



18 NOVEMBER

European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

2023 Edition

**Learning from victims and
survivors of childhood sexual
violence to inspire policy change**

Child sexual exploitation or sexual abuse is **never** the fault of the child. But too often feelings of shame and stigma prevent them telling anybody about it. In many cases, victims/survivors do not feel able to disclose their experiences before adulthood. Consequently, they are unable to access help or support to heal from this trauma. As a result, perpetrators go unpunished which can lead to further abuse of the same or other children. We must break the silence surrounding sexual abuse and learn from victims'/survivors' experiences to improve protection and prevention services to end sexual abuse for all children everywhere.

— **The 2023 edition of the European Day focuses on learning from victims/survivors of childhood sexual violence to inspire policy change.** This will be an opportunity to highlight the importance of engaging with victims/survivors to learn from them and their traumatic experiences, to understand what could have been done better to react, report and to support them. **Giving them a voice can inspire change.**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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■ Listening to and learning from victims/survivors is important to:

- ▶ remove practical barriers to reporting;
- ▶ improve victim's/survivor's services;
- ▶ strengthen legislation and policies;
- ▶ empower children to stay safe and access help if they are being abused;
- ▶ empower adults to break the silence and safeguard children;
- ▶ effect cultural change to stop stigmatising victims/survivors.

■ 48 countries have ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (**Lanzarote Convention**) which is monitored by the Lanzarote Committee. In January 2023 the **Brave movement** was granted observer status, ensuring survivor engagement with the Lanzarote Committee at all levels of its work.

■ To mark the European Day, the Council of Europe encourages activities, exchanges and debates on this issue, especially involving victims/survivors, state actors, parliamentarians, educators, child protection professionals, parents and children.

■ Actions you can take:

- ▶ Join together: find out if there is a victim/survivor council or movement in your country and see how you can support them;
- ▶ Speak out: a simple conversation with your friends or family can break the silence and the taboos surrounding these issues. We have lots of tools available on our website to help you do this;
- ▶ Get help: if you are worried about a child or if you are a victim/survivor of childhood sexual violence, you can search for organisations working in your country here:

www.bravemovement.org/get-help

www.globalcollaborative.org

www.childhelplineinternational.org

<https://www.weprotect.org/mapping-participation-initiatives>

Contact: EndChildSexAbuseDay@coe.int

Websites: www.coe.int/EndChildSexAbuseDay
www.coe.int/children

Twitter: [@coe_children](https://twitter.com/coe_children) / [#EndChildSexAbuseDay/](https://twitter.com/EndChildSexAbuseDay)
[#LearningfromSurvivors](https://twitter.com/LearningfromSurvivors)

Facebook: [Council of Europe Children Rights](https://www.facebook.com/CouncilofEuropeChildrenRights)

Instagram: [@councilofeurope](https://www.instagram.com/councilofeurope)

