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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)"

This factsheet was prepared by the Secretariat in March 2023.

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

Table of Contents

I. Introduction 3
II. Legal frameworks 4
III. Investigations and prosecution 7
IV. Jurisdiction rules 10
V. International cooperation 14
VI. Assistance to victims 17
VII. Civil society involvement and cooperation 21
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 23
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 2nd 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 41st 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 2nd 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 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.[1] At the same time, Cyprus does not have a legislative definition of child sexual abuse material, relying instead on prosecutorial practice or case-law.[2]

- 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"[3] 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.[4]

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.[5]

- 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.[6]

Follow-up actions:

The Law Office of the Republic is currently working on amendments to the Law of 2014 on sexual abuse and the suggestions and guidelines of the Committee will be taken into consideration. It is worth mentioning that there are several cases where there have been convictions under the Law of 2014

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.[7]

Therefore, the Committee **requests** Cyprus to ensure in its legal framework that:

- a child will not be prosecuted when

[1] Para. 43
[2] Para. 50
[3] 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.
[4] Recommendation II-1
[5] Paras. 59 and 60
[6] Recommendation II-5
[7] Paras. 67, 68 and 78

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;[8]

Follow-up actions:

- 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.[9]

Follow-up actions:

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.[10]

- 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.[11]

Follow-up actions:

<u>On sexual extortion of children</u>

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.[12]

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.[13] Cyprus would also prosecute conduct relating to the possession of the initial child sexual image or video as an offence related to "child pornography".[14]

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.[15]

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;[16]
- to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.[17]

[8] Recommendation II-6
[9] Recommendation II-8
[10] Para. 82
[11] Recommendation II-9
[12] Paras. 99 and 100
[13] Para. 102
[14] Para. 103
[15] Para. 106
[16] Recommendation II-11
[17] 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;[18]
- to introduce in their legal framework a definition of "child sexual abuse material" in line with its Recommendation II-1 above;[19]
- 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;[20]
- 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;[21]
- 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;[22]

Promising practices:

[18] Recommendation II-2
[19] Recommendation II-3
[20] Recommendation II-4
[21] Recommendation II-7
[22] 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 abuse [23]but no specialised training for prosecutors.[24]

- The Committee thus **requires** Cyprus to put training in place for prosecutors on aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.[25]

Follow-up actions:

- 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.[26]

Follow-up actions:

Cyprus also has some relevant training in place for judges.[27]

- 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.[28]

Follow-up actions:

On victim and perpetrator identification

Cyprus has victim identification units within law enforcement for cases of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children.[29] It makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's international child sexual exploitation database.[30]

THE FORENSIC LAB OF THE CYPRUS POLICE CYBERCRIME UNIT

- The Committee requests those Parties that are not already doing so to ensure that law enforcement and prosecution units, services or persons specialized in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are adequately financed to ensure sufficient resources, including staff, equipment and training.

Follow-up actions:

The Forensic Lab of the Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit is equipped with the latest technology needed to assist in the investigation of such cases. Furthermore, the personnel of the Unit are trained and experienced in the investigation of cases regarding child sexual exploitation.

- The Committee requires all Parties to ensure that investigations and

[23] Para. 145
[24] Para. 166
[25] Recommendation III-15
[26] Recommendation III-16
[27] Para. 167
[28] Recommendation III-18
[29] Para. 180
[30] Para. 186

criminal proceedings in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are treated as priority and carried out without any unjustified delay.	Follow-up actions: The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit handles such cases and they are given priority and handled without any unjustified delay.

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.[31]
Follow-up actions:

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;[32]
- 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;[33]
- 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;[34]
- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children have sufficient specialisation in offences involving CSGSIV;[35]
- to ensure that training on the challenges raised by CSGSIV and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to judges;[36]
- 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.[37]

[31] Recommendation III-3, III-7
[32] Recommendation III-4
[33] Recommendation III-5
[34] Recommendation III-9
[35] Recommendation III-10
[36] Recommendation III-19
[37] Recommendation III-24

- 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;[38]
- 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;[39]
- 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.[40]

<u>On victim and perpetrator identification, data retention and expeditious proceedings</u>

- 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.[41]

Follow-up actions:

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;[42]
- 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;[43]

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.[44]

Promising practices:

[38] Recommendation III-14
[39] Recommendation III-20
[40] Recommendation III-21
[41] Recommendation III-30
[42] Recommendation III-25, III-29
[43] Recommendation III-31
[44] 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.[45][46]

Follow-up actions:

The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit maintains a high level of cooperation with other countries via international channels of cooperation (i.e. Europol, Interpol, EIOs - European Investigation Orders, ILORs - International Letters of Requests).

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.[47]

- 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

[45] Recommendation IV-1

[46] 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.

[47] Para. 215

ICTs committed by one of its nationals, even if the offence occurs abroad.[48] [49]

Follow-up actions:

The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit maintains a high level of cooperation with other countries via international information exchange channels (i.e. Europol, Interpol).

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.[50]

- 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.[51] [52]

Follow-up actions:

When the offence is reported in Cyprus, the investigation is handled by the Cyprus Police. If the offence is reported in another country, that country can ask for the assistance of Cyprus via international channels of cooperation (i.e. EIOs - European Investigation Orders, ILORs - International Letters of Requests). In such cases, whatever necessary actions need to be carried out are

[48] Recommendation IV-2

[49] 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

[50] Para. 217

[51] Recommendation IV-4

[52] 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.

done so, as if the case was under investigation by the Cyprus Police.

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.

- 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.[53]

Follow-up actions:

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.[54]

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

[53] Recommendation IV-5

[54] Para. 227

child in pornographic performances (Article 21), when committed by one of their nationals.[55]

Follow-up actions:

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.[56]

Follow-up actions:

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;[57]
- 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.[58]

Promising practices:

[55] Recommendation IV-6
[56] Recommendation IV-9
[57] Recommendation IV-7
[58] 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.[59] Cypriot law enforcement representatives attend the Europol's central annual training course "Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet" (COSEC).[60] 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.[61] 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.[62]

- 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.[63]

Follow-up actions:

[59] Para. 255
[60] Para. 259
[61] Para. 261
[62] Para. 262
[63] Recommendation V-18

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.[64]

Follow-up actions:

The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit maintains a high level of cooperation with other countries via international channels of cooperation (i.e. Europol, Interpol, EIOs - European Investigation Orders, ILORs - International Letters of Requests).

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;[65]
- to assess on a regular basis the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them;[66]
- 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;[67]
- 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;[68]
- 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 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;[69]
- 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;[70]
- 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

[64] Recommendation V-3
[65] Recommendation V-4
[66] Recommendation V-5
[67] Recommendation V-6
[68] Recommendation V-7
[69] Recommendation V-8
[70] Recommendation V-9

related to CSGSIV;[71]

- to assess, develop and strengthen cooperation between them to protect and provide assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;[72]
- 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;[73]
- 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;[74]
- 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;[75]
- 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;[76]
- 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;[77]
- 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.[78]

Promising practices:

[71] Recommendation V-10
[72] Recommendation V-11
[73] Recommendation V-12
[74] Recommendation V-13
[75] Recommendation V-14
[76] Recommendation V-15
[77] Recommendation V-16
[78] 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.[79]

- 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.[80]

Follow-up actions:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES:

As required by the Lanzarote Committee, Cyprus takes legislative[81] and other measures to encourage and support the information services such as telephone or internet helplines to provide advice to child victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by ICTs as well as persons wishing to help them in a confidential manner or with due regard of their anonymity. These information services are made available widely, are available at extended hours, are delivered in a language that the caller and especially the victim can understand and are free of charge.

The helplines are:

- Helpline 1440 https://findahelpline.com/organizations/association-for-the-prevention-and-handling-of-violence-in-the-family-aphvf-helpline-1440

The helpline operates 24/7. Anyone can contact helplines to get information about domestic and gender-based violence. Services provided: information on rights, and options for victims, depending on needs; support and counseling; cooperation with other relevant services; referrals to competent services and reports to the Competent Authorities. They act as gateways to other services, e.g. Shelters, Counseling, Perpetrators Program.

- The House of the Child

The Scandinavian model "Barnahaus" (The House of the Child) is implemented in Cyprus in order to offer all kinds of assistance and support to abused children. The support consists mainly, to social, psychological and psychotherapy measures. In these efforts the Ministry of Education is also involved since 2017, through its participation in the multidisciplinary team, by an educational psychologist, whose duty is to related and facilitate children needs with school and learning procedures.

The House of the Child provides a full

[79] Para. 277
[80] Recommendation VI-1
[81] https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/2014_1_91/full.html

spectrum of necessary services, under one roof, the House of the Child, seeking to serve justice in a child-friendly manner when handling cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring the best interest the child's safety, protection and well-being through a multidisciplinary approach. The management and operation of the House of the Child Policy Center have been entrusted to the "Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, and the overall supervision is carried out by the Social Welfare Services (YKE) in collaboration with co-competent Services. The House of the Child operates with the direct and systematic cooperation of the Cyprus Police, the Social Welfare Services, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.

- Hope for Children Helpline 1466 https://findahelpline.com/organizations/hope-for-children-helpline-1466

It operates 24/7. The Hope for Children helpline is available nationwide. It offers information and support on gender and sexual identity issues, anxiety, depression, trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, self harm, abuse and domestic violence, sexual abuse and other relevant issues. Additionally, it gives information regarding the cooperation with other relevant services, referrals to competent services and reports to the Competent Authorities. The helpline acts as gateways to other services, e.g. Shelters and Counseling programs.

- UNHCR CYPRUS (Delegation of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees)

UNHCR Cyprus launched in October 2017 an online information platform for refugees and asylum-seekers living in Cyprus. A mobile-friendly website that is accessible at http://help.unhcr.org/cyprus the "HELP" platform seeks to serve as a one-stop information shop, offering comprehensive, accurate and objective information that is essential for refugees and asylum-seekers in Cyprus. The Help platform is updated on a regular basis.
Tel. 22-359057/43, 22-660164
cypni@unhcr.org
www.unhcr.org/cyprus.html

- Cyprus Family Planning Association – Helpline 1455

The 1455 Helpline is free and provides information and support to the public on sexual and reproductive health issues. Through the Helpline, referrals are made to services, organizations, and programs operating across Cyprus.
The 1455 Helpline is staffed by trained volunteers and professionals (Psychologists – Sociologists – Counselors), both professional and non-professional. The service is provided with complete confidentiality and trust. The Association is an active member of the Youth Organization of Cyprus (ONEK) Counseling Helpline Network.

- Organization for the Protection of Victims of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Tel. 25-109139
www.stigma-organisation.org

- Youth Board of Cyprus (ONEK) Helpline: 1410, Tel. 22-402600 / 2

www.onek.org.cy

- Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO)

Helpline: 1140
Tel. 22-339001
info@domviolence.org.cy
www.domviolence.org.cy

- Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office (Police) Helplines

Police Emergency Lines 112 or 199 and 22-808442
Citizens' Communication Line 1460
https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/F22B902F60E387DCC2258887001DD63A/$file/%CE%92%CE%99%CE%91%20%CE%A3%CE%A4%CE%97%CE%9D%20%CE%9F%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%9F%CE%93%CE%95%CE%9D%CE%95%CE%99%CE%91_EN_compressed.pdf?Ope

nElement
domviol.childabuse@police.gov.cy

- Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman) Tel. 22-405500 / 501

Ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.cy
www.ombudsman.gov.cy

- Commissioner for Children's Rights Tel. 22-873200

childcom@ccr.gov.cy
http://www.childcom.org.cy

- European Helpline for Children and Adolescents 116111

www.call116111.com

- "Cyber Ethics" Cyprus Safer Internet Center - Tel. 70000116

helpline@cyberethics.info
www.cyberethics.info
Chat.www.cyberethics.info

- Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) Tel. +357 22 841 528

info@medinstgenderstudies.org
www.medinstgenderstudies.org

- Archbishop Makarios III Hospital

Tel. 22-05000 (call centre), 22-405160 / 38 (Gynaecology and Obstetrics
Clinic)

- Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence

Tel. 22-775888
familyviolence.ac@cytanet.com.cy
www.familyviolence.gov.cy
The above helplines are available to anyone nationwide in Cyprus to offer support and guidance on how to combat violence or sexual abuse and proceed to complaints to the police.

The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit has:

- a call center (+357 22808200) which can be reached every day of the year between 0700-1900. Members of the Unit with experience in such case are available to assist in any enquiries citizens may have, including children.
- an email account (cybercrime@police.gov.cy) is available for citizens, including children, to correspond any related matters to the Unit.
- a website (CyberAlert.CY - Home) is available to citizens, including children, through which they can electronically submit a report which will be handled by the Police accordingly.

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

[82] Para. 287

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]

Promising practices:

[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]

Follow-up actions:

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES:

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, through the collaboration of Pedagogical Institute and Educational Psychology Service, organize every-year professional trainings for educators (in Elementary, Primary and Secondary education), special educators, educational psychologists, trainee educational psychologists of Cyprus University, as well as Directors and Supervisors of schools, in the public and private sector.

The Council "FONI", responsible of following state actions by law, will include in the new strategic plan for 2025-2027, compulsory trainings at the university level for all educators during their studies.

The Deputy Ministry of Social Services, finances NGOs that prevent and protect children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Hope for Children receives full funding for the Children's House as well as "FONI", the National Strategy Implementation Council. "FONI" is responsible for coordinating all actions aimed at preventing and combating sexual abuse and exploitation of children and child pornography. "FONI" covers the expenses of the training seminars for professionals who work with children.

[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.

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.

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.

Promising practices:

Foni, the National Strategy Implementation Council was established under the Law on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Combating Sexual abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography (Law 112 (I) / 2017),

[90] Recommendation VII-3.
[91] Recommendation VII-4.
[92] Recommendation VII-5.
[93] Recommendations VII-6, VII-7.

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]

Follow-up actions:

The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, carries out awareness sessions targeted at parents, teachers and students, with regards to the use of the internet and the harmful effects of child sexual abuse.

- to ensure that awareness-raising for children about the risks that they face when generating and/or sharing CSGSIV 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]

Follow-up actions:

The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, carries out awareness sessions targeted at parents, teachers and students, with regards to the use of the internet and the harmful effects of child sexual abuse.

[94] Para. 365
[95] Para. 378
[96] Recommendation VIII-1.
[97] Recommendation VIII-2.

- 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]

  Follow-up actions:
  During the preparation of the above-mentioned awareness sessions carried out by the Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit, all available materials and activities are taken into account.

- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities;[99]
  Follow-up actions:
  Trainings carried out by the Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit that are aimed at children with any kind of disability, are adapted accordingly.

- 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]
  Follow-up actions:
  During its awareness sessions, the Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit strives to promote this issue.

- 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 CSGSIV of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken;[101]

  Follow-up actions:
  The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit carries out many awareness campaigns that are promoted via the media, via the internet (webpages and social media) or directly to parents and/or other persons who have regular contact with children (such as teachers).

- 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]
  Follow-up actions:
  The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, carries out awareness sessions targeted at parents, with regards to the use of the internet and the harmful effects of child sexual abuse.

- 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]

[98] Recommendation VIII-3.
[99] Recommendation VIII-4.
[100] Recommendation VIII-5.
[101] Recommendation VIII-6.
[102] Recommendation VIII-7.
[103] Recommendation VIII-8.

Follow-up actions:
The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit carries out many awareness campaigns that are promoted via the media and via the internet (webpages or social media), offering options for preventive measures.

- 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]

Follow-up actions:
The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit cooperates closely on these matters with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the Office of the Commissioner for Electronic Communications and Postal Regulation (including the Digital Security Authority) and NGOs.

Promising practices: Cyprus has implemented various awareness-raising and prevention initiatives to address the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse associated with children generating and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves. These efforts involve governmental bodies, law enforcement, NGOs, and educational institutions working together to promote digital safety and child protection.

1. **National Strategy and Coordination Efforts**
   Cyprus has adopted a **National Strategy and Action Plan** to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. The **Implementation Council "FONI"**, established in 2018, coordinates national efforts by organizing awareness campaigns, educational seminars, and training workshops to educate children, parents, and professionals about online risks.
2. **Educational Programs and Awareness Campaigns**
   The **Cyprus Safer Internet Centre (CyberSafety)**, coordinated by the Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education, implements awareness-raising campaigns targeting children, parents, and educators. These campaigns emphasize the risks of sharing self-generated sexual content and provide age-appropriate digital literacy education. Schools across Cyprus incorporate these programs to help children understand responsible online behavior.
   "*Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center (HFC)* is involved in policy making to safeguard children's rights and takes initiative in creating and delivering various programs focused, among other areas, on the prevention of child sexual abuse including the risks associated with children generating and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves. Some examples are parents' psychoeducation groups, social media campaigns promoting digital safety, psychoeducation of child-service users and workshops in schools for teachers, students and parents.

3. **Support Services for Affected Children**

   The **Children's House**, operated by "*Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center (HFC) with the involvement of Social Welfare Servies, Cyprus Police, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education*, provides a multidisciplinary approach for supporting children who have been victims of sexual exploitation or abuse. The centre coordinates all involved agencies in these cases as well as offering forensic interviews, **psychosocial support, medical examination, and therapeutic services**, ensuring that affected children and their families

[104] Recommendation VIII-9.

receive proper care and protection.

4. **Law Enforcement and Cybercrime Prevention**

   The **Office for Combating Cybercrime (OCC/CP) of the Cyprus Police** works closely with **CyberSafety** and international partners to detect and prevent online child sexual exploitation. Authorities run prevention campaigns, inform students and parents about **online grooming, sexting risks, and cyberbullying**, and ensure quick responses to reported incidents.

   The **Children's House**, operated by "*Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center (HFC)*, collaborates when needed OCC/CP to make sure all procedures are child-friendly, and enhances them by providing psychosocial support to the victims and their families when needed in order for the OCC/CP officers to collect all the relevant evidence in a timely and efficient manner without traumatizing children.

5. **Cyprus Safer Internet Hotline and Helpline**
   The **Cyprus Safer Internet Hotline (SafenetCY)** allows users to report **child sexual abuse material (CSAM), online grooming, and illegal content**, helping law enforcement take action. In addition, the **Cyprus Safer Internet Helpline** provides confidential **psychological and technical support** to children and adults who encounter harmful online experiences.
   Moreover, through HFC's helpline and other services reports relevant crimes and collaborates with OCC/CP.

6. **Peer-Led Awareness Initiatives**
   Recognizing the importance of **peer influence**, Cyprus encourages youth participation in **Safer Internet Youth Panels**. These initiatives empower young people to act as **digital safety ambassadors**, educating their peers on online risks and responsible internet use. Also, **Student Ambassadors of "Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center** (CRC Campus Club) explore various issues, such as cyberbullying, abuse, and gender equality, understanding how these issues affect young people and how they are in violation of their rights, and what they can do to exercise their rights as young people and stop these things from occurring to themselves and their peers.

7. **Collaboration with the Private Sector and Media**
   Cyprus promotes cooperation with **technology companies, social media platforms, and media organizations** to spread awareness about the risks of self-generated sexual content. Campaigns leverage **social media, television, and educational videos** to reach a broader audience and provide practical advice on safe internet use.

8. **Parental Guidance and Digital Literacy for Caregivers**
   Awareness-raising efforts also focus on **parents and guardians**, equipping them with knowledge about online threats and effective communication strategies. Educational sessions guide parents on **monitoring children's online activities**, setting up parental controls, and fostering **open discussions** about internet safety.

Cyprus demonstrates a holistic approach to tackling the issue of children generating and sharing sexual content, combining legislation, law enforcement, education, and support services. Through these coordinated national and EU-level efforts, the country strengthens its preventive measures and ensures that children, parents, and professionals are well-equipped to recognize, prevent, and

respond to digital threats effectively.

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]

Follow-up actions:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH

As required by the Committee, the mandatory teaching of the subject of Health Education - Unit 3.1. "Family Planning, Sexual and Reproductive Health" - ensures that all children at primary and secondary level receive information about the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Additionally, the Holistic Sexual Education Law of 2022[106], aims to establish an effective legislative framework that ensures:

(a) the provision of comprehensive sexual education to children and adults attending primary and secondary public and private schools.

(b) the implementation of training programs for educators in public and private education on family planning and sexual education.

(c) the provision of educational materials and technical support to higher education institutions that choose to offer sexual education programs to their students.

The following thematics are explicitly described in the teachers' manuals for Sexuality Education "Journey of life"[107], "We say No"[108] and "I'm set"[109] with corresponding activities.

In line with the Health Education Curriculum, the objectives below are implemented through the aforementioned Unit 3.1, throughout Primary and Secondary Education:

Health Education Curriculum in Primary School

Children should be able to:

- understand and explain The Underwear Rule: "Nobody is allowed to touch or caress the child at those parts of the body, which as a rule are covered by the underwear. And correspondingly, neither are the children allowed to touch the body of others at these parts".
- recognize the private parts of the body
- name the body private parts with their exact names (penis, testicles, vulva, chest)
- understand that their body belongs to them
- recognize the good and bad touches
- recognize the good and bad secrets
- recognize a safety network with people who they can trust (family, teachers, principal, helplines,police)
- report child sexual abuse crimes

Health Education Curriculum in Secondary School

Children should be able to:

- understand and explain that no one has the right to make them feel bad

[105] Recommendation IX-3.

[106] https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2022_1_205.html

[107] https://archeia.moec.gov.cy/sd/299/agogi_ygeias_taxidi_zois.pdf

[108] https://archeia.moec.gov.cy/sd/299/leme_ochi_odigos_sexoualikis_diapaidagogisis.pdf

[109] https://sch.cy/sm/740/IMSET_Manual.pdf

(physically, psychologically/emotionally).
- recognize types of physical abuse (e.g. hitting, kicking, burning, pulling hair, spitting, food deprivation).
- recognize psychological/emotional types of abuse (e.g. mocking, threatening, belittling, cursing.
- name and state ways to protect and deal with any form of abuse.
- turn to a trusted adult for help.
- recognize and name services, helplines and bodies to which children can turn for help.
- state the consequences of fake profiles on the internet.
- distinguish forms of violence (physical, sexual, psychological, financial) within and outside the family.
- recognize that the sexual harassment and abuse are illegal acts.
- recognize that a person that suffers from such abuse should know where to look for support and help.
- show zero tolerance to any form of violence whatsoever.
- defend themselves and others from sexual abuse.

Additionally, in relevance with the Secondary School Curriculum, during the last three academic years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024 - 2025, seminars on the prevention of online child sexual abuse - protection from the phenomenon of sexting – for teachers and students of Secondary General and Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, were organized nationwide by the Pedagogical Institute in collaboration with the Educational Psychology Service. The seminars addressed issues such as consensual and non-consensual sexual behaviors and the legislation regarding sextortion. The assessment of the seminars by students and teachers indicated their importance and usefulness, as well as the necessity of their implementation in the future.

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;[110]
- 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);[111]
- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes;[112]
- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities;[113]
- 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;[114]
- 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;[115]
- 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.[116]

[110] Recommendation IX-1.
[111] Recommendation IX-2.
[112] Recommendation IX-4.
[113] Recommendation IX-5.
[114] Recommendation IX-6.
[115] Recommendation IX-7.
[116] Recommendation IX-8.

Promising practices:

"Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center (HFC) in Cyprus has implemented several initiatives to educate children about the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly in the context of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). These efforts focus on age-appropriate education, internet safety training, and comprehensive support services, ensuring that children are equipped with the knowledge and resources to protect themselves.

1. Non-Formal Education Workshops

HFC provides a variety of experiential workshops based on non-formal education methods. These workshops aim to inform children about their rights and the risks associated with sexual exploitation and abuse, including those facilitated by ICTs. The programs are designed to be age-appropriate and engaging, fostering a deeper understanding among children. Workshops on bullying and healthy relationships educate students on recognizing and respecting personal boundaries, as well as fostering empathy which prevent the victimization of children.

2. "One in Five" Campaign

As the representative of the Council of Europe's "One in Five" Campaign in Cyprus, HFC works to raise awareness and educate children, parents, and professionals about sexual violence against children. The campaign emphasizes the importance of prevention and provides tools to recognize and respond to signs of abuse.

3. Children's House

HFC operates the "Children's House," a child-friendly facility that provides a safe environment for children who have experienced sexual abuse. The center offers interdisciplinary services, including social, psychological, and legal support, all under one roof. This approach ensures that affected children receive comprehensive care tailored to their needs.

Professionals provide guidance to school staff on handling cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

4. European Helpline for Children and Adolescents (116 111)

HFC together with the association SPAVO, operates the European Helpline for Children and Adolescents 116111, providing counseling services to young individuals in need. The helpline offers a confidential space for children to discuss any concerns, including issues related to online safety and exploitation. This service ensures that children have access to immediate support and guidance.

5. Collaboration with Educational Institutions

HFC collaborates with schools and other educational institutions to implement programs that educate children about online safety and the risks of sexual exploitation. These collaborations aim to integrate awareness-raising activities into the educational context, ensuring that information is disseminated effectively to students.

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,[117] 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."[118] 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.[119] 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 abuse[120] 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.[121]

- 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.[122]

Follow-up actions:

SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES:

On a yearly basis, the Social Welfare Services organise trainings/ seminars on these issues, in order to educate Social Welfare Officers working with children. Specialized professionals on child protection matters deliver these trainings/seminars.

[117] See http://www.foni.org.cy/
[118] Para. 411
[119] Para. 416
[120] Para. 428
[121] Para. 429
[122] Recommendation X-7.

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;[123]
- 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.[124]

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.

Promising practices:

[123] Recommendation X-2.
[124] 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 Cyprus

The Committee notes that Cyprus participated for at least one year in the EU Kids Online surveys.[125] 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.[126]

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;[127]

  Follow-up actions:

  The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit has not yet handled any such cases.

- 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.[128]

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;[129]

  Follow-up actions:

  The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit will ensure that data is collected regarding any such cases it may handle in the future.

- 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.[130]

  Follow-up actions:

  The Cyprus Police Cybercrime Unit strives to keep informed and updated so as to ensure that polices and measures are best developed and appropriately targeted to tackle these issues.

[125] Para. 440
[126] Para. 443
[127] Recommendation XI-1
[128] Recommendation XI-4
[129] Recommendation XI-2
[130] Recommendation XI-3

Promising practices:

- ***"Hope for Children"* CRC Policy Center (HFC)** actively contributes to research, policy discussions, and advocacy on child protection, including online safety.
- **HFC** has collaborated with EU and international bodies to assess online risks affecting Cypriot children, advocating for evidence-based policy development.
- Through its **Children's House, HFC** gathers case-based insights into child sexual abuse and online victimization, helping inform research and service improvement.

- Cyprus has **participated in the EU Kids Online project**, which gathers data on children's digital habits, online risks, and safety practices. The survey measures the prevalence of sending and receiving sexual messages, including CSGSIV, providing valuable baseline data for policy development. However, no dedicated national research has been conducted specifically on the psychological effects of having self-generated sexual content shared online.
- Cyprus has acknowledged the need for structured data collection mechanisms on CSGSIV and ICT-facilitated child sexual exploitation. The **Office for Combating Cybercrime (OCC/CP)** of the Cyprus Police monitors online child exploitation cases, including those related to self-generated explicit content. However, a dedicated national research mechanism for continuous data collection and impact assessment has not yet been fully established.
- The **Cyprus Safer Internet Centre (CyberSafety)**, coordinated by the **Cyprus Pedagogical Institute**, undertakes **s**tudies and awareness-raising activities related to child online safety. CyberSafety has worked with educational institutions and NGOs to assess children's digital behaviors, though specific research on CSGSIV remains limited.

While Cyprus has made progress in understanding children's online risks through participation in EU-wide studies, there is still a need for more systematic, dedicated national research on CSGSIV. Expanding data collection efforts, interdisciplinary research, and collaboration between law enforcement, academia, and child protection organizations (including HFC) will be essential to developing effective policies and interventions. To align with the **Committee's recommendations**, Cyprus should:

- Conduct dedicated national research on CSGSIV and its impact on children's mental health and well-being.
- Establish a national data collection mechanism to systematically monitor cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs.
- Enhance collaboration with civil society, NGOs, and international research bodies to strengthen evidence-based policymaking.
- Ensure findings from existing research (EU Kids Online, CyberSafety studies) are incorporated into national policies to better target prevention strategies.

Increase HFC's role in research collaborations, leveraging insights from the Children's House and online safety programs to inform new studies on digital child exploitation