

T-ES(2024)09_en final

7 November 2024

LANZAROTE COMMITTEE

Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe
Convention on the protection of children against sexual
exploitation and sexual abuse

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**Declaration on protecting children against sexual exploitation
and sexual abuse facilitated by emerging technologies**

Adopted by the Lanzarote Committee at its 43rd meeting (6-8 November 2024)

1. Recognising the serious harm caused by all forms of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs);
2. Aware that emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality, are being increasingly used and developed by perpetrators to facilitate sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children;
3. Underlining the specific harm caused by artificially generated and altered (for example deepfakes) child sexual abuse material, including when this is used to solicit (groom), coerce and extort children into engaging in or witnessing sexual activities, including producing live child sexual abuse material;
4. Acknowledging that these technologies may also provide tools and opportunities to enhance efforts to prevent and protect children from sexual abuse, as well as to facilitate investigation and prosecution of these offences;
5. Recalling that “the existing offences in the Lanzarote Convention remain criminalised by national law in the same way, whatever the means used by sexual offenders to commit them, be it through the use of ICTs or not, even when the text of the Lanzarote Convention does not specifically mention ICTs”, in accordance with its 2017 [Interpretative Opinion](#) on the applicability of the Lanzarote Convention to sexual offences against children facilitated through the use of ICTs;
6. Reiterating that Parties should consider extending the criminalisation of the solicitation (grooming) of children for sexual purposes through ICTs to cases where the sexual abuse is not the result of a meeting in person, but is committed online, in line with its 2015 [Opinion on Article 23](#);
7. Drawing attention to the [findings](#) of its second monitoring round on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs;
8. Taking note of the 2018 Council of Europe Committee of Ministers [Guidelines](#) to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment;

9. Reaffirming the importance of the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185) and its second additional protocol on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence, in combatting all forms of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by emerging technologies;
10. Recognising the importance of the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225) to address the challenges and opportunities posed by emerging technologies and in particular the obligation to take due account of any specific needs and vulnerabilities in relation to the respect for the rights of children;
11. Taking into due account the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the [Optional Protocol](#) on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC), along with other relevant international instruments of international organisations and bodies, the [explanatory report](#) to the guidelines on the application of the OPSC, general comments of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and target 16.2 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
12. Taking note of the on-going work by the European Union, in the context of the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2024/0035 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material, to take into account the exponential growth of online sharing of child sexual abuse material and to the increased possibilities for perpetrators to hide their identity (and conceal their illegal activities), most notably online, thereby escaping investigation and prosecution;
13. **The Lanzarote Committee** calls upon State Parties to the Lanzarote Convention to protect children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by emerging technologies by:
 - a. ensuring that legislation, policies and national practices fully implement the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention and the relevant recommendations adopted by the Lanzarote Committee including in its opinions, statements and declarations;
 - b. considering criminalising all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including the creation of child sexual abuse material, facilitated by: emerging technologies, AI generated or altered materials,

virtual reality experiences, or haptic devices, as well as aiding and abetting such offences;

c. considering the possibility of removing reservations under Article 20 paragraph 3 Lanzarote Convention pertaining to the “production and possession of pornographic material consisting exclusively of simulated representations or realistic images of a non-existent child”;

d. ensuring that sanctions for sexual offences against children facilitated by emerging technologies are effective, proportionate and dissuasive, taking into account the serious harm caused to victims;

e. strengthening accountability for those that benefit from the misuse of emerging technologies to commit sexual offences against children;

f. considering using these technologies to identify and safeguard victims, identify perpetrators, detect, investigate and prosecute these offences;

g. ensuring that victims of these offences have access to protective measures and victim support services available, in accordance with Articles 11 and 14 Lanzarote Convention;

h. enhancing prevention initiatives, including preventive interventions to target potential offenders and to address harmful sexual behaviours among children;

i. ensuring, in accordance with Article 5 Lanzarote Convention, that professionals in regular contact with children are trained to understand the risks associated with these technologies, to identify them, and how to assist any child concerned;

j. strengthening awareness raising among the general public on the scale of child sexual exploitation and abuse and the use of technology by perpetrators;

k. providing education and training for children, in co-operation with parents, on the use of technology by children as part of their development, and to improve the understanding of harmful sexual behaviours displayed by children;

l. strengthening data collection to regularly assess and review current trends in offending and victimisation as technologies continue to develop;

m. enhancing international co-operation to better combat these crimes.