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ENF-VAE(2025)PV02
Strasbourg, 30 June 2025

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

Meeting report

Fifth meeting

Strasbourg, 4-5 June 2025
Agora building, Room G04

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ENF-VAE

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

1. This fifth meeting of the Committee of Experts on the Prevention of Violence (hereinafter, ”the Committee”) was held in Strasbourg on 4-5 June 2025. The meeting was opened by Maria Vargová (Slovakia), outgoing Chair of the ENF-VAE.

2. She welcomed the participants and introduced Marzenka Krejcirik, the new member of the Committee, nominated by the Luxembourg authorities. Marzenka Krejcirik introduced herself and highlighted her experience as a child protection specialist, her previous work with children in alternative care and survivors of violence, and her active involvement in drafting legislation on gender-based violence. Her expertise and long-standing commitment to the rights of the child were welcomed by the Committee.

3. The Committee was then welcomed by Anne Kayser, its Secretary , who thanked Maria Vargová for her commitment and dedication as Chair of the Committee over the past two years.

Agenda item 6: Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the ENF-VAE Committee

4. The Secretariat introduced the electronic-voting procedure for the election of the new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, outlining the practical modalities and voting rules pursuant to Article 12 of Resolution CM/Res(2021).

5. Following the presentation of the candidates, Marjo Annika Malja (Finland) was elected Chair of the Committee and Viktoria Sebhelyi (Hungary) was elected Vice-Chair. Both newly elected office holders were congratulated by the Committee and thanked for their willingness to take on these roles in support of ENF-VAE’s work.

Agenda item 2: Adopting the agenda and order of business

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

Agenda item 3: Statement of the Chair and Secretariat

7. The newly elected Chair, together with the Secretariat, highlighted the importance of maintaining a clear strategic orientation for the Committee’s work. They both recalled the importance of the ongoing work on the draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, noting that the subject requires a clear, direct, and focused approach, supported by a concise and accessible document. Emphasis was placed on the crucial role of children in contributing to the process.

8. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the state of implementation of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027). This included an overview of the discussions during the last CDENF (Strasbourg 1-2 April 2025) and of the outcome of the Mid-Term Review Conference of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) held in Strasbourg on 3-4 April 2025. The Conference aimed to reflect on the progress made across the six strategic objectives, including on protecting children against violence. The outcome of the stakeholder hearing on the draft Recommendation on comprehensive sexuality education will feed in the drafting process of the new legal instrument.

9. The Committee also took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the state of implementation of its Terms of Reference as well as its revised workplan and timeline for the Committee’s upcoming activities.

Agenda item 5: Child consultations on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education

10. The Committee took note of the presentation by Dr Elina Stenvall about the child consultations on comprehensive sexuality education carried out throughout Europe, involving children aged 13 to 19, through 10 sessions and a questionnaire. Among the points raised:

- The Children highlighted a lack of reliable information on sexuality, stressing the need for mandatory, age-appropriate education, starting from an early age, including emotional learning starting from kindergarten.
- They expressed the view that sexuality education is essential to prevent sexual violence, promote inclusiveness, and support a healthy development. They recommended this education to be delivered by qualified professionals, not just parents, in safe, inclusive, formal, informal and non-formal settings.

11. The Committee welcomed these findings, reaffirmed the importance of child participation in shaping the Recommendation and took note of the report on child consultations.

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

12. Dr Meghan Campbell, consultant, presented an overview of the comments received through the stakeholder consultation and the exchange that took place during the Mid-term review Conference. She also gave options to revise the draft Recommendation reflecting these comments.

13. The Committee reviewed the draft Recommendation in its entirety, taking into account the comments from the stakeholders. Among others, the Committee agreed on the following points:

- While taking into account the suggested additions to the text of the Recommendation, the latter should remain focused, concise and structured, avoid repetition and use the explanatory memorandum for additional elements;
- Definitions were further aligned with existing Council of Europe and international instruments;
- The definition of comprehensive sexuality education should state that it is always age and developmentally appropriate as well as based on scientific evidence. This avoids the need to repeat these characteristics throughout the text, thereby streamlining the text;
- Further references to the central role of parents and of the community were included to emphasise the importance of their need for support and of providing them with the appropriate tools and information on comprehensive sexuality education;
- The need for adequate training and of awareness raising was further highlighted;
- While considering the many comments requesting to add references to the positive aspects of a healthy sexuality, the committee agreed on the relevance of keeping the focus of this Recommendation on protecting children from violence;
- The Committee discussed the current title for the Recommendation. The need for a shorter and clearer title was emphasised. Maintaining the focus on protection against violence and a reference to “comprehensive sexuality education” was considered important, while recognising that member states can choose different names according to their national contexts.

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

14. Finland informed the Committee about the development of a National Action Plan (2026-2033), which includes the goal of a childhood free from violence. The process is aligned with the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. A first draft has been prepared and will be finalised by the end of the year. A new draft law reflecting the Barnahus Model is currently undergoing public consultation and will be shared during the next meeting.

15. France reported on the upcoming entry into force, in September 2025, of a compulsory programme on affective and sexuality education, starting from preschool (age 3). Despite political resistance and misinformation circulating online, the programme will address consent and puberty from age 8 and sexuality from age 11. The concept of gender identity will be introduced from age 14.

16. Slovak Republic shared progress made on Barnahus implementation and digital safety. Over 1.800 children from 175 schools took part in the "Be Cool Online" programme. A new model for preventing radicalisation is being developed following a tragic school attack. Initiatives also focus on Roma inclusion under the Child Guarantee – these initiatives involve co-design with Roma youth.

17. Iceland presented the Prosperity Act, which aims to integrate services and intervene early in child protection. Recent initiatives include municipality cooperation, and the launch of an online tool "SES" to support children of divorced parents (also rolled out in Denmark and Sweden). Iceland also shared information about the Signs of Safety initiative, which is a collaborative and structured approach to child protection, focused on child safety and the mobilisation of family strengths and networks, aiming to transform practice and systems by placing children, their parents, and their natural support networks at the heart of assessment, decision-making, and planning. Five days of workshops were organised to learn about the Signs of Safety approach.

18. Hungary reported on the expansion of the Barnahus model, implemented though five Hearing and Therapy Centres" operating in the country. In addition, a new postgraduate course on forensic interviews was launched this January by the University of Public Service. .

19. Luxembourg identified several areas for improvement to strengthen children's rights, including expanding professional training, considering the establishment of a Barnahus-type structure and a specialised cybercrime unit, and mobilising additional resources to better prevent and address violence, particularly sexual abuse.

20. The representative from the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) informed the Committee about alarming trends emerging from the latest monitoring reports, which point to an important increase in sexual violence among young people linked to an increased exposure to pornography.

21. The representative from the Lanzarote Committee reported on its monitoring activity, on the Informal Conference of Ministers to be held in Malta on 1 July 2025 marking the 15th anniversary of the Lanzarote Convention, as well as on the launch of the 15th anniversary website and the related exhibition. The Secretariat informed the Committee about the upcoming International Day on Child Sexual Abuse on 18 November, which will focus on Data Collection.

22. The representative from the Conference of INGOs noted the growing number of attacks resulting from far-right narratives targeting youth and emphasised efforts made to promote inclusive education, especially for LGBTQ+ and intersex youth.

Agenda item 8: Any other business

23. No further issues were raised

Agenda item 9: Dates and place of the next meetings

24. The Committee took note that its next meetings will be held, in person, in Strasbourg on **7-8 October 2025** and on **18-19 March 2026**.

Agenda item 10: Approval of the meeting report

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

Appendix 1

Agenda and Order of Business

1.	**Opening of the meeting**	Reference documents • List of members to the ENF-VAE Committee • Report of the ad-hoc meeting (10 February 2025) – ENF-VAE(2025)PV01 • List of participants– ENF-VAE(2025)LoP2 (to be issued)
2.	**Adoption of the agenda and order of business**	Working documents • Draft agenda – ENF-VAE (2025)OJ2 • Draft annotated agenda – ENF-VAE(2024)OJ2ANN
3.	**Statement of the Chair and Secretariat**	Reference documents • 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 • Workplan and working methods 2025 – ENF-VAE(2025)01
4.	**Age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for – inter alia – preventing and combating violence against children** (*deliverable (3) of the terms of reference)*	Working document • Revised draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children – ENF-VAE(2025)02 Rev1 (restricted) – to be issued • Compilation of comments on the draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education – ENF-VAE(2025)03 (restricted) – to be issued • Draft Explanatory Memorandum to the Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children – ENF-VAE(2025)04 (restricted) – to be issued Reference documents • Draft Recommendation on age appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children – ENF-VAE(2025)02 Rev • 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 • Updated 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

		• Thematic Guidance note on Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content - CDENF(2024)20
5.	**Child consultations on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education**	Reference documents • Concept note on child consultations on comprehensive sexuality education - ENF-VAE (2024)02 • Report on child consultations on comprehensive sexuality education – ENF-VAE(2025)05 (restricted) – to be issued
6.	**Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair**	Reference documents • List of candidatures – ENF-VAE(2025)06 (restricted) – to be issued • Article 12 of Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods
7.	**Update on key developments and other events by members, participants and observers**	
8.	**Any other business**	
9.	**Date and place of the next meetings**	Proposals to be approved: • 6th meeting of ENF-VAE: 7-8 October 2025 • 7th meeting of ENF-VAE: 18-19 March 2026 • 8th meeting of ENF-VAE: 7-8 October 2026
10.	**Approval of the meeting report**	

GENERAL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Terms of reference of ENF-VAE 2024-2027
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
ENF-VAE(2023)PV02	Report of the second meeting of the ENF-VAE
ENF-VAE(2024)PV01	Report of the third meeting of the ENF-VAE
ENF-VAE(2024)PV02	Report of the fourth meeting of the ENF-VAE
ENF-VAE(2025)PV01	Report of the ad-hoc meeting of the ENF-VAE

Appendix 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS / *MEMBRES*

Finland / *Finlande (Chair)*
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
Solenne Donal
Juvenile judge /*Juge des enfants*
Paris Judicial Court / *Tribunal Judiciaire de Paris*

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* *(Online/ En ligne)*
Viktoria Sebhelyi,
Independent consultant / *Consultante* indépendante

Iceland / *Islande* *(Online/ En ligne)*
Pall Olafsson,
Director, Department of Prosperity / *Directeur, Service de la* Prospérité

Luxembourg / *Luxembourg*
Marzenka Krejcirik
Pedagogical Officer in Child and Family Welfare, Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth and Independent Expert in Child Protection and Children's Rights, *Ombudsman fir Kanner a Jugendlecher* (Children's Rights Defender) / *Agent pédagogique dans l'aide à l'enfance et à la famille, Ministère de l'Education nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse et Tierce-experte freelance en protection de l'enfance et en droits de l'enfant, Ombudsman fir Kanner a Jugendlecher (Défenseur des droits de l'enfant)*

Slovaquie / *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 indépendante sur l'enfance, l'affectivité et la protection de l'*enfance

PARTICIPANTS

Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Committee) / *Comité des Parties à la Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur la protection des enfants contre l'exploitation et les abus sexuels (Comité de Lanzarote*)
Stevan Popovic
Member in respect of Serbia / *Membre représentant de la Serbie*

***Groupe d'experts sur la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des femmes et la violence domestique (GREVIO)* / Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence**
Ellen O'Malley Dunlop
Member in respect of Ireland / *Membre représentante de l'Irlande*

Conference of INGO / *Conférence des OING*
Rú Ávila Rodríguez
Deputy Executive Director and Policy & Research Manager / *Directeur général adjoint et responsable des politiques et de la recherche*

OBSERVERS / *OBSERVATEURS*

Missing Children Europe
Lea Meindre-Chautrand
Senior Policy Advocacy Officer / *Responsable du plaidoyer politique*

CONSULTANTS

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

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

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DGII - *Direction générale de la Démocratie et de la dignité humaine* / Directorate *General of Democracy and* Human Dignity
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Children's rights division / Division droits des enfants
Agnes von Maravić
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Carolina Savonitto
Stagiaire

Steering *Committee for* the Rights of the Child (CDENF) / *Comité Directeur Pour les Droits de l'Enfant (CDENF)*
Tanja Gerwien
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Study visitor / *Visiteur d'étude*

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Naomi Trewinnard
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INTERPRETERS / *INTERPRETES*

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