

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 16 November 2023

ENF-VAE(2023)PV02

**Committee of experts on the prevention of violence
(ENF-VAE)**

Second Meeting (Strasbourg, Agora Building, Room G04)

(In person meeting)

11 – 12 October 2023

Meeting report

*Prepared by the Children's Rights Division
Directorate of Anti-Discrimination
Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity*

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

1. The second meeting of the Committee of experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE, hereafter the Committee) was opened by the ENF-VAE Chair, Mária VARGOVA (Slovakia), who welcomed all participants.
2. Regina JENSDOTTIR, Head of the Children's Rights Division, also welcomed the experts to this second meeting, which would be more focused on substance. She invited experts to build their work on the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the [many] relevant recommendations issued by Council of Europe monitoring bodies (i.e. Lanzarote Committee, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), etc.). She referred to the current challenges that ENF-VAE will address, including what can be called a "pandemic" of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) and the increased access to pornographic content by children.
3. The Committee was then greeted by Zeynep USAL-KANZLER, Secretary to the Committee, who thanked colleagues for their support in the preparation of the meeting and looked forward to the work ahead.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and order of business

4. The Committee adopted the agenda as it appears in Appendix I.

Agenda item 3: Statement by the Chair and the Secretariat

5. The Committee took note of the information provided by Katrin UERPMANN, Secretary of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child ([CDENF](#)), on relevant Council of Europe activities under Strategic Objective 1 of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), drawing particular attention to the recently adopted Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2023\)8](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on strengthening reporting systems on violence against children. Information was also provided regarding the on-going preparation of draft Recommendations on the rights and the best interests of the child in parental separation and in care proceedings by the Committee of Experts ([CJ/ENF-ISE](#)), jointly with the European Committee for Legal Cooperation (CDCJ), with particular relevance in terms of prevention and protection of children from violence.
6. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the state of implementation of the ENF-VAE Terms of Reference as well as the revised workplan of the ENF-VAE following the revision of the Committee's Terms of Reference in light of the outcomes of the 4th Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government (Reykjavik, 16-17 May 2023).
7. The Chair expressed her gratitude for the level of interest shown for the work of ENF-VAE, especially on the work on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, by other intergovernmental committees and monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe, which shows the multi-layered and multifaceted nature of the task. She expressed trust that the support from the representatives of those bodies shall be instrumental in ensuring the quality and inclusiveness of the outcome and welcomed representatives from the Lanzarote Committee, the Gender Equality Commission, the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and the GREVIO Secretariat to the meeting.

Agenda item 4: Feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for - inter alia - preventing and combating violence, including risky or harmful sexual behaviour by children

8. Dr Meghan CAMPBELL, consultant from the University College Cork (Ireland), made a presentation on the draft Feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) to strengthen responses for – inter alia – preventing and combatting violence, which covered the concept of sex education, the human-rights based approach to CSE as a means to

end violence, empiric and legal findings related to CSE as well as recommendations to inform a future draft non-binding instrument to be prepared by ENF-VAE.

9. The Committee took note of the presentation, examined the draft feasibility study and held a discussion on the main aspects that should be covered by the feasibility study. Among others, the following was pointed out:

- The need to consider that much of what children learn about sex happens beyond the realms of the school, through the internet, initiated out of children's own interest.
- The importance of providing CSE through a multidisciplinary approach in schools, including health professionals, teachers, etc., as well as of duly equipping and training CSE teachers across schools.
- The feasibility study should also cover the role of parents in the provision of CSE to their children and differentiate between their role and that of the school staff. Parents should be advised, accompanied and invited to be part of the solution and to have an active role in CSE. This would need advising and training of parents on CSE. The role of other societal actors could also be covered, such as the child protection services and other professionals working for and with children.
- The highly important role of children's meaningful participation at every stage of the provision of CSE (curriculum design, implementation, monitoring), including through peer-to-peer education¹, to avoid a paternalistic approach. Participation should be inclusive of different voices to avoid the replication of societal power dynamics. This is, the participation of girls, children with disabilities, LGBTI children or children out of school should be ensured.
- The relevance of recognising and paying special attention to specific groups of children who are at higher risk of falling victims of violence and bullying, including girls, LGBTI children and children with disabilities (with different categories of disability). CSE should naturalise diversity, to equip children to understand this concept from a very early age.
- CSE should be provided in non-judgmental spaces, and specific spaces for boys, girls, LGBTI children and children with disabilities should be created. Children should also be able to access information confidentially.
- A discussion referred to the gender of CSE teachers, with differing views on the topic. While some participants argued that teachers should be of the same gender as students, others considered that both men and women teachers should be providing CSE, as different positive models for children are needed. Additional research is needed on this topic to inform the feasibility study.
- The study should balance the right to freedom of religion, and address the role of some religious leaders and advocates of other traditional values, and their resistance to the provision of CSE, including good practices from member states and ECtHR case law.
- The feasibility study should not address what the CSE curriculum should cover at different ages, but rather propose a human rights instrument grounding the provision of CSE in children's rights. The study should however affirm that CSE provision should start as early as possible.
- The inclusion of a gender equality perspective, which is based on gender disaggregated data, across the draft study, with findings from GREVIO's monitoring of the Istanbul Convention and other Council of Europe documents relevant for the topic, including a collection of papers on Article 14 of the Convention which deals with education. CSE is crucial for students to understand all issues related to gender equality, non-violent behaviour and gender-based violence.
- The study and its recommendations should also cover the issue of children displaying harmful or risky sexual behaviour as well as prevention of sexual offences committed by adolescents with a gender equality perspective.
- The study should include a trauma perspective and a positive psychology model, particularly with regards children displaying harmful sexual behaviour.

¹ 2nd implementation report, Recommendation VIII-5: To improve its impact, the Lanzarote Committee invites parties to ensure that awareness raising for children of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse that they face when generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves is led first and foremost by their peers.

- The need to cross-reference Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)8 on strengthening reporting systems for professionals on violence against children in the study.
- There should be accountability and monitoring mechanisms in place with periodic reviews of the provision of CSE nationally.

10. The Committee provided instructions to the consultant for the revision and finalisation of the draft feasibility study and agreed to send final written comments to the Secretariat before the **30 October 2023**. The Committee was informed that an updated draft of the feasibility study would be revised at the 3rd meeting of ENF-VAE.

Agenda item 5: Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10 on Council of Europe policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence, including the development of model prevention approaches

11. The Committee took note of the presentation made by Dr. Susanna GREIJER, consultant to the ENF-VAE, on the draft questionnaire for the implementation review of CM/Rec(2009)10, which is mainly divided in two parts, to gather quantitative and qualitative data respectively and covers the relevant legal and policy issues and challenges in developing national strategies for the protection of children from violence. The questionnaire also focuses on issues related to peer-to-peer violence and child participation.

12. The Committee further examined and revised the draft questionnaire. Some of the suggestions made by different participants included:

- adding a definition of the “child”,
- referring to the gendered aspect of violence against children, and including the definition of violence enshrined in the Istanbul Convention, while taking into account its other provisions and integrating gender equality and intersectionality dimension, as relevant,
- ensuring that the questions also cover the situation of decentralised states with regional or local laws/policies,
- adding “prevention and detection” of violence throughout the questionnaire (to the existing references to “protection of violence”),
- mentioning violence against children in the judicial system, in work settings and in the context of travel and tourism, as well as the recruitment or involvement of children in armed conflict,
- referring to age-appropriate CSE in the school curricula,
- covering also professionals working indirectly for and with children in the questions, as well as volunteers,
- reformulating the terminology of child prostitution and child pornography to refer to children exploited through prostitution and child sexual abuse material respectively,
- adding a question about funding dedicated specifically to the prevention and detection of violence against children, and
- having more specific questions with regard to the justice system for child victims and witnesses of violence.

13. The Committee instructed the Secretariat to finalise the draft questionnaire and circulate it for final approval by ENF-VAE members, for its later submission to the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) for approval during its 8th Plenary on 14-16 November 2023. The questionnaire would later be circulated among member states with a deadline for responses until 31 January 2024.

Agenda item 6: Hearing with external experts

14. The Committee held an exchange of views and took note of the interventions by external experts from diverse organisations offering different forms of awareness raising and training for various target groups (children, parents and professionals working with children) for the provision of age-appropriate CSE:

- i. **Family Federation of Finland** (Väestöliitto), on the Finnish model of Body-Emotion Education;
- ii. **Sensoa** (Belgium), the Flemish centre of expertise for sexual health, which has introduced a Flag system as an evidence-based tool for identifying acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour for children and young people from 0 to 18 years old;
- iii. **Association Colosse aux pieds d'argile** (France), which provides awareness raising, support and training of children and adults (supervisors, educators, parents, etc.) through prevention officers present across France on the prevention of violence against and among children within sports clubs and schools; and
- iv. **International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)** – European Network, which has produced a series of policy briefs on sexuality education and runs projects on sexual and reproductive health, including a project on sexuality education in the Roma community (My Body My Rights) which showcases the delivery of CSE outside school settings, while highlighting the cross-cutting principles of anti-discrimination and gender equality.

Agenda item 7: Update on key developments and other events by participants and observers

15. The Committee took note of the update of key activities related to the mandate of ENF-VAE as shared by:
- Tijana Borovčanin, member of the Lanzarote Committee of the Council of Europe,
 - Sara Slana, member of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC),
 - Konstantina Tsekeri and Adina Dudau, Defence for Children International (DCI) Greece, and
 - Theresa Ryan-Rouger, Missing Children Europe.

Agenda item 8: Discussion on child participation process

16. The Committee discussed the child participation dimension in carrying out its deliverables, as proposed in the workplan, and agreed that the modalities for child consultations would be decided at the 3rd ENF-VAE meetings. Two national experts (from France and Finland) expressed their commitment to conduct child consultations to inform the draft feasibility study on CSE.

Agenda item 9: Any other business

17. No further issue was raised.

Agenda item 10: Date and place of next meetings

18. The Committee took note that the next meeting of ENF-VAE would be held, in person, in Strasbourg from 12th to 13th March 2024 (date still to be confirmed).

Agenda item 11: Adoption of the meeting report

19. The Committee agreed to approve the meeting report in written proceedings.

Appendix 1

Agenda and Order of Business

1.	Opening of the meeting	<u>Reference documents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">List of participants - ENF-VAE(2023)LoP2List of membersReport of the first meeting - ENF-VAE(2023)PV01
2.	Adoption of the agenda and order of business	<u>Working documents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft agenda - ENF-VAE (2023)OJ2Draft annotated agenda - ENF-VAE(2023)OJ2 ANN
3.	Statement by the Chair and the Secretariat	<u>Reference documents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Terms of reference of the ENF-VAECouncil of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)CDENF(2022)INF2 CoE Conventions and Recommendations - Key Resources for implementing the Strategy (2022-2027)Working methods and workplan - ENF-VAE(2023)01 rev Restricted
4.	The feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for - inter alia - preventing and combating violence, including risky or harmful sexual behaviour by children (<i>deliverable (1) of the terms of reference</i>)	<u>Working document</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education - ENF-VAE(2023)04 Restricted <u>Reference documents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Study on Sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children: Nature, causes, consequences and responses, Prepared by: Professor Simon Hackett, Durham University, United Kingdom - CDENF-GT-VAE(2020)04Resources and excerpts of relevant international and European instruments on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education - ENF-VAE(2023)02
5.	Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10 on Council of Europe policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence, including the development of model prevention approaches (<i>deliverable (3) of the terms of reference</i>)	<u>Working document</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft questionnaire for the implementation review of CM/Rec(2009)10 on Policy Guidelines on Integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence - ENF-VAE(2023)06 Restricted <u>Reference documents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">CM/Rec(2009)10 on Council of Europe policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence

- Methodology to conduct implementation reviews of Committee of Ministers' Recommendations - [CDENF\(2022\)27](#)

6.	Hearing with external experts	
7.	Update on key developments and other events by participants and observers	
8.	Discussion on child participation process	
9.	Any other business	
10.	Date and place of next meetings	12-13 March 2024 (tbc), Strasbourg (in person)
11.	Adoption of the meeting report	

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Date	Time (UTC+1)	Agenda items
11 October 2023	Morning 09.30 am -12.30 pm	Items 1- 4.
	Afternoon 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm	Items 4 (continued), 6 and 8.
12 October 2023	Morning 09.30 am - 12.30 pm	Item 5.
	Afternoon 2.00 pm - 16.30 pm	Items 5 (continued) and 7, 9-11.

GENERAL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Terms of reference of ENF-VAE 2023-2024
Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods

MEETING REPORTS

ENF-VAE(2023)PV01	Report of the first meeting of the ENF-VAE
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Appendix 2

List of participants

MEMBERS / MEMBRES

Austria / Autriche

Alina Seel
Austrian Federal Chancellery
Head of Department
Directorate General VI – Family and Youth

Finland / Finlande

Malja Marjo
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Senior Ministerial Adviser, Social Affairs

France

Solenne Donal
Juge des enfants
Tribunal Judiciaire de Paris

Greece / Grèce

Eftychia Katsigaraki
Ministry of Justice
General Directorate of Special Legal Affairs & Human Rights
General Director

Hungary / Hongrie

Viktoria Sebhelyi
Independent consultant

Slovakia / Slovaquie

Mária Vargová
National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children
Director

Spain / Espagne

Pepa Horno
Independent consultant on childhood, affectivity and protection

Sweden / Suède

Ola Florin
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Division for Social Services and Disability Policy
Deputy Director

Excused

OTHER MEMBER STATES / AUTRES ETATS MEMBRES

Türkiye / Türkiye

Ilayda Eryilmaz
Ministry of Family and Social Service

PARTICIPANTS

Lanzarote Committee of the Council of Europe / Comité Lanzarote du Conseil de l'Europe

Tijana Borovčanin
Member in respect of Bosnia-Herzegovina/ bosnie-Herzégovine

The Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) / Le Comité directeur sur l'anti-discrimination, la diversité et l'inclusion (CDADI)

Sean Finch
Member in respect of the United Kingdom/ royaume-Uni
Rapporteur of the Rights of the Child of the CDADI

Gender Equality Commission (GEC) / Commission pour l'égalité de genre (GEC)

Sara Slana
Member in respect of Slovenia/Slovénie

OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS

Defence for Children International (DCI)

Konstantina Tsekeri
Director of DCI – Greece

Dr. Adina Dudau
DCI – Greece

Missing Children Europe

Theresa Ryan-Rouger
Senior Policy Adviser

CONSULTANTS

Dr. Meghan Campbell

Reader in International Human Rights Law
Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham

Dr. Susanna Greijer

Independent consultant

EXTERNAL EXPERTS

Camille Butin

Advocacy Advisor
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) European Network

Dr. Raisa Cacciatore

MD, Child psychiatrist, Adolescent health specialist, Senior Adviser
Family Federation of Finland (Väestöliitto)

Henriikka Kangaskoski

Educator
Family Federation of Finland (Väestöliitto)

Simon Latournerie

Directeur adjoint
L'association Colosse aux pieds d'argile

Wannes Magits

Sexual Development Policy Officer
Flemish expertise centre for sexual health (Sensoa)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

DGII – Directorate General of Democracy / Direction générale de la Démocratie

Children's Rights Division / Division des Droits des enfants

Regina Jensdottir
Children's Rights Co-ordinator and Head of the Children's Rights Division / *Coordinatrice des droits des enfants et Cheffe de la Division des droits des enfants*

Katrin Uerpmann
Secretary of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) / *Secrétaire du CDENF*

Ana Guerreiro
Policy Advisor / *Conseiller politique*

Maria Asensio Velasco
Assistant Lawyer/ *Juriste assistante*

Anouk Moulin
Trainee / *Stagiaire*

Gender Equality Division / Division de l'égalité de genre

Cécile Gréboval
Programme Manager / *Responsable de programme*

Violence against women Division / Division sur la violence à l'égard des femmes

Francesca Montagna
Administrator / *Administratrice*

Kerstin Schinnerl
Administrator / *Administratrice*

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit/ L'Unité Orientation Sexuelle et Identité de Genre

Ellsworth Camilleri
Senior Project Officer / *Chargé de projet expérimenté*

Gabriella Calleja
Senior Policy advisor / *Conseiller politique expérimenté*

SECRETARIAT OF THE ENF-VAE / SECRÉTARIAT DU ENF-VAE

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INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES

Grégoire Devictor
Katia di Stefano
Isabelle Marchini