



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## FACTSHEET – BULGARIA

### Lanzarote Committee's Implementation Report 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 Bulgaria in March 2025 displayed in orange and blue text boxes.

## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction .....	3
II.	Legal framework .....	4
III.	Investigations and prosecution .....	9
IV.	Jurisdiction rules .....	12
V.	International cooperation .....	15
VI.	Assistance to victims .....	18
VII.	Civil society involvement and cooperation .....	22
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 .....	24
IX.	Education for children .....	28
X.	Higher education curriculum and continuous training .....	31
XI.	Research .....	33

## 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 Committee on the legal frameworks specific to Bulgaria

The Committee observes that to demonstrate compatibility with the exclusion of criminal liability for the production and possession of CSGSIV, Bulgaria pointed at the age of criminal responsibility below which children cannot be held criminally liable for acts they commit, which is 14 in Bulgaria.<sup>1</sup> Bulgaria also informed that production and possession of CSGSIV were not criminalised when the child(ren) in question have reached the legal age for sexual activities.<sup>2</sup> The Committee however highlights that reliance upon the age of criminal responsibility and the legal age for sexual activities alone to exclude criminal responsibility does not correspond to a situation of full compliance with paragraphs 3-6 of the 2019 Opinion, since children above the age of criminal responsibility and below the legal age for sexual activities cannot avail themselves of this exemption.<sup>3</sup>

The Committee finally notes that Bulgaria has rules that lead to the criminalisation of the distribution by children of CSGSIV of other children.<sup>4</sup>

The Committee therefore **requests** Bulgaria:

- to ensure in its legal framework that a child will not be prosecuted when he/she possess:
  - their own self-generated sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos;
  - self-generated sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos of another child with the informed consent of the child depicted on them;
  - the self-generated sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos of another

child as a result of receiving them passively without actively asking for them.<sup>5</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

- to ensure in its legal framework<sup>6</sup> that a child will not be prosecuted for sharing his/her sexual images and/or videos with another child when such sharing is voluntary, consensual and intended solely for their own private use.<sup>7</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

- to ensure that the distribution or transmission by children of self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos 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) of the Convention.<sup>8</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

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

The Committee observes that, in cases where the sexual extortion is intended to procure other sexual favours from the child depicted in the images/videos or from another child, Bulgaria would prosecute for sexual abuse of a child in accordance with Article 18. In Bulgaria, the use of force or threats is an aggravating circumstance to the offence of persuading a child of 14 years old or less to “take part in or to observe actual, virtual or simulated sexual intercourse between persons of the same or different sex or lascivious exhibition of human sexual organs, sodomy,

<sup>1</sup> Para.71.

<sup>2</sup> Para.73.

<sup>3</sup> Paras. 72, 73

<sup>4</sup> Para.82.

<sup>5</sup> Recommendation II-6.

<sup>6</sup> The expression “legal framework” is not limited to legislation but should be understood in a broader way, e.g., through prosecutorial guidance or practice.

<sup>7</sup> Recommendation II-8.

<sup>8</sup> Recommendation II-9.

masturbation, sexual sadism or masochism” and a material element of the offence regarding children over 14 years old.<sup>9</sup>

It also notes that Bulgaria did not submit information regarding its prosecution of cases where the sexual extortion was intended to procure a financial gain or other property from the child, additional sexual images or videos, or any other gain (e.g. contacts of peers for their sexual solicitation).

The Committee therefore **invites** Bulgaria:

Please see below updated and amended in 2023 and 2024 provisions of Chapter II “Crimes against the person”, Section VIII “Debauchery” of the Criminal Code on the relevant to the recommendation provisions:

**“Article 155**

(1) (Amended, SG No. 28/1982, SG No. 10/1993, SG No. 62/1997, SG No. 92/2002, SG No. 26/2004, SG No. 75/2006) A person who persuades an individual to practise prostitution or acts as procurer or procuress for the performance of indecent touching or copulation, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to three years and by a fine from BGN 1,000 to 3,000.

(2) (Amended, SG No. 10/1993, SG No. 62/1997, SG No. 75/2006) A person who systematically places at the disposal of different persons premises for sexual intercourse or for acts of lewdness shall be punished by deprivation of liberty for up to five years and by a fine from BGN 1,000 to 5,000.

(3) (New, SG No. 62/1997, amended, SG No. 92/2002, SG No. 75/2006) Where acts under Paragraphs 1 and 2 above have been committed with a venal goal in mind, punishment shall be imprisonment from one to six years and a fine from BGN 5,000 to 15,000.

(4) (New, SG No. 21/2000, amended, SG No. 75/2006) A person who persuades or forces another person to using drugs or analogues thereof for the purposes of practising prostitution, to performing copulation, indecent assault, intercourse or any other acts of sexual gratification with a person of the same sex, shall be punished by imprisonment for five to fifteen

- when dealing with sexual extortion cases involving children, 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>10</sup>

- to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.<sup>11</sup>

years and by a fine from BGN 10,000 to 50,000.

(5) (New, SG No. 21/2000, amended, SG No. 92/2002, supplemented, SG No. 75/2006, amended, SG No. 38/2007) Where the act under Paragraphs 1 - 4 has been committed:

1. by an individual acting at the orders or in implementing a decision of an organized criminal group;

2. (supplemented, SG No. 39/2024) with regard to a person under 18 years of age or an insane person, or where the act caused significant harmful consequences for the physical, mental, or moral development of the victim;

3. with regard to two or more persons;

4. repeatedly;

5. at the conditions of a dangerous recidivism, the punishment under pars. 1 and 2 shall be imprisonment from two to eight years and a fine from BGN five thousand to fifteen thousand, under Paragraph 3 - imprisonment from three to ten years and a fine from BGN ten thousand to twenty five thousand, and under Paragraph 4 - imprisonment from ten to twenty years and a fine from BGN hundred thousand to three thousand.

- (6) (Renumbered from Paragraph 3, SG No. 62/1997, renumbered from Paragraph 4, SG No. 21/2000, repealed, SG No. 75/2006).

- (7) (Renumbered from Paragraph 4, SG No. 62/1997, renumbered from Paragraph 5, SG No. 21/2000, amended, SG No. 92/2002, effective 1.01.2005 in respect of the punishment of probation - amended, SG No. 26/2004, effective 1.01.2004, repealed, SG No. 103/2004, effective 1.01.2005).

.....

<sup>9</sup> Para.102.

<sup>10</sup> Recommendation II-11.

<sup>11</sup> Recommendation II-12.

### **Article 155b**

*(New, SG No. 27/2009, supplemented, SG No. 26/2010)*

*(1) (Previous text of Article 155b, amended, SG No. 74/2015, SG No. 53/2022, SG No. 67/2023) Anyone who persuades a person under 14 years of age to observe actual, virtual or simulated sexual intercourse between persons of the same or different sex or lascivious exhibition of human sexual organs, sodomy, masturbation, sexual sadism or masochism shall be punished by imprisonment from three to ten years.*

*(2) (New, SG No. 53/2022, amended, SG No. 67/2023) Anyone who persuades a person under 14 years of age to participate in or observe actual, virtual or simulated sexual intercourse between persons of the same or different sex or lascivious exhibition of human sexual organs, sodomy, masturbation, sexual sadism or masochism shall be punished by imprisonment for five to ten years.*

*(3) (New, SG No. 74/2015, renumbered from Paragraph (2), SG No. 53/2022, supplemented, SG No. 39/2024) Where the act under Paragraphs (1) and (2) has been committed:*

- 1. through the use of force or threat;*
  - 2. through taking advantage of a state of dependence or supervision,*
  - 3. by two or more persons who have conspired in advance;*
  - 4. repeatedly,*
- (amended, SG No. 53/2022, SG No. 67/2023) the punishment shall be imprisonment from five to fifteen years.*

*(4) (New, SG No. 39/2024) The punishment under Paragraph (3) shall also be imposed where the act under Paragraphs (1) – (3) caused significant harmful consequences for the physical, mental, or moral development of the victim.*

### **Article 155c**

*(New, SG No. 74/2015) (1) (Previous text of Article 155c, amended, SG No. 53/2022, SG No. 67/2023) Anyone who, through the use of force or threat or through taking advantage of a state of dependence or supervision, persuades an underage person to observe actual, virtual or simulated act of molestation, copulation, sexual intercourse, including sodomy, masturbation, sexual sadism or masochism, as well as in lascivious exhibition of human sexual organs, shall be punished by imprisonment from three to*

*seven years.*

*(2) (New, SG No. 53/2022, amended, SG No. 67/2023) Anyone who, through the use of force or threat or through taking advantage of a state of dependence or supervision, persuades an underage person to participate in an actual, virtual or simulated act of molestation, copulation, sexual intercourse, including sodomy, masturbation, sexual sadism or masochism, as well as in lascivious exhibition of human sexual organs, shall be punished by imprisonment for three to ten years.*

*(3) (New, SG No. 39/2024) Where the act under Paragraphs (1) and (2) caused significant harmful consequences for the physical, mental, or moral development of the victim, the punishment shall be imprisonment from five to twelve years."*

### **EXTRA INFORMATION**

*The Department 06 "Cyber Offences" of the National Investigation Service, established by Order of the Prosecutor General, continues to function.*

*In the period from 01.07.2023 to date, a total of 6 training events have been held on the topics listed in the table (Annex), with a total of 148 prosecutors and 77 investigators receiving training.*

#### **Annex:**

**01.07- 31.12.2023 r.**

- "Children's Pathway" in cases of children witnessing or at risk of violence;*
- Introduction to Justice for Children. Current criminal law aspects;*
- Child alienation in domestic violence and parental conflict situations;*
- Round table on "The use of electronic evidence to combat child trafficking for sexual exploitation more effectively";*
- Trafficking and exploitation of children.*

**01.01.- 01.12.2024 r.**

- International Forum "Together in the fight against cyberbullying of children";*
- Working on cases of child victims of violence - identification, intervention and inter-institutional cooperation;*
- International forum "Together in the fight against cyberbullying of children";*
- Good practices for effective teamwork under the Coordination Mechanism for cases involving child victims and perpetrators of crime;*

- “Children's Trail” in cases of children witnessing or at risk of violence;
- Integrated assessment in cases of violence

against children.

### Generic recommendations of the Committee on legal frameworks

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

- acknowledging that the term “child pornography” can be misleading and undermine the gravity of the crimes it refers to, to rather use the term “child sexual abuse material” (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>12</sup> 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>13</sup>
- to strengthen the protection of children by introducing explicit references in their respective legal frameworks to conduct concerning child self-generated sexual images and/or videos, identifying the circumstances

Since its adoption the relevant provision on “grooming” in the Bulgarian Criminal Code does not require a meeting or production of CSAM to have followed. According to our legislation it is enough for a person to have established contact, in whatever way, with a person under 18 years of age so as to perform molestation, copulation, or sexual intercourse, or to create pornographic material, or for the purpose of involvement in a pornographic show. Please see below the text of Art. 155a of the Criminal Code, as amended in 2023 and 2024:

*“Article 155a*

*(New, SG No. 38/2007, amended and supplemented, SG No. 27/2009, amended, SG No. 26/2010, SG No. 74/2015)*

when children should not be held criminally liable and when they should be prosecuted only as a last resort.<sup>14</sup>

- to introduce a definition of “child sexual abuse material” (CSAM) in its legislative framework in line with its Recommendation II-1 above.
- to contemplate appropriate legal responses to conduct involving non-visual CSGSIV produced by children in the context of offences covered by the Convention.<sup>15</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>16</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>17</sup>

*(1) (Amended, SG No. 67/2023) Anyone who, by using information or communication technology or otherwise, discloses or collects information about a person under 18 years of age for the purpose of establishing contact with that person so as to perform molestation, copulation, sexual intercourse, or prostitution, or to create pornographic material, or for the purpose of involvement in a pornographic show shall be punished by imprisonment from three to ten years and a fine from BGN 10,000 to BGN 20,000.*

*(2) The punishment under Paragraph 1 shall also be imposed on anyone who, by using information or communication technology or otherwise, establishes contact with a person under 18 years of age so as to perform molestation, copulation, or sexual intercourse, or to create pornographic material, or for the purpose of involvement in a*

<sup>12</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>13</sup> Recommendation II-1.

<sup>14</sup> Recommendation II-2.

<sup>15</sup> Recommendation II-4.

<sup>16</sup> Recommendation II-7.

<sup>17</sup> Recommendation II-10.

*pornographic show.*

*(3) (New, SG No. 39/2024) Where the act under Paragraphs (1) and (2) caused significant harmful consequences for the physical, mental, or moral development of the victim, the punishment shall be imprisonment from five to twelve years.”*

**Promising practices:**



### 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 Committee on investigations and prosecution specific to Bulgaria

The Committee observes that Bulgaria has specialised units dealing with ICT facilitated offences against children within law enforcement, which are dedicated exclusively to cyber or sexual crimes against children.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the Cyber Crime Sector, which is part of the Ministry of Interior, has a functional competence to prevent, intercept and reveal instances of online child sexual exploitation.<sup>19</sup>

Bulgaria did not provide information on the specialisation of prosecution and court staff in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children.

However, the Committee notes that Bulgaria has training modules in place for law enforcement agents<sup>20</sup> and prosecutors<sup>21</sup> related to aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Prosecutors have access to training on children's rights in general, sexual violence against children, online child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, and international collaboration.<sup>22</sup>

- The Committee **requests** Bulgaria to ensure that training on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children is available for judges who are or will be working on these issues.<sup>23</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The Committee **invites** Bulgaria:

- to establish, where appropriate, specialised units, services or persons within the courts in charge of dealing with ICT facilitated sexual offences against children.<sup>24</sup>
- to ensure that training on the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to prosecutors.<sup>25 26</sup>

The Committee observes that Bulgaria has victim identification units within law enforcement for cases of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, located within cybercrime units or high-tech crime departments.<sup>27</sup> It also makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) image and video database, through the same specialised units.<sup>28</sup>

Bulgaria reported that the tracking of Internet connections, especially when connections have been made through servers from different countries including through hidden IP addresses, as well as the use of encrypted messages, may be a challenge for the identification of perpetrators.<sup>29</sup>

The Committee notes that in Bulgaria, undercover operations can be permitted by a

<sup>18</sup> Para.116.

<sup>19</sup> Para.118.

<sup>20</sup> Para.145.

<sup>21</sup> Para.156.

<sup>22</sup> Para.164.

<sup>23</sup> Recommendation III-18.

<sup>24</sup> Recommendation III-8.

<sup>25</sup> Such trainings can also be part of broader training programmes.

<sup>26</sup> Recommendation III-17.

<sup>27</sup> Para.180.

<sup>28</sup> Para.186.

<sup>29</sup> Para.194.

court, and special intelligence means can be used when necessary for the investigation of the crime whereby a child under the age of 18, or a person who looks like they are under 18 years old, are used for the purpose of the creation of pornographic material.<sup>30</sup> Finally, the Committee notes that in Bulgaria,

the legal framework on telecommunication data storage is a problem in the prosecution phase, particularly insofar as providing a unified and reasonable time-limits for the storage of data by telecommunications service providers.<sup>31</sup>

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

On the specialisation and training of authorities:

- Mindful of the different contexts in the Parties as recalled in para. 235 of the Explanatory Report, the 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>32</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

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

- 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>33</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>34</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>35</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>36</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>37</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>38 39</sup>
- to ensure that training on the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to judges.<sup>40 41</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>42</sup>
- to ensure that training on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children for law-enforcement, prosecutors and judges

<sup>30</sup> Para.197.

<sup>31</sup> Para.198.

<sup>32</sup> Recommendation III-3 and III-7.

<sup>33</sup> Recommendation III-4.

<sup>34</sup> Recommendation III-5.

<sup>35</sup> Recommendation III-9.

<sup>36</sup> Recommendation III-10.

<sup>37</sup> Recommendation III-11.

<sup>38</sup> Such trainings can also be part of broader training programmes.

<sup>39</sup> Recommendations III-14.

<sup>40</sup> Such trainings can also be part of broader training programmes.

<sup>41</sup> Recommendation III-19.

<sup>42</sup> Recommendation III-20.

contains a practical element, involving simulated or real cases.<sup>43</sup>

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

- The 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>44</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

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

- 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>45</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>46</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>47</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>48</sup>

**Promising practices:**

<sup>43</sup> Recommendation III-21.

<sup>44</sup> Recommendation III-30.

<sup>45</sup> Recommendation III-24.

<sup>46</sup> Recommendation III-25, III-29.

<sup>47</sup> Recommendation III-31.

<sup>48</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 Committee on jurisdiction rules specific to Bulgaria

#### 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 Bulgaria has established laws clarifying the circumstances in which its national criminal law will apply to a transnational situation following the territoriality principle. Accordingly, Articles 3 to 6 of the Criminal Code provide, inter alia, that the criminal legislation applies to Bulgarian citizens who have committed crimes abroad, and to foreigners who have committed a crime of a general nature abroad which affects the interests of the Republic of Bulgaria or of a Bulgarian citizen.<sup>49</sup>

- The Committee **requests** Bulgaria to take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish jurisdiction over transnational cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, when one of the constituent elements of the offence has taken place in their territory.<sup>50</sup>

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

The jurisdiction rules have always cover the abovementioned hypothesis - over transnational cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, when one of the constituent elements of the offence has taken place in their territory. The applicable provisions are Art. 3 – 6 of the Criminal Code. Furthermore, under the Criminal Procedure Code it is explicitly prescribed that in case the offence was committed abroad (if that is the hypothesis for example), the investigation is

carried out by an investigator (Art. 194, para. 1, point 3 of the CPC).

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

The Committee notes that almost all Parties, including Bulgaria, have jurisdiction in cases where the offence covered by the Convention is committed by one of their nationals, even if the offence occurs abroad.<sup>51</sup> It also observes that Bulgaria has jurisdiction over offences committed by persons who have their habitual residence in its territory.

#### 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))

Bulgaria 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 denunciation from the State where the offence was committed.

- Therefore, the Committee **requires** Bulgaria 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 (Article 18), offences concerning child prostitution (Article 19), the production of “child pornography” (Article 20(1)(a)) and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances (Article 21), when committed by one of their nationals or by a person who

<sup>49</sup> Para.214.

<sup>50</sup> Recommendation IV-1.

<sup>51</sup> Para.215.

has his or her habitual residence in its territory.<sup>52</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Bulgaria has never required prosecution for whichever of the offences, falling within the scope of the Convention, to be instituted based on “a report from the victim or a denunciation from the State of the place where the offence was committed for offences”. On the contrary – all the offences cover by the Convention are offences of a general nature and their investigation starts *ex officio* and does not depend on whether the victim has filed a report or not. Once the competent authorities come to know in whatever way about such an offence, they are obliged to initiate criminal proceedings. Under the Criminal Code the offences of private nature – meaning those for which the investigation’s start depends on filing report by the victim are explicitly provided as such under the Criminal Code, are very limited in number, and none of them is related to offence of sexual nature against a child. All the offences covered by the Convention are crimes of general nature. Furthermore, according to Art. 207, para. 1 of the Criminal Procedure Code: *“Conditions for the institution of pre-trial proceedings*  
*Article 207*  
*(1) Pre-trial proceedings shall be instituted where there is a statutory occasion and sufficient information about the perpetration of a crime.”*

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))

For offences committed abroad by one of their nationals, Article 25(4) of the Convention additionally provides that Parties should take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that its jurisdiction is not subordinate to the condition that the acts are criminalised at the place where they were performed, i.e.

subject to the dual criminality principle. This concerns the following offences: sexual abuse (Articles 18), offences concerning child prostitution (Article 19), the production of child pornography (Article 20(1)(a)), and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances (Article 21(1)(a) and (b)).<sup>53</sup> The Committee notes that the criminal law of Bulgaria has a clause which provides for the possibility of derogating from the general rules on jurisdiction based on international instruments. However, it is unclear which provisions of the Criminal Code can be adapted or excluded, and whether this allows full compliance with Article 25(1)(d), (e) and 25(4) of the Convention.<sup>54</sup>

- The Committee **requires** Bulgaria to remove the requirement for dual criminality for offences of sexual abuse (Article 18), offences concerning child prostitution (Article 19), the production of child pornography (Article 20(1)(a)) and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances (Article 21), when committed by one of their nationals.<sup>55</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Bulgaria has never applied dual criminality in cases where a Bulgarian citizen has committed whatever type of offence abroad. “Whatever type of offence” includes also any type of offence of sexual nature against a child, to be understood as all offences covered by the Convention too. According to Art. 4 para. 1 of the Criminal Code:

“Article 4

(1) The Criminal Code shall apply to the Bulgarian citizens also for crimes committed by them abroad.”

The latter means that if, for example, a Bulgarian citizen has committed a rape (or any other type of offence) in whichever country, once the competent Bulgarian authorities come to know about it, they will institute investigation in Bulgaria.

<sup>52</sup> Recommendation IV-5.

<sup>53</sup> Para.2019.

<sup>54</sup> Para.227.

<sup>55</sup> Recommendation IV-6.

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))

The Committee notes that in Bulgaria, the passive personality principle is applied in respect of offences committed against a national, only for certain offences punishable by imprisonment of at least 6 years, e.g. sexual offences and incest.<sup>56</sup>

- The Committee **requests** Parties that are not already doing so, including Bulgaria to endeavour necessary legislative or other measures to establish jurisdiction over any offence established in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention where the offence is committed against one of its nationals or a person who has his or her habitual residence in their territory.<sup>57</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

When a Bulgarian citizen is a victim of crime, committed against her/him abroad, the jurisdiction for this crime is exercised by the Bulgarian competent authorities based on: 1) if the perpetrator is a foreign citizen - based on Art. 5 of Criminal Code (*Article 5 The Criminal Code shall also apply to foreign citizens who have committed crimes of general nature abroad, whereby the interests of the Republic of Bulgaria or of Bulgarian citizens have been affected*); and 2) if the perpetrator is a Bulgarian citizen - the jurisdiction is exercised based on Art. 4, para. 1 of the Criminal Code (*Article 4 (1) The Criminal Code shall apply to the Bulgarian citizens also for crimes committed by them abroad*).

#### Generic recommendations of the Committee on jurisdiction rules

- The Committee **invites** all Parties 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>58</sup>
- solicitation of children for sexual purposes.<sup>59</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Bulgaria has never applied dual criminality in cases where a Bulgarian citizen has committed whatever type of offence abroad. "Whatever type of offence" includes also any type of offence of sexual nature against a child, to be understood as all offences covered by the Convention too. According to Art. 4 para. 1 of the Criminal Code:

"Article 4

(1) The Criminal Code shall apply to the Bulgarian citizens also for crimes committed by them abroad." The latter means that if, for example, a Bulgarian citizen has committed a rape (or any other type of offence) in whichever other country, once the competent Bulgarian authorities come to know about it, they will institute investigation in Bulgaria.

#### Promising practices:

<sup>56</sup> Para.231.

<sup>57</sup> Recommendation IV-9.

<sup>58</sup> Recommendation IV-7.

<sup>59</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.

### Observations and recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation specific to Bulgaria

The Committee recalls that, in accordance with Article 41(3)(a) of the Convention, because an important amount of time has passed since the great majority of the ratifications to the Convention, and since national legislation of the Parties concerned evolved since then, it seems appropriate to evaluate the effects of those Parties' reservations with a significant impact on CSGSIV. In particular, the concerned Parties, including Bulgaria, should evaluate the necessity for maintaining reservations made:

- in accordance with Article 20(4) of the Convention, activating the right not to apply, in whole or in part, Article 20(1)(f) of the Convention which implies the criminalisation of knowingly obtaining access, through ICTs, to child pornography, when committed without right;
- in accordance with Article 21(2) of the Convention, activating the right to limit the application of its Article 21(1)(c) to cases where children have been recruited or coerced, in conformity with paragraph 1.a or b.

The Committee therefore **invites** Bulgaria:

- to withdraw the reservation it made in accordance with Article 20(4) of the Convention, activating the right not to apply, in whole or in part Article 20(1)(f) of the Convention.<sup>60</sup>
- to withdraw the reservation it made in accordance with Article 21(2) of the Convention, activating the right to limit the

application of Article 21(1)(c) of the Convention.<sup>61</sup>

The Committee also notes that INHOPE<sup>62</sup>, PROMISE Barnahus Network<sup>63</sup>, WeProtect Global Alliance<sup>64</sup>, INSAFE and Safer Internet Centres<sup>65</sup>, ECPAT<sup>66</sup>, and EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) cybercrime CSE/CSA<sup>67</sup> conduct cooperation projects to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Bulgaria.<sup>68</sup> The Committee further notes that Bulgaria, among other Parties, benefits from trainings for forensic interviewers in the framework of the PROMISE Barnahus Network, the latter having formed an informal network, and is engaged in an exchange and common learning through online training and Avatar practice.<sup>69</sup>

In addition, law enforcement representatives from Bulgaria attend the Europol's annual training course "Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet" (COSEC), as well as the Europol-Interpol-Cepol co-organised training course on victim identification (VID training course).<sup>70</sup>

Finally, Bulgaria mentioned that it cooperates with Interpol regarding the blocking of illegal content through the use of the worst-of list from this institution.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Recommendation V-1.

<sup>61</sup> Recommendation V-2.

<sup>62</sup> [www.inhope.org/](http://www.inhope.org/)

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.barnahus.eu/en/>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.weprotect.org/>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/>

<sup>66</sup> <https://ecpat.org/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.europol.europa.eu/empact>

<sup>68</sup> Para.255.

<sup>69</sup> Para.266.

<sup>70</sup> Para.259.

<sup>71</sup> Para.265.

## Generic recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation

- On international cooperation, the Committee **requests** all Parties, including Bulgaria to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Lanzarote Convention.<sup>72</sup>

### Follow-up actions:

The Republic of Bulgaria (all its competent authorities exercising international legal assistance) have always had excellent cooperation with other countries. There are no practical examples for any kind of problems met so far.

The Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria actively uses all available mechanisms, instruments and opportunities for interaction in the line of international legal cooperation in criminal cases.

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

- 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>73</sup>
- to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the 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 Convention, in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>74</sup>
- to regularly assess the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them.<sup>75</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>76</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>77</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>78</sup>
- to maintain and develop efforts to strengthen international cooperation with other Parties and non-Parties to the 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>79</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>80</sup>

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

<sup>73</sup> Recommendations V-6, V-11.

<sup>74</sup> Recommendations V-4, V-7, V-12, V-15.

<sup>75</sup> Recommendation V-5.

<sup>76</sup> Recommendation V-8, V-13.

<sup>77</sup> Recommendation V-9.

<sup>78</sup> Recommendation V-10.

<sup>79</sup> Recommendations V-14, V-16.

<sup>80</sup> Recommendation V-19.



**Promising practice:**

Romania reported European projects with Bulgaria, Italy and Spain for the development of good practice manuals.

**Promising practices:**

## 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.

### Observations and recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims specific to Bulgaria

The Committee observes that there are helplines for children that are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in Bulgaria.<sup>81</sup> It also notes that helplines in Bulgaria are run in collaboration between different bodies, including ministries and NGOs, which can be very effective for victims who benefit from this synergy and broader services.<sup>82</sup>

The Committee further notes that Bulgaria has legislation containing adequate provisions to assist child victims, although they concern the protection of children in general,<sup>83</sup> as well as a coordination mechanism which was established in 2010 to support and accompany child victims of trafficking upon their return, using a multidisciplinary approach.<sup>84</sup>

- The Committee however **requires** Bulgaria to take the necessary legislative or other measures to assist child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, 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>85</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Please refer to all applicable provisions of Bulgarian legislation implementing the recommendation, whereby we consider that Bulgarian legislation is fully compliant with the relevant requirements:

#### 1. CHILD PROTECTION ACT

##### Coordination mechanism in case of violence

**Art. 36d.** (New, SG No. 24/2019, in force from 1.07.2020 - amended, SG No. 101/2019) **(1)** In order to ensure the

protection of a child at risk or a victim of violence or exploitation, the Social Assistance Directorate shall establish a multidisciplinary team, the members of which shall work together until the case is closed and which shall develop an action plan for the protection of the child or for the prevention of violence.

**(2)** Within 24 hours of receiving a report of a child at risk or a victim of violence or exploitation, a social worker designated by the Director of the Social Assistance Directorate shall assess the report. Upon confirmation of the information, the social worker shall notify orally by telephone, including mobile phone, and in writing by mail, e-mail or fax the members of the team referred to in paragraph (1). 1, setting a date and time for the team to meet.

**(3)** (amend. - SG 71/2020) The leader of the team referred to in par. 1 shall be the social worker designated by the Director of the Social Assistance Directorate. A representative of the district department of the Ministry of the Interior (district inspector, inspector of the children's pedagogical room or operational worker), of the district prosecutor's office and a representative of the municipality shall necessarily participate in the team. At the discretion of the team leader, a representative of the regional health inspectorate, the child's personal physician or a representative of the hospital from which the case was reported, a representative of the regional education department and of the school, kindergarten or other educational institution and a representative of the provider of the state-funded social service used by the child shall

<sup>81</sup> Para.280.

<sup>82</sup> Para.277.

<sup>83</sup> Para.288.

<sup>84</sup> Para.292.

<sup>85</sup> Recommendation VI-3.

be invited to participate.

**(4)** The mayor of the municipality shall assist in coordinating the activities of the multidisciplinary team.

**Protection of a child victim of violence or exploitation**

**Art. 36e.** (New, SG 24/2019, in force from 1.07.2020 - amend., SG 101/2019) **(1)** The protection of a child at risk or a victim of violence or exploitation shall be undertaken after the examination of the case by the multidisciplinary team and in accordance with the action plan proposed by the multidisciplinary team under Art. 36d, par. 1.

**(2)** The action plan shall contain health, social and educational services for the prevention of violence or for the recovery of the child.

*Bulgarian legislation clearly addresses and places special emphasis on issues related to violence prevention, coordination between institutions and support for child victims. These issues are regulated in specific legislation, including the Child Protection Act (CPA), the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and other legal acts. The Child Protection Act is the main specialised law in Bulgarian legislation regulating state policy towards children at risk. The Act guarantees the right of the child to protection against involvement in activities detrimental to his or her physical, mental, moral and educational development. Every child has the right to protection against methods of upbringing, physical, psychological or other forms of violence and influence contrary to his or her dignity and contrary to his or her best interests. The Child Protection Act enshrines the understanding of the leading role of prevention of risks and timely support for the child and the family. There is a provision (Article 7(1) and (2) of the Child Protection Act) which states that there is a duty to assist, and that any person who becomes aware that a child is in need of protection should immediately notify the relevant authorities. The same duty is owed to any person who becomes aware of this in connection with his or her profession or*

*activity, even if it is bound by professional secrecy. The possibility of examining anonymous reports in the case of child abuse is also regulated by law (Article 10, paragraph 5 of the Regulations for the implementation of the Child Protection Act). With changes in the Law on Protection of Children against Violence, as of 01.07.2020, the implementation of the Coordination Mechanism on Violence, in force since 2010, is now regulated at the legal level, through which the protection of a child victim of violence or exploitation is legislated. Inter-institutional interaction and the formation of a multidisciplinary team to develop an action plan for the protection of the child or for the prevention of violence are regulated. The action plan contains health, social and educational services for the prevention of violence or for the recovery of the child.*

*According to the Child Protection Act, children who are victims of abuse, violence, exploitation or any other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment inside or outside the family are children at risk and appropriate protection measures shall be taken against them, depending on the assessment of the case, the identified risks and the needs of the child. All child protection authorities have a responsibility to protect and support children from violence, abuse and various forms of abuse and, within the limits of their powers and competence, are obliged to provide protection and care by taking the necessary legislative and administrative measures in a timely manner. The child protection system provides assistance and protection to children who have suffered violence or other forms of abuse. Psychological support to improve the child's psycho-emotional state and overcome the trauma of the experience is mandatory in working with these children. The role of social services is essential in this respect, supporting individuals to prevent and/or overcome social exclusion, realise rights and improve quality of life. The role of social services is also important in the implementation of protection measures taken for children at risk. At present, specialised and comprehensive support for*

children who have been victims of violence or other forms of exploitation, including trafficking, is mainly provided in Crisis Centres, where social services are provided for shelter, information and counselling; advocacy and mediation; therapy and skills training. According to the Social Assistance Agency, by the end of December 2024, 20 Crisis Centres for Children have been opened and are functioning as a state-delegated activity in the country, where 212 children can be supported. The Community Support Centres also provide specialised support to child survivors of violence through psychosocial support, legal assistance and counselling, etc. As of the same period Community Support Centres, including Community Centres for Children and Families, number 188 and can provide support to almost 9 000 children and their families.

**2. Regulation for the implementation of the Child Protection Act:**

Art. 16a, par. 16a(1) in conjunction with Art. 1, Art. 14 and Art. 16, par. 1.

Chapter Three "Procedure for the implementation of child protection measures"

**3. Methodology for the management of a case for the protection of a child at risk by the Child Protection Department from 2021, approved by the Chairperson of the State Agency for Child Protection and the Executive Director of the Social Assistance Agency**

**4. An Act to provide assistance and financial compensation to victims of crime.**

**5. Code of Criminal Procedure:**

Chapter Thirteen "Evidence"

Section II "Voice evidence"

Explanations of the accused"

**Right of defence**

Art. 15.

**Presentation of a civil claim by the prosecutor**

Art. 51.

**Rights of the victim in pre-trial proceedings**

Art. 75.

**Rights of the civil claimant**

Art. 87.

**Special representative**

Art. 101.

**Protection of the witness**

Art. 123.

**Examination of a witness with special protection needs**

Art. 139a.

**Examination of a witness who is a minor**

Art. 140.

**Hearing of the case in camera**

Art. 263.

**Chapter Twenty**

**HEARING**

**Section III**

**Trial**

**Examination of witnesses**

**6. Protection of Persons at Risk in Criminal Proceedings Act.**

**Nature of special protection for persons at risk and types of protection**

**Generic recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims**

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

- 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>86</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>87</sup>

### Example of a promising practice

In Bulgaria, the priority of the Hotline and the Consultative Line for safe Internet is to stop the dissemination of images of child sexual abuse (child pornography) and to combat other forms of sexual abuse of children on the Internet, as well as to remove or restrict Internet content that is inappropriate or harmful to children. Any adult or minor who wants to report online content or behaviour that is illegal under Bulgarian law or may have a traumatic or harmful effect on minors can easily report it to [www.safenet.bg](http://www.safenet.bg). The anonymity of the reporters is guaranteed. In addition, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre operates a Hotline receiving and acting upon reports of online child sexual exploitation and abuse material, sexual grooming, cyberbullying and non-illegal but harmful for children online content in close cooperation with national LEA and Interpol. The helpline is addressed to children, young people, parents, teachers and other professionals, and organises awareness-raising events aiming at making Internet a safer place for children. The Centre has also developed in cooperation with national authorities, the "Rules to be safe online". The objective is to guarantee the right of the child to access appropriate information and materials online, to synthesise in one place the information on the dangers on the Internet, to provide specific guidelines for child protection and safe behaviour on the computer networks of schools, and to improve the coordination and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

#### Promising practices:

---

<sup>86</sup> Recommendation VI-2.

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

## 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.

### Observations and recommendations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation specific to Bulgaria

The Committee observes that Bulgaria cooperates with NGOs, the media, and family planning centres.<sup>88</sup> Its support for the development of prevention activities by civil society takes the form of financial support and grants,<sup>89</sup> training opportunities for civil society actors on the online environment,<sup>90</sup> cooperation working groups, as well as the organisation of seminars.<sup>91</sup> The Committee further notes that Bulgaria is among the Parties that develop and support different activities which are aimed at raising the awareness of not only children but also adults such as parents, educators, doctors and social workers about existing risks and dangers of ICTs for children.<sup>92</sup>

With regard to civil society involvement in prevention activities, Bulgaria provided information on general prevention projects and programmes on violence against children,

as well as activities aimed at minimising the risk of abuse that children face online.<sup>93</sup> However, the Party used related terms to describe these projects, without mentioning the challenges raised by CSGSIV specifically, which leaves doubt as to the actual content of such projects.<sup>94</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee **invites** Bulgaria to support civil society in carrying out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV.<sup>95</sup>

With regard to civil society involvement in victim assistance programmes, the Committee welcomes the fact that Bulgaria is among a minority of Parties where programmes are in place to assist victims of violence taking place in the digital environment,<sup>96</sup> and in particular related to CSGSIV offences.<sup>97</sup>

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

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

- 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>98</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>99</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>100</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>101</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Para.308.

<sup>89</sup> Para.310.

<sup>90</sup> Para.311.

<sup>91</sup> Para.312.

<sup>92</sup> Para.315.

<sup>93</sup> Para.320.

<sup>94</sup> Para.322.

<sup>95</sup> Recommendation VII-5.

<sup>96</sup> Para.328.

<sup>97</sup> Para.327.

<sup>98</sup> Recommendation VII-3.

<sup>99</sup> Recommendation VII-4.

<sup>100</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>101</sup> Recommendations VII-6, VII-7.

## Examples of promising practices

Bulgaria has launched a guidebook “The other dictionary of Internet” explaining the main online risks for adolescents, including provocative selfies, sexting, sextortion and revenge porn; developed interactive games on the topic of child safety online; and made available an interactive Internet safety knowledge test.

### Promising practices:

Information has been prepared by The Ministry of Youth and Sport on the recommendations made in the updated Lanzarote Committee report to be circulated by email to the Presidents of sports federations and NGOs working with children, as well as all sports schools in the country. Instructions for their follow-up have been prepared and the information should be brought to the attention of the athletes, officials and all coaches working with children, as well as their parents.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport continues its work on the Council of Europe's Start to Talk initiative, which it joined in 2020. It is aimed at public authorities and the sports movement to take concrete measures to prevent and respond to violence against children in sport. A Roadmap containing a long-term and sustainable strategy for the protection of children in sport in Bulgaria has been developed and is due to be officially published in 2025.

To date, the initiative has developed a methodology that will support the planning and implementation of activities through the development of a country-specific roadmap that sets out a long-term and sustainable strategy for child protection in sport.

The initiative has also produced a desk study, which shows the picture of the current situation regarding the protection of children in sport in Bulgaria.

## 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.

### Observations and recommendations of the Committee on 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 specific to Bulgaria

The Committee notes that in Bulgaria, a public debate “For and against uploading sexy selfies” gathered in 2016 over 30 young people at the IT Step Academy Bulgaria in Sofia. The aim of the debate was to try to oppose views on the widespread phenomenon of uploading provocative photos on the Internet, thus discussing in more depth the consequences of such online behaviour.<sup>102</sup>

It also notes a variety of awareness-raising tools and materials dealing with the general aspect of online safety and staying safe on social media in Bulgaria.<sup>103</sup>

- The State Agency for Child Protection (SACP) has prepared a handbook with rules and useful advice for children to surf the internet safely.<sup>104</sup> It includes a glossary with information on uploading and sharing photos, as well as information on cyberbullying. The handbook also includes useful contacts such as the Cybercrime Department of the General Directorate for Combating Organised Crime, the Safer Internet Centre and the 116 111 national children’s helpline.

- SCAP developed in October 2020 online safety rules.<sup>105 106</sup> The aim is, among others, to carry out prevention and synthesise information on the dangers of the Internet in

one place and to provide kindergartens and schools with specific guidelines for the protection of children on social networks and the Internet.

- On the occasion of the 2019 Edition of the Safer Internet Day, the SACP organised discussions in kindergartens and schools about the rules developed for a safe Internet. This was an opportunity to present the mobile application of the SACP competition “Safety in the digital environment and in the real world”. These competitions provided an opportunity to develop mobile applications to protect children’s rights on the Internet and prevent online risks, based on a child participation process. The discussion included the dangers of selfies, fake profiles, and how to protect children from cyberbullying.

- UNICEF Bulgaria and partners developed Guidelines for online safety for children during COVID-19, where materials and resources are regularly uploaded, including advice for children themselves and their parents.<sup>107</sup>

The Committee finally observes that In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications (MTITC) is leading and co-ordinating the national Digital

<sup>102</sup> Para.345.

<sup>103</sup> Para.349.

<sup>104</sup> <https://sacp.government.bg/sites/default/files/news/novina-1735.pdf> (in Bulgarian)

<sup>105</sup> <https://sacp.government.bg/%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%86%D0%B0/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%B8-%D0%B2-%D0%B1%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82> (in Bulgarian)

<sup>106</sup> The rules have been developed in association with the General Directorate for Combating Organised Crime, the Safer Internet Centre, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Sofia Regional Department of Education, heads of educational institutions in the Bulgarian Union of State Education Employers, and the Secondary School Leaders Association of the Republic of Bulgaria.

<sup>107</sup> The Guidelines can be found at: <https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/media/7181/file>



Bulgaria 2025 programme,<sup>108</sup> together with the roadmap adopted by the Council of Ministers on 5 December 2019. The programme lays down priority action areas, objectives, measures and activities for the growth and

widespread use of information and communication technologies. It is being implemented by various institutions in the sectoral policies that they have undertaken to carry out.<sup>109</sup>

**Generic recommendations of the 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 Bulgaria:

- 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>110</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>111</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>112</sup>
- to have available awareness-raising

tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities.<sup>113</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>114</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>115</sup>
- to take the necessary measures to ensure co-ordination between the agencies responsible for raising awareness of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves.<sup>116</sup>

In order to prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, police officers attend parents' meetings in schools after an invitation from the head teachers and explain to parents the risks of the internet and the constant exchange of video images between children.

In order to raise awareness of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children who create and/or share sexual images and/or videos of themselves, with or without coercion, it is planned to update the National Policing in Schools Programme and create new lessons. One of these is : Dangerous Strangers - how to keep out of trouble. The topic looks at the dangers of communicating with strangers, both online and in their surroundings.

---

<sup>108</sup> [www.mtictc.government.bg/en/category/85](http://www.mtictc.government.bg/en/category/85)

<sup>109</sup> Para.378.

<sup>110</sup> Recommendation VIII-1.

<sup>111</sup> Recommendation VIII-2.

<sup>112</sup> Recommendation VIII-3.

<sup>113</sup> Recommendation VIII-4.

<sup>114</sup> Recommendations VIII-6.

<sup>115</sup> Recommendation VIII-7.

<sup>116</sup> Recommendation VIII-9.

To raise awareness among children about the risks and dangers on the Internet, an information campaign "Talk to me!" will be held on cybercrime protection. The aim of the campaign is to clarify the concept of "Cyber" and the possibilities for crimes to take place there. To provide a model for a safe Internet. To raise awareness of culpable behaviour in cyber space and its consequences. The campaign is to be launched on Safer Internet Day in February 2026.

To recognise harassment and sexual violence in virtuality and reality, a "Stop the Harassment" awareness campaign is planned for 2026.

The Committee requests Bulgaria to ensure that ALL children in primary and secondary education receive information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children facilitated by ICTs. The Lanzarote Committee argues that the organization of lectures and/or activities on this topic should not be left to the discretion of schools or teachers.

In this connection, lectures are given on the National Programme "Policing in Schools". Lectures and talks are given by specialist police officers working with children, following a pre-approved plan by school principals. Topics on the prevention of sexual violence and sexual exploitation are included in the updated programme. The aim is to improve pupils' awareness of child sexual abuse on the Internet and ways of prevention. The topics are arranged as follows:

- Preventing and combating child pornography and sexual abuse on the Internet.
- Prevention of child sexual exploitation.
- Prevention of sexual violence.
- Internet dangers. Sexual violence.
- Sex crimes. Human trafficking.

To ensure a permanent national resource for internet safety with an ongoing programme of activities, the Directorate General for Combating Organised Crime holds regular meetings with children and parents across the country.

### **Example of a promising practice**

The Committee highlights a promising practice in Bulgaria related to the peer-to-peer awareness raising method. Indeed, the Children's Council, set up as a government body, seeks to encourage children to become involved in discussing and implementing policies that are of direct relevance to them, including online risks for children in their age group. Similarly, the competition on children's safety in the digital environment organised by the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP) was intended to identify ideas on this subject by and for children in order to anticipate the risks associated with being online (and on social media). In addition, local Commissions for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings have been established, as well as a network of young volunteers engaged in the implementation and support of prevention activities among their peers. The network's main focus in 2019 was on the safe use of the Internet in the context of the risk of human trafficking.<sup>117</sup>

#### **Promising practices:**

To stimulate reading, create good practices and work with juvenile offenders, including sexual offenders, the information campaign "You can!" The aim of the campaign is to show juvenile offenders a model for spending free time and creating reading habits. The campaign should reach out to child offenders to introduce them to classic books and authors and also to authors of contemporary books. Planned date of implementation November 2025 - National Enlightenment Day.

Preventive measures have been taken to promote information and communication to the technology sector, the media and other professionals to raise awareness among children, their

---

<sup>117</sup> Para.361.

parents, those in regular contact with children and the general public about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse to which children are exposed. By the end of 2025, an information campaign "Look Up!" is to be carried out targeting young girls to prevent trafficking and sexual exploitation. Planned date 18 October 2025 European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings -

## 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.

### Observations and recommendations of the Committee on education for children specific to Bulgaria

The Committee identifies a difficulty in implementing the Convention in Bulgaria, where it is not clear whether all children benefit from the information on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and risks related to the self-generation by children of sexual images and/or videos. Indeed, in Bulgaria, information on CSGSIV is not part of the mandatory national curriculum, and the preventive activities on this topic differ from one local authority to another. As such, children living in different regions or cities may not receive the information. The Committee notes that municipalities organise different activities on different subjects related to the safety of children on the Internet, some of these focusing on the abuse of children on the internet, or “child pornography on the internet”. Two Child Police Academies organised joint events and lectures focused on “Crime on the Internet” in the city of Vidin, and lectures were delivered to children from 1 to 11 grades on the topic “Safe internet behaviour” in the city of Rousse.<sup>118</sup>

The Committee further notes that in Bulgaria, information on CSGSIV is provided to children in the educational context at different levels of education, depending on the regions.<sup>119</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee **requires** Bulgaria to ensure that all children at primary and secondary education 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>120</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The Ministry of Education and Science has taken the following educational measures in the area of cyber security and protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and technology tools:

As part of the activities under the National Programme for Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Protection of Victims in the period 2019-2024, 300 pedagogical specialists have been trained on the prevention of trafficking in human beings.

In the school year 2023 - 2024, Module 2 "Aggression-free school for a safe school environment" was implemented under the National Programme "Support for the Personal Development of Children and Students" to implement a comprehensive programme for the prevention of aggression and for the creation of a safe school environment - the Steps Together Programme. With the resources of the module, 32 school projects have been funded for a total amount of BGN 298 100.00. The approved funding of the projects will involve 11 984 students, 1066 teachers and 6135 parents.

From the school year 2024 - 2025, this module has already become a separate National Programme "Aggression-free for a safe learning environment". The aim of the

<sup>118</sup> Para.387.

<sup>119</sup> Para.393.

<sup>120</sup> Recommendation IX-3.

Programme is to provide conditions for creating a safe educational environment in kindergartens and schools and for methodological support of this process as a means of preventing aggression and bullying among children and students. Under Module 1 "Aggression-free kindergarten for a safe educational environment" of the programme, 20 kindergartens with 2803 children, 320 teachers and 2550 parents will be covered. Under Module 2 "Aggression-free school for a safe school environment" of the programme, 13 606 pupils, 1350 teachers and 5900 parents from 41 schools will be covered. The focus of the NP for the school year 2024-2025 is to provide a safe learning environment for children and adolescents also in the virtual space.

The Ministry of Education and Science is involved in the development and implementation, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, of a project proposal for funding under the European Commission's Technical Assistance Instrument 2024 on

"Promoting the Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Young People in Bulgaria", addressing the mental health support needs of children and young people of school age, as well as in the preparation of a project proposal for funding under the Swiss- Bulgarian cooperation programme in the thematic area "Health and Social Protection"

Participation in the two projects will contribute to raising health awareness among adolescents and increase their awareness of sexual health and how to prevent risky behaviours in this area.

It also **invites** Bulgaria:

- to ensure that information on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards child self-generated sexual images and/or videos, 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>121</sup>

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

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

- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes.<sup>122</sup>
- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities.<sup>123</sup>
- to provide information to children on child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, facilitated by ICTs, including as regards child self-generated sexual images and/or videos, 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>124</sup>

- to provide information to children on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV, within a more general context of sexuality education.<sup>125</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>126</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Recommendation IX-2.

<sup>122</sup> Recommendation IX-4.

<sup>123</sup> Recommendation IX-5.

<sup>124</sup> Recommendation IX-6.

<sup>125</sup> Recommendation IX-7.

<sup>126</sup> Recommendation IX-8.

**Promising practices:**

The Ministry of Education and Science is providing organizational support to the Commission (NCTBH) in commemorating 18 October - International Day for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

In 2023. "Trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation and communities at risk. The event was organized by the National Commission to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Sofia.

In connection with the commitment of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (NCTBH) under the cooperation measures related to combating trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation, part of the Bilateral Cooperation Work Programme between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) of Bulgaria and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (FMLSA) of Germany with the horizon 2023-2024 in key partnership with the European Labour Authority (ELO), the Ministry of Education and Science assisted the administration of the NCTBH in conducting a The main target group of the planned sessions are Roma health, education and labour mediators to build sensitivity to the risks of being involved in human trafficking for forced labour and labour exploitation, as well as awareness on safe labour migration, labour and social security rights, and working and living conditions in Germany. The training contributed to the development of competences among Roma mediators that will increase the effectiveness of the advisory support they provide in the community, both in terms of prevention of involvement in forced labour and labour exploitation and in relation to access to rights for potential labour migrants in Germany as a destination country.

## 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.

### Observations and recommendations of the Committee on higher education curriculum and continuous training specific to Bulgaria

The Committee observes that a part of the professionals who will or already work with children receive education on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in Bulgaria.<sup>127</sup>

However, the Committee **requires** Bulgaria:

- to ensure that teaching or training on the rights of children and their protection for 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) is not optional.<sup>128</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts 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>129</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

With regard to professionals’ general knowledge of the protection of the rights of the child, the Committee welcomes the fact that in Bulgaria, some persons working in contact with children receive awareness of the protection and rights of children, in different frameworks and on different topics.<sup>130</sup> It identifies as a promising practice the fact that the State Agency for Child Protection conducts meetings on the introduction of media and online literacy as a university subject for teachers and students of education-related subjects. This subject is already taught at the University of Sofia, preparing them to convey this knowledge to children in schools.

<sup>127</sup> Para.275.

<sup>128</sup> Recommendation X-4.

<sup>129</sup> Recommendations X-5 and X-6.

<sup>130</sup> Para.432.

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

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

- 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 CSGSIV, for example through education or continuous training.<sup>131</sup>

- to ensure that all the sectors where professionals work in contact with children, including when working on a voluntary basis, have an adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and with specific reference to the risks associated with CSGSIV, for example through education or continuous training.<sup>132</sup>

### Promising practices:

---

<sup>131</sup> Recommendation X-2.

<sup>132</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.

### Observations and recommendations of the Committee on research specific to Bulgaria

The Committee notes that Bulgaria provided information on research undertaken on the sexual exploitation and abuse of children online, aggression, cyberbullying, and adolescent's attitudes to healthy behaviours.<sup>133</sup>

Bulgaria also informed of its participation for at least one year in the EU Kids Online surveys, which collect data and information on, inter alia, children's practice of sending and receiving sexual messages online.<sup>134</sup>

However, the absence of specific reference to CSGSIV makes it unclear whether research undertaken in Bulgaria specifically addresses this issue, other than in the context of the EU Kids Online research project.<sup>135</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee **invites** Bulgaria to collect data and undertake research at the national and local level, for the purpose of observing and evaluating the phenomenon of CSGSIV.<sup>136</sup>

### Generic recommendations of the Committee on research

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

- 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>137</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>138</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>139</sup>

#### Promising practices:

<sup>133</sup> Para.439.

<sup>134</sup> Para.440.

<sup>135</sup> Para.444.

<sup>136</sup> Recommendation XI-1.

<sup>137</sup> Recommendation XI-2.

<sup>138</sup> Recommendation XI-3.

<sup>139</sup> Recommendation XI-4.