



Building a Europe
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Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants



Strasbourg, 17 November 2021

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Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDEF)

Fourth plenary meeting

Abridged Report

Strasbourg, 13 – 15 October 2021

By videoconference

Prepared by the Children's Rights Division

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Draft Abridged Report

Meeting details

The Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) held its fourth meeting in Strasbourg in an online format on 13-15 October 2021 with Ms Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou (Greece) in the Chair.

The agenda of the meeting is contained in the Appendix. The full report of the meeting including the list of participants will be made available on the CDENF's webpage.¹

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair **opened** the meeting and welcomed CDENF members, participants observers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and order of business

The Committee **adopted** its agenda and order of business as it appears in the Appendix.

3. Statement by the Chair and the Secretariat

The Chair **drew attention** to the main objective of the meeting which was to examine and the draft Strategy in view of its approval before submission for adoption by the Committee of Ministers in early 2022.

Ms Regína Jensdóttir, Head of the Children's Rights Division, reminded delegations of the **relevance of the new Strategy**, not only as a response to topical issues, but also as the result of an inclusive process, involving other Council of Europe bodies, international partner organisations, and more than 220 children from 10 member States. She **expressed her gratitude** to the Italian government for their support to the Strategy Launching Conference in April 2022.

4. CDENF's tasks and activities: review of progress, evaluation of completed activities and next steps

The Committee **took note and approved** the updated CDENF workplan for 2021 and the proposed work programme for 2022 (subject to the approval of the terms of reference for the CDENF).

4.1 Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) (CDENF specific task (i))

The Committee

- following delays taken in the preparation of the final implementation report on the current Strategy (2016-2021), **decided** to adjourn its approval to the next CDENF plenary meeting;
- **took note** of the fact that notably the activities 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) and of the Working Group on responses to violence against children (CDENF-GT-VAE) would be pursued in 2022.

¹ www.coe.int/cdenf

4.2. Preparation of the Council of Europe draft Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) (CDENF specific tasks (ii) + (vi))

Item 4.2.a. Review of the draft Strategy

The Committee

- **agreed to consider** content-related comments to the draft Strategy, submitted by CDENF members, participants and observers in advance of the meeting, which had not been previously discussed and agreed upon by a majority of members, either at the 3rd CDENF plenary meeting (18- 20 May 2021) or the CDENF plenary session dedicated to the review of the draft Strategy (14-15 June 2021);
- **proceeded with the in-depth consideration** of a number of comments made and changes proposed to the draft Strategy and decided to include some of them;
- **took note of the reservations** expressed by three delegations (Hungary, the Russian Federation and Turkey) regarding any reference made in the draft Strategy to the terms “gender”, “gender-based”, “sexual orientation”, “homophobia”, “transphobia”, or “LGBTI” with specific arguments put forward by each delegation;
- **took note of reservations** put forward by two delegations (the Russian Federation and Turkey) about the references made to future work to be undertaken to develop age-appropriate and comprehensive sexuality education;
- **took note of the reservations** put forward by two delegations (the Russian Federation and Turkey) about references made to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) which they were not parties to;
- **took note of the reservation** made by the Russian Federation regarding the appropriateness to reference legal instruments and policy documents of the European Union, related to the rights of the child;
- **took note of the reservations** expressed by two Delegations (Hungary and the Russian Federation) on the inclusion of certain words and word-combinations in the part reflecting the proposals coming from children;
- **decided** not to include the changes proposed relating to the above-mentioned reservations into the draft Strategy;
- **took note of the two dissenting opinions** submitted by the Russian Federation and Turkey towards the end or right after the meeting, that would be appended to the full meeting report;
- **approved** the draft Strategy as revised during the meeting;
- **instructed the Secretariat** to submit the draft Strategy, as approved, to the Committee of Ministers for adoption during one of its upcoming meetings.

4.2. Preparation of the Council of Europe draft Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) (CDENF specific tasks (ii) + (vi))

Item 4.2.b. Presentation by children and facilitators on their proposals for a future Council of Europe Strategy

The Committee

- **heard an address** by Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy (DGII) of the Council of Europe;
- **heard an address by** Ms Elda Moreno, Head of the Children's Rights and Sport Values Department;
- **heard and welcomed the presentations made by children (by video) from the ten Council of Europe member states** (Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Greece, Italy,

Montenegro, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain) having participated in the child consultation process on the draft Strategy for the Rights of the Child, involving a total of 220 children between March and July 2021 and agreed to include the key recommendations by children in the draft Strategy.

4.2. Preparation of the Council of Europe draft Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) (CDENF specific tasks (ii) + (vi))

Item 4.2.c. State of play of the organisation of the Launching conference of the Strategy

The Committee

- **took note** of the information provided by Mr Alfredo Ferrante (Italy) and the Secretariat, on the organisation of the High-level Launching Conference on the new Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022 to 2027) to take place in Rome, Italy on 7-8 April 2022 under the Italian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

4.3. Work to enhance the implementation of international and Council of Europe standards on the protection of children from violence in member states (CDENF specific task (iii))

The Committee

- **took note** of a presentation by Ms Simona Florescu, independent expert, on the outcomes of the survey on national mechanisms for professionals to report violence against children led amongst all CDENF delegations in 2021;
- **took note** of the information provided by the Secretariat with regard to the upcoming 2nd and 3rd CDENF webinars on “Covid-19 and Children’s Rights”, concerning mental health and intrafamily violence in particular, to be held on 22 November 2021.

4.4. The protection of the best interests of the child in situations of parental separation and in childcare proceedings (CDENF specific task (iv) 1))

The Committee

- **took note** and discussed the information presented by the Secretariat on the state of play of the Committee of Experts on the protection of the best interest of the child in situations of parental separation and in care proceedings (CJ/ENF-ISE), set up jointly with the European Committee on Legal Cooperation (CDCJ), and welcomed the upcoming child consultation process.

4.5. The rights of children and children’s participation in the decision-making process in the biomedical field (DH-BIO) (CDENF specific tasks (iv) 2 and (vi))

The Committee

- **took note** of the information provided by the Secretariat on the work underway regarding the rights of children and children’s participation in the decision-making process in the biomedical field, jointly with the Steering Committee on Bioethics (DH-BIO), including the constitution of the drafting group which will convene for a first meeting on 29 November 2021.

4.6. CDENF opinions (CDENF main task (iv))

The Committee

- **took note** of and discussed the information presented by the Secretariat on the draft opinion prepared through a written procedure on PACE Rec 2206(2021) on “The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children’s rights”.

5. Co-operation and synergies with other relevant Council of Europe bodies and committees, international organisations and civil society

The Committee

- **heard and took note** of updates on current activities shared by the EU delegation, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the European Network of Ombudspersons (ENOC), the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, as well as the representatives of the Council of Europe Joint Committee on Youth and the Lanzarote Committee.

6. Co-operation projects

The Committee

- **took note** of the information presented by the Secretariat on ongoing co-operation projects in the areas of juvenile justice, on ending online child sexual abuse and exploitation in Europe, and on promoting child participation, including with the support of CDENF delegations.

7. Working methods and evaluation of activities (CDENF main task (xi))

The Committee

- **took note** of the main changes introduced by Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods, as compared to Resolution CM/Res(2011)24, which it will replace by 1 January 2022.

8. Election to the Bureau

Subject to the adoption of its new terms of reference (2022-2025), the Committee

- **re-elected** Ms Ružica Boškić (Slovenia) and Mr Joost Van Haelst (Belgium) as Bureau members for a second two-years’ mandate, starting from 1 January 2022;
- **elected** Mr Alfredo Ferrante (Italy) as a Bureau member for a first two-years’ mandate, starting from 1 January 2022, renewable once.

9. Any other business

- Participants did not raise any other business.

10. Date and place of next meeting

The Committee **took note**, notably of the following upcoming meetings:

- 1-3 February 2022 (online): Plenary session dedicated to the rights of children in migration;
- 7-8 April 2022 (Rome): High-level Conference to launch the new Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027);

Subject to any last comments presented in writing directly after the present meeting, the Committee also **agreed** to the proposed calendar for main meetings to be held in 2022.

11. Approval of the abridged report of the session

This abridged report was sent to all national delegations after the meeting, for approval via written procedure.

Appendix**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. CDENF's tasks and activities: review of progress, evaluation of completed activities and next steps**
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- 4.1. Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) (CDENF specific task (i))**
- a. Presentation of and approval of the draft implementation report
 - b. Presentation of the state of play and final tasks ahead
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- 4.2. Preparation of the Council of Europe draft Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) (CDENF specific tasks (ii) + (vi))**
- a. Review of the draft Strategy, as revised:
 - during and following the dedicated Plenary session (14-15 June 2021)
 - based on the results of the child consultations led in ten member states
 - b. Presentation by children and facilitators on their proposals for a future Council of Europe Strategy
 - c. State of play of the organisation of the Launching conference of the Strategy, to be held on 6-8 April 2022 in Rome/Italy
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- 4.3. Work to enhance the implementation of international and Council of Europe standards on the protection of children from violence in member states (CDENF specific task (iii))**
- a. Consideration of the draft analysis report on national mechanisms for professionals to report violence against children, as prepared by the CDENF-GT-VAE Working Group
 - b. European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (18 November) and CDENF webinar on intrafamily violence and mental health
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- 4.4. The protection of the best interests of the child in situations of parental separation and in childcare proceedings (CDENF specific task (iv) 1))**
- State of play of the work process, including the launch of a child consultation process, in the CJ/ENF-ISE Sub-Committee
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- 4.5. The rights of children and children's participation in the decision-making process in the biomedical field (DH-BIO) (CDENF specific tasks (iv) 2 and (vi))**
- State of preparations towards the set-up of a joint Drafting group by the CDENF and the Committee on Bioethics (DH-BIO), to prepare a draft guide to good practices concerning the participation of children in the decision-making process on matters regarding their health
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- 4.6. CDENF opinions (if appropriate) (CDENF main task (iv))**
- a. Final draft opinion by the CDENF on PACE Recommendation 2206 (2021) on the Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's rights
 - b. Final response by the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly on PACE Recommendation 2196 (2021) on the Impact of labour migration on left-behind children
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- 5. Co-operation and synergies with other relevant Council of Europe bodies and committees, international organisations and civil society (CDENF specific task (ix))**
 - a. European Union's priorities according to the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2021-2024)
 - b. Oral updates by other international organisations, Council of Europe bodies and committees, and civil society organisations

- 6. Co-operation projects**

- 7. Working methods and evaluation of activities (CDENF main task (xi))**
 - a. New Committee of Minister's Resolution on intergovernmental committees and their working methods as of 2022

- 8. Election to the Bureau**

- 9. Any other business**

- 10. Date and place of next meetings**

- 11. Approval of the abridged meeting report**

- 12. Closing**
