



FACTSHEET – CYPRUS

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)”

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I. Introduction

Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs) is a common challenge faced by all States. The often transnational nature of these offences makes international cooperation of the utmost importance especially to identify and protect victims as well as to identify and prosecute perpetrators.

The Council of Europe [Convention on the Protection of Children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse](#) (“Lanzarote Convention”) is a comprehensive instrument that sets out the applicable standards necessary to:

- Prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse, including where this is facilitated by ICTs;
- Protect victims;
- Prosecute perpetrators; and
- Promote national and international co-operation to strengthen these actions.

The [Committee of the Parties to the Lanzarote Convention](#) (“the Lanzarote Committee”) monitors the implementation of the Convention in thematic monitoring rounds. This allows for all Parties to be monitored simultaneously on the same theme.

Particularly concerned by the exponential increase in offences committed using child self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGSIV), the Lanzarote Committee decided to dedicate its second monitoring round to this topic. The 43 States that were Party to the Convention at the time the monitoring round was launched took part, including Cyprus.

The [implementation report](#) adopted by the Lanzarote Committee in the context of this monitoring round is based on information provided by [State Parties](#) and [other stakeholders](#) in response to a questionnaire. The implementation report also contains information received from 306 [children](#) in 10 Parties who chose to participate.

The Lanzarote Committee’s recommendations to improve or reinforce the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse can be found in boxes in each of the 10 thematic chapters. The key messages resulting from the children’s participation are also reflected throughout the whole report. Each chapter also includes examples of promising practices.

The Lanzarote Committee indicates the different levels of urgency applicable to the recommendations made by using the following terms:

- **“Require”**: when the steps recommended correspond to obligations arising from the Lanzarote Convention, as clarified by its Explanatory report;
- **“Request”**: when the steps recommended correspond to obligations arising from the Lanzarote Convention, as clarified by documents adopted by the Committee (e.g. previous monitoring round findings, opinions, other)¹;
- **“Invite”**: when the steps recommended correspond to promising practices or other measures to enhance protection of children against sexual violence even beyond specific requirements of the Lanzarote Convention.

This factsheet is based on the implementation report and has been prepared by the Lanzarote Committee Secretariat as a practical tool to be used by Cyprus to clearly identify the relevant recommendations and actions addressed by the Lanzarote Committee to it. Therefore, it does not include updated information on measures implemented by the Parties since the adoption of the report

¹ See Rule 30 (General comments, proposals and opinions) of the Lanzarote Committee’s Rules of Procedure.

in March 2022. Parties are encouraged to inform the secretariat of any relevant measures implemented after that date, which may have an impact on the Committee's analysis and recommendations by completing this [online form](#) or by email to lanzarote.committee@coe.int.

Key findings of the implementation report as to all Parties

The Committee raised particular concerns that in the vast majority of State Parties, children are at risk of criminal liability in relation to their own self-generated materials, and that many Parties do not provide for the specific offence where a child is a victim of extortion involving the use of its CSGSIV.

Strengthening international cooperation was identified as of particular importance in this context, given that these offences often contain a transnational element. The Lanzarote Committee also called on Parties to establish jurisdiction where any constituent element of an offence takes place within their territory.

Many Parties were found to provide mechanisms to facilitate reporting of these crimes but without providing specific services to support and assist children who have been victims of online sexual abuse to recover. Lack of public awareness and education, including among children, about the specific risks associated with ICT facilitated sexual abuse and self-generated content was also identified as a common challenge.

II. Legal frameworks

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 framework specific to Cyprus

The Committee notes that the Cypriot legal framework refers explicitly to child self-generated sexual material.² At the same time, Cyprus does not have a legislative definition of child sexual abuse material, relying instead on prosecutorial practice or case-law.³

- Accordingly, the Committee **invites** Cyprus 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”](#)⁴ 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, as it notes that the term “child pornography” can be misleading and undermine the gravity of the crimes it refers to.⁵

It appears that Cyprus does not criminalise the production, acquisition or possession of material involving children who have reached the age of sexual consent where that material is produced and possessed with the consent of those children and only for the private use of the persons involved, in so far as the acts did not involve any abuse, in application of Article 8(3) of EU Directive 2011/93.⁶

- In this light, the Committee **requires** Cyprus to ensure that:
 - the child depicted in such images has reached the legal age for sexual activities and has given his/her consent for the possession of such images and/or videos, and that
 - the person possessing the child-self generated images and/or videos and the child depicted on them are of similar ages and maturity (e.g., by setting a maximum age difference among them) in line with para 129 of the Convention’s Explanatory Report, and that
 - the production and possession of the mentioned images and/or videos did not involve any abuse.⁷

The Committee further notes that Cyprus has rules allowing for the criminalisation of the production of sexually explicit images by children themselves, as well as the possession, distribution and transmission of their own images.⁸

Therefore, the Committee **requests** Cyprus 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

² Para. 43

³ Para. 50

⁴ 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.](#)

⁵ Recommendation II-1

⁶ Paras. 59 and 60

⁷ Recommendation II-5

⁸ Paras. 67, 68 and 78

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;⁹

- 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.¹⁰

Cyprus also has rules that lead to the criminalisation of the distribution by children of self-generated sexual images and/or videos of *other* children.¹¹

- Accordingly, the Committee **requests** Cyprus 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.¹²

On sexual extortion of children

In situations when the coercer already in possession of child self-generated material, attempts to procure or knowingly obtain access to further CSGSIV, prosecutions would be brought for offences related to child pornography and corruption of children, the presence of a threat not being taken into account.¹³

When the coercer, possessing the CSGSIV, threatens the child for some other kind of sexual gain, Cyprus would prosecute for sexual abuse of a child in accordance with Article 18, for offences related to child prostitution and to participation in pornographic performances, and corruption of children. It would also qualify the conduct described in this scenario as solicitation of children for sexual purposes.¹⁴ Cyprus would also prosecute conduct relating to the possession of the initial child sexual image or video as an offence related to “child pornography”.¹⁵

When the offender possessing CSGSIV also exploits them to gain money or other property from the child, Cyprus would identify the situation as child prostitution or child pornography.¹⁶

When dealing with sexual extortion cases involving children, the Committee **invites** Cyprus:

- to take into account the situation where CSGSIV are used to force, coerce or threaten the child to give additional self-generated sexual images and/or videos, 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;¹⁷
- to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.¹⁸

⁹ Recommendation II-6

¹⁰ Recommendation II-8

¹¹ Para. 82

¹² Recommendation II-9

¹³ Paras. 99 and 100

¹⁴ Para. 102

¹⁵ Para. 103

¹⁶ Para. 106

¹⁷ Recommendation II-11

¹⁸ Recommendation II-12

Generic recommendations of the Committee on legal frameworks

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

- to strengthen the protection of children by introducing explicit references in their respective legal frameworks to conduct concerning CSGSIV, identifying the circumstances when children should not be held criminally liable and when they should be prosecuted only as a last resort;¹⁹
- to introduce in their legal framework a definition of “child sexual abuse material” in line with its Recommendation II-1 above;²⁰
- to contemplate appropriate legal responses to conduct involving non-visual self-generated sexual material produced by children in the context of offences covered by the Convention;²¹
- 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 self-generated sexual images and/or videos;²²
- to consider criminalising solicitation of children for sexual purposes (“grooming”), even when it does not lead to either a face-to-face meeting or to producing CSAM;²³

¹⁹ Recommendation II-2

²⁰ Recommendation II-3

²¹ Recommendation II-4

²² Recommendation II-7

²³ Recommendation II-10

III. Investigations and prosecution

In its [Interpretative Opinion on the applicability of the 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 Cyprus

On training of authorities

The Committee notes that Cyprus has training modules in place for law enforcement agents related to aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse²⁴ but no specialised training for prosecutors.²⁵

- The Committee thus **requires** Cyprus to put training in place for prosecutors on aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.²⁶
- It also **requests** Cyprus to ensure that training on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children is available for prosecutors who are or will be working on these issues.²⁷

Cyprus also has some relevant training in place for judges.²⁸

- The Committee **requests** Cyprus to ensure that training on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children is available for judges who are or will be working on these issues.²⁹

On victim and perpetrator identification

Cyprus has victim identification units within law enforcement for cases of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children.³⁰ It makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's international child sexual exploitation database.³¹

Generic recommendations of the Committee on investigations and prosecution

On the specialisation and training of authorities

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.³²

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

- to ensure that the capacities of any investigative units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children take into account evolving technologies and online behaviours, and more specifically, that they reflect current practices used by perpetrators. Additionally, the Committee invites all Parties to exchange best practices between the relevant investigative units;³³
- to ensure that law enforcement units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children adequately cover

²⁴ Para. 145

²⁵ Para. 166

²⁶ Recommendation III-15

²⁷ Recommendation III-16

²⁸ Para. 167

²⁹ Recommendation III-18

³⁰ Para. 180

³¹ Para. 186

³² Recommendation III-3, III-7

³³ Recommendation III-4

and/or are specialised in offences against children involving CSGSIV;³⁴

- 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;³⁵
- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children have sufficient specialisation in offences involving CSGSIV;³⁶
- to ensure that training on the challenges raised by CSGSIV and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to judges;³⁷
- 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, reflecting current practices across Parties, include the establishment and use of national child abuse material databases, and that resources are sufficiently allocated.³⁸
- 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;³⁹
- 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;⁴⁰

- to ensure that training on ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children for law-enforcement, prosecutors and judges contains a practical element, involving simulated or real cases.⁴¹

On victim and perpetrator identification, data retention and expeditious proceedings

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.⁴²

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

- to engage in and strengthen inter-Party cooperation for the purpose of identifying child victims of ICT facilitated sexual offences and perpetrators of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, including, where appropriate, by providing access to each other's databases or shared databases;⁴³
- 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;⁴⁴
- 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.⁴⁵

³⁴ Recommendation III-5

³⁵ Recommendation III-9

³⁶ Recommendation III-10

³⁷ Recommendation III-19

³⁸ Recommendation III-24

³⁹ Recommendation III-14

⁴⁰ Recommendation III-20

⁴¹ Recommendation III-21

⁴² Recommendation III-30

⁴³ Recommendation III-25, III-29

⁴⁴ Recommendation III-31

⁴⁵ Recommendation III-32

IV. Jurisdiction rules

Due to their online component, offences related to conducts involving CSGSIV have an inherently international dimension. 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 Cyprus

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))

Cyprus did not submit information as to whether it applies the territoriality principle.

- Accordingly, the Committee **requests** Cyprus 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 its territory.⁴⁶⁴⁷

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

The Committee notes that Cyprus does not prosecute offences committed abroad by its nationals.⁴⁸

- It thus **requires** Cyprus to take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish jurisdiction over cases of child sexual

exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs committed by one of its nationals, even if the offence occurs abroad.⁴⁹⁵⁰

The Committee further notes that Cyprus does not establish jurisdiction over offences established in accordance with the Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in its territory.⁵¹

- Accordingly, the Committee **requires** Cyprus to establish jurisdiction over offences established in accordance with the Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in their territory.⁵²⁵³

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))

Cyprus did not submit information as to whether it subordinates its jurisdiction to this condition.

⁴⁶ Recommendation IV-1

⁴⁷ After the adoption of the report, the Committee was informed that the situation in Cyprus is in fact in line with recommendation IV-1. Indeed, Article 5(1) (e)(v) of Caption 154 of the Cyprus Criminal Law provides for universal jurisdiction for offences committed in any foreign country by any person, if the offence is “one of the offences in respect of which, by virtue of a treaty or international convention binding the Republic, the law of the Republic is applied”, which is the case for the Lanzarote Convention.

⁴⁸ Para. 215

⁴⁹ Recommendation IV-2

⁵⁰ After the adoption of the report, the Committee was informed that the situation in Cyprus is in fact in line with recommendation IV-2. Indeed, Article 5(1) (e)(v) of Caption 154 of the Cyprus Criminal Law provides for universal jurisdiction for offences committed in any

foreign country by any person, if the offence is “one of the offences in respect of which, by virtue of a treaty or international convention binding the Republic, the law of the Republic is applied”, which is the case for the Lanzarote Convention

⁵¹ Para. 217

⁵² Recommendation IV-4

⁵³ After the adoption of the report, the Committee was informed that the situation in Cyprus is in fact in line with recommendation IV-4. Indeed, Article 5(1) (e)(v) of Caption 154 of the Cyprus Criminal Law provides for universal jurisdiction for offences committed in any foreign country by any person, if the offence is “one of the offences in respect of which, by virtue of a treaty or international convention binding the Republic, the law of the Republic is applied”, which is the case for the Lanzarote Convention.

- Accordingly, the Committee **requires** Cyprus 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 has his or her habitual residence in its territory.⁵⁴

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

The criminal law of Cyprus has a clause which provides for the possibility of derogating from the general rules on jurisdiction based on international instruments. According to Title 154, Article 5(1) of the Criminal Code, Cypriot criminal law applies to all offences committed in a foreign country by any person, if the offence is provided for in an international treaty or convention binding the Republic of Cyprus.⁵⁵

At the same time, Cyprus did not provide

information as to whether it applies the dual criminality principle in assuming jurisdiction.

- Accordingly, the Committee **requires** Cyprus 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.⁵⁶

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))

Cyprus did not submit information as to whether it applies the passive personality principle.

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

Generic recommendations of the Committee on jurisdiction rules

The Committee **invites** those Parties that are not yet doing so:

- to remove the requirement for dual criminality 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 when committed by one of their nationals;⁵⁸

- to remove the requirement for dual criminality for offences concerning solicitation of children for sexual purposes (Article 23) when committed by one of their nationals.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Recommendation IV-5

⁵⁵ Para. 227

⁵⁶ Recommendation IV-6

⁵⁷ Recommendation IV-9

⁵⁸ Recommendation IV-7

⁵⁹ 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 Cyprus

INHOPE, the PROMISE Barnahus Network, WeProtect Global Alliance, and EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) cybercrime CSE/CSA carry out projects in Cyprus to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.⁶⁰ Cypriot law enforcement representatives attend the Europol's central annual training course "Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet" (COSEC).⁶¹ As regards specific cooperation for the purpose of protecting and providing assistance to victims (Article 38(1)(b)), Cyprus referred to the protection of victims, raising

awareness and training in EMPACT.⁶² As regards international police cooperation, Cyprus referred to the US-based FBI and the U.S. National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline.⁶³

- The Committee **requires** Cyprus to ensure that the victims of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse in matters related to CSGSIV in the territory of Parties to the Convention which are not members of the European Union other than the one where they reside, may make a complaint before the competent authorities of the State of their residence.⁶⁴

Generic recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation

- The Committee **requests** all Parties to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Convention.⁶⁵

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

- to consistently analyse the possibilities to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the Convention;⁶⁶
- to assess on a regular basis the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them;⁶⁷
- to assess, strengthen and develop international cooperation between the Parties

of the Convention for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV;⁶⁸

- to consistently analyse the possibilities to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the Convention for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV;⁶⁹
- to strengthen cooperation with relevant intergovernmental bodies, and with transnational networks and other international organisations and initiatives due to their capacity to mobilisation, their world-wide

⁶⁰ Para. 255

⁶¹ Para. 259

⁶² Para. 261

⁶³ Para. 262

⁶⁴ Recommendation V-18

⁶⁵ Recommendation V-3

⁶⁶ Recommendation V-4

⁶⁷ Recommendation V-5

⁶⁸ Recommendation V-6

⁶⁹ Recommendation V-7

scope, and their flexibility to work, for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁰

- 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;⁷¹
- 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;⁷²
- to assess, develop and strengthen cooperation between them to protect and provide assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷³
- to regularly analyse the possibilities to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the Convention, for the purpose of protecting and providing assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁴
- to assess, develop and strengthen cooperation with relevant intergovernmental bodies, transnational networks and other international organisations and initiatives due to their capacity to mobilisation, their world-wide scope, and their flexibility to work for the purpose of protecting and providing assistance

to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁵

- to maintain and develop efforts to strengthen international cooperation in investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the 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;⁷⁶
- to analyse the possibilities to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention, on investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Convention, in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁷
- to further maintain and develop efforts to strengthen international cooperation in investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Convention, with countries which are not Parties to the 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 collecting data, training, vetting, and selection in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁸
- 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.⁷⁹

⁷⁰ Recommendation V-8

⁷¹ Recommendation V-9

⁷² Recommendation V-10

⁷³ Recommendation V-11

⁷⁴ Recommendation V-12

⁷⁵ Recommendation V-13

⁷⁶ Recommendation V-14

⁷⁷ Recommendation V-15

⁷⁸ Recommendation V-16

⁷⁹ Recommendation V-19

VI. Assistance to victims

While the ultimate aim in the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse is to prevent such actions from taking place, it is also essential to ensure that children who have already been victims of sexual offences, as well as those adults who were sexually exploited or sexually abused as children, including when they occur as a result of the self-generation by children of sexual images and/or videos, receive the most appropriate and best possible support, assistance and psychological help. Therefore, a comparative study of national mechanisms for assisting child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly where this results from the CSGSIV is extremely helpful.

Observations and recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims specific to Cyprus

As regards the reporting mechanisms available to child victims, the Committee notes that in Cyprus helplines are run in collaboration between different bodies, including ministries and NGOs.⁸⁰

- The Committee **requires** Cyprus to take the necessary legislative or other measures to encourage and support the establishment of information services, such as telephone or internet helplines, to provide advice to child victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs as well as persons wishing to

help them, in a confidential manner or with due regard for their anonymity. These information services should be made available as widely as possible. This can be done in several ways: the service is available at extended hours, it is delivered in a language that the caller, and especially the child, can understand, and it is free of charge.⁸¹

The Committee further notes that Cyprus has legislation on assistance to child victims of sexual violence.⁸²

Generic recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims

The Committee **invites** all Parties that are not already doing so:

- to promote awareness raising or specialised training for professionals who provide advice to children through telephone or internet helplines on ICT facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse of children – including the risks associated with CSGSIV – and on how to
- provide appropriate support to victims and to those who wish to help them;⁸³
- to ensure that the assistance measures referred to in Recommendation VI-3 are available to child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including offences due to the production, possession, distribution or transmission of CSGSIV.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Para. 277

⁸¹ Recommendation VI-1

⁸² Para. 287

⁸³ Recommendation VI-2

⁸⁴ 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 Cyprus

The Committee notes that NGOs are the most involved counterparts in the field of prevention and assistance to child victims, along with the media, academia, and family planning centres.⁸⁵ It further notes that Cyprus develops and supports 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.⁸⁶

As regards civil society involvement in prevention activities, in Cyprus the interaction with civil society includes preventive and awareness-raising activities to minimise the risk of abuse that children face online.⁸⁷

- The Committee **requests** Cyprus to encourage the financing of projects and programmes carried out by civil society aimed at preventing and protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.^{88,89}

Generic recommendations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation

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

- 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;⁹⁰
- 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;⁹¹
- to support civil society to carry out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV;⁹²
- to encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives 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.⁹³

Promising practices

In Cyprus, the National Strategy and Action plan for the protection and prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation and child pornography provides that state authorities should implement prevention projects and programmes in cooperation with other services/NGOs/private sector.

⁸⁵ Para. 308

⁸⁶ Para. 315

⁸⁷ Para. 320

⁸⁸. Examples of projects and/or programmes will enable assessment of follow-up to this recommendation.

⁸⁹ Recommendation VII-2.

⁹⁰ Recommendation VII-3.

⁹¹ Recommendation VII-4.

⁹² Recommendation VII-5.

⁹³ Recommendations VII-6, VII-7.

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

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

Chapter II of the Convention, on “preventive measures”, states in Articles 5, 6 and 8 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 possible 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 Cyprus

The Committee notes that the Office for Combating Cybercrime of the Cyprus Police (OCC/CP) and the Cyprus Safer Internet Centre (CyberSafety) have agreed to share and report information, in accordance with Cypriot domestic legislation, to combat illegal online content, including CSAM, online grooming and hate speech.⁹⁴ Co-ordination for a safer internet for children is the responsibility of the Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education and Culture.⁹⁵

Generic 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

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

- 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;⁹⁶
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children about the risks that they face when generating and/or sharing CSAM 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;⁹⁷
- 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;⁹⁸
- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities;⁹⁹
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children regarding the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse that they face when generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves is led first and foremost by their peers;¹⁰⁰
- 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 CSAM of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken;¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ Para. 365

⁹⁵ Para. 378

⁹⁶ Recommendation VIII-1.

⁹⁷ Recommendation VIII-2.

⁹⁸ Recommendation VIII-3.

⁹⁹ Recommendation VIII-4.

¹⁰⁰ Recommendation VIII-5.

¹⁰¹ Recommendation VIII-6.

- 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 CSGSIV of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken;¹⁰²
- to promote or conduct awareness-raising campaigns for the general public providing information about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken;¹⁰³
- 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.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Recommendation VIII-7.

¹⁰³ Recommendation VIII-8.

¹⁰⁴ Recommendation VIII-9.

IX. Education for children

Informing children about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and how to protect themselves is the cornerstone of prevention and sexuality education is paramount to this end.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on education for children

- The Committee **requires** all Parties, including Cyprus, to ensure that all children at primary and secondary level receive information about the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs. Organising lectures and/or activities on this topic should not be left to the discretion of schools or teachers.¹⁰⁵
- The Committee **invites** all Parties, including Cyprus:
- to address in educational contexts the issue of the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV;¹⁰⁶
 - to ensure that information on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV, is provided to children during both primary and secondary education (whether as part of the national curricula or in the context of non-formal education for children at these levels);¹⁰⁷
 - to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes;¹⁰⁸
 - to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities;¹⁰⁹
 - to provide information to children on child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV, in their national curriculum or other non-formal educational contexts, in a form which is adapted to the evolving capacity of the children and therefore which is appropriate for their age and maturity;¹¹⁰
 - to provide information to children on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including CSGSIV, within a more general context of sexuality education;¹¹¹
 - 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.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ Recommendation IX-3.

¹⁰⁶ Recommendation IX-1.

¹⁰⁷ Recommendation IX-2.

¹⁰⁸ Recommendation IX-4.

¹⁰⁹ Recommendation IX-5.

¹¹⁰ Recommendation IX-6.

¹¹¹ Recommendation IX-7.

¹¹² Recommendation IX-8.

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. If they are not adequately equipped to inform children about their rights, to detect situations where a child is at risk of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, it is likely that they will not 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. This will 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 Cyprus

The Committee notes that Cyprus is developing training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children on the risks associated with CSGSIV. Thus, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, in collaboration with the Foni Council,¹¹³ was planning to organise seminars and training workshops in 2021 for students and teachers, aimed at providing information on issues arising from international instruments, in particular one on the subject “Distribution of photographic or other material that may be considered a product of sexual abuse or exploitation between students.”¹¹⁴ Some professionals in Cyprus who will or already work with children receive training and/or education on the protection of children against

sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.¹¹⁵ Some of them have also been trained and/or received education on how to identify potential situations where a child is a victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse¹¹⁶ and on the possibility to report situations where they have reasonable grounds for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.¹¹⁷

- The Committee **requires** Cyprus to encourage awareness of the protection and rights of children among persons who have regular contacts with children in the education, health, social protection, judicial and law-enforcement sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities.¹¹⁸

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

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

- 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;¹¹⁹
- to ensure that all the sectors where professionals work in contact with children, including when working on a voluntary basis, have adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and with specific reference to the risks associated with CSGSIV.¹²⁰

¹¹³ See <http://www.foni.org.cy/>

¹¹⁴ Para. 411

¹¹⁵ Para. 416

¹¹⁶ Para. 428

¹¹⁷ Para. 429

¹¹⁸ Recommendation X-7.

¹¹⁹ Recommendation X-2.

¹²⁰ Recommendation X-3.

Promising practice

In February 2016, schools in Cyprus received a circular on the procedures to be followed, with an emphasis on child protection in case a child confesses abuse.

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 Cyprus

The Committee notes that Cyprus participated for at least one year in the EU Kids Online surveys.¹²¹ Cyprus has affirmed that no research was undertaken on issues raised by CSGSIV and/or on the psychological effects on persons who have had such material shared online. However, some data was collected within the context of the EU Kid Online surveys on the practice of sending and receiving sexual messages, including CSGSIV.¹²²

Generic recommendations of the Committee on research

The Committee **invites** all those Parties which have not already done or are not already doing so:

- to collect data and undertake research at the national and local level, for the purpose of observing and evaluating the phenomenon of CSGSIV;¹²³
- 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, for the purpose of observing and evaluating 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.¹²⁴

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

- 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;¹²⁵
- 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.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Para. 440

¹²² Para. 443

¹²³ Recommendation XI-1

¹²⁴ Recommendation XI-4

¹²⁵ Recommendation XI-2

¹²⁶ Recommendation XI-3