



6 August 2019

**IMPLEMENTING CHILD PARTICIPATION  
IN THE 2019 EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN DAY  
ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION  
AND SEXUAL ABUSE (18 NOVEMBER)**

**EMPOWERING CHILDREN TO STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**A FACILITATORS TOOL KIT**

Prepared by the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe



If you are an adult interested in supporting children in organising and participating in initiatives to celebrate our latest edition of the European Day on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (18 November), then this FACILITATORS TOOL KIT is designed to help you! Packed with background information, step-plan advice and examples, you are sure to find a methodology to suit that will lead to a successful outcome.

## About the European Day

Information on the European Day can be found on [our website](#), alongside other Council of Europe activities around the protection of children against sexual violence. A [general presentation leaflet](#) explaining the European Day is appended.

Organising activities on the European Day is flexible and decentralised. Council of Europe partners take ownership for marking the European Day as they see fit. They can hold national actions and decide themselves on the initiatives they wish to take, particularly through the use of social media and already existing networks. Possible actions include school talks; discussions; flash mobs; roadshows; screening films on the topic of sexual violence against children; other creative initiatives and media events.

Each edition of the European Day focuses on a specific theme. In 2019 it is “**Empowering children to stop sexual violence**”. A leaflet on this theme is appended and can be found on [our website](#).

Children are all too often side-lined from matters that concern them while they should be given the means, space, opportunity and support to participate in the design and implementation of measures, policies, programmes or other initiatives to prevent and respond to sexual abuse and exploitation.

**All initiatives stimulating and encouraging child-led projects, child participation and interactions amongst children themselves are welcome as well as those between children and policy makers, educators, parents and child protection professionals.**

The facilitators’ role is therefore to help such child-led projects on the occasion of the European Day.

## Facilitation of child-led initiatives for the European Day

### Step 1 - Preparations

Child-led initiatives are projects designed and implemented by children to achieve a particular aim. Our mission here is to mark the European Day and raise-awareness about sexual abuse and exploitation of children. A participation process is considered child-led when children are given the possibility to identify issues of concern, initiate activities and advocate on behalf of themselves. Children should therefore take ownership of the whole process and prepare their own project; the role of adults is to provide support if needed and in the form requested.

Nevertheless, the general principles of child participation should apply for the child-led initiatives: it should be child-centred, inclusive, voluntary, meaningful, transparent and sustainable. All activities should take place in a child-friendly and preferably neutral environment where children feel safe and comfortable. The best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration throughout the whole process of child participation - from the initial preparations through to the follow-up of the activity.

Child participants, preferably aged between 12 and 18, should be selected through an open call: they should volunteer to take part and be informed about the framework, the objectives and the topics concerned in advance. Their parents or guardians should be fully informed and give their consent in accordance with domestic legislation (in a written form if prescribed by domestic law). National data protection and confidentiality rules shall be strictly followed.

A child safeguarding policy should be in place – instigated by the institution or organisation responsible – which applies to all persons involved in facilitating the development and implementation of child-led activities for the European Day. This policy should include all the necessary measures to ensure that professionals do no harm to children and promote their best interest. Child safeguarding includes both preventive actions to minimise the risks of harm occurring and responsive actions to ensure that incidents which may happen are appropriately and swiftly handled.

## **Step 2 - Development of child-led initiatives**

Once the group of children interested in preparing initiatives for the European Day are gathered, the facilitator should support them in developing and implementing their project. This process should be adjusted to the needs and expectations of the children. Below you can find suggested activities for this purpose. [Publications and materials produced by the Council of Europe](#) to prevent sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children are at your disposal and available in [several languages](#).

In general, the facilitator, trained and experienced in working with children, should bear in mind the following:

- Children should have the ownership of the whole process and should decide on all aspects of the project. The role of the facilitator is to keep the focus of the discussion and support them to respect the frameworks given. Set up of “house rules” in the group can facilitate the work;
- Ensure the children understand the scope of their participation, the opportunities and limitations given to lead their own initiatives on the European Day;
- Create a safe and comfortable environment for all members of the group;
- Raise open question in order to avoid influencing their answers. You can help with further questions to support their thinking and brainstorming;
- Child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation being a sensitive topic, it is better to start the discussion about the situation in general. Be prepared to support children in case any child shares personal experience. When you set the “house rules” make sure that the group includes a rule that anyone can leave the room at any time;
- If you feel it appropriate, you can allow the children to also seek and use information from sources other than what you provide, including information and communication technologies;
- Always respect the domestic legislation on child protection and code of conduct of professionals working with children including rules related to data protection and privacy rights, professional secrecy and reporting obligations.

### ***Suggested activities***

1. Try starting with ice-breakers and team-building activities in case the group of children do not know each other. For ideas, consult the Council of Europe publications [Compasito – Manual on human rights education for children](#) and [Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people](#).

2. The aim of the European Day is to raise awareness about the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. This topic must be introduced to the children properly. You can start a discussion about children's rights in general with the following questions:

- What is a child?
- What are the rights of the child? Can you give examples?
- What does it mean to have the right to be free from violence? What is violence or abuse?
- What is sexual violence/abuse/exploitation?
- How can children be protected from violence? Who should protect them from violence?

You can use the child-friendly [materials](#) prepared by the Council of Europe to introduce this topic to the children.

3. Explain that the Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights international organisation. It comprises 47 member States. It aims, among other things, at protecting children from violence, including from sexual abuse and exploitation all over Europe. Highlight that, in order to achieve this aim, the governments of the Council of Europe prepared a document called the [Lanzarote Convention](#) which includes obligations for the governments, including the one of their home country, to protect children from sexual violence. At the same time, the Council of Europe chose a day when everyone who would like to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation can organise an activity, this is the European Day on 18 November. You can also share some examples of what was done in previous years on the occasion of the [European Day](#).

4. Once the context of the European Day is discussed, explain to the children that this year they can take the lead and organise their own project on this occasion. Make the children understand that they have the ownership over the whole process: they can decide on all aspects of the project, the facilitator's role is to help them keep the focus of the discussion, respect the framework and provide support if needed. Also inform the children about the opportunities and limitations of a project to be implemented in the framework given by the school, the civil society organisation or any other institution.

5. The next step is to support the children to develop their project ideas for the European Day. Depending on the age and maturity of the children, you can use the questions below in the table to walk the children through the development of their initiative for the European Day. The best is if the children take notes in any easily accessible manner (on a big poster or in electronic format), so the details of the project they agreed on can be consulted later, at any time by anyone. You can also support the discussion if you prepare yourself ahead to have a good knowledge of the following topics relevant for the European Day:

- sexuality education;
- sexual abuse of children in the circle of trust;

- sexual abuse of children in sports;
- sexual abuse and exploitation of children facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs) (online grooming, risks of self-generated sexual images, sexting, sexual extortion and coercion of children facilitated by ICTs).

Children’s attention can be drawn to these topics, too, but be prepared to talk about recent cases or stories of which the children might have come across in the media or in their closer environment.

***Step-by-step guide***

<b>What</b> do you want to do?	What is the theme you want to focus on (relevant for the European Day)? What type of activity is involved? Do you want to organise one event or more? What kind of event do you want to organise?
<b>Why</b> do you want to do this project?	Why do you want to carry out this project and these activities within the project? What is your motivation individually and as a group? What do you expect to achieve with this project?
<b>When</b> do you want to do this project?	How long will it last? One event or more? When do you want to start/end it? What is the timeline of your project? Is there any important date to keep in mind when you plan your project?
<b>Where</b> do you want to do this project?	Do you want to do your project at the school/community house/in the city or more/other locations? Do you need to ask permission to use these facilities? Do you want to manage activities online? If so, which platform do you want to use?
<b>Who</b> is involved in the project?	Who is in the project team? What is your role in the team? What is the target audience of the project? What is the target audience of the activities? Do you need partners? If so, who can they be and what do you have to do to involve them?

<p><b>How</b> will you do this project?</p>	<p>What logistics are required? What practical matters must be dealt with?          Is there a cost in organising your activities? If so, how much would you need? Where can you get funding?          Do you need regular meetings with the team to plan and carry out the project? If so, how many times per week/month or which days?          Would you like to share news about your project in offline or online media?</p>
<p>Do you need any other type of support?          Do you have any other questions?</p>	

### Step 3 - Implementation of child-led initiatives

The facilitator should support the team to carry out the activities as planned, if needed in the framework of regular meetings agreed upon by the children. Such meetings can also serve as an occasion for the children to reorganise and reschedule some activities if necessary.

If the children agree to use social media or any other online platform to post about their initiative, the facilitator should follow them closely and discuss with the children if anything happens which bothers them (inappropriate comments etc.). For wider dissemination, the children can use the hashtag of the European Day (#EndChildSexAbuseDay).

Children are invited to send a summary of their initiative to be featured on the website of the 2019 edition of the European Day (by completing a [form](#) in English or French or by sending an email to [EndChildSexAbuseDay@coe.int](mailto:EndChildSexAbuseDay@coe.int)). The facilitator shall explain to the children that the Council of Europe would appreciate to be informed about their initiative, even from the preparations, and more than happy to share these good projects with adults and children from all over Europe. The children can also look at the [website of the 2019 edition of the European Day](#) to see what other children do on 18 November.

More information about the campaign materials and visibility are available at the Social Media Kit. A poster to promote the involvement of children is also available.

### Step 4 - Follow-up

It is important to gather the children to evaluate their project once it is implemented and support them on how to carry on if they would like to organise similar activities in the future. This should happen with the participation of the children who were members of the project team and with the exclusion of any other adult except the facilitator.

#### *Suggested activities*

1. Gather the children in a circle for the closing session. Congratulate them on their work, preferably also mentioning individual contributions or achievements.

2. It is also advisable to evaluate the European Day initiatives as a process with the children with non-formal means since this is the best way to get direct feedback from them. You can use one of the following methods:

- Ask them to write two positive and negative experiences on the participation in different papers and then gather all the positive and all the negative ones on the wall or in a flipchart. Depending on the group, you can summarise and read them out or ask the participants to place their paper and explain;
- Prepare backpack or luggage pictures or drawings (A/4 size) and ask the children to write everything inside the bag, which they take home from this participation. Then they can read it out or place in the middle of the circle and you can read it out together.

3. Probably, during the evaluation, the children will express if they are interested and willing to carry on with these activities. Discuss this with them, if necessary, by using the table above for the project development.

**Any questions or requests for a WORD format of this Tool kit or the Poster should be addressed to: [EndChildSexAbuseDay@coe.int](mailto:EndChildSexAbuseDay@coe.int)**

Websites: [www.coe.int/EndChildSexAbuseDay](http://www.coe.int/EndChildSexAbuseDay)  
[www.coe.int/lanzarote](http://www.coe.int/lanzarote)  
[www.coe.int/children](http://www.coe.int/children)

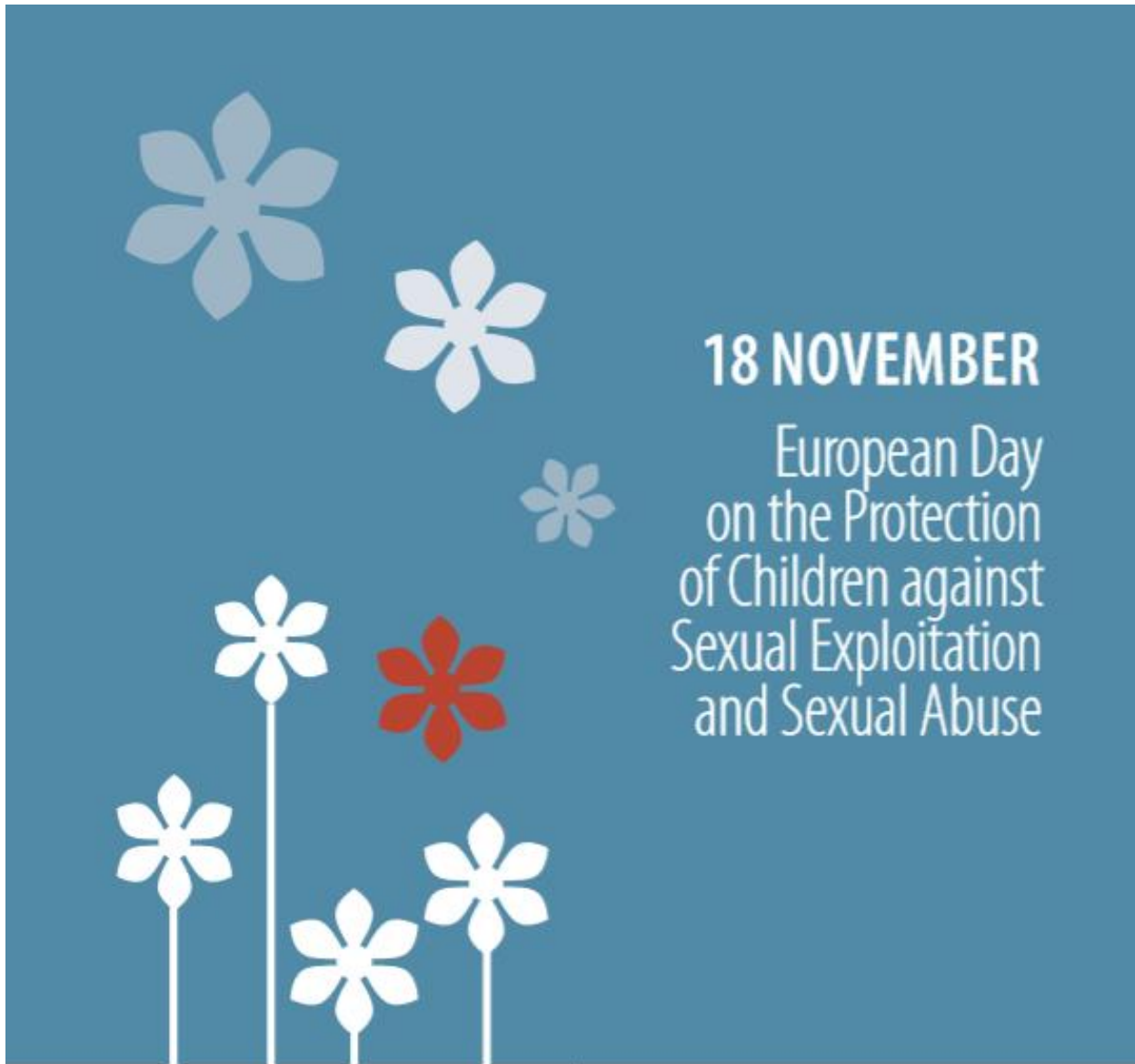
Twitter: [@coe\\_children](https://twitter.com/coe_children)

Facebook: [Council of Europe One in Five Campaign](https://www.facebook.com/CouncilofEuropeOneinFiveCampaign)

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

Hashtag: [#EndChildSexAbuseDay](https://twitter.com/EndChildSexAbuseDay)





**18 NOVEMBER**

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

[www.coe.int/EndChildSexAbuseDay](http://www.coe.int/EndChildSexAbuseDay)





## Since 2015, 18 November is the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse\*

### What is the purpose of the new European Day?

Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children are still a tragic reality for all our societies. They are a serious violation of children's rights, and have long lasting and often detrimental consequences for their entire life.

To prevent these crimes, prosecute the perpetrators and protect the victims, the Council of Europe and its member States need to make sure that parents, educators, NGOs and decision-makers do not shy away from the problem, but bring it to light and discuss ways and take practical steps to solve it.

The objectives of the European Day are therefore to:

- ▶ raise public awareness of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, and the need to prevent such acts;
- ▶ facilitate open discussion on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and help prevent and eliminate the stigmatisation of victims;
- ▶ promote the ratification and implementation of the Lanzarote Convention – a unique legally-binding instrument that obliges states to criminalise all forms of sexual abuse of children and spells out the ways to fight it.

The European Day adds on to the work of the Council of Europe and its member States under the ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children, which ended in November 2015. The European Day activities will help maintain the momentum it created.

It also offers an opportunity to explain what the Council of Europe does to protect the rights of the child, in line with the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child.

### Who is the European Day for?

This day is meant for children and for everyone who interacts with children in their personal or professional capacity:

- ▶ parents;
- ▶ local, regional and national authorities;
- ▶ professionals working with children, including educators, sport coaches, law enforcement agents, etc.;
- ▶ non-governmental organisations;
- ▶ the private sector.

### How can the European Day be marked?

The European Day is to be organised in a flexible and decentralised manner.

Council of Europe member States and civil society take ownership for marking the European Day. They can hold national actions and decide themselves on the initiatives they wish to take, particularly through the use of social media and already existing networks. Possible actions include lectures at schools; discussions; flash mobs; roadshows; screening of films on the topic of sexual violence against children; creative initiatives and media events.

The Council of Europe has set up a dedicated web page containing:

- ▶ child-friendly awareness-raising material for parents, professionals and children;
- ▶ awareness-raising and other resources for local, regional and national authorities;
- ▶ a list of events organised at national level.

Contact: [EndChildSexAbuseDay@coe.int](mailto:EndChildSexAbuseDay@coe.int)

Website: [www.coe.int/EndChildSexAbuseDay](http://www.coe.int/EndChildSexAbuseDay)

Twitter: [@coe\\_children](https://twitter.com/coe_children)  
[#EndChildSexAbuseDay](https://twitter.com/EndChildSexAbuseDay)

\* As decided by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 12 May 2015.





**18 NOVEMBER**

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

2019 Edition

Empowering children  
to stop sexual violence



## 18 November is the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse\*

Children are all too often sidelined from matters that concern them. They should be given the means, space, opportunity and support to participate in the design and implementation of measures, policies, programmes or other initiatives aiming at preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse. The 2019 edition of the European Day therefore focuses on *“Empowering children to stop sexual violence”*.

As 2019 is also the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe encourages the organisation of any type of activity giving center stage to children, their insights and proposals. All initiatives stimulating child-led projects, child participation and interactions amongst children themselves are welcome as well as those between children and policy makers, educators, parents and child protection professionals.

To this end, the Council of Europe is developing:

- ▶ Guidelines to facilitate child-led initiatives and child safeguarding policies;
- ▶ A child friendly explanation of the European Day;
- ▶ A social media kit.

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