



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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CDENF/Bu(2021)PV2  
20 April 2021

**Fifth meeting of the Bureau  
of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)  
12-13 April 2021**

**Meeting report**

**1. Opening of the meeting**

1. The Bureau of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) held its fifth meeting on 12-13 April 2021 (via videoconference).
2. The CDENF Chair, Ms Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou (Greece), opened the meeting and welcomed the other Bureau members.

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

3. The revised draft agenda was adopted as it appears in Appendix I. The list of participants appears in Appendix II.

**3. Statement by the Secretariat**

4. The Bureau was informed that the Committee of Ministers, at its 1399<sup>th</sup> meeting at Deputy Level (17 March 2021), had taken note of the report on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)9 on “life projects for unaccompanied minors” and of the abridged report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> plenary meeting of the CDENF; and had postponed the discussion and adoption of the Draft Declaration on “the need to protect children’s privacy in the digital environment”.
5. The Bureau took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the main objectives of the present meeting, which included the review of progress made under the current Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) and towards the preparation of the new Strategy (2022-2027) as well as an outlook to the Programme and Budget, including intergovernmental deliverables to be foreseen under the next, now quadrennial, Terms of Reference.

#### 4. Review of progress (updated CDENF working plan for the biennium)

6. The Bureau was informed about the changes and updates included in the working plan for the CDENF, which covered a new date for the Plenary meeting on migration (14 and 15 June 2021), a final date for the Regional Discussion on children's rights and alternative care (1 June 2021), and the date of the Joint Bureau meeting of the CDCJ and CDENF (24 June 2021) to follow-up on the work of the CJ/ENF-ISE. All meetings are foreseen to take place online.
7. The Bureau decided to postpone the second event of the CDENF webinar series on COVID-19 and Children's Rights with a focus on violence against children, originally scheduled to take place in June 2021, to a later date. In order to identify good practice to be shared at the next webinar, the CDENF would be invited to share such practice via a relevant response form to be sent out after the next meeting.

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

8. The Bureau took note of the state of advancement in drafting the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), which would cover a period of 6 years and subsequently deploy action in 3 biennial action plans. It was highlighted that the progress of the new Strategy would be subject to a mid-term review through a conference but would not entail the preparation of a separate comprehensive report as done previously; formal reporting would be carried out through biennial implementation reports present to the Committee of Ministers.
9. The Bureau heard an update on the developments of the child consultation process currently kicked off to take place in 10 member states with the support of an expert consortium composed by Defense for Children International (DCI) Italy, and welcomed the direct involvement of member states and children in the process.
10. The Bureau heard a presentation by the Secretariat on the new Strategy's structure and main features, which sees the 5 priority areas of the current Strategy unchanged and the addition of a sixth one focussing on children in crisis and emergency situations. The other main new elements are represented by: 1) the integration of **cross-cutting elements** reflected in the joint use of gender sensitive, anti-discrimination and child participation approaches; 2) the **variable** nature of the Strategy through systematic consultations and the promotion of multi-stakeholder cooperation and flexibility to host emerging challenges; 3) the **action-oriented** structure of the Strategy which encompassed implementation activities of existing key standards as well as innovative focus areas to be explored, besides providing for a results-chain framework to increase accountability and keep track of progress made in its implementation.
11. The Bureau examined the Strategy integrally, adding or commenting on individual paragraphs or terms, but generally appreciating its clear structure and comprehensiveness, which at the same time allowed for flexibility to adapt to new challenges that might arise. The enhanced quality of the substance of the document was also noted welcoming, *inter alia*, the integration of the sixth priority area.
12. The Bureau held an exchange of views on several topical issues of the new Strategy including, *inter alia*, child participation, pointing to the fact that reference to EU documents was frequent but that not all non-EU member states would feel fully represented here. The Secretariat would substitute such references with the outcomes of the child consultations undertaken by the Council of Europe as soon as results were available. The Bureau proposed to clarify the co-existence of child participation as both a priority area and a cross-cutting issue in the document. The Bureau also noted the need to increase references to the best interests

of the child throughout the document, in order to emphasise that this principle must be taken into account in all decisions concerning the child, rather than in judicial proceedings only.

## **6. Upcoming CDENF meetings**

### **6.1 Third plenary meeting of the CDENF (18-20 May 2021)**

13. The Bureau examined the draft Agenda of the CDENF third plenary meeting which would take place online and approved it subject to a number of editorial changes.

### **6.2 Plenary Session on Migration**

14. The Bureau examined and approved the preliminary draft agenda for the CDENF plenary session on migration taking place on 14-15 June 2021, aimed at finalising the work started by the CAHENF on two main issues, i.e. guardianship and age assessment. The Bureau emphasised the importance of prioritising the approval of the age assessment instrument to set legal standards for such procedures. The Bureau agreed to send the relevant documents to CDENF members and observers for comments in advance, specifying that the exchange in the plenary would focus on those paragraphs for which comments had been made. The Bureau also considered the importance of CDENF delegations co-ordinating with their respective governments in advance of the meeting in order to clarify and duly coordinate for the decisions to be taken.

## **7. Draft Programme and budget for 2022-2025**

15. The Bureau was informed about the draft programme and budget for 2022-2025, as well as the process ahead, The Bureau took note of a possible extension, in view of anticipated delays, of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the CJ/ENF-ISE and of the task list and thus activity of the CDENF-GT-VAE Working group in 2022.

## **8. 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)**

16. The Bureau heard an update on the CJ/ENF-ISE developments and the work ahead, including the discussion of the feasibility studies for a draft instrument or tool on the best interests of the child in parental separation situations and in care proceedings to take place at the next meeting (14-15 April), as well as a final date for the Joint Bureau meeting of the CDENF and CDCJ (24 June 2021) for the adoption of the feasibility studies and the decision on the type of instruments or tools to be developed, after circulation for written comments to CDENF and CDCJ delegations.

17. The Bureau considered the Secretariat's proposal for a workplan envisaging consultations with both children and stakeholders, to be carried out throughout 2022 subject to the Committee of Ministers' approval to extend the ToR.

18. The Bureau emphasised the relevance and importance of the work currently carried out by the CJ/ENF-ISE and expressed their support to the finalisation of work by the Committee of Experts beyond its current mandate.

## **9. Work of the Working Group on responses to violence against children (CDENF-GT-VAE)**

19. The Bureau heard an update on the continuous CDENF-GT-VAE activity towards a draft recommendation on mechanisms for professionals to report violence against children and was informed of the focus of the next CDENF-GT-VAE meeting (22-23 April 2021), concerning the integral examination of the draft prepared by the consultant. It would also hear back from the analysis of the responses provided to the survey launched in the Working Group to explore states' existing laws, policies and practices on the topic, which had provided substantive information for a non-binding instrument but revealed an interest for further exploring specific aspects in all CDENF member states. An extended survey was currently being prepared by the relevant consultant and planned to be launched at the next CDENF plenary.

20. The Bureau took note of the developments on the second subject matter dealt by the Group, concerning harmful sexual behaviour by children, for which the preparation of a mapping study, including an additional survey, was still under consideration, for various reasons, including the number of questionnaires to be sent to the CDENF over the next months, which could possibly represent a considerable challenge for some CDENF delegations. However, the Bureau generally noted an interest in pursuing this activity in a way yet to be defined to bridge the gap between, *inter alia*, harmful sexual behaviour and issues to be dealt with under the new Strategy, such as sex and relationship education.

## **10. Preparation of a draft opinion for the attention of the Committee of Ministers on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2196 (2021) on Impact of labour migration on left-behind children**

21. The Bureau examined a draft opinion prepared by the Secretariat on PACE Recommendation 2196 (2021), welcoming the initiative of the PACE and reiterating the CDENF's commitment, within the remits of its mandate, to consider situations of vulnerability for children across all of its priority areas. The Bureau agreed for the draft opinion to be circulated among Delegations for tacit approval within a week in view of its submission to the Committee of Ministers by 30 April 2021.

## **11. Update on recent implementation and co-operation activities and partnerships**

22. The Bureau was informed on the numerous ongoing co-operation activities supporting the implementation of Council of Europe standards in relation to projects on preventing violence against children concerning policy making and addressing priority needs in legislative terms (Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) as well as technical projects to support the establishment of Barnahus (Slovenia and Finland). In addition, the updates on the newly established project in Slovenia on the diversion of children from the justice system were made. The official launch of the joint CoE and EU project CP4Europe aimed at strengthening the involvement of children in decision-making in 5 member states (Czech Republic, Finland, Iceland, Portugal and Slovenia) was announced, and the innovative tools that would be developed in the framework of such project were mentioned, along with the use of existing Council of Europe ones such as CPAT. Finally, the Secretariat informed about the launch of two new projects with the European Commission DG-reform, relating to juvenile justice and Barnahus respectively.

23. The Bureau took note of the participation of the Council of Europe Coordinator for the Rights of the Child in an online conference on the new EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child

on 12 April 2021 and of the partnership meeting held with the European Commission and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) on future opportunities for collaboration.

### **12.1 Recent event**

24. The Bureau was informed about the outcomes of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the CDENF webinar series on “COVID-19 and children’s rights” focusing on overcoming educational challenges (22 March 2021), which was attended by more than 80 participants and received excellent feedback from delegations. The Bureau welcomed the outcomes and discussed the format of the webinar expressing a preference for less dense programmes and the importance of ensuring more interactivity among participants through sessions organised as a dialogue between the moderator and invited speakers (for example through pre-defined questions), but also including the use of polls, more prominent engagement with chat statements/comments, and the possible use of interactive presentation software, such as Mentimeter or AHA-slides. The participation of children at the event was also regarded as an important feature by the Bureau, which agreed to keep on involving them in future webinars increasing their opportunities to interact with the audience.

### **12.2 Upcoming events**

25. The Bureau took note of the state of preparation of upcoming events, notably the launch of an online survey on national law and practice relating to children’s rights in alternative care in preparation to the regional exchange on alternative care to take place on 1 June 2021. In addition, upcoming online events within the framework of the World Forum for Democracy were presented, notably on “Children and youth leading the fight against Climate change”, in June 2021 (dates and possible participation of (a) CDENF member(s) to be confirmed). Finally, the Bureau took note of another remarkable event initiated by the CDCJ and the UNHCR which consisted of a conference on statelessness taking place on 22-24 September 2021, including the current condition of stateless children in the world.

### **13. Any other business**

26. Participants raised no other business.

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

27. The Bureau agreed to hold: a Joint Bureau meeting with the CDCJ on 24 June 2021 and its next meeting in mid-September 2021, at a date yet to be agreed between 10-17 September 2021 dedicated to the preparation of the fourth plenary meeting on 13-15 October 2021.

### **15. Approval of the list of decisions**

28. The Bureau considered the draft list of decisions and adopted it before the end of the meeting.

## APPENDIX I – Agenda

1.	<b>Opening of the meeting</b>	
2.	<b>Adoption of the agenda and order of business</b>	CDENF/Bu(2021)OJ2prov Reference document: <a href="#">CDENF/Bu(2021)PV1</a> Report of the fourth meeting of the Bureau
3.	<b>Statement by the Secretariat</b>	
4.	<b>Review of progress</b> (updated CDENF working plan for the biennium)	Reference document: <a href="#">CDENF(2020)21Rev3</a> – Schedule of CDENF activities and thematic priorities
5.	<b>Draft Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)</b> The Bureau is invited to examine the draft strategy in view of its presentation to the CDENF at its third plenary meeting.	Working document: CDENF/Bu(2021)07prov (restricted) Draft Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) Reference documents: <a href="#">Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021)</a> <a href="#">1st report on the implementation of the Strategy (2017)</a> <a href="#">Mid-term evaluation report (2019)</a> <a href="#">Report on the third priority area: “A life free from violence for all children” (2019)</a> <a href="#">2nd implementation report (2020)</a> <a href="#">COM(2021) 142 final EU strategy on the rights of the child</a>
6.	<b>Upcoming CDENF meetings</b>	
6.1	<b>Third plenary meeting of the CDENF (18-20 May 2021)</b> The Bureau is invited to examine the proposed draft agenda and priority issues to be discussed.	Working document: <a href="#">CDENF(2021)OJ1prov</a> – Draft agenda of the third plenary meeting Reference document: <a href="#">CDENF(2020)PV3</a> Report of the second meeting of the CDENF

6.2	<p><b>Plenary Session on Migration (14-15 June 2021)</b> The Bureau is invited to examine the proposed draft agenda.</p>	<p><a href="#">CDENF(2021)OJ2prov</a> – Draft agenda of the plenary session on migration</p>
7.	<p><b>Draft programme and budget for 2022 - 2025</b> The Bureau is invited to take note of the information provided by the Secretariat and use it as a basis for a discussion on the progress that has been achieved under the current Terms of Reference, the challenges ahead, and the identification of possible new priorities for the work of the CDENF taking into account the new priorities and actions defined in the draft Strategy.</p>	<p><u>Working documents:</u> <a href="#">CDENF/BU(2021)05</a> (restricted) - Draft programme and budget for 2022 - 2025 Proposal of priority actions for the years 2022-2025 <u>Reference documents:</u> <a href="#">CDENF(2020)21Rev3</a> – Schedule of CDENF activities and thematic priorities <a href="#">CDENF Terms of Reference 2020-2021</a></p>
8.	<p><b>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)</b> The Bureau will be informed on the agenda of the 3rd meeting of the CJ/ENF-ISE, to take place on 14-15 April, and on the next steps ahead, notably: <u>May 2021</u>: written consultation of CDENF and CDCJ delegations on the draft feasibility studies and the types of instruments/tools to be prepared; <u>End June 2021</u> (date to be confirmed): Joint bureau meeting (CDENF and CDCJ): Examination and approval of the draft feasibility studies, including the draft proposals on the types of instruments/tools to be prepared.</p>	<p><u>Reference documents:</u> <a href="#">CJ/ENF-ISE(2021)OJ1ANN</a> – Draft Agenda (annotated) of the 3rd CJ/ENF-ISE meeting <a href="#">CJ/ENF-ISE(2021)01Rev</a> - Working methods and workplan <a href="#">Terms of reference of the CJ/ENF-ISE</a></p>
9.	<p><b>Work of the Working Group on responses to violence against children (CDENF-GT-VAE)</b> The Bureau will be informed on the agenda of the 4th meeting of the CDENF-GT-VAE Working Group, to take place on 22-23 April, and the next steps ahead, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notably continuous work towards a draft Recommendation on the Development of effective mechanisms for professionals to report violence against children;</li> <li>- Possibly, if a need for this is identified by the Working Group, the organisation of an extended survey on VAC reporting mechanisms in all member states represented on the CDENF (between May and July);</li> </ul> <p>The launch of a mapping study on national responses to harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) by children, on the basis of a survey to be led via the CDENF.</p>	<p><u>Reference document:</u> <a href="#">CDENF-GT-VAE(2021)OJ1</a> – Draft Agenda of the 4th CDENF-GT-VAE meeting</p>
10.	<p><b>Preparation of a draft opinion for the attention of the Committee of Ministers on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2196 (2021) on Impact of labour migration on left-behind children</b> The Bureau is invited to examine a draft opinion prepared by the Secretariat and to decide on further steps with regard to its</p>	<p><u>Working documents:</u> <a href="#">PACE Recommendation 2196 (2021)</a> <a href="#">CDENF/BU(2021)06prov</a> Draft opinion (restricted) <u>Reference documents:</u></p>

	finalisation and approval by the Committee prior to its submission to the Committee of Ministers by 30 April 2021	<a href="#">PACE Resolution 2366 (2021)</a> <a href="#">PACE Report Doc 15137</a>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Update on recent implementation and co-operation activities and partnerships</b>	
	<b>Recent event</b>	
<b>12.1</b>	1st CDENF online webinar to address challenges met under the COVID-19 pandemic: "Overcoming education challenges: from the right to education to implementation during the pandemic and planning long-term improvements", 22 March 2021	<u>Reference document:</u> <a href="#">Programme of the 1<sup>st</sup> webinar</a>
	The Bureau will be invited to exchange on the outcome of the webinar.	
	<b>Upcoming events</b>	
<b>12.2</b>	1 June 2021: <a href="#">Regional discussion on alternative care</a> to contribute to the 2021 UNCRC Day of General Discussion	<u>Reference document:</u> (Draft) Concept note on the organisation of a Regional Discussion on "children's rights and alternative care" (restricted)
	June 2021 (date to be confirmed): <a href="#">Second CDENF online webinar</a>	
	June 2021 (date to be confirmed): World Forum for Democracy Online events: "Children and youth leading the fight against Climate change"	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	
	<b>Date and place of next meetings</b>	
	The Bureau is invited to agree on the dates of its next meetings	
<b>14.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">End of June 2021</a> (date to be confirmed): Joint bureau meeting (CDENF and CDCJ)</li> <li>- <a href="#">September 2021</a>: Bureau meeting dedicated to the preparation of the fourth plenary meeting</li> </ul>	
<b>15.</b>	<b>Approval of the list of decisions</b>	



## **APPENDIX II – List of participants/ Liste de participants**

### **BUREAU MEMBERS / MEMBRES DU BUREAU**

Ms Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou (Chair)  
Attorney at Law, Supreme Court of Greece

Ms Rosário Farmhouse  
President of the National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and the  
Protection of Children and Young People, Portugal

Ms Ružica Boškić  
Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities,  
Slovenia

Ms Hanna Vsevirov  
Head of Department, Children and Families Department Ministry of Social Affairs,  
Estonia (excused on 13 April 2021)

### **DGII – Directorate General of Democracy**

Ms Regina Jensdottir  
Children's Rights Co-ordinator, Head of the Children's Rights Division / *Cheffe de la  
Division des droits des enfants et Coordinatrice du CdE pour les droits de l'enfant*

Ms Katrin Uerpmann  
Secretary to the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child  
Programme Officer / *Responsable de programme*

Ms Maren Lambrecht-Feigl  
Co-Secretary to the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child  
Programme Officer / *Responsable de programme*

Ms Stéphanie Burel  
Senior Project Officer / *Responsable principale de projet*  
Children's Rights Division / *Division des droits des enfants*

Ms Maria Asensio Velasco  
Policy Officer / *Chargée de mission*  
Children's Rights Division / *Division des droits des enfants*

Ms Anna Bracco  
Policy Officer / *Chargée de mission*  
Children's Rights Division / *Division des droits des enfants*

Mr Tapio Koivula  
Trainee / *Stagiaire*

