



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## COMPLIANCE PROCEDURE – ALBANIA

### Lanzarote Committee's 2<sup>nd</sup> Monitoring Round on:

**“The protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs): addressing the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGSIV)”**

This factsheet was prepared by the Secretariat in March 2023.

It has been updated with information submitted by the Government of Albania in March 2025 displayed in orange and blue text boxes.

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## I. Introduction

One of the main functions of the Lanzarote Committee (“the Committee”) is to monitor the effective implementation of the Lanzarote Convention (“the Convention”). The monitoring procedure is divided into rounds, each concerning a specific thematic area and involving all State Parties (“the Parties”) simultaneously. The monitoring rounds start with the launch of a thematic questionnaire, to which the national authorities are asked to respond, and which other relevant stakeholders can comment on. After carrying out its **evaluation procedure**, consisting of the analysis of such replies, the Committee adopts an **implementation report** where it draws conclusions about the different national frameworks, strategies and policies in place, makes recommendations to Parties, and highlights promising practices as well as some challenges. Sometime after the adoption of the implementation report, the Committee conducts a **compliance procedure** with the aim of assessing whether Parties comply with the recommendations made by the Committee as part of the evaluation procedure.

The compliance procedure seeks to assess the follow-up given by Parties to the recommendations made by the Committee in the evaluation procedure. In the [implementation report of its 2<sup>nd</sup> monitoring round concerning the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos](#), the Committee made **three types of recommendations**:

- **“Require”**: when the steps the Committee recommends Parties to take correspond to obligations arising from the Convention, as clarified by its explanatory report.
- **“Request”**: when the steps the Committee recommends Parties to take correspond to obligations arising from the Convention, as clarified by documents adopted by the Committee (such as previous monitoring round findings, opinions or other documents).
- **“Invite”**: when the steps the Committee recommends Parties to take correspond to promising practices or other measures to enhance protection of children against sexual violence even beyond specific requirements of the Convention.

At its 41<sup>st</sup> meeting (13-15 February 2024), the Lanzarote Committee agreed on a new methodology for the assessment of State Parties’ compliance with the 2nd monitoring round recommendations ([see point 4 of the Appendix to the List of decisions](#)). It entrusted the Secretariat to insert boxes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> monitoring round country [factsheets](#) to highlight where information on follow-up measures taken or changes occurred may be inserted. It is recalled that these factsheets are a synthesis of the Committee’s implementation report findings with respect to specific Parties. The factsheets are structured along the lines of the implementation report and the footnotes in this document refer to the specific paragraphs of the implementation report.

The orange boxes contain information submitted by the State Party regarding progress made towards the implementation of the recommendation.

The blue boxes contain examples of national promising practices that respond to “invite” recommendations made by the Committee.

## II. Legal framework

Interpreting the Convention, in conjunction with its [Opinion on child sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos generated, shared and received by children](#) (6 June 2019), the Committee identifies what Parties ought to have in place as well as what they are encouraged to do to better protect children against the exploitation of their self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGSIV).

### Observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on the legal framework specific to Albania

The Committee observes that Albania does not have a legislative definition to describe "child sexual abuse material" (CSAM) in its legislative framework and relies upon prosecutorial practice or case law.<sup>1</sup>

- The Committee **invites** Albania to introduce a definition of CSAM for material depicting acts of sexual abuse of children and/or focusing on the genitalia of the child, following the guidance set out in the ["Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse"](#).<sup>2</sup> The Committee acknowledges that using the term "child pornography" can undermine the gravity of the crimes it refers to, and invites Parties to rather use the term CSAM in the development of future national, regional and international legal instruments and policies addressing the prevention of and protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.<sup>3</sup>

The Committee observes that the possession of CSGSIV by children is criminalised in Albania.<sup>4</sup> The Committee however notes that the majority of Parties do not prosecute such conduct as they may subject the criminalisation to other conditions (e.g. the context of the possession, the legal age for sexual activities, etc). On this, Albania pointed at the age of criminal responsibility below which children cannot be held criminally liable for acts they commit to demonstrate compatibility with the exclusion of criminal liability for the production and possession of CSGSIV, which is 14 years old.<sup>5</sup> However, The Committee highlights that reliance upon the age of criminal responsibility alone to

exclude criminal responsibility does not correspond to a situation of full compliance with paragraphs 3-6 of the 2019 Opinion, since older children (those above the age of criminal responsibility) cannot avail themselves of this exemption. The situation is particularly of concern with respect to Parties with a particularly low age of criminal responsibility.<sup>6</sup>

- The Committee **requests** that Albania ensures that a child will not be prosecuted when he/she possesses their own CSGSIV; CSGSIV of another child with the informed consent of the child depicted on them; or CSGSIV as a result of receiving them passively without actively asking for them.<sup>7</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

These issues addressed by the Committee of States Parties to the Convention require concrete interventions in the provisions of the Criminal Code and it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study and analysis.

In the following, we would like to inform you that the Ministry of Justice is in the process of drafting the new Criminal Code and we emphasize that the draft is being prepared by approximating European Union directives and taking into account the developments of international jurisprudence and the European Court of Human Rights. The Ministry of Justice has as one of its priorities the preparation of the new Criminal Code, which must be in accordance with the legal and social developments of the time, the acts of the European Union, international standards, as

<sup>1</sup> Para.50.

<sup>2</sup> The Terminology Guidelines also refer to the term "child sexual exploitation material", indicating that this term can be used in a broader sense, see ["Luxembourg Terminology Guidelines", pages 38-40 in particular.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Recommendation II-1 and Recommendation II-3.

<sup>4</sup> Para.68.

<sup>5</sup> Para. 71.

<sup>6</sup> Para. 72.

<sup>7</sup> Recommendation II-6.

well as the practices of the courts. As mentioned above, the recommendations provided will be taken into consideration, within the framework of the relevant analyses that will be carried out for the drafting of the new Criminal Code.

The Committee observes that children are potentially criminally liable for the distribution or transmission of their own CSGSIV in Albania.<sup>8</sup> Further, Albania has rules that lead to the criminalisation of the distribution by children of CSGSIV of *other* children.<sup>9</sup>

- The Committee **requests** that Albania ensures that a child will not be prosecuted for sharing his/her CSGSIV with another child when such sharing is voluntary, consensual, and intended solely for their own private use.<sup>10</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

These issues addressed by the Committee of States Parties to the Convention require concrete interventions in the provisions of the Criminal Code and it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study and analysis.

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- The Committee also **requests** that

Albania ensures that the distribution or transmission by children of CSGSIV of *other* children is prosecuted as a last resort when such images and/or videos qualify as “child pornography” in accordance with Article 20(2) Lanzarote Convention.<sup>11</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

These issues addressed by the Committee of States Parties to the Convention require concrete interventions in the provisions of the Criminal Code and it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study and analysis.

In the following, we would like to inform you that the Ministry of Justice is in the process of drafting the new Criminal Code and we emphasize that the draft is being prepared by approximating European Union directives and taking into account the developments of international jurisprudence and the European Court of Human Rights. The Ministry of Justice has as one of its priorities the preparation of the new Criminal Code, which must be in accordance with the legal and social developments of the time, the acts of the European Union, international standards, as well as the practices of the courts. As mentioned above, the recommendations provided will be taken into consideration, within the framework of the relevant analyses that will be carried out for the drafting of the new Criminal Code.

#### On the “sexual extortion of children”:

The Committee observed that Albania could not provide data or details about cases of sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV.<sup>12</sup> In cases where the sexual extortion is intended to procure additional sexual images or videos, prosecutions would only be brought for offences related to child pornography, the presence of a threat not being taken into account.<sup>13</sup> When it is intended to procure other sexual favours from the child depicted on the images/videos or from another children, Albania reported that they would prosecute for sexual abuse of a child in

<sup>8</sup> Paras.78, 82.

<sup>9</sup> Para. 82.

<sup>10</sup> Recommendation II-8.

<sup>11</sup> Recommendation II-9.

<sup>12</sup> Para.95.

<sup>13</sup> Para. 99

accordance with Article 18 of the Convention.<sup>14</sup> In the case where it is intended to procure a financial gain, other property from the child, or any other gain (e.g. contacts of peers for their sexual solicitation), Albania did not submit information in this respect.

- When dealing with sexual extortion cases involving children, the Committee **invites** Albania to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted<sup>15</sup>

and to take into account the situation where CSGSIV are used to force, coerce or threaten the child to give additional CSGSIV, other sexual favours, a financial gain or other gain to the offenders by:

- either creating a specific incrimination to address this situation,
- or prosecuting both the initial detention of CSGSIV and the act of extortion.<sup>16</sup>

### **Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on the legal framework**

On the legal framework, the Committee **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to introduce explicit references in its respective legal frameworks to conduct concerning CSGSIV, identifying the circumstances when children should not be held criminally liable and when they should be prosecuted only as a last resort.<sup>17</sup>
- to contemplate appropriate legal responses to conduct involving non-visual CSGSIV produced by children in the context of offences covered by the Convention.<sup>18</sup>

- to adopt legislative or other measures which promote as a priority educational and other measures that will aim to support children in safely exploring their sexual development while understanding and avoiding risks deriving from the production and possession of CSGSIV.<sup>19</sup>
- to consider criminalising the offence of "grooming" (solicitation of children for sexual purposes), even when it does not lead to a face-to-face meeting or producing CSAM.<sup>20</sup>

### **Promising practices:**

<sup>14</sup> Para. 102.

<sup>15</sup> Recommendation II-11.

<sup>16</sup> Recommendation II-12.

<sup>17</sup> Recommendation II-2.

<sup>18</sup> Recommendation II-4.

<sup>19</sup> Recommendation II-7.

<sup>20</sup> Recommendation II-10.

### III. Investigations and prosecution

In its [Interpretative Opinion on the applicability of the Lanzarote Convention to sexual offences against children facilitated through the use of information and communication technologies](#) (ICTs) (12 May 2017), the Committee called on Parties to ensure effective investigation and prosecution of ICT facilitated sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by providing resources and training to responsible authorities.

#### Observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on Investigations and Prosecution specific to Albania

The Committee observes that Albania's investigation and prosecution services are already in line with some of its recommendations as Albania has:

- specialised units dealing with ICT-facilitated offences against children within law enforcement.<sup>21</sup>
- specialised prosecution services which handle ICT-facilitated sexual offences *committed by children*.<sup>22</sup>
- training modules in place for law enforcement agents related to aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well as its own training programme, used either in full or in part to carry out training for law enforcement agents.<sup>23</sup>
- has victim identification units within law enforcement for cases of ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children.<sup>24</sup>

To improve the effective implementation of the Lanzarote Convention, the Committee **requires** Albania:

- to put training in place for prosecutors on aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.<sup>25</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The General Prosecutor's Office has aimed to strengthen the normative framework and increase professional capacities for effective criminal prosecution, which contributes to the general and specific prevention of violence in this field. The training process is ongoing, mentioning the following trainings:

-Training on the topic: "Friendly

interviewing techniques with minor victims of sexual abuse", June 2024, the total number of participants is 59 professionals, including 21 prosecutors, 24 judicial police officers and 14 "victim coordinators", respectively.

-Training on the topic: "Providing assistance to minor victims/witnesses of criminal offenses and inter-institutional cooperation", October 2024, the total number of participants is 42 professionals, including 12 prosecutors, 18 judicial police officers, and 12 "Victim Coordinators", respectively.

-Training of Victim coordinators on topics such as: Implementation of the Criminal Justice Code, Friendly interviewing techniques for minor victims/witnesses; Assistance to minor victims/witnesses of criminal offenses and inter-institutional cooperation.

It also **requests** Albania:

- to ensure that training on ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children is available for prosecutors and judges who are or will be working on these issues.<sup>26</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The following trainings were held at the Magistrates' School:

-On February 23, 2024, the training on the topic "Investigation and Trial of Sexual Crimes and Sexual Exploitation of Minors", attended by 13 prosecutors and 4 judicial police officers.

<sup>21</sup> Para. 115.

<sup>22</sup> Para. 138.

<sup>23</sup> Para.145, 146.

<sup>24</sup> Para.180.

<sup>25</sup> Recommendation III-15.

<sup>26</sup> Recommendation III-16 and III-18.

-On December 13, 2024, the training on the topic "Trafficking in Human Beings, Adults and Minors", attended by 54 prosecutors and 38 OPGJ.

-On December 20, 2024, the training on the topic "Trafficking in Human Beings, Adults and Minors", attended by 45 prosecutors and 28 judicial police officers.

- to take the necessary legislative or other measures, in conformity with the fundamental principles of their internal law, to ensure an effective investigation and prosecution of ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children, allowing, where appropriate, for the possibility of covert operations.<sup>27</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

In accordance with national legislation, the Prosecutor General approved General Instruction No. 8, dated 15.11.2021 "On the effective investigation and prosecution of criminal offenses involving minors in conflict with the law, victims and/or witnesses", amended by Instruction No. 1, dated 20.01.2025, which aims to increase efficiency, effectiveness and reduce deadlines in the investigation and prosecution of cases involving/and against minors, in conflict with the law, victims and/or witnesses, guided by the principles of a more child-friendly criminal justice and the best interest of the minor, in order to contribute to the reduction of criminality in and against minors, in their rehabilitation and reintegration. This instruction has also unified several criminal procedures and procedural acts in the case of minors, in accordance with best practices and international standards in criminal justice for minors.

-In implementation of the acts of the Prosecutor General, in 11 prosecutors' offices with general jurisdiction, special Units/Sections have been established for the investigation of criminal offenses with minor perpetrators and victims, with trained prosecutors, judicial police officers and coordinators, supported through

manuals and training. While in two other smaller prosecutors' offices, dedicated prosecutors have been appointed.

-The General Prosecutor's Office has collaborated closely with international organizations and civil society to increase the quality of investigations, psychological support and ensure child-friendly justice, including the cooperation with the Center for Civic Legal Initiatives and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, regarding the 3-year project, "Proactive Engagement for the Protection and Enforcement of the Law against Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence", as well as the project supported by SIDA, within the framework of which the manual on gender-based violence was drafted.

Psychologists are employed by General Prosecutor's Office that work as "Victim Coordinators". In 2023, "Victim Coordinators" at the General Prosecutor's Office drafted a training manual on the issue of gender-based violence. This manual addresses issues on online sexual violence against minors and the treatment of cases of online sexual abuse, interviewing techniques, establishing long-term communication with the minor victim, as well as trauma and its effects. 16 "Victim Coordinators" from all general jurisdiction prosecution offices and 19 judicial police officers in the prosecution offices were trained for this manual. In the Fier and Saranda districts, in cooperation with UNICEF Albania, representatives from schools, child protection units and judicial police officers in the police were also trained.

Also, the General Prosecution Office, has also prepared a draft/working protocol for coordinators, on the topic "Providing assistance to minor victims/witnesses of criminal offenses and inter-institutional cooperation".

On a more negative note, the Committee observed Albania has no connection to

<sup>27</sup> Recommendation III-28.



INTERPOL's International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) image and video database.<sup>28</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee **invites** Albania to connect with INTERPOL's ICSE database.<sup>29</sup>

**Currently, the Albanian State Police has cooperation with NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children) which brings reports on cases related to online accounts that deal with sexually abusive activities with minors in Albania, also has access to the**

**ICACOPS platform (Child Online Protection System) platform which identifies IPs that upload this material to the internet. Albanian State Police will cooperate with Interpol in order to create access to the ICSE database.**

### **Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on investigation and prosecution**

#### On the specialisation and training of authorities:

The Committee **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to ensure that the capacities of any investigative unit specialised in ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children take into account evolving technologies and online behaviours and reflect current practices used by perpetrators.<sup>30</sup>
- to ensure that law enforcement units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children adequately cover and/or are specialised in offences against children involving CSGSIV.<sup>31</sup>
- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children have the necessary specialisation in the intersecting areas of children's rights, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and ICT technical knowledge.<sup>32</sup>
- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children have sufficient specialisation in offences involving CSGSIV.<sup>33</sup>

- to have units, sections or persons specialised in ICT-facilitated sexual offences committed by children against other children for authorities responsible for investigation and for authorities responsible for prosecution.<sup>34</sup>
- to provide specific training on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, including when such offences involve CSGSIV, and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion to law enforcement agents who are likely to come into contact with such cases.<sup>3536</sup>
- to ensure that training on the challenges raised by CSGSIV and ICT-facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to prosecutors and to judges.<sup>37</sup>
- to offer joint (or "joined-up") training for professionals, and particularly law enforcement, prosecutors and judges, involved in legal proceedings involving ICT-facilitated child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, in order to ensure consistency at all stages.<sup>38</sup>
- to ensure that training on ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children for law-enforcement, prosecutors and judges contains a practical element, involving

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<sup>28</sup> Para.189.

<sup>29</sup> Recommendation III-26.

<sup>30</sup> Recommendation III-4.

<sup>31</sup> Recommendation III-5.

<sup>32</sup> Recommendation III-9.

<sup>33</sup> Recommendation III-10.

<sup>34</sup> Recommendation III-11.

<sup>35</sup> Such trainings can also be part of broader training programmes.

<sup>36</sup> Recommendation III-14.

<sup>37</sup> Recommendation III-17 and III-19.

<sup>38</sup> Recommendation III-20.

simulated or real cases.<sup>39</sup>

- In addition, mindful of the different contexts in the Parties as recalled in para 235 of the Explanatory Report, the Lanzarote Committee **requests** those Parties that are not already doing so to ensure that law enforcement and prosecution units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are adequately financed to ensure sufficient resources, including staff, equipment and training.<sup>40</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

The Albanian State Police, with the structural changes made by Order of the Minister of Interior, No. 47, dated 14.04.2023, have created the Child Pornography Investigations Sector with 3 employees, in the Cyber Crimes Investigation Directorate in the General Police Directorate, as well as the Child Pornography Investigation Section with 2 employees, in the Tirana Local Police Directorate. Computer Crimes Investigation Sections with 2 employees have also been created in all Local Police Directorates of

On measures to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of offenders:

The Lanzarote Committee **requires** all Parties to ensure that investigations and criminal proceedings in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are treated as priority and carried out without any unjustified delay.<sup>41</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

Currently, the Albanian State Police has cooperation with NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children) which provides reports on cases related to online accounts that deal with sexually abusive activities with minors in Albania, also has access to the ICACOPS platform that identifies IPs that upload this material to the Internet. Albanian State Police will

other regions.

Since these units have been newly created, with personnel who have not had experience in investigating these crimes, efforts have been made to create the opportunity to increase human capacities during this time, by providing training for their staff to investigate these crimes as well as technical capacities that are computer programs or devices that help in identifying and detecting the perpetrators of these criminal offenses.

During this year, work will be done to collect materials that will serve to prepare training modules in cooperation with the Security Academy, for the training of employees who deal with the investigation of these crimes, as well as for prosecutors who pursue these cases. It is important that the personnel of these structures, in cooperation with the Prosecutor's Office and Judges, receive continuous training on the investigation of these cases, since the forms of committing these crimes change every day.

cooperate with Interpol in order to create access to the ICSE database.

All cases of sexual offenses facilitated by ICT have been treated with priority and have been referred without delay to the relevant Prosecutor's Offices. Despite the fact that the Criminal Code criminalizes only "Internet Child Pornography", Article 117/2, other cases related to "Grooming" or "Sexting" are referred to as criminal offenses such as "Sexual Harassment" or "Indecent Acts" provided for in Articles 108/a and 108 of the Criminal Code.

State Police have very good cooperation with state institutions as National Agency for Cyber Security, The Electronic and Postal Communications Authority, the Ministry of Education, non-governmental organizations I Sigurt.al and Alo 116 111 for the exchange of information as quickly as possible, when dealing with criminal

<sup>39</sup> Recommendation III-21.

<sup>40</sup> Recommendation III-3 and III-7.

<sup>41</sup> Recommendation III-30.

offenses facilitated by ICT.

Albanian State Police is cooperating with the NGO “Our Rescue” in order to support computer equipments and programs that serve these investigative structures, as well as in providing training for the structures investigating child pornography.

It also **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to ensure that measures, services and technology available to those in charge of identifying child victims of ICT-facilitated sexual offences are up to date, reflect current practices across Parties, including establishing and using national child abuse material databases, and that resources are sufficiently allocated.<sup>42</sup>
- to engage in and strengthen inter-Party cooperation for the purpose of identifying child victims and perpetrators of

ICT facilitated sexual offences, including, where appropriate, by providing access to each other’s databases or shared databases, including those containing information on such perpetrators.<sup>43</sup>

- to take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that preservation of specified stored computer data in connection with a specific criminal investigation or proceedings is made possible, fully upholding the rights of the parties involved.<sup>44</sup>
- to take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the investment in human, financial and physical resources is sufficient to have data generated by ICTs analysed in a timely manner so that investigations are carried out without any unjustified delay.<sup>45</sup>

Promising practices:

<sup>42</sup> Recommendation III-24.

<sup>43</sup> Recommendation III-25, III-29.

<sup>44</sup> Recommendation III-31.

<sup>45</sup> Recommendation III-32.

## IV. Jurisdiction rules

Due to their online component, offences related to conducts involving CSGSIV have an inherently international aspect. As the prosecution of offences related to this material may involve more than one jurisdiction, the report analyses the jurisdictional rules in place in the Parties, enabling the determination of which Party may prosecute a particular case and under what conditions.

### Observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on jurisdiction rules specific to Albania.

#### Jurisdiction in cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs committed on the territory of a Party: the territoriality principle (Article 25(1) (a-c))

The Committee notes that Albania has established laws clarifying the circumstances in which their national criminal law will apply to a transnational situation following the territoriality principle. Accordingly, Albania will have jurisdiction over offences related to conducts linked to CSGSIV if the offender or the victim is present in Albania or if CSGSIV was stored or generated in Albania.<sup>46</sup>

#### Jurisdiction based on nationality and residency (Article 25(1)(d), (e))

The Committee observes that Albania does not establish jurisdiction over offences established under the Lanzarote Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in their territory.<sup>47</sup>

- Hence, the Committee **requires** Albania to establish jurisdiction over offences established under the Lanzarote Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in Albania.<sup>48</sup>

#### **Follow-up actions:**

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania, in Article 16, paragraph 1, stipulates that the fundamental rights and freedoms provided for in the Constitution for Albanian citizens apply equally to foreigners and stateless persons in the territory of the Republic of Albania, except in cases where the Constitution specifically links Albanian citizenship to the exercise of certain rights

and freedoms. The spirit of this constitutional principle also applies to criminal proceedings. In this sense, the procedural rights provided for minor victims, in the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Code of Criminal Justice for Minors, shall be equally applicable regardless of their citizenship. Also, the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, in Article 54, provides for the right of every child to be protected from violence, abuse and exploitation that may harm their health.

#### Jurisdiction not subordinated to the condition that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or denunciation from the State where the offence was committed (Article 25(6))

Albania did not provide information as to whether it subordinates its jurisdiction to the condition that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or a denunciation from the State where the offence was committed.

- Therefore, the Committee **requires** Albania to remove the requirement that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or a denunciation from the State of the place where the offence was committed for offences of sexual abuse, offences concerning child prostitution, the production of “child pornography” and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances, when committed by one of their nationals or by a person who has his or her habitual residence in its territory.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Para.214.

<sup>47</sup> Para.217.

<sup>48</sup> Recommendation IV-4.

<sup>49</sup> Recommendation IV-5.

#### Follow-up actions:

The recommendations provided will be taken into consideration, within the framework of the relevant analyses that will be carried out for the drafting of the new Criminal Code.

Jurisdiction not subordinated to the condition that the acts are criminalised at the place where they were performed: the dual criminality principle (Article 25(4))

Albania reported to the Committee that its criminal laws apply to acts committed by their nationals abroad if it is also punishable at the place of the commission.<sup>50</sup> This practice is called the principle of dual criminality.

- The Committee **requires** Albania to remove the requirement for dual criminality when committed by one of their nationals, for offences of sexual abuse, offences concerning child prostitution, the production of child pornography and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances.<sup>51</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The recommendations provided will be taken into consideration, within the framework of the relevant analyses that will be carried out for the drafting of the new

Criminal Code.

Jurisdiction in cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs committed against nationals or habitual residents of a Party: the passive personality principle (Art. 25(2))

Albania did not provide information as to whether it has jurisdiction in cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs committed against nationals or habitual residents of a Party.

- The Committee **requests** Parties that are not already doing so, including Albania to endeavour to take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish jurisdiction over any offence established under the Lanzarote Convention where the offence is committed against one of its nationals or a person who has his or her habitual residence in its territory.<sup>52</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The recommendations provided will be taken into consideration, within the framework of the relevant analyses that will be carried out for the drafting of the new Criminal Code.

### Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on the Jurisdiction rules

- The Committee **invites** Albania to remove the requirement for dual criminality when committed by one of their nationals, for offences of:
  - possessing, offering, distributing, transmitting, procuring child pornography, and

the fact of knowingly gaining access to child pornography through ICTs, when CSGSIV are involved,<sup>53</sup>

- solicitation of children for sexual purposes.<sup>54</sup>

#### Promising practices:

<sup>50</sup> Para.222.

<sup>51</sup> Recommendation IV-6.

<sup>52</sup> Recommendation IV-9.

<sup>53</sup> Recommendation IV-7.

<sup>54</sup> Recommendation IV-8.

## V. International cooperation

The implementation report also analyses cooperation practices and examples of coordinated international responses, not only in the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse of children, but also in areas related to the prevention, protection and assistance of child victims and persons related to them.

### Main observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on international cooperation specific to Albania

The Committee observes that the PROMISE Barnahus Network,<sup>55</sup> WeProtect Global Alliance,<sup>56</sup> and ECPAT<sup>57</sup> conduct cooperation

projects to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Albania.<sup>58</sup>

### Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on international cooperation

- On international cooperation, the Committee **requests** all Parties, including Albania to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Lanzarote Convention.<sup>59</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Currently, the State Police has cooperation with NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children) which brings reports on cases related to online accounts that deal with sexually abusive activities with minors in Albania, also has access to the ICACOPS platform (Child Online Protection System) platform which identifies IPs that upload this material to the internet. State Police will extend the cooperation also with Interpol in order to create access to the ICSE database.

Safer Internet Day (SID) is organized every year at the beginning of February, to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology, especially by children and young people. Albania opened the activities for the International Safer Internet Day, which also corresponds with the opening of the National Campaign "Together for a Safer Internet", which lasts throughout February 2025. The campaign, brings together, Ministry of Education, the

Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the State Police, the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, the National Authority for Cybersecurity, the State Social Service, the Safer Internet Center in Albania (iSIGURT.al) CRCA/ECPAT Albania, ALO 116-111, Save the Children, SHKEJ and MEDPAK. The campaign is supported by the NetSmartKids Albania initiative, co-funded by the European Union and CRCA Albania.

The Committee **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to assess, strengthen and develop international cooperation with other Parties to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and to provide assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>60</sup>
- to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Lanzarote Convention to disseminate the standards of the Lanzarote Convention, including for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, for the purpose of protecting and providing assistance to victims and concerning the offences established in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention, in

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.barnahus.eu/en/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.weprotect.org/>

<sup>57</sup> <https://ecpat.org/>

<sup>58</sup> Para.255.

<sup>59</sup> Recommendation V-3

<sup>60</sup> Recommendations V-6, V-11.

matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>61</sup>

- to regularly assess the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them.<sup>62</sup>
- to strengthen cooperation with relevant intergovernmental bodies and with transnational networks and other international organisations and initiatives due to their capacity to mobilisation, their worldwide scope, and their flexibility to work, for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children as well as for protecting and providing assistance to victims, in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>63</sup>
- to consider requesting the establishment of cooperation projects managed by the Council of Europe to assist them in their efforts to preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>64</sup>
- to support regional and international capacity building efforts to improve policy and operational measures including the pooling

and sharing of successful education and awareness-raising tools for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>65</sup>

- to maintain and develop efforts to strengthen international cooperation with other Parties and non-Parties to the Lanzarote Convention, in investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention, in particular in the area of police cooperation, namely ensuring that their law-enforcement agencies can connect and contribute to the Europol and Interpol databases, and develop the areas of data, training, vetting, and selection, in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>66</sup>
- to integrate, where appropriate, prevention and the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV, in assistance programmes for development provided for the benefit of third States.<sup>67</sup>

#### Promising practices:

<sup>61</sup> Recommendations V-4, V-7, V-12, V-15.

<sup>62</sup> Recommendation V-5.

<sup>63</sup> Recommendation V-8, V-13.

<sup>64</sup> Recommendation V-9.

<sup>65</sup> Recommendation V-10.

<sup>66</sup> Recommendations V-14, V-16.

<sup>67</sup> Recommendation V-19.



## VI. Assistance to victims

This chapter provides a comparative study of national mechanisms and measures for assisting child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly where this results from the CSGSIV.

### Main observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on assistance to victims specific to Albania

The Committee observes that there are helplines for children that are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in Albania<sup>68</sup> and that it collaborates with different bodies, including ministries and NGOs. This can be very effective for victims who benefit from this synergy and broader services.<sup>69</sup>

However, the Committee also observes that although Albania has legislation containing adequate provisions to assist child victims, they concern the protection of children in general and do not specifically provide support, assistance, and psychological help to child victims of sexual abuse or exploitation.<sup>70</sup>

Hence the Committee **requires** Albania to take the necessary legislative or other measures:

- to encourage and support the establishment of information services, such as telephone or internet helplines, to provide advice to child victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs as well as persons wishing to help them, in a confidential manner or with due regard for their anonymity. Furthermore, these information services should be made available as widely as possible. This can be done in several ways: the service is available at extended hours, it is delivered in a language that the caller, especially the child, can understand, and it is free of charge.<sup>71</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The National Toll-Free Line 116006 was activated in December 2023, in collaboration with Electronic and Postal Communications Authority and the 2

telephone operators (ONE and VODAFONE). In order to promote the Line and raise community awareness of the phenomenon of trafficking, on January 23, 2024, the anti-trafficking communication campaign “The Truth in the Light” 116 006 was presented, as part of the program “Transforming the National Response to Human Trafficking in and from Albania”, which is funded by the United Kingdom government and implemented by UNICEF in Albania. The main goal of this campaign is to reduce human trafficking within and from Albania through prevention, protection and services for the reintegration of survivors, as well as strengthening coordinated anti-trafficking partnerships.

Also there is an other child help line Alo 116111

- to assist child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, in the short and long term, in their physical and psycho-social recovery, taking due account of the child’s views, needs and concerns.<sup>72</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

During 2024, Child Protection Workers (CPWs) have managed a total of **16 cases** of violence against children in the digital environment. The cases have mainly been blackmail, threats and publications of intimate and inappropriate photos/videos, online bullying, threats and insults on social platforms. The cases have been reported to the police and then followed up with the cybercrime structures of the state police to investigate the cases.

Child Protection Workers have assessed the situation, convened Inter-Sectoral

<sup>68</sup> Para.280.

<sup>69</sup> Para.277.

<sup>70</sup> Para.285.

<sup>71</sup> Recommendation VI-1.

<sup>72</sup> Recommendation VI-3.



Technical Groups at the local level and drafted individual protection plans for each child.

In these cases, in collaboration with state police actions to identify the perpetrators and close blackmailing or bullying addresses, psychological services for children have been provided. The cases are periodically monitored by Child Protection Workers in close cooperation with school

psychologists.

Additionally, Albania acknowledged the significant lack of data collection and information on the number of victims who have received support, assistance, and psychological help in the context of CSGSIV.<sup>73</sup> The Committee finds it unrealistic that, according to national statistical data, no cases have been reported or referred in Albania.<sup>74</sup>

### Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on assistance to victims

The Committee also **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to promote awareness raising or specialised training for professionals who advise children through telephone or internet helplines on ICT-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse of children – including the risks associated with CSGSIV – and how to provide appropriate support to victims and to those

who wish to help them.<sup>75</sup>

- to assist child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including of offences due to the production, possession, distribution or transmission of CSGSIV in the short and long term, in their physical and psycho-social recovery, these measures must take due account of the child's views, needs and concerns.<sup>76</sup>

#### Promising practices:

Continuing a positive tradition established over the years, the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with state institutions and partner organizations, organized sensitization and awareness-raising activities for the prevention of human trafficking in 12 regions of the country. The activities aimed to bring to the attention of all state and non-state structures the importance of undertaking a joint commitment in the fight against human trafficking, as well as to convey messages about the risks posed by trafficking, the ways and forms for increasing public awareness, especially of vulnerable groups.

In the framework of the European Day against Trafficking in Persons, the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the "UART" Network and the main institutions at the central and local level, organized on October 18 in Shkodra a national awareness-raising event within the framework of the national campaign to prevent and combat trafficking in persons (activities foreseen in the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons 2024-2025). The event was attended by representatives from public institutions, members of the National Referral Mechanism, national and international organizations, diplomatic missions, civil society activists, high school students, media representatives, the private sector, as well as community members.

It is worth noting that the above-mentioned activities are foreseen in the National Action Plan (NAP) for Combating Trafficking in Persons 2024-2025, approved by Council of Ministers No. 458, dated 10.07.2024. The National Action Plan is based on the vision of the Strategy against Organized Crime and Serious Crime and, in particular, aims to ensure that the Albanian government and all state and non-state actors are committed and committed to preventing and combating trafficking in persons to ensure the protection of individuals and vulnerable groups from trafficking, the taking of effective legal measures against perpetrators of the crime of trafficking in persons, as well as the protection

<sup>73</sup> Para.295, 296.

<sup>74</sup> Para.299.

<sup>75</sup> Recommendation VI-2.

<sup>76</sup> Recommendation VI-4.

and respect for the rights of potential victims of trafficking and, in particular, women and children.

## VII. Civil society involvement and cooperation

Civil society's involvement in protecting children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is crucial and acknowledged by the Convention. Projects and programmes carried out by civil society, as well as cooperation between the competent state authorities and civil society, cover a wide range of issues.

### Main observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation specific to Albania

The Committee observes that Albania is one of the few Parties where cooperation projects are decided upon by a national body specifically dedicated to children's rights, such as the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights. The State Agency signed a cooperation agreement in April 2016 with the National Children's Counselling Line Alo 116 111, which aims to improve the referral system for children at risk, through increased cross-sector co-operation and co-ordination work between public and non-public structures. It also signed a cooperation agreement with the Together Albania Foundation, which aims at informing all institutions, civil society organisations, children, young people about the online counselling service [www.nukjevetem.al](http://www.nukjevetem.al) which offers free help to children, while respecting their anonymity and referral of child cases at risk that is signalled via the web site [www.nukjevetem.al](http://www.nukjevetem.al).<sup>77</sup>

The Committee recognises Albania's efforts to develop and support different activities aimed at raising the awareness of not only children but also adults, such as parents, educators, doctors and social workers, about the existing risks and dangers of ICTs for children.<sup>78</sup> The Committee also observes that in Albania, the interaction with civil society includes preventive, educational and awareness-raising activities to minimise the risk of abuse that children face online,<sup>79</sup> including the risk of abuses related to the sharing of CSGSIV.<sup>80</sup>

Albania is among few Parties that mentioned programmes meant to assist victims of offences related to CSGSIV in its reply to the

Committee.<sup>81</sup> Victim assistance mechanisms in Albania consist of helplines and shelters where victims of violence, including children, can seek support in cases of sexual abuse.<sup>82</sup> Helplines concern broad issues such as children's rights in general and violence against children, including sexual violence. Reporting illegal material online or offences through these helplines is also possible.<sup>83</sup>

To improve the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention, the Committee:

- **requires** Albania to involve civil society bodies in implementing preventive measures in the field of sexual exploitation and abuse of children.<sup>84</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

UNICEF supported Municipalities of Tirana, Shkoder and Korca to implement BiblioTech' initiative through the NGO – ASDO. In the past 3 years, the below has been achieved:

Strengthening knowledge and skills in the field of innovation and technology  
1 418 total number of Children / young people empowered with knowledge in the field of innovation, technology, online security, digital education and financial education in training at Bibliotech corners, and who have benefited from a safe internet from #FRIENDLYWIFI provided near these corners.

- #Bibliotech Tirana
- #Bibliotech Shkodër

<sup>77</sup> Para.306.

<sup>78</sup> Para.315.

<sup>79</sup> Para.320.

<sup>80</sup> Para.323.

<sup>81</sup> Para.327.

<sup>82</sup> Para. 329.

<sup>83</sup> Para.328.

<sup>84</sup> Recommendations VII-1.

- #Bibliotech Korçë

97000 nr. total of children / youth potentially reached on Social-Media Presence in the community  
6 #Bibliotech corners offers services related to online prevention and protection. The #Bibliotech's internet and public Wi-Fi service provides filters that block child pornography.  
39 number of secure devices to navigate on the Internet/to empower young people with knowledge in the field of innovation and technology  
17 number of info sessions in schools for online security, Shkodër, Tiranë.  
Active youth engagement  
220 number of children participating with project ideas in the #BiblioTech competition

- **requests** Albania to encourage the financing of projects and programmes carried out by civil society aiming to prevent

and protect children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.<sup>85</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Safer Internet Day (SID) is organized every year at the beginning of February, to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology, especially by children and young people. Albania opened the activities for the International Safer Internet Day, which also corresponds with the opening of the National Campaign "Together for a Safer Internet", which lasts throughout February 2025. The campaign, brings together, Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the State Police, the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, the National Authority for Cybersecurity, the State Social Service, the Safer Internet Center in Albania (iSIGURT.al) CRCA/ECPAT Albania, ALO 116-111, Save the Children, SHKEJ and MEDPAK. The campaign is supported by the NetSmartKids Albania initiative, co-funded by the European Union and CRCA Albania.

### Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation

The Committee **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to expand cooperation with civil society to better prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and the challenges raised by the exploitation of CSGSIV.<sup>86</sup>
- to ensure that the forms of cooperation that take place with civil society in the field of prevention and protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse are of a sustainable nature.<sup>87</sup>

- To support civil society to carry out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV.<sup>88</sup>

- to encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives<sup>89</sup> and to seek children's views at the stage of drafting new legislation concerning the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and as regards CSGSIV.<sup>90</sup>

### Difficulties to implement the Convention

The Committee observes that there is a lack of specialised assistance to child victims of sexual abuse,

<sup>85</sup> Recommendations VII-2.

<sup>86</sup> Recommendation VII-3.

<sup>87</sup> Recommendation VII-4.

<sup>88</sup> Recommendation VII-5.

<sup>89</sup> Parties are also invited to provide example(s) of how children's views are taken into account in the context of the participation of children.

<sup>90</sup> Recommendations VII-6, VII-7.

including psychological support in Albania.<sup>91</sup>

**Promising practice:**

The Committee highlights Albania's practice as a promising practice on this matter:

Albania has recourse to mobile apps: the iSigurt application was designed as part of the National Platform for Child Safety Online ([www.ISIGURT.al](http://www.ISIGURT.al)). It is accessible on smartphones and includes informative and preventive information, as well as direct links to reporting an incident to child helpline services.

NGOs from Albania, Cyprus and Finland broadcast animated video clips for children and parents, addressing the issue of online self-generated sexual content and how to prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence.

**Promising practices:**

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<sup>91</sup> Para.330.

## **VIII. Promoting awareness of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves**

The Articles 5, 6 and 8 of the Convention establish that States Parties should take the necessary measures to prevent all forms of child sexual exploitation and abuse and to protect children from their effects. Awareness-raising is one type of preventive measure.

### **Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on promoting awareness of the risk of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves**

The Committee **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to ensure that explanations of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves, with or without coercion, are included in the awareness-raising campaigns that they promote or conduct, whatever the target audience.<sup>92</sup>
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children about the risks that they face when generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves takes place early enough, before they reach their teens, and that it is “adapted to their evolving capacity” or, in other words, their age and degree of maturity.<sup>93</sup>
- to use unchanged, wherever possible, the awareness-raising tools, materials and activities mentioned in this report or else to adapt them to their national contexts and their own languages and, if necessary, develop new ones, concentrating on videos and distribution through social media.<sup>94</sup>
- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities.<sup>95</sup>
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children regarding 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.<sup>96</sup>

- to promote themselves and to encourage the information and communication of the technology sector, the media, and other professionals to raise awareness among children, their parents, persons having regular contact with children, and the general public about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken.<sup>97</sup>
- to step-up awareness-raising for parents and persons with parental authority about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken.<sup>98</sup>
- to promote or conduct awareness-raising campaigns for the general public providing information about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken.<sup>99</sup>
- to take the necessary measures to ensure co-ordination between the agencies responsible for raising awareness of the risks of

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<sup>92</sup> Recommendation VIII-1.

<sup>93</sup> Recommendation VIII-2.

<sup>94</sup> Recommendation VIII-3.

<sup>95</sup> Recommendation VIII-4.

<sup>96</sup> Recommendation VIII-5.

<sup>97</sup> Recommendations VIII-6.

<sup>98</sup> Recommendation VIII-7.

<sup>99</sup> Recommendation VIII-8.

sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual

images and/or videos of themselves.<sup>100</sup>

### **Promising practice**

In Albania, the #Openyoureyes campaign has used a combination of visual messaging channels (TV advertisements, billboards and posters) to increase the impact of awareness-raising among children regarding the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse that they may face online and the risk that the content/videos/images (including sexual content) that they generate may be misused by others. The message to the children was: "Yes, you'll be browsing online. Yes, you're probably going to come across risky content and behaviour. It happens to everyone. But if we work together and support one another, you can come through these problems safe and sound."

#### **Promising practices:**

2024 Meta Online Safety Campaign, a collaboration between UNICEF and Meta, aimed to protect children and young people from online risks while promoting awareness among parents and caregivers. The campaign utilized Meta platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger to disseminate messages on cyberbullying, sexual exploitation, economic misuse of personal data, and harmful content, especially for children on the move. Through interactive posts, videos, and expert tips, the campaign provided practical guidance for online safety, encouraged reporting, and normalized discussions around digital risks. It targeted adolescents (13-19 years) and caregivers, striving for increased awareness and usage of reporting channels to create a safer digital environment. The campaign adds got 53,478 clicks, respectively 4396 clicks from children (13-19), 32,758 clicks from parents/caregivers and 16,324 clicks by people on the move. The campaign was reached (number of people who saw the add) by 804,843 people and got 8,049,530 impressions in total.

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<sup>100</sup> Recommendation VIII-9.

## IX. Education for children

While the protection of child victims and the prosecution of offenders are key elements in the fight against the sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, preventing them from occurring in the first place is paramount. Informing children about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and how to protect themselves is the cornerstone of prevention.

### Main observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on education for children specific to Albania

The Committee observes that information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs and the challenges raised by CSGSIV is covered in "Health education".<sup>101</sup>

- The Committee **invites** Albania to provide information to children on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including CSGSIV, within a more general context of sexuality education.<sup>102</sup>

### Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on education for children

The Committee **requires** all Parties, including Albania:

- to ensure that all children at primary and secondary level receive information about the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs. Organising lectures and/or activities on this topic should not be left to the discretion of schools or teachers.<sup>103</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

For the implementation of the strategic commitments set out in the National Agenda for Children's Rights 2021-2026, as well as in the National Strategy for Cybersecurity 2020-2025 and Law 18/2017 "On the rights and protection of the child", the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child (SARPC), in February 2024, signed a Cooperation Agreement with the National Authority for Cybersecurity (NACS) with the aim of raising awareness about the safety and protection of children in the digital environment. Based on this Agreement, SARPC in cooperation with NACS for the period February - December 2024 has carried out 4 workshops for professionals and parents where 200 professionals (child protection workers, teachers, psychosocial in schools)

and 43 parents were trained and made aware in 4 municipalities. 30 awareness-raising activities were organized in secondary and high schools. Around 1,300 children were informed in these meetings. Children and professionals were informed about the ways to report cases of bullying, sexual harassment, online blackmail.

Within the framework of the National Strategy for Cybersecurity, to guarantee cyber security for children, the Agency for the Quality Assurance of Pre-university Education has drafted the "Manual for Internet Security", a material that offers a package of instructions and advice regarding the promotion of safe and effective use of the Internet by students and teachers. The manual addresses in detail the main risks that children may encounter while using the Internet, such as: cyberbullying, sexual harassment, hacking of personal data, addiction to online games, etc.

To protect children against cyber violence, a network of cooperation with parents and the child protection unit has been established in schools.

In schools, closed meetings are also

<sup>101</sup> Para.399.

<sup>102</sup> Recommendation IX-7.

<sup>103</sup> Recommendation IX-3.



organized to address the issue of bullying on social networks in a safe and trustworthy environment, encouraging students to speak freely and seek help.

In order to deepen knowledge in the function of cyber security of students and their protection from illegal content, Ministry of Education and Sports has strengthened the psychosocial service in schools through capacity building and their professional development regarding violence in the digital environment, as well as the addition of security officers.

The Committee **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to address in educational contexts the issue of the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV.<sup>104</sup>
- to ensure that information on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV,

is provided to children during both primary and secondary education (whether as part of the national curricula or in the context of non-formal education for children at these levels).<sup>105</sup>

- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes.<sup>106</sup>
- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities.<sup>107</sup>
- to provide information to children on child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV, in their national curriculum or other non-formal educational contexts, in a form which is adapted to the evolving capacity of the children and therefore which is appropriate for their age and maturity.<sup>108</sup>
- to ensure that parents, caregivers, and educators are involved, where appropriate, in the provision of information to children on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, in particular as regards CSGSIV.<sup>109</sup>

#### Promising practices:

### X. Higher education curriculum and continuous training

Persons who have regular contact with children in the education, health and social protection sectors and areas related to sport, culture and leisure are at the forefront of the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, as they have the most interaction with children under their supervision in these different settings. However, they may not be adequately equipped to inform children about their rights, to detect situations where a child is at risk of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse and to respond appropriately. It is therefore of crucial importance that they are well informed about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, both during their education and continuously during their careers, to enable them to adapt to emerging trends and risks in the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs.

#### Main observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on higher education curriculum and continuous training specific to Albania

The Committee notices a lack of action from Albania regarding higher education curriculum and continuous training.

Therefore, the Committee **requires** Albania:

- to ensure that teaching or training on the rights of children and their protection for persons who have regular

<sup>104</sup> Recommendation IX-1.

<sup>105</sup> Recommendation IX-2.

<sup>106</sup> Recommendation IX-4.

<sup>107</sup> Recommendation IX-5.

<sup>108</sup> Recommendation IX-6.

<sup>109</sup> Recommendation IX-8.

contacts with children (i.e. in the education, health and social protection sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities) is not optional.<sup>110</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

The Ministry of Education and Sports, with Instruction no. 32, dated 21.01.2025, has approved the National Action Plan for strengthening mechanisms to prevent any form of violence and bullying and increasing security in pre-university educational institutions, which includes measures related to cybersecurity, safe internet at school and ethical behavior in digital environments.

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) in collaboration with the relevant institutions have taken important steps to achieve cyber security, with the main goal being to protect children from risks and violence when using the internet and social networks.

Children's surfing the internet has positive effects on learning outcomes and social inclusion, but it can also expose them to the dangers of the virtual world.

MES is part of the National Strategy for Internet Safety. Within the framework of this Strategy, to guarantee cyber security for children, the Pre-University Education Quality Assurance Agency has drafted the "Internet Safety Manual" a material that provides a package of instructions and advice regarding the promotion of safe and effective use of the internet by students and teachers. The manual addresses in detail the main risks that children may encounter while using the internet, such as: cyberbullying, sexual harassment, hacking of personal data, addiction to online games, etc.

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contact with children are equipped to identify any situation of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and are informed of the possibility for them to report to the services responsible for child protection any situation where they

have "reasonable grounds" for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:

- in the education sector
- in the health sector
- in the social protection sector
- in areas relating to sport, culture, and leisure activities.<sup>111</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

To increase children's safety on the internet, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection have adopted joint Instruction no. 658, dated 23.09.2019, "On the procedures and actions that educational structures undertake, in cooperation with child protection structures, in cases when in the premises of a pre-university educational institution it is found that a child is accessing illegal and/or harmful content on the internet for his or her age". Ministry of Education and Sports has adopted Instruction no. 34, dated 16.11.2018, "On the prohibition of mobile phones in pre-university educational institutions, both by teachers and students", as well as Order no. 493, dated 30.07.2018, "On the non-use of mobile phones during the learning process in schools". These documents are in the process of being reviewed and improved.

- to encourage awareness of the protection and rights of children among persons who have regular contact with children in the education, health, social protection, judicial and law-enforcement sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture, and leisure activities.<sup>112</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

To protect children against cyberbullying, a network of cooperation with parents and the child protection unit has been established in schools, and a group of coordinators for the Cybersecurity Assessment Report is functioning. Schools also organize closed meetings to address the issue of bullying on social networks in a safe and trustworthy environment, encouraging students to

<sup>110</sup> Recommendation X-4.

<sup>111</sup> Recommendation X-5, X-6.

<sup>112</sup> Recommendation X-7.

speaking freely and seeking help.

In order to deepen knowledge in the function of cyber security of students and their protection from illegal content, MES has strengthened the psychosocial service in schools through capacity building and professional development, as well as the addition of security officers. Psychosocial service employees and security officers draft periodic reports that also include the main risks that children may encounter while using the internet, which are reported according to the relevant work procedures. Informative talks were held on the topic: "Safe children on the Internet and protection from virtual violence", carried out with students of lower secondary education (AMU), with the participation of representatives of the Child Protection Unit, the Domestic Violence Coordinator and psychologists of the institutions. The main purpose of these talks was to inform about the legal necessity of respecting children's rights and protecting them from any form of violence.

The Committee **requests** Albania:

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contact with children have adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs, for example through education or continuous training.

<sup>113</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

Integration of the "Peer Educators for Online Safety" program in 9-year schools. Creation and support of an online network of ICT teachers to promote the issue of child protection on the Internet. Creation of a professional network of online ICT teachers, which has been operating since the 2021-2022 school year. Filters have been applied in public and private schools to prevent children from accessing inappropriate and illegal sites, as well as ongoing information for ICT teachers on reporting incidents.

**Generic recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on higher education curriculum and continuous training**

The Committee also **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts with children (i.e. in the education, health and social protection, sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities), have an adequate knowledge of the risks associated with CSISIV, for example through education or continuous

training.<sup>114</sup>

- to ensure that all the sectors where professionals work in contact with children, including when working on a voluntary basis, have adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and with specific reference to the risks associated with CSISIV.<sup>115</sup>

**Promising practices:**

<sup>113</sup> Recommendation X-1.

<sup>114</sup> Recommendation X-2.

<sup>115</sup> Recommendation X-3.

## XI. Research

Effective prevention mechanisms and responses to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse of children require an understanding of the issues at stake, as well as knowledge of the prevalence and characteristics of the phenomenon. Accurate and precise information may be necessary to develop quality and targeted policies and measures. The gathering of information and understanding of the phenomenon is particularly important in the context of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, in light of their rapid development and increased use.

### Main observations and recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee on research specific to Albania

Albania has affirmed that no research was undertaken on issues raised by CSGSIV and/or on the psychological effects on persons who have had such material shared online.<sup>116</sup>

Therefore, the Committee **invites** all Parties, including Albania:

- to collect data and undertake research at the national and local levels to observe and evaluate the phenomenon of CSGSIV.<sup>117</sup>
- to ensure that data on the phenomenon of CSGSIV and the risks associated with it is regularly collected and research on the issue is regularly undertaken.<sup>118</sup>

- to build on the findings from existing research on CSGSIV, when available, to ensure that policies and measures are best developed and appropriately targeted to tackle the issues raised by CSGSIV.<sup>119</sup>
- to take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or designate mechanisms for data collection or focal points at the national or local levels and in collaboration with civil society to observe and evaluate the phenomenon of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including on the issues arising from CSGSIV, with due respect for the requirements of personal data protection.<sup>120</sup>

#### Promising practices:

<sup>116</sup> Para.443.

<sup>117</sup> Recommendation XI-1.

<sup>118</sup> Recommendation XI-2.

<sup>119</sup> Recommendation XI-3.

<sup>120</sup> Recommendation XI-4.