved monitoring of convicted offenders. The ongoing compliance procedure on ICT-facilitated sexual abuse is expected to conclude in 2026.
- j. Missing Children Europe updated the Committee on recent initiatives, including [recommendations](#) in relation to the DATA Missing Project, the [iCare2](#) mediation Train-the-Trainers event, the [Young Queer and Away from Home](#) project with IGLYO, and the launch of the [Combat Online Grooming project](#). It also reported on progress under the [Guard-Up project](#) to strengthen guardianship systems for unaccompanied minors, the 2025 Artist Missing awareness-raising campaign with the [#FindingHome website](#), and preparation for its 2026 annual conference in Cyprus.
- k. Eurochild announced the publication of its flagship [Equal Childhoods report](#).

## **9. Elections to the Bureau**

42. The CDENF elected for the period from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2027, the three following Bureau members: Mary Gasparian (Armenia), Marjo Malja (Finland) and Célia Chamiça (Portugal).

## **10. Appointments**

43. The CDENF welcomed the designation of Ombeline Lesselier (France) as CDENF reference person for migration and asylum.

## **11. Any other business**

44. Participants did not raise any additional issues.

## **12. Date and place of next meetings**

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

- 2-4 June 2023, Strasbourg: 13<sup>th</sup> CDENF plenary meeting;
- 25-27 November 2026, Strasbourg: 14<sup>th</sup> CDENF plenary meeting (new dates).

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

46. The abridged meeting report was approved during the meeting by all members present.

## Appendix I – Agenda

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**1. Opening of the meeting**

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

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

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**4. Review of progress**

- Evaluation of completed activities
- Updated Terms of Reference
- Updated workplan

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

*Main deliverable 8 and main task (iii)*

- Presentation of Report of the Mid-term review conference (3-4 April 2025)
- Exchange of views on the draft implementation report of the Strategy for the right of the child regarding the period 2024-2025

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**5.1 Strategic Objective 1: Freedom from violence for all children**

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

Draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter-alia preventing and combating violence against children and its Draft Explanatory Memorandum

*Main deliverable 9*

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

**5.2.1 Child rights impact assessment tool (CRIA+) on artificial intelligence**

*Main deliverable 7*

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

**5.3.1 Council of Europe recommendations on protecting rights of children in parental separation and care proceedings and their Explanatory Memoranda**

*Main deliverable 1 and 2*

Launch of the two recommendations jointly with the [European Committee on Legal Co-operation \(CDCJ\)](#)

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**5.3.2 Thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice**

*Main deliverable 13*

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**5.3.3 Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and interagency services (ENF-JUS)**

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*Main deliverable 12*

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**5.4 Strategic Objective 5: Giving a voice to every child**

**5.4.1 Implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18**

*Main deliverable 10*

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**5.4.2 Draft Guidelines for developing a national children's participation strategy**

*Main deliverable 11*

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**6. Transversal issues:**

- a. Mainstreaming of gender, youth, rights of persons with disabilities and of Roma and Traveller issues  
*main task (xvii)*
- b. Contribution to the UNSDGs  
*main task(xx)*

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**7. Update on ongoing activities from CDENF members**

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**8. Co-operation with other relevant Council of Europe bodies and committees and other institutions and observers**

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**9. Elections to the Bureau**

Bureau members (3)

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**10. Appointments**

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**11. Any other business**

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**12. Date and place of next meeting**

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

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**Appendix II – Update on ongoing activities from CDENF members**

See restricted document