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**Committee on Social Affairs,
Health and Sustainable Development**

**Proposal for
the Child Safeguarding Policy
of the
Parliamentary Assembly
of the Council of Europe
(Reviewed on 05.03.2025)¹**

¹ approved by the Bureau of the Assembly on 22 May 2025.

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I. Introduction and background

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (the Assembly) is committed to promoting, developing, and protecting the rights of the child. The Assembly is convinced that to do this work effectively, it needs to listen to the children themselves, and to act upon their comments and suggestions.

2. The Assembly's undertaking to promote child participation is in line with relevant international standards and is part of a common trend in international and regional organisations. Child participation is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; also, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges children's right to participation as an essential part of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The EU and the Council of Europe Strategies on the Rights of the Child, as well as the European Commission's European Child Guarantee emphasise the importance of child participation.

3. The Assembly notes that working with children requires the existence of rules and procedures, to ensure that no harm is done to the wellbeing of the children concerned. The Assembly welcomes the drafting of the Organisation-wide safeguarding policy, which is currently under way. The present text is based on the Child safeguarding policy of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division. It will be either replaced or revised as required once the new Child safeguarding policy of the Council of Europe enters into force.

4. This policy also reflects the experience gained through the piloting of child participation during the preparation of reports on "The right to be heard – Child participation: a foundation for democratic societies" (Rapporteur: Baroness Massey, United Kingdom, SOC, 2022) and on "Inaction on climate change – a violation of children's rights" (Rapporteur: Ms De Temmerman, France, ALDE, 2021) but also the lessons learnt through the child consultation workshop on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education held in Rome in December 2024.

5. The legal basis for the Assembly's Child Safeguarding Policy is provided by paragraph 8 of Resolution 2414 (2022)² on "The right to be heard: child participation, a foundation for democratic societies", which outlines the following:

8. The Assembly undertakes to put child participation in practice in its own work as follows:

8.1 consult children, who have diverse backgrounds and thus are representative of our societies, in the preparation of the Assembly reports that concern them, in an appropriate way and with due respect to child safeguarding procedures, for example through written consultations, participation in hearings, focus groups and parliamentary networks; give children a voice in the debate of Assembly reports that concern them, for example by inviting a child representative to take the floor in the debate of the report in plenary or in the Standing Committee, and provide children with feedback on how their contributions were used and what impact they may have had;

8.2 monitor Assembly reports for compliance with the rights of the child and child participation;

8.3 pay particular attention to the participation of children in situations of vulnerability;

8.4 support systematic information sharing and synergies with other Council of Europe bodies, international and European institutions, such as UNICEF, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament, and with the voluntary sector;

8.5 consider facilitating annual reviews of child participation in parliaments, with the support of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) and with Eurochild.

II. Policy statement

6. The Council of Europe [Strategy for the Rights of the Children \(2022 – 2027\)](#) calls on States to uphold the human rights of children by protecting them from all forms of violence and discrimination, respecting their rights to education and encouraging child participation. The Assembly is committed to conducting its activities in full compliance with the rights of the child. Furthermore, it commits to protecting children from harm and ensuring the children's right to protection is fully realised.

III. Aim and scope of the policy

7. The aim of the PACE Child Safeguarding Policy is to:

² <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29686/html>

- prevent and minimise the risk of harm that may be caused to children, because of actions or neglect by staff, volunteers and interns, parliamentarians, experts and third parties hired for the activities the protection of children, who are involved in the work of the Assembly;
- create a safeguarding framework to be applied when the Assembly organises activities for or involving children;
- protect the PACE's reputation.

8. The policy applies directly to all staff of the Assembly, whether permanent, temporary, seconded or interns, to parliamentarians, volunteers, experts and contracted third parties who perform tasks under the activities for and with children implemented by the Assembly. They must be fully aware of this Policy and sign the Statement of commitment to the Parliamentary Assembly's Child Safeguarding Policy before participating in the activity. See Annex 2.

9. This Policy applies in all Council of Europe premises, as well as any other place in which Secretariat members may find themselves in connection with their work for the Organisation, and any place in which Parliamentary Assembly's activities occur. It also applies to online activity, including the use of social media.

10. The Policy covers all children who are involved in, or otherwise impacted by, the Parliamentary Assembly's activities in any way. This includes any children with whom Secretariat members or other relevant persons are in contact, by whatever media; as well as any children who visit the Organisation's premises, attend an event organised by the PACE or which takes place in the context of its activities; and children who otherwise participate in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities. It also covers any children whose personal data is processed or whose image or story is shared by the Organisation. The Policy applies at all times, both within and outside working hours.

11. The policy must be read in conjunction with other internal legal texts of the Council of Europe that govern the conduct of Secretariat members and other individuals involved in the Organisation's activities, including the Staff Regulations and Rules, and the Organisation's ethical framework, as well as the Code of Conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Regulation on the protection of personal data. These internal texts of the Council of Europe require the Organisation's staff members to base their professional conduct on a set of ethical values and include prohibitions on actions that could harm children.

IV. Principles

12. In its work and activities for and with children, the Assembly respects the following general principles:

Best interests of the child

In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. This includes considering their age, sex, other characteristics, needs, cultural background or any other factor that may contribute to causing harm; as well as their views on any given situation.

Informed consent

Throughout the whole child participation process, children and their parents should be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about the activity and their rights and should express their informed consent.

Do no harm principle

In line with the International Child Safeguarding Standards³, the "do not harm" principles refer to minimising any harm that may be caused inadvertently because of activities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It entails putting in place measures to prevent harm; assessing and mitigating risks of harm; and ensuring that, in the event that harm occurs, appropriate actions are taken to minimise its impact and to follow up appropriately with all those involved.

Right to be protected

Children have an inherent right to protection from violence and suicide. Development should be interpreted in its broadest sense, embracing the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological and social development.

³ International Child safeguarding developed by Keeping Children Safe is available here: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/KCS-ICS-Standards-EN-2024.pdf>

The right to be heard

Involving children in decision-making at individual, family, organisation and policy level in society is key to realising their rights. Children should be empowered to understand and enjoy their rights. They should be made aware of what is acceptable and what is not and what they can do if there is a problem or a concern.

Non-discrimination

The rights of the child apply to all children without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his/her parent's or legal guardian's race⁴, colour, sex, age, state of health, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status.

Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability are essential to ensure that poor practice can be addressed appropriately, potentially abusive behaviour challenged, and best practice promoted.

Data protection

All processing of personal data of children, including in communication and media activities, should be conducted in line with the Regulation outlining a data protection system for personal data files in the Council of Europe (CM(89)70) of 20 March 1989.

V. Child safeguarding relevant definitions

13. For the purposes of this child safeguarding policy, the following definitions apply.

Child - based on Article 1 of the UNCRC⁵ and Article 3 of the Lanzarote Convention⁶, a child means any person below the age of eighteen years.

Child safeguarding – all measures adopted to keep children safe, prevent and respond to harm possibly caused to them as a result of their involvement in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities. Child safeguarding includes both preventive actions to minimise the risks of harm occurring, and responsive actions to ensure that incidents which may happen are appropriately handled.

Child abuse/harm – any conduct or absence of conduct which harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development directly or indirectly. Child abuse can be physical, sexual and/or psychological in nature.

Parliamentary Assembly's activity – any debate of Assembly reports, either in plenary or in the Standing Committee, meetings (e.g. hearings, focus groups, side events), written or oral consultations, interviews conducted as part of fact-finding visits, social function, publication and communication, both online and in person, organised by the Parliamentary Assembly, both in all Council of Europe premises and in any place where Parliamentary Assembly's activities may occur.

Secretariat of the Assembly – any permanent and temporary staff contracted in accordance with the Council of Europe Staff Regulations⁷ as well as seconded officials and interns, who work for the Assembly.

Parliamentarian – any member of the Parliamentary Assembly being representative or substitute from national delegations from member States, special guests, observers, partners for democracy or other delegations.

Person involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities - any natural or legal person who participates or is otherwise involved in the activities organised by the Assembly.

⁴ In this Policy as in other Council of Europe documents, the term "race" is used in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as "belonging to another race" are not excluded from protection against discrimination.

⁵ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989. Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

⁶ Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), 2007. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680084822>

⁷ Staff Regulations – Current version in force from 1 January 2023. Available at: <https://search.coe.int/intranet/?i=0900001680782c27>

VI. Guidelines for conduct

a. Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children

14. Adults participating in activities involving children should:

- Respect and value children as full human beings and rights' holders. Respect towards children in the context of activities should include:
 - Always informing and engaging with children in ways that are appropriate and understandable to them;
 - Enable children to express themselves as they can, without patronising or otherwise showing any form of disrespect;
 - Avoid unnecessary or unconstructive criticism and adopt an encouraging attitude;
 - Ensure anonymity of children's views and act in a way that prevents all forms of retaliation against children (even after they have returned home/to their local context).
- Comply with all relevant laws concerning the protection of children in the country where the activity takes place, while respecting international legal standards;
- Have full regard to the principles outlined in this policy;
- Treat children and young people fairly and respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation;
- Be careful about perception and appearance in their language, actions and relationships with children; their behaviour should demonstrate respect for children and their rights. See Annexes 4 and 5 if you are a speaker or an interpreter during an event involving children;
- Use positive, non-violent methods to manage children's behaviour;
- Where possible and practical, follow the 'two-adult' rule, wherein two or more adults supervise all activities that involve children, and are always visible and present;
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns;
- Take appropriate action as required where they become aware or suspect that a child has experienced or is experiencing abuse. See Annex 6 for a template of a reporting incident form;
- Cooperate in child safeguarding related investigations (internal and external) and take steps to make available any documentary or other information necessary for the completion of the investigation.

15. Adults participating in activities involving children should not:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others;
- Take children to their home, especially where they will be alone with them;
- Contact children with direct messages on their phone, email or on their social media accounts, unless there is an explicit agreement and consent given by the child to be contacted on matters related to the event;
- Ask children to become their "friends" and "/or "followers" on social media;
- Share personal information, including their photos with children;
- Express opinions in such a way that might put children in an uncomfortable situation;
- Hug in general and touch children in a manner which might be considered intrusive and uncomfortable;
- Use any physical forms of punishment on a child, psychological and/or sexual violence, neglect or any types of violence on a child;
- Discriminate against, show different treatment toward, or favour children to the exclusion of others; stigmatise children (for example, based on gender, race, ability, class, or another factor);
- Expose children to hazardous work and illegal activities, such as the consumption of various drugs or alcohol, spending time out very late in the night, using unsafe means of transportation, etc.;
- Ignore a situation where a child is experiencing or is at risk of harm. Adults should take appropriate action;
- Distribute children's photos, videos, stories and statements or their private contact details in any form and on any communication channels, including social media channels. Any use of children's photos, videos, stories and statements can only be distributed upon consent of the children and their parents or legal guardian. See Annex 1;
- Violate children's other rights (for example, their right to privacy, to information and to participate in decisions concerning them).

b. Guidelines for using images and stories about children

16. The Council of Europe norms on the protection of privacy and of data protection shall apply to the use of images and stories about children.

17. When developing and using photos or videos featuring children involved in the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly, the following principles should be respected:

- **Informed consent:** Permission should always be sought from the children themselves before taking images. To the greatest extent possible, the organisation should acquire informed consent of the child, the child's parent or legal guardian, and/or the institution responsible for the child, before using any photo or video for publicity, fundraising, awareness raising, or any other purpose. The purpose should be made clear to the consent giver. See Annex 1 on various consent forms for children participating in event and their parents or legal guardians.
- **Privacy:** Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within a country and cause them to be put at risk should not be used in any form of communication for general or public purposes. Geotagging of images should be disabled when taking photographs.
- **Security:** Information about children's lives and images of children (including information stored on a computer) should be kept in secure files. Access to these should be limited to those who need to use them during their work.
- **Portrayal:** Images of children should portray the children in a dignified and respectful way. The image should not shame or embarrass a child and should be presented in context.

c. Guidelines for child participation in the activities of the Assembly

18. For child participation to be meaningful, the specific needs of children should be considered and accommodated for to the extent possible throughout the activity. See Annex 7 on issues which need to be considered when deciding about child participation and consultation events.

19. For the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly which involve participation of children, the principle of “do no harm” and “best interest of the child” should apply. Special attention should be paid to the particularly vulnerable groups of children (e.g. children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children in care, Roma⁸ children, children on the move or otherwise affected by migration, and children from minorities).

Initiating an activity

20. Meaningful participation starts at consultation on the activity concept. The possibility of child participation and the form in which it would be conducted should be considered during the initiation phase of the activity.

21. When inviting children to participate in an activity, they should be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and to have their views given due weight. They should be informed on how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact and should give their informed consent. See Annex 1 on various consent forms for children participating in event and their parents or legal guardians. Children should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.

Planning an activity

22. The children's involvement in the activity should be considered based on their potential or actual vulnerability. The methods of engagement and stage of involvement of children throughout the activity should be outlined.

23. Participation should be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalised children, to be involved. Children are not a homogenous group, and participation should provide for equality of opportunity for all, without discrimination on any grounds.

24. Potential risk situations during the planning phase are linked to communication with children. This is generally done through intermediary organisations that represent the interests of children or organisations run

⁸ The term “Roma” used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale, and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

by children. A safeguarding risk assessment about child safeguarding must be included in the planning phase of any activity involving children.

Implementing an activity

25. Environments and working methods should be adapted to children's evolving capacities. Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure that children are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views. Consideration should be given to the fact that children will need differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities. All individuals involved in the activities should be made aware of the "Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children" under subchapter VI a. of this document.

26. Potential risk situations during the activity include direct interaction with children when they are participating in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities. Organisations representing the interest of children, Secretariat of the Assembly, as well as members of the Parliamentary Assembly and other participants in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities are key groups involved.

27. The Parliamentary Assembly collaborates with expert organisations and individuals when organising child participation activities. These partnerships ensure that sound knowledge and best practice in supporting children to cooperate and communicate in a respectful manner is available. Furthermore, measures are in place to mitigate any risks of potential peer-to-peer safeguarding incidents.

Involving third parties

28. Parliamentary Assembly's activities may include activities where specific tasks are performed by third parties, either through service contracts or grant agreements. Specific risks are involved in the contracting of third parties and therefore the Secretariat of the Assembly should adopt preventive measures to minimise any risk.

29. Any member of the Secretariat of PACE involved in the organisation of Parliamentary Assembly's activities with and for children should, to the extent possible, take measures to ascertain the good character of adults encountering children in the context of activities. When risks are assessed as important, the Secretariat of PACE may request individuals involved in child participation activities to provide their criminal record.

Closing an activity

30. The experiences with child participation should be part of the documentation of lessons learned during the activity.

31. Reports on the activities should include information on the preparation of the activity, the results of the child participation and how it impacted on the outcomes of the activity.

32. Children should be informed as to how their views have been interpreted and used and, where necessary, provided with the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis of the findings. Children are also entitled to be provided with clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Wherever appropriate, children should be given the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes or activities. Monitoring and evaluation of children's participation should be undertaken, where possible, with children themselves.

Evaluating an activity

33. When appropriate, the final evaluation report should contain information on how the child participation was conducted and its impact on the outcomes of the project. The lessons learned should include child safeguarding as a factor of the evaluation.

VII. Reporting and responding to issues of concern

34. All individuals covered by this policy should be informed about the steps to take and whom to contact when concerns arise regarding the safeguarding of children.

35. All children involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities should be informed in a child-friendly manner about the child safeguarding policy.

36. A child safeguarding report should be made in the following instances that occur in the framework of the Parliamentary Assembly's activities:

- a potential case of abuse is observed or suspected;
- an allegation of abuse is being made;
- a child discloses abuse;
- a breach of the policy is reported or observed.

37. The reporting process should be as follows: informing the Head of Secretariat of the relevant Committee directly, in writing, of child protection concerns. If a child is in immediate danger, the Head of the Secretariat should directly contact the police and/or local child protection services as required by national law. The secretariat of PACE and the partners in the activity's implementation will extend full cooperation with competent national authorities to facilitate investigation, criminal and other proceedings as appropriate.

38. The identity of a person reporting information or co-operating with the investigation shall not be disclosed, unless expressly authorised by him or her, or where the conduct of a fair procedure so requires.

39. The organisation guarantees that there will be no retaliation or negative consequences for anyone who reports concerns or allegations in good faith. This includes protecting children and staff members who report issues from any form of retaliation or discrimination.

VIII. Misconduct

Misconduct by staff members

40. All staff members are bound by the Staff Regulations and Rules as well as the Ethical Framework of the Organisation. Misconduct by staff members of the Assembly may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Misconduct by trainees

41. Trainees are required to observe the relevant principles, rules and values of the Council of Europe (including the protection of human dignity), and confidentiality.

42. When an activity which they participate in or observe involves or concerns children, trainees shall also be required to observe and comply with the child safeguarding policy. Any misconduct regarding the "Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children" under subchapter VI a. of this document will be examined and appropriate action taken, including the potential termination of the traineeship.

Misconduct by experts

43. Experts who fail to adhere to the "Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children" under subchapter VI a. of this document should not be allowed to participate in activities involving children.

Misconduct by contracted third parties

44. The Council of Europe will not contract with third parties who fail to adhere to the "Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children" under subchapter VI a. of this document.

45. Any person participating in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities or implementing activities with support from the Organisation, including contracted third parties, are required to observe the relevant principles, rules and values of the Council of Europe (including the protection of human dignity), and confidentiality.

Misconduct by children

46. The Parliamentary Assembly is ready to ensure that incidents between children are treated with urgency, in a non-violent and respectful manner. In the case of minor or first-time incidents, children will be reminded by their accompanying adults to adapt their behaviour to the agreed Code of Conduct for children. See Annex 3. This gives children the opportunity to reflect and plan how they can behave differently, with the support of the accompanying adults. If children continue to breach the expected Code of Conduct after the first reminder, or if their behaviour is more serious, they will be given a formal warning by their accompanying adult. Adults will also decide whether further action should be taken, such as restricting their participation in some activities or removing them from all activities altogether. If necessary, they will make a record of what has happened and, if appropriate, inform the children's parents or legal guardians.

IX. Implementation, monitoring and review of the policy

47. The Child Safeguarding Policy shall apply to all activities organised by the Parliamentary Assembly as of ... 2025 (approval by the Bureau). All activities organised for and with children must ensure fully compliance with this policy, including by using the safeguarding tools in the Annexes of the Policy.

48. The Child Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Changes in international best practices or legal requirements will be reflected in the policy. The Assembly will seek regular feedback from children involved in decision-making processes to assess their experiences and identify areas for improvement in safeguarding measures.

Sign-off:

This Child Safeguarding Policy was approved by:

[Approving Body Name]

Signature: _____

on [Date]

Name: [Name] , Title: [Title]

X. Annexes

Annex 1: Consent forms

Informed Consent/Assent Form for the participants in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities

(to be signed by the participating child, parent/legal guardian and facilitator before each activity)

Thank you for being here with us, your participation is very valuable not only for you but also for children across Europe! Before starting we need to make sure you understand what is expected of you.

	👍 Yes	👎 No
Someone explained to me the objective of this consultation/activity in comprehensible language, and I understand what is expected of me.		
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the activities and the facilitator answered all my questions in a manner that I could understand.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may quit at any time without explaining why.		
I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles or presentations by the research team and the Council of Europe.		
I understand my name can be shared with Council of Europe's partners for the organisation of this activity.		
I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations. I can choose an alias.		
I understand that the list of participants will be kept for archival purposes, in accordance with the rules of the Council of Europe.		
I don't mind that activities are recorded, in writing or audio, to write the reports.		
I want to take part in this consultation/activity.		

If you crossed all boxes 'yes', you are ready to sign below and start the activity! If not, you can ask the facilitator for clarifications, help or you can leave this activity.

I understand what is required of me and I would like to take part in this activity.		
Name/Alias	Signature	Date, Location
Consent from parent / guardian		
Name/Alias	Signature	Date, Location
Facilitator conducting the activities		
Name/Alias	Signature	Date, Location

* Council of Europe acts in conformity Council of Europe Regulation on the protection of personal data adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 June 2022. We keep your personal data safe and protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage. We will use your data only for the purpose of this activity and will keep it for archival purposes, in accordance with the rules of the Council of Europe.

**Informed consent Form
for the use of images or audio or visual recordings**

(to be signed by the young participant or the parent/legal guardian of the participating child before each activity)

I. Background of the activity

The photographs/video and recordings/audio (“the Material”) of you/your child during the sessions of the events to be held in the framework of the activity will be used and stored by the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (“the Secretariat”) for educational or information purposes to illustrate or promote the above stated events and the results of discussions during the events.

The Secretariat is the “data controller” with respect to the Material, which means it has the decision-making power in respect of its processing.

The Material may be transferred by the Secretariat to the third parties, for educational or information purposes, if these are bound by applicable data protection regulations which ensure the adequate level of protection.

The Material may be made accessible to the public or published on a public network (i.e. social media channels, webpages of the implementing partners) by the Council of Europe, or the partners present at the event. In those cases, criteria of confidentiality and anonymity will be applied and any pictures, videos, statements will only be shared with your consent.

Personal data as well as any medium in which they are contained will be securely stored by the CRD which put in place appropriate security measures to prevent your personal information from being accidentally lost, used, or accessed in an unauthorised way, altered, or disclosed, in line with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

II. Consent

I hereby grant an authorisation to the Secretariat, for the purposes described in Section I. of this Consent Form to store, use, edit, reproduce, communicate, and modify or create derivative products of the Material covered by this Consent Form. The Material and the resulting end-products (“the Material and Derivatives”) may be shared with the partner organisations involved in organising the events.

I authorise the Council of Europe to make the Material and Derivatives in part or in full available to the public in all forms of media, including but not limited to print, digital media, and the internet, and by any means.

I understand that, should a legend or caption be written on or near the Material by the Council of Europe or those acting with its permission, it will preserve my reputation and the one of my child and refrain from any demeaning use.

I accept that any personal data transferred to third parties acting with the Council of Europe’s permission will be governed by the data protection regulations applicable to the third parties. The Council of Europe bears no responsibility for ensuring that the third parties act in accordance with the applicable data protection regulations.

I certify that I am fully aware of my rights and acknowledge that I shall have no claim to any remuneration for the exploitation of the Material and Derivatives referred to in this consent form.

I am aware that I can withdraw my consent at any time by sending a message to [*name of a member of PACE Secretariat*] at [*email address of a member of PACE Secretariat*]. However, the Council of Europe can only be expected to undertake reasonable steps to stop the processing to which I agreed. I accept that the Council of Europe can only guarantee that the Material and Derivatives will no longer be published or promoted by the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe bear no responsibility for the use of the Material and Derivatives by any third party or by media over which they cannot exercise effective control.

I have read the above and I consent to give my personal information to the Council of Europe. My signature also indicates that I have received the copy of this consent form.

For persons 18 years old or older

I am the subject featured in the Material, and I have read and understood this document.

SIGNATURE:

NAME OF PERSON:

DATE: LOCATION: EMAIL ADDRESS:

For persons under 18 years old

I am the parent or legal representative of the minor. I have read and understood this document.

SIGNATURE:

NAME OF PERSON SIGNING ON BEHALF OF THE SUBJECT:

NAME OF SUBJECT:

DATE: LOCATION: EMAIL ADDRESS:

For persons who cannot read or write

I have read this document to the person whose name/story is being used. The person says they understand this document.

SIGNATURE:

NAME OF PERSON SIGNING ON BEHALF OF SUBJECT:

NAME OF SUBJECT:

DATE: LOCATION: EMAIL ADDRESS:

Informed assent form for the use of images or audio or visual recordings
(to be signed by the participant, parent/legal guardian and facilitator before each activity)

Thank you for being here with us, your participation is very valuable not only for you but also for children across Europe! Before starting we need to make sure you understand what is expected of you.

	👍 Yes	👎 No
Someone explained to me the objective of this consultation in comprehensible language, and I understand what is expected of me.		
I accept that the facilitator records this consultation and uses the recording to accurately document the content of the consultation.		
I consent to original materials created by me in the framework of this consultation, such as artwork, drawings, poems or essays, being used, shared and published in a report by the Council of Europe.		
I accept that the facilitator or someone from his/her/their team takes group photos of me and other participants during the activity.		

I understand what is required of me and I would like to take part in this activity.		
_____	_____	_____
Name/Alias	Signature	Date, Location
Consent from parent / legal guardian		
_____	_____	_____
Name/Alias	Signature	Date, Location
Facilitator conducting the activities		
_____	_____	_____
Name/Alias	Signature	Date, Location

*Council of Europe acts in conformity with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons regarding the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation). We keep your personal data safe and protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage. We will use your data only for the purpose of this project and we will delete it when the project comes to an end.

Annex 2: Statement of commitment to the Child Safeguarding Policy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

(to be signed by parliamentarian/staff member/volunteer/consultant before each activity)

I, hereby acknowledge that I have received, read, understood, and agreed to uphold the Child Safeguarding Policy of the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe. As a parliamentarian/staff member/volunteer/consultant, I recognise the importance of protecting children from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and neglect, and I am committed to ensuring their safety and well-being in all activities where I participate or that are under my responsibility.

By signing this policy I pledge to:

- Adhere to the principles and guidelines outlined in the Policy and ensure that they are consistently followed in all aspects of my work.
- Report any concerns or suspicions of child abuse or neglect immediatly, as outlined in the Policy.
- Promote a safe and supportive environment where children's rights are respected, and they are protected from harm, exploitation, or any form of discrimination.
- Support efforts to raise awareness of child safeguarding issues and encourage others to adopt responsible and ethical practices in their interactions with children.

I understand that my adherence to the Child Safeguarding Policy is essential in safeguarding the rights and welfare of children, and I am committed to acting in the best interests of children at all times.

Signed:

Date:.....

Position

Annexe 3: Code of Conduct and information document for children attending Parliamentary Assembly's activities

Feeling safe and protected

Safeguarding means ensuring that you and other children are always safe and never exposed to any risks of abuse or violence. The Parliamentary Assembly and its partners have taken all possible measures that ensure that children's participation and well-being is always protected.

When children participate in events, sometimes they might experience uncomfortable situations that they want to talk about with a trusted adult. In these cases, such concerns should be addressed as soon as possible to ensure a safe and pleasant experience for everyone. Most often these situations happen without any bad intention, and fast and reasonable solutions can be achieved through dialogue.

Your dignity and equity in participation are always to be respected

Yours and other children's and adults' dignity must always be preserved. Any act against children or adults, intimidating, discriminating and excluding them from activities, talking about them and presenting them in an unappropriated way must never happen during the activity.

Your consent for the use of your photos, statements and stories

A formal consent was given by your parents or legal guardian, and most probably you have also agreed for the organisers to take photos of you and record statements and stories told by you in the different activities. Photos of children should always represent you in a dignified and respectful manner. If at any moment of the activity, you feel uncomfortable with the photos, statements and stories, you have the right to ask the organisers not to use some or any of them.

The language and the communication during the activity

Adults are aware of the need to use a child-friendly, inclusive, appropriate language during the activity, so every child can understand and participate to the conversations. You have the right to request explanations, for certain words not to be used, for more time to prepare your statements and your participation in an activity. You should never feel under pressure or forced to do or say something!

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Everyone involved in the event, whatever their role might be, has been informed about and will do anything in their power to respect your safety at any moment during the activity. If you find yourself in a situation in which you feel disrespected or unsafe your accompanying adult and dedicated staff members of the Council of Europe can listen to you and take all necessary measures to address your concern.

It is helpful to let these adults know if you don't feel comfortable

Besides your accompanying adult(s), the following people oversee the implementation of child safeguarding and make sure it is respected by everyone during the activity: *[name of a staff member of PACE Secretariat]* and *[name of another adult involved in organising the activity, for instance consultant]*. It is helpful to talk to your accompanying adult and these adults with safeguarding responsibilities if you do not feel comfortable with something which happened or was said to you, or, you have a concern that another child has been involved in an abusive situation or has been discriminated against. If you don't feel comfortable to talk to an adult in person, you can contact:

[name and phone number of a member of PACE Secretariat]

[name of another adult involved in organising the activity, for instance consultant]

If you prefer writing an email, you can send one in English or in your mother tongue to:
[name and email address of a member of PACE Secretariat]

All safeguarding incidents are dealt with in a respectful manner, and confidentiality of all children and adults involved is preserved. The adults responsible to respond to safeguarding incidents know whom they should inform about the incident, and what measures to take to make sure that nobody is exposed to further harm, in any of its forms.

You have the right to say 'NO!'

You and all other children attending the events have the right to interrupt, withdraw or stop your participation at any time without the need to provide a justification.







Please remember that no-one has to:

- Hit or hurt you in any way
- Bully, tease or insult you
- Ignore what you say, including questions and requests
- Treat one child or a group of children better (or worse) than others
 - Make you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed
 - Try to make you say things that you don't want to say
- Try to make you do things you don't want to do, including activities that are illegal (such as drinking alcohol, smoking and taking drugs), unsafe (such as swimming in the hotel pool or going outside alone), or harm anyone else (such as hitting or being mean to someone)
- Take you outside the meeting or hotel without your accompanying adult
 - Invite you to sleep in their hotel room or in another place
- Sleep in your bed or in your hotel room (unless you wanted to be placed in the same room)





Code of Conduct for children

To make sure all children who take part in this activity feels safe and make others feeling safe, we ask them to display an appropriate behaviour. This would mean, that:

YOU HAVE TO:

-  be supportive and kind to others
-  be friendly
-  listen to others
-  be helpful
-  have good manners
-  treat everyone with respect
-  take responsibility for your own behaviour
-  talk to [*name of accompanying adults*] about anything that worries or concerns you
-  follow this Code of Conduct and other rules (including the law)
-  join in and have fun!

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO:

-  be disrespectful to anyone else
-  bully other people (online or offline)
-  behave in a way that could be intimidating
-  be abusive towards anyone.

What happens if you do not to follow the Code of Conduct?

This Code of Conduct is part of our process for making sure everyone who takes part in our activities feels safe and, in case of any incidents, gets the support they need.

Minor or first-time incident

If you behave in a way that doesn't follow this Code of Conduct, your accompanying adults will remind you about it and ask you to change your behaviour. This gives you the chance to think and to plan how you could behave differently, with the support of staff and/or your accompanying adults.

Formal warning

If you continue not to follow the Code of Conduct after your first reminder, or if your behaviour is more serious, you will be given a formal warning by your accompanying adult. He or she will talk with you about what happened and agree what support you need to improve your behaviour in the future. He or she might also decide that further steps should be taken, such as restricting you from taking part in some activities. If necessary, he or she will make a record about what happened and inform your parents or carers if it is appropriate.

Reporting procedures

If your accompanying adult and any other child or adult becomes concerned that your behaviour suggests you might need protection or that you might present a risk of harm to other children and young people, they will follow the reporting procedures. If the reporting procedures are necessary, your accompanying adult will talk this through with you and your parents as soon as possible.

Annex 4: Guidelines for speakers in events involving children

Please consider the following guidance to support children's participation and engagement during the event.

Golden rules for speakers

- Use clear, accessible and inclusive language.
- Avoid difficult words, or if you need to use them, make sure you always explain them clearly.
- Consider rephrasing if children indicate they do not understand.
- Avoid using abbreviations and acronyms or explain them clearly.
- Be sure you listen carefully when they address you.
- Every time you reply to a child try to compliment them on some parts of their comments, and if you are to disagree with the point made by a child, please frame it so that the child does not feel humiliated. For example: *"That is a very good question"* or *"Actually, many people think so, but the fact is ..."*.
- Never tell a child that their opinion/answer is wrong.
- Never insist a child uses a microphone. Use of the microphone is entirely voluntary for all participants.
- If a question or a comment from a child is unclear, then help by asking them questions to clarify what they are trying to say.
- Keep the same tone in your voice as you would when speaking to an adult.
- Show respect to the different opinions of children might have from yours.
- When you pose questions to a child, make them short and do not pressure them to answer.

Protection from harmful information

Children and adolescents have the right to be protected from any information they do not need to know and for which they may not have the understanding and maturity to cope. This is especially true if the information deals with sexual matters. All adults at the conference have a duty to ensure that no child is harmed because of information from presentations and discussions.

This means:

- No sensitive/shocking/offensive stories or case studies.
- No shocking/sexually suggestive images or videos.
- No emotional personal testimony of abuse and exploitation.
- Sensitivity to others' cultures.

Safeguarding rules to be respected:

- Do not send direct private messages to children during meetings. The accompanying adults and the organisers are available to support if messages need to be passed on to child participants.
- If any subject matter has the potential to be particularly sensitive, the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe should be informed in advance so that they can appropriately prepare the children participating.
- Do not take photos of or record children without prior permission of children and their accompanying adult.
- Please note that we have decided not to use the last names of children participating in the events.

Annex 5: Guidelines for adult interpreters in events involving children

Children and adolescents participating in the meetings need to be given the space to speak out. Your role as an interpreter, therefore, becomes very important as you become the children's and adolescents' voice. All interpreters are kindly invited to ensure that the following guidelines are used throughout interpretation support and service is provided in a way in which is sensitive to the needs of the children involved:

- Do not force them to.
- Try to receive in advance, copies of all written information available to participants.
- Make the agreed sign if someone is speaking too quickly for good interpretation. Lift a hand (or do the "T" sign) and indicate the need for extra time for translation.

Protection from harmful information

Children and adolescents have the right to be protected from any information they do not need to know and for which they may not have the understanding and maturity to cope. This is especially true if the information deals with sexual matters. All adults at the activité have a duty to ensure that no child is harmed because of information from presentations and discussions.

This means:

- No sensitive/shocking/offensive stories or case studies.
- No shocking/sexually suggestive images or videos.
- No emotional personal testimony of abuse and exploitation.
- Sensitivity to others' cultures.

Safeguarding rules to be respected:

- Do not send direct private messages to children during meetings. The accompanying adults and the organisers are available to support if messages need to be passed on to child participants.
- Do not take photos of or record children without prior permission of children and their accompanying adult.
- Ensure confidentiality of information about the child and/or adolescent's personal life.
- Please note that we have decided not to use the last names of children participating to the events.
- When a child/adolescent is speaking in a plenary session, stand up together with them and interpret when they have finished speaking.
- To show respect for the child/adolescent, interpret exactly what they say. For example, "My name is ... and I come from ... my experience is..."
- Request that the child/adolescent give adequate pauses.
- Avoid "What she/he wants to say is that ... I do not understand what she/he is saying, but I think".
- Never give your own opinion or examples from your own experience. If you do not understand what the child/adolescent has said make sure you get clarification before you start interpreting.
- Immediately inform facilitators if the children and adolescents do not understand what is being said. Do not take on the role of giving explanations or answer on behalf of children.
- Congratulate the child and/or adolescent for every progress achieved in overcoming inhibitions.
- Do not show any doubt to what the child and/or adolescent is saying. Remember that when speaking in front of people, the child and/or adolescent totally relies on your help to communicate with others.
- Recognise that it may be the first time for the child and/or adolescent to visit a foreign country. Help make this visit truly an educational experience.

If the child wishes to speak in English, let them do so but do not correct them if they might make any mistakes.

Annex 6: Template for reporting a child safeguarding incident

This template serves the safeguarding responsible adults to fill in, within 24 hours, all information received in the context of a disclosure of an alleged safeguarding incident. Access to this document is restricted to the safeguarding responsible adults.

The safeguarding incidents and concerns documentation supports collecting as much information as possible on the incidents/concerns in case measures must be taken, including by filing a report to the police; tracking progress in responding to the incidents to ensure they are timely and adequate; tracking information about potential unidentified risks and/or means of mitigation; and producing safeguarding reports and discuss lessons learned.

In this document: **survivor** refers to any person who have been subject of an alleged safeguarding incident; the term replaces the term “victim”, which tries to be avoided in the safeguarding literature; **subject of concern** refers to an alleged perpetrator of a safeguarding incident, which could be: injury, suspected physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, bullying.

Key information about the person reporting the incident	
Name	
Role at the conference (i.e. staff member, consultant, volunteer, guest speaker, interpreter, child participant)	
Partner organisation	
Contact details	
Key information about the child safeguarding incident	
Details on how, when, and by whom, the allegation was reported	
Description of alleged incident, including description of the nature of incident (e.g. injury, suspected physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, bullying) and dates, times and locations	
Description of alleged or suspected survivors (e.g. name, age, gender, nationality, specific needs)	
Description of alleged or suspected subject of concern (e.g. name, age, gender, nationality, organisational affiliation/position)	
Were the partners and parents and/or legal guardians informed?	
Actions taken in response to allegations to date (e.g. first aid, referral for medical or psycho-emotional assistance, investigations, notification of the partner organisation, etc)	
Follow-up actions taken to ensure that the survivor has received adequate support in the short, medium and long-term, if necessary	
Requested support from partners (e.g. support for survivors, witnesses, the subject of concern, and/or for the processes of investigations)	

Have been an external authority informed?

The safeguarding responsible adults might use a system of coding to protect the identity of survivors, alleged perpetrators and potential witnesses. They might also intentionally omit information about the date of birth, country of origin of the survivor and the subject of concern to make it difficult to track these persons' identity. It is also recommended to keep information on the identity and personal details of persons involved separate from incident and related reports.

Annex 7: The key issues to think about when involving children in an activity of the Parliamentary Assembly

- What is the purpose of involving children? What is the best way of achieving this purpose (ex. children's participation in a hearing or a debate, written consultation, rapporteur's engagement in dialogue with children throughout the preparation of a report, or a long-term partnership agreement with a relevant organisation)?;
- What are the terms of reference for the engagement, including the frequency of meetings and forms of communication during and in between face-to-face meetings;
- How to reach out to a broad range of children who are most affected including children who are harder to reach to ensure different perspectives are adequately reflected;
- What expertise is required, and who can help with facilitating child participation?;
- What capacity building is necessary, including training and capacity building for staff, parliamentarians, and children?;
- How to ensure that children are fully informed about the aims and working methods of the Assembly, their own role in relevant activities, and how their views will be considered?;
- How and when to provide feedback to children on how their views have been considered?;
- What safeguarding measures are required (ex. use of consent forms, use of first name only in public appearances, and ensuring that the child is duly accompanied and supported before, during and after the activity)?;
- How to draw conclusions from this work and how to ensure that the lessons learned feed into future work of the Assembly?

Annex 8: Useful texts and publications

1. Resolution 2414 (2022) on The right to be heard: child participation, a foundation for democratic societies: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29686/html>
 2. Recommendation 2218 (2022) on The right to be heard: child participation, a foundation for democratic societies: [Rec. 2218 - Recommendation - Adopted text](#)
 3. Council of Europe Handbook on children's participation "Listen – Act – Change": <https://rm.coe.int/publication-handbook-on-children-s-participation-eng/1680a14539>
 4. Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806482d9>
 5. Framework for evaluating children's participation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – working document AS/Soc/Inf (2021) 05
 6. Action learning in the PACE initiative on children's participation – working document AS/Soc/Inf (2021) 03
 7. Methodology on Child Participation in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - working document AS/Soc/Inf (2020) 01rev
 8. Promoting child participation in and through the Parliamentary Assembly - working document AS/Soc/Child/Inf (2019) 01
 9. "Passport to your rights" <https://rm.coe.int/passport-for-your-rights-eng/1680a35876>
 10. I have rights, you have rights, he/she has rights... brochure <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680473582>
- For additional child-friendly materials please visit: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/publications>