



Building a Europe
for and with children

Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants



ENF-VAE(2025)PV01
Strasbourg, 26 February 2025

Committee of Experts on the Prevention of Violence (ENF-VAE)

Meeting report

Ad hoc meeting (online)

Strasbourg, 10 February 2025

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[ENF-VAE](#)

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

1. This ad hoc meeting of the Committee of experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE, hereafter the Committee) was held online on 10 February 2025. It was opened by the ENF-VAE Chair, Mária Vargova (Slovakia), who welcomed all participants and noted that the focus of the meeting is to agree on a version of the draft Recommendation on *“age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children”*, for the purpose of circulation to the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) and other selected stakeholders for written consultation.
2. The Committee took note of the update that a call for nominations had been made to fill the position in ENF-VAE that is currently vacant, and the CDENF Bureau would advise the CDENF on the appointment.
3. The Committee was then greeted by Anne Kayser, Secretary to the Committee, who thanked colleagues for their support in the preparation of the meeting and looked forward to the work ahead.
4. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the new online shared space, which aims to facilitate the sharing of and collaboration on documents in a secure online space. The draft Recommendation was uploaded on this shared space allowing members, participants and observers of the ENF-VAE to comment on the draft ahead of the meeting.

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

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

Agenda item 3: Statement of the Chair and the Secretariat

6. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the Council of Europe activities under the Strategic Objective 1 of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), in particular the organisation of the mid-term review conference on 3-4 April 2025.
7. It also took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the progress made in the implementation of its [Terms of Reference](#) and [workplan](#). The Secretariat recalled the work carried out by the Committee in order to provide a basis for the current work on the draft Recommendation on *“age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children”*, namely:
 - the approval of a “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”: [CDENF\(2024\)08](#);
 - the update of a study on “Sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children: Nature, causes, consequences and responses”: [ENF-VAE\(2024\)05](#); and
 - the contribution to the CDENF guidance note “Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content”, to be finalised before publication.

Agenda item 4: Preliminary draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children (deliverable (3) of the terms of reference)

8. Ms Elina Stenvall, consultant, presented the outcomes of the child consultations carried out in relation to the draft Recommendation. The Committee took note of the presentation.
9. Dr Catherine O’Sullivan and Dr Meghan Campbell, consultants, gave a presentation on the preliminary draft Recommendation. The Committee held an exchange on the preliminary draft

Recommendation and took note of the comments provided by the members, observers and participants of ENF-VAE, including those made in writing ahead of the meeting.

10. This preliminary draft was generally supported as a good basis for consultation of stakeholders. The points raised included:

- In addition to violence against children, the Recommendation should also address more extensively **violence between children** and discuss the differences between **positive and negative relationships**, as well as education on **bonding and affection**;
- Several participants underlined the need to enhance the references to **child protection**;
- The importance to provide adequate material to parents as well as to other care-givers was underlined.
- Participants suggested that the **best interests of the child** and the **right to gain information** should be stressed, for children to have legal means to access sexuality education despite parents' reluctance.
- On **child participation**, participants underlined that there should be emphasis on the roles of **NGOs** working with children, the provision of adequate **financial resources** and of **safeguarding** of children;
- Participants suggested including references to relevant **regional and international instruments and resolutions**, either in the Recommendation or in the Explanatory Memorandum.
- The appropriateness of the title was discussed, with one Delegation suggesting replacing it with "**sexual health and relationships education**". This delegation also underlined that there should be a focus on the family having primary responsibility for providing sexual education;

11. The Committee instructed the consultants and the Secretariat to review the preliminary draft Recommendation in the light of the discussion and comments of the Committee, with a view to circulating the draft for stakeholder consultations. The Chair invited participants to send their written comments to the Secretariat by Thursday, 13 February 2025. The Secretariat noted that this is the first round of comments and there would be future opportunities to further examine the draft.

12. The Committee also took note of the draft list of stakeholders to be consulted on the draft Recommendation, which had been uploaded to the online shared space. The Committee was invited to provide the Secretariat with names and contact details of relevant partners to be added to this list.

Agenda item 9: Any other business

13. No further issue was raised.

Agenda item 10: Date and place of next meetings

14. The Committee took note that the next meetings of ENF-VAE would be held, in person, in Strasbourg on 4-5 June 2025 and 7-8 October 2025.

Agenda item 11: Adoption of the meeting report

15. The meeting report was circulated shortly after the meeting and approved by all members via written procedure.

Appendix 1

Agenda and Order of Business

Monday 10 February 2025

Timing (CET)	Agenda Item	Working documents Reference documents
2:00 pm	1. Opening of the meeting The meeting will be opened by the ENF-VAE Chair, Mária Vargová (Slovakia).	<u>Reference documents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of participants – ENF-VAE(2025)LoP1 List of members Report of the fourth meeting ENF-VAE(2024)PV02
2:10 pm	2. Adoption of the agenda and order of business <u>Required action:</u> The ENF-VAE is invited to review and adopt the draft agenda and order of business.	<u>Working document</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Annotated Agenda and Order of Business – ENF-VAE(2025)OJ1ANN prov
2:15 pm	3. Statement of the Chair and Secretariat <u>Required action:</u> The ENF-VAE is invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the Council of Europe activities under the Strategic Objective 1 of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), in particular the organisation of the mid-term review conference on 3-4 April 2024 take note of the information provided by the Chair and the Secretariat on the state of implementation of the ENF-VAE Terms of Reference. 	<u>Reference documents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of reference of the ENF-VAE Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) CoE Conventions and Recommendations – Key Resources for implementing the Strategy (2022-2027) CDENF(2022)INF2 Working methods and workplan ENF-VAE(2025)01 E
2:30 pm	4. Preliminary draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children (<i>deliverable (3) of the terms of reference</i>) <u>Required action:</u> The ENF-VAE is invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take note of the presentation by the consultants on the preliminary draft Recommendation on Age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education; take note of the information provided on the outcome of the child consultations; hold an exchange on the preliminary draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education; take note of the comments provided by the Observers and Participants of ENF-VAE; instruct the consultants and the Secretariat to review the preliminary draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education in light 	<u>Working document</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children CDENF(2024)07 (restricted document) <u>Reference documents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 – CDENF(2024)08

	of the discussion and comments of the group;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ share a first draft of the Recommendation with the CDENF, the CDEDU (Steering Committee for Education) and selected stakeholders for consultation.
4:30 pm	Any other business
4:40 pm	Date and place of the next meetings <div> <u>Proposals to be approved:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th meeting of ENF-VAE: 4-5 June 2025 • 6th meeting of ENF-VAE: 7-8 October 2025 </div>
4:45 pm	Approval of the meeting report
5:00 pm - End of the meeting	

Appendix 2

List of participants

MEMBERS / MEMBRES

Finland / Finlande

Marjo Malja

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health / *Ministère des affaires sociales et de la santé*

Senior Ministerial Adviser, Social Affairs / *Conseillère ministérielle principale, Affaires sociales*

France / France

Solenne Donal

Juge des enfants / *Juvenile judge*

Tribunal Judiciaire de Paris / *Paris Judicial Court*

Greece / Grèce

Eftychia Katsigaraki

Ministry of Justice, General Directorate of Special Legal Affairs & Human Rights / *Ministère de la Justice, Direction générale des affaires juridiques spéciales et des droits de l'homme*

General Director / *Directrice Générale*

Hungary / Hongrie

Viktoria Sebhelyi

Independent consultant / *Consultante indépendante*

Iceland / Islande

Páll Ólafsson

Director, Department of Prosperity / *Directeur, ministère de la Prospérité*

Slovakia / Slovaquie

Mária Vargová

National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children / *Centre national de coordination pour la résolution des problèmes de violence à l'égard des enfants*

Director / *Directrice*

Spain / Espagne

Pepa Horno

Independent consultant on childhood, affectivity and protection of children / *Consultante indépendant sur l'enfance, l'affectivité et la protection de l'enfance*

MEMBERS cc / MEMBRES cc

Albania / Albanie

Dastid Koreshi

Chair of the GR-SOC / *Président du GR-SOC*

Permanent representative of Albania to the Council of Europe / *Représentant permanent de l'Albanie au Conseil de l'Europe*

Italy / Italie

Alfredo Ferrante

Director General for the Rights of the Child - Italian Department for Family Policies / *Directeur pour les Droits de l'enfant - Département italien pour les politiques familiales*

Elena Falcomatà

Senior Expert - Prime Minister's Office / *Expert senior - Bureau du Premier Ministre*

PARTICIPANTS

Lanzarote Committee / Comité de Lanzarote

Lorna Muscat

Head of Office, Commission for Children, Malta / *Chef de Bureau, Commission pour les enfants, Malte*

European Commission / Commission Européenne

Chrisoula Arcoudis

DG Justice and Consumers / *DG Justice et consommateurs*

OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS

COFACE

Beatrijs Gelders

Policy and Advocacy officer / *Chargé de mission et plaidoyer*

DCI Belgium

Benoît Van Keirsbilck

Director, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child / *Directeur, Membre du Comité des droits de l'enfant des Nations unies*

IGLYO / CINGO

Ahmed El-Salawy

Policy and Research Officer / *Chargé de mission et de recherche*

Missing Children Europe

Salomé Habousha

Senior Policy Advocacy Officer / *Responsable de plaidoyer*

SOS Children's Village International

Mathilde Scheffer

Advocacy Advisor / *Conseiller en plaidoyer*

OBSERVERS STATES TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / ETATS OBSERVATEURS AUPRES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Mexico

Eva Pizano

Deputy to the Permanent Representative / *Adjointe à l'Observateur.trice Permanent*

CONSULTANTS

Meghan Campbell

Reader in international human rights law, University of Birmingham / *Professeure en droit international des droits de l'homme, Université de Birmingham*

Catherine O'Sullivan

Vice Dean, School of Law, University College Cork / *Vice doyenne de l'Ecole de droit, Université de Cork*

Elina Stenvall

Director, SOS Children's Villages Finland / *Directrice, SOS Villages d'enfants Finlande*

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

Parliamentary Assembly / Assemblée Parlementaire

Grazia-Alessandra Sino

Project manager / *Responsable de projets*

Giorgio Loddo

Secretary to the Committee on Equality and non-discrimination / *Secrétaire du Comité sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination*

Human rights Commissioner's Office / Bureau du Commissaire aux droits de l'Homme

Katharina Kirchberger

Adviser / *Conseillère*

Office for the Commissioner of Human Rights / *Bureau du Commissaire aux droits de l'Homme*

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

Children's rights division / Division droits des enfants

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

Agnes Von Maravic

Executive Secretary of the Lanzarote Committee / *Secrétaire exécutive du Comité de Lanzarote*

Naomi Trewinnard

Legal advisor / *Conseillère juridique*

Cooperation Unit - Children's Rights Division / Unité de coopération - Division des Droits des Enfants

Maria Asensio Velasco

Project Officer / *Responsable de projet*

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child / Comité Directeur Pour les Droits de l'Enfant

Katrin Uerpmann

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

Paul Lee

Trainee / *Stagiaire*

Gender Equality Division / Division de l'égalité de genre

Flurina Frei

Programme Manager / *Responsable de programme*

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

Francesca Montagna

Administrator / *Administratrice*

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

Gabriella Calleja

Senior SOGIESC Policy Adviser/ *Conseillère politique principale (SOGIESC)*

Ellsworth Camilleri

Project Officer, Co-Secretary of the ADI-SOGIESC/ *Chargé de projet principal, co-secrétaire de l'ADI-SOGIESC*

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

Anne Kayser

Secretary to the ENF-VAE / *Secrétaire du ENF-VAE*

Children's Rights Division (DGII) / *Division des Droits des enfants (DGII)*

Justine Vizier

Project Officer / *Chargée de Projets*

Children's Rights Division (DGII) / *Droits des enfants (DGII)*

Audrey Winum
