



#RedefiningPower: Strengthening the rights of the child as the key to a future-proof Europe

*Conference organised by the Council of Europe in the framework of the
French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*

DRAFT PROGRAMME - Overview

Council of Europe, Palais de l'Europe

Strasbourg, France

13-14 November 2019

Update: 30/07/2019



The framework of the conference

To mark the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and to celebrate the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), the Council of Europe is organising a conference under the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France on 13-14 November 2019.

Organised with the support of the French Ministries for Europe and Foreign Affairs, for Solidarity and Health, for National Education, for Justice, for the Interior, for Overseas and for Culture, as well as the Human rights defender, the conference will serve to stimulate dialogue on the major challenges for the rights of the child, involving state representatives, ombudspersons for the rights of the child, civil society and other players and international experts.

While recognising that progress has been made, the participants will examine systemic shortcomings, obstacles and blind spots in legislation and policy and the challenges they pose to the rights of the child. Facing contemporary challenges and against the background of societies which are more demanding and attentive to equal opportunities and rights, participants will discuss the opportunities for the promotion and protection of children's rights, in support of the full implementation of the UN CRC and Council of Europe standards. The participation of children in decisions concerning them and in public life, is one of the major contemporary challenges. Every effort will therefore be made to ensure that the contributions submitted by children in advance of and during the conference, are visible and duly taken into account.

In addition, the conference offers the opportunity to strengthen the focus of the Council of Europe on new challenges thus informing and strengthening the relevance of the work of the organisation under the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) and beyond.

Adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in March 2016, the "Sofia Strategy" provides a common vision for strengthening the rights of the child and focuses this action around five priority areas:

1. Equal opportunities for all children;
2. Participation of all children;
3. A life free from violence for all children;
4. Child-friendly justice for all children;
5. Rights of the child in the digital environment.

A mid-term evaluation report will be available in advance of the meeting, identifying progress achieved, as well as difficulties encountered, and opportunities to seize. It will also present how states have found inspiration in the Strategy for their legislative and political reforms.

The conference will bring together some 200 participants in a forum, fostering a dynamic exchange of views and discussion, exploring innovative ideas with the participation of government representatives, members of parliament, child rights defenders and other experts able to provide insights on the issues raised.

Under the title “#RedefiningPower: Strengthening the rights of the child as the key to a future-proof Europe” the participants are invited to discuss recent political, social, technological and other developments having an impact on children and the exercise of their rights, and to engage in dialogue allowing the child rights agenda to be driven forward. Based on evidence relating to emerging trends and threats, participants are encouraged to identify measures for stepping up child protection and advancing towards more just and non-violent societies, in which child protection and participation are both the objectives and the means of ensuring the European ideal in a way that will stand the test of time. Against this background, the conference complements the Council of Europe’s action to support the member states in their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Let’s talk about power: “Power talks”

The conference pursues an ambitious objective in wishing to challenge traditions, attitudes, behaviours, assumptions and concepts that remain an obstacle to the effective protection of the rights of the child. Participants are in particular invited to bring and be open to new ideas.

As it wishes to explore how to increase the power of children’s rights, the conference proposes a new format of “power talks”. Speakers will be briefed to be thought-provoking, forward-looking and focus on ways to scale up action and engage with a maximum of stakeholders. They will put forward ideas on how to unleash the power within all of us to broaden the mobilisation and make sure that children’s rights take deep roots in our societies. Participants will be encouraged to engage in a dynamic dialogue and reflect on how to use the various sources of power to overcome the challenges they face.

Networking

For participants, the conference offers the opportunity to meet and exchange with other stakeholders in order to join forces and develop ideas for stepping up joint action in favour of children’s rights. Decision-makers of various backgrounds are encouraged to listen to children’s experiences and advice and to exchange views with them in order to reach conclusions and recommendations that take into consideration children’s voices and their real needs.

An open space for states and organisations is available to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, ideas and tools.

The Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF)

The Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) guides the intergovernmental work on children’s rights of the Council of Europe, and mainstreams children’s rights into the work undertaken by other Council of Europe bodies and sectors,

Given its key role in overseeing the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy and its mid-term evaluation, the CAHENF is holding a plenary meeting on the day prior to the conference (Tuesday 12 November), gathering again in an afternoon session following the conference (from Thursday 14 November at 14.30) to approve a Declaration which will subsequently be submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Programme overview

Tuesday 12 November 2019

Plenary meeting of the
Ad hoc Committee for the
Rights of the Child (CAHENF)

*Only for CAHENF members
and observers*

Wednesday 13 November 2019

08:30- 09:30	Registration
09:30 – 10:00	Opening ceremony
10:00 – 10:45	High-level plenary session 1
<i>10:45-11:15</i>	<i>Coffee break and networking</i>
11:15 – 12:30	High-level plenary session 2
<i>12:30 – 14:00</i>	<i>Buffet lunch</i>
14:00 – 15:30	Power Talk 1 – The power of collaboration
14:00 – 15:30	Power Talk 2 – The power of inclusion
14:00 – 15:30	Power Talk 3 – The power of media
<i>15:30 – 15:45</i>	<i>Coffee break and networking</i>
15:45 – 17:15	Power Talk 4 – The power of speaking up against violence
15:45 – 17:15	Power Talk 5 – The power of data
15:45 – 17:15	Power Talk 6 – The power of participation
<i>17:15 – 18:00</i>	<i>Closing event</i>
<i>20:00</i>	<i>Dinner</i>

Thursday 14 November 2019

09:00 – 10:30	Power Talk 7 – The power of family relations
09:00 – 10:30	Power Talk 8 – The power of support
09:00 – 10:30	Power Talk 9 – The power of technology
<i>10:30-11:00</i>	<i>Interlude</i>
<i>11:00-11:30</i>	<i>Coffee break and networking</i>
11:30-13:00	Children's Rights for a future-proof Europe – redefining priorities for 2020 and beyond Turning words into action: presentation of next steps
13:00	Close of the conference
<i>13:15</i>	<i>Buffet lunch</i>

	<u>14:30</u>
	Plenary meeting of the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF)
18:00	Close of the CAHENF meeting

Wednesday 13 November 2019

08:30- 09:30 Registration

09:30 – 10:00 Opening ceremony

Marija Pejčinović-Burić, Secretary General elect of the Council of Europe (tbc)
Agnès Buzyn, Minister of Solidarity and Health (tbc) / Adrien Taquet, Secretary of State on Child Protection (tbc)

10:00 – 10:45 High-level plenary session 1

Liliane Maury Pasquier, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe

Linos-Alexandre Sicilianos, President of the European Court of Human Rights

Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe

10:45-11:15 Coffee break and networking

11:15 – 12:30 High-level plenary session 2

Moderator: Stella Kyriakides, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Sub-Committee on Children

Najat Maalla M'jid, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Violence against Children

Afshan Khan, Regional director for Europe and Central Asia, UNICEF (tbc)

A member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (tbc)

A representative of the European Commission / European Parliament (tbc)

Koulla Yiasouma, Chairperson of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC)

Veronica Yates, Director of the Child Rights International Network (CRIN)

Discussion and questions

12:30 – 14:00 Buffet lunch

14:00 – 15:30 **Power Talk 1 – The power of collaboration: stepping up the coordination of global and pan-European agendas to increase their impact on children’s human rights**

There are no solo performers on the international stage: much more can be achieved by working together. But where, exactly, are there gaps to be filled? What added value can intergovernmental bodies generate by working together better? How can they coordinate their work more effectively? And how can visions developed at the global and pan-European level be turned into joint and concrete actions to take the rights of all children forward? This session looks at recent, major reports, studies and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and asks where we go from here in turning the vision of the UN CRC into a new reality for children.

14:00 – 15:30 **Power Talk 2 – The power of inclusion: fighting precarity, poverty and exclusion, and promoting equal opportunities for all children**

Too often, poverty is transmitted from one generation to the next. Across Europe, many children are still feeling the effects of austerity policies today. And poverty still falls hardest upon our most vulnerable members of society. Positive action is needed to develop the attitudes, means and support which will enable children to leave poverty behind. What role can education and the promotion of human rights play in breaking cycles of poverty? And what priorities should national strategies to combat poverty address to be effective?

14:00 – 15:30 **Power Talk 3 – The power of media: inform, inspire and mobilise while respecting the rights of the child**

In a world where they reflect and shape social norms and influence political decisions, media have a particular responsibility when portraying children, reaching out to them and when addressing matters of concern to them. How to ensure that this responsibility is not overlooked? How to promote ethical reporting and avoid collateral damage when covering highly sensitive subjects, such as child abuse? Are whistle-blowers protected and able to speak up about serious child protection gaps and violations? What further action is needed to encourage the media to use its power to protect and promote the rights of the child? And, finally, how to encourage children to become critical users of the media?

15:30 – 15:45 *Coffee break and networking*

15:45 – 17:15 **Power Talk 4 – The power of speaking up against violence: putting an end to violence against children**

International and national agendas across the world, express strong commitment to ending violence against children. Yet responses to reported violence are not yet sufficiently effective and may even put children at risk. How do we create an environment where children feel confident enough to share an experience of violence? How can we guarantee that their stories will be taken seriously and addressed properly? Sexual violence against and abuse of children is happening in places where children should feel safe, including in care institutions, schools and sports associations. But are we ready to tackle these issues head-on?

15:45 – 17:15 Power Talk 5 – The power of data: balancing transparency, freedom of expression and privacy of children

In today's data-driven societies, childhood and family life are being increasingly "datafied" and the rights of the child are being challenged. How to ensure respect for the rights of children in the digital environment? How to ensure children's privacy when faced with an increase in the questionable commercial use of their data? How will their data footprint shape their lives and ultimately redefine their digital citizenship? How is children's understanding of the digital environment considered in designing services, regulations and policies? Are decision-makers of any kind equipped to create safe roads for children through the data-driven territory?

15:45 – 17:15 Power Talk 6 – The power of children: shaping or shaking up political agendas for a new generation of activists

Across Europe and the world, we see more and more children making their voices heard. Children are powerful advocates of their own rights and are taking bold steps to have them respected and protected. What more can be done to foster an engaged, curious and courageous generation? What protections and safeguards are needed to ensure that children are safely and securely using and fighting for their human rights? What can adults learn from these young rights-holders? And is it time for children to be given a say through the most fundamental form of societal participation: the right to vote?

17:15 – 18:00 *Closing event*

20:00 *Dinner*

Thursday 14 November 2019

09:00 – 10:30 Power Talk 7 – The power of family relations: respecting the best interests of the child in divorce and separation

The first contact that children have with the justice system comes too often as a result of disputes relating to divorce and separation, custody or visiting rights; thus situations that regularly have devastating results for the children involved. The image and role of the modern family is changing, as is the position of children therein. How to strike the right balance between the interests of parents and children in such cases? Are the rights of the child adequately upheld by the justice system and are they given a voice? How to better deal with cases of intra-family violence? And how can both parents maintain a positive relationship with their children while in conflict with each other?

09:00 – 10:30 PowerTalk 8 – The power of support: Responding to and preventing peer-to-peer sexual violence

The capacities of professionals confronted with cases of sexual violence committed by children may sometimes be exceeded by the complexity of this phenomena which often remains a taboo. The Lanzarote Convention requires member states to put in place relevant programmes or intervention measures. This session looks into appropriate ways of addressing peer-to-peer sexual violence by children. Which measures are to be taken with regard to children who commit such acts towards other children, often younger than themselves? Which methods are the most effective at an age where the acts committed by children may be facilitated by ICTs with consequences that children can hardly predict?

09:00 – 10:30 PowerTalk 9 – The power of technology: seizing opportunities and responding to new challenges in the relations between children and technologies

Nowadays, technology is an integral and inescapable part of children’s lives. We have only started imaging the applications and implications of Artificial Intelligence. While information and communication technologies offer children undeniable benefits, they also come with risks. How exactly are offenders using technology to abuse and exploit children? How can technology become a catalyser of change to prevent violence, protect children and fight impunity, in the full respect of the right to privacy? And how can the private and public sectors co-operate and foster a culture of digital responsibility?

10:30-11:00 *Interlude*

11:00-11:30 *Coffee break and networking*

11:30-13:00 Children’s rights as a key to a future-proof Europe: redefining priorities for 2020 and beyond

“Turning words into action”

Discussion on the next steps in the implementing the Strategy on the Rights of the Child of the Council of Europe (2016-2021), and its five pillars:

1. Equal opportunities for all children;
2. Participation of all children;
3. A life free from violence for all children;
4. Child-friendly justice for all children;
5. Rights of the child in the digital environment.

Discussion in “fish-bowl” format

13:00 Close of the conference

General Rapporteur for the Conference

Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, Chairperson of the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF)