



FACTSHEET – ESTONIA

Lanzarote Committee monitoring findings 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 Estonia in March 2025 displayed in orange and blue text boxes.

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I. Introduction

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

The compliance procedure seeks to assess the follow-up given by Parties to the recommendations made by the Committee in the evaluation procedure. In the [implementation report of its 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 Estonia

The interplay of the age of criminal responsibility and the age of sexual consent

Estonia pointed at the age of criminal responsibility (14) below which children cannot be held criminally liable for acts they commit to demonstrate compatibility with the exclusion of criminal liability for the production and possession of CSGSIV. It also noted that production and possession of self-generated material were not criminalised when the child(ren) in question have reached the legal age for sexual activities.¹ The Committee highlights, however, that reliance upon the age of criminal responsibility alone to exclude criminal responsibility does not correspond to a situation of full compliance with the 2019 Opinion, since older children (those above the age of criminal responsibility) and younger children (those below the legal age for sexual activities) cannot avail themselves of this exemption.² It also highlights that particular attention must be paid where there is a gap between the age of criminal responsibility and the age of consent (particularly where the age of criminal responsibility is relatively low, or the age of sexual consent relatively high).³

Accordingly, the Committee **requests** Estonia to ensure in its legal framework that:

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

- the self-generated sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos of another child as a result of receiving them passively without actively asking for them;⁴

Follow-up actions:

We amended our Penal Code (amendments entered into force 01.11.2022) and now § 178 (1) clearly states that: *Manufacture, acquisition or storing, handing over, displaying or making available to another person in any other manner of pictures, writings or other works or reproductions of works depicting a person of less than eighteen years of age in a pornographic situation, or a person of less than fourteen years of age in a pornographic or erotic situation, unless it is done voluntarily on the basis of the mutual consent between the person under the age of eighteen years depicted in the work or in a reproduction thereof, and the person who committed the act, solely for their personal use, without payment of money or any other consideration for it, and their engaging in an act of sexual intercourse or any other act of a sexual nature is not punishable as a criminal offence, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment or up to three years' imprisonment.*

§ 178 should be considered together with § 145 (1) of the Penal Code: *Engaging in sexual intercourse or any other acts of sexual nature with a person under sixteen years of age by an adult person, unless the age difference between the adult person and the person between fourteen and sixteen years of age is not more than five years, is punishable by up to five years' imprisonment.*

¹ Paras. 71 and 73

² Paras. 72 and 73

³ Para. 74

⁴ Recommendation II-6

- 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.⁵

Follow-up actions:

Please see the previous answer.

As regards criminalisation of the distribution by children of self-generated sexual images and/or videos of *other* children, Estonia pointed out that it depends on the case.⁶

- Therefore, the Committee **requests** Estonia 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.⁷

Follow-up actions:

Please see the previous answer.

On sexual extortion of children

In a situation when the coercer already in possession of CSGSIV, attempts to procure or knowingly obtain access to further CSGSIV, Estonia would bring prosecution for offences related to child pornography, the presence of a threat not being taken into account.⁸ It would also qualify such conduct as trafficking in human beings.⁹

When the coercer, possessing the CSGSIV, threatens the child for some other kind of sexual gain, Estonia would prosecute for sexual abuse of a child in accordance with Article 18 of the Convention.¹⁰ It would also prosecute conduct relating to the possession of the initial child sexual image or video as an offence related to “child pornography” under Article 20 of the Convention¹¹ and, again, qualify such conduct as trafficking in human beings.¹²

If the offender possessing CSGSIV exploits them to gain money or other property from the child, such conduct will be qualified as extortion or aggravated extortion and human trafficking.¹³

Generic recommendations of the Committee on legal frameworks

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

- acknowledging that the term “child pornography” can be misleading and undermine the gravity of the crimes it refers to, to rather use the term “child sexual abuse material” (CSAM) for material depicting acts of sexual abuse of children and/or focusing on the genitalia of the child following the guidance set out in the “[Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#)”¹⁴ 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;¹⁵

- 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;¹⁶
- to introduce in their legal framework a definition of “CSAM” in line with its Recommendation II-1 above;¹⁷
- to contemplate appropriate legal responses to conduct involving non-visual self-generated sexual material produced by children in the context of

⁵ Recommendation II-8

⁶ Para. 82

⁷ Recommendation II-9

⁸ Para. 99

⁹ Para. 100

¹⁰ Para. 102

¹¹ Para. 103

¹² Para. 104

¹³ Para. 106

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Recommendation II-1

¹⁶ Recommendation II-2

¹⁷ Recommendation II-3

- offences covered by the Convention;¹⁸
- 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;¹⁹
 - 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 child sexual abuse material;²⁰
 - when dealing with sexual extortion cases involving children, to take into account the situation where CSGSIV are used to force, coerce or threaten the child to give additional 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;²¹
 - to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.²²

Promising practices:

¹⁸ Recommendation II-4

¹⁹ Recommendation II-7

²⁰ Recommendation II-10

²¹ Recommendation II-11

²² Recommendation II-12

III. Investigations and prosecution

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

Observations and recommendations of the Committee on investigations and prosecution specific to Estonia

On the specialisation and training of authorities

The Committee notes that Estonia has, within law enforcement, a central unit and regional subdivisions dealing with ICT facilitated offences against children, which cooperate at different levels.²³ The Forensic Science Institute is able to conduct separate complex forensic examinations.²⁴ As regards prosecution, there is a specialised unit in the Northern District Prosecutor's Office and specialised prosecutors in all other regions.²⁵

- As regards the judicial system, the Committee **invites** Estonia to establish, where appropriate, specialised units, services or persons within the courts in charge of dealing with ICT facilitated sexual offences against children.²⁶

As regards training for law enforcement agents, it is provided both by the State and by external organisations.²⁷ The trainings cover investigative processes, including interviewing techniques, where a child victim is involved.²⁸

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

Follow-up actions:

Investigators and prosecutors receive annual training on how to tackle child sexual abuse. Prosecutors specialised in sexual offences against children have mutual trainings with the police, among other topic on ICT facilitated sexual offences as well. The exact content of the training will be agreed between the parties before the training, based on data and needs. The trainers will be selected depending on the subject matter, but could be people from the courts, the Police and Border Guards own in-house staff or universities. Both prosecutors and police officers have also participated in international training on this topic.

The last such training took place in November 2024 when the Police and Border Guard hosted an online training on the prevention of child sexual abuse on dark web, for example gathering evidence from dark web, VPN, virtual machines, Arica, AI and CSAM created with AI, P2P, torrents etc.

In addition, in the period 2019-2024, the Police and Border Guard has had trainings on:

- A child-friendly approach in Barnhaus model.
- Digital developments in the field of sexual offences against children.
- Child sexual abuse online: how to prevent and combat it?
- Interviewing children who have

²³ Para. 119

²⁴ Para. 121

²⁵ Para. 126

²⁶ Recommendation III-8

²⁷ Para. 148

²⁸ Para. 152

²⁹ Recommendations III-16, III-18

experienced abuse and difficult situations.

- There is always training for new staff on the questioning of minors.
- For existing professionals, there are annual refresher courses on the interrogation of minors.

On victim and perpetrator identification

The Committee also notes that Estonia has victim identification units within law enforcement for cases of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children³⁰ and makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's international children sexual exploitation database.³¹

- The Committee **requests** Estonia to take the necessary legislative or other measures, in conformity with the

fundamental principles of their internal law, to ensure an effective investigation and prosecution of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, allowing, where appropriate, for the possibility of covert operations.³²

Follow-up actions:

§ 126² of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates the grounds for conducting a covert operation. Subsection (2) of the § 126² provides a list of criminal offences regarding which a covert operation may be conducted. All sexual offences against children are mentioned in that list. Therefore, allowing for the possibility of covert operations.

Code of Criminal Procedure in English:
https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/512122_024002/consolide

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.³³

Follow-up actions:

The Police and Border Guard Board started to have a separate unit on this issue already on 01.04.2004. Although at the beginning it was started only in the Northern region, today such a unit exists in every prefecture.

There are specialised prosecutors and they are working together with the police units working with sexual offences against children in all regions of Estonia. However, these units are understaffed.

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

- 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;³⁴

³⁰ Para. 180

³¹ Para. 186

³² Recommendation III-28

³³ Recommendation III-3, III-7

³⁴ Recommendation III-4

- 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;³⁵
- 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;³⁶
- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children have sufficient specialisation in offences involving CSGSIV;³⁷
- to ensure that training on the challenges raised by CSGSIV and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to judges;³⁸
- 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.³⁹

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

- 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;⁴⁰
- 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;⁴¹

- 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.⁴²

On victim and perpetrator identification, data retention and expeditious proceedings

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

- 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 ensure that investigations and criminal proceedings in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are treated as priority and carried out without any unjustified delay;⁴⁴
- 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;⁴⁵
- 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.⁴⁶

Promising practices:

³⁵ Recommendation III-5

³⁶ Recommendation III-9

³⁷ Recommendation III-10

³⁸ Recommendation III-19

³⁹ Recommendation III-24

⁴⁰ Recommendation III-14

⁴¹ Recommendation III-20

⁴² Recommendation III-21

⁴³ Recommendation III-25, III-29

⁴⁴ Recommendation III-30

⁴⁵ Recommendation III-31

⁴⁶ Recommendation III-32

Prosecutors specialised in sexual offences against children have mutual trainings and regular roundtables with the police. Also, over the years, the Police and Border Guard Board has stepped up cooperation and exchange of experience at international level, e.g. INTERPOL, where networking members meet 1-2 times a year.

Considering general educational system in Estonia digital competence is one of the general competences of the national curriculum for basic schools: the ability to use innovative digital technology to cope in a rapidly changing society, both when learning, acting as a citizen and communicating in communities; to find and retain information using digital tools and to assess its relevance and reliability; to participate in digital content creation, including the creation and use of texts, images and multimedia; to use appropriate digital tools and techniques to solve problems, communicate and collaborate in different digital environments; to be aware of the dangers of the digital environment and to be able to protect one's privacy, personal data and digital identity; to follow the same moral and value principles in the digital environment as in everyday life.

IV. Jurisdiction rules

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

Observations and recommendations of the Committee on jurisdiction rules specific to Estonia

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))

Estonia did not submit information as to its application of the territoriality principle when the offence has a transnational perspective and was committed in the territory of more than one State, or when its result materialised in another State.

- Therefore, the Committee **requests** Estonia 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.⁴⁷

Follow-up actions:

Penal Code, § 8. *Applicability of penal law to acts against internationally protected legal rights*

Regardless of the law of the place of commission of an act, the penal law of Estonia shall apply to any acts committed outside the territory of Estonia if punishability of the act arises from an international obligations binding on Estonia.

Since Estonia has ratified the Lanzarote Convention, the Lanzarote Convention is also an international obligation binding on Estonia. Therefore § 8 of the Penal Code applies.

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

The Committee observes that Estonia can prosecute offences committed abroad by its nationals.⁴⁸ However, it notes that Estonia does not establish jurisdiction over offences established in accordance with the Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in its territory.⁴⁹

- Accordingly, the Committee **requires** Estonia to establish jurisdiction over offences established in accordance with the Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in their territory.⁵⁰

Follow-up actions:

In these cases there are two possibilities.

One of these possibilities is § 7 (1) point 2 of the Penal Code:

§ 7. Applicability of penal law by reason of person concerned

(1) The penal law of Estonia applies to an act committed outside the territory of Estonia if such act constitutes a criminal offence pursuant to the penal law of Estonia and is punishable at the place of commission of the act, or if no penal power is applicable at the place of commission of the act and if:

1) the act is committed against a citizen of Estonia or a legal person registered in Estonia; or

2) the offender is a citizen of Estonia at the time of commission of the act or becomes a citizen of Estonia after the commission of the act, or if the offender is an alien who has

⁴⁷ Recommendation IV-1

⁴⁸ Para. 215

⁴⁹ Para. 217

⁵⁰ Recommendation IV-4

been detained in Estonia and is not extradited.

The second option is to use § 8 of the Penal Code, for the cases where the act was committed by a foreigner whose habitual residency is in Estonia, but who has not been detained nor extradited.

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))

Estonia did not submit information as to whether it subjects its jurisdiction to this condition.

- Accordingly, the Committee **requires** Estonia 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 its nationals or by a person who has his or her habitual residence in its territory.⁵¹

Follow-up actions:

No such requirements exist, so there is nothing to be removed.

The Code of Criminal Procedure, § 6 stipulates the legality principle, which means that according to this principle, the investigative authority and the prosecutor's office are obliged to initiate and conduct criminal proceedings within the limits of their competence when the elements of a crime appear. The principle of legality obliges the competent authorities to initiate criminal proceedings upon establishing the elements of a crime,

regardless of the opinion of any person or state authority. It also follows from the above that the investigative authority and the prosecutor's office do not have the competence to assess the expediency of initiating criminal proceedings in an individual case when receiving information indicating a crime. The information indicating a crime can be received in any manner, so no report from the victim is required.

§ 6. Principle of mandatory criminal proceedings

Where the facts of a criminal offence come to light – unless the circumstances provided by § 199 of this Code that preclude criminal proceedings are present, or unless there are no grounds for terminating such proceedings under subsection 2 of § 201, under §§ 202, 20³, 203¹, 204, 205, 205¹, 205², 205³ or under subsection 3 of § 435 of this Code, the investigative authority and the Prosecutor's Office are required to conduct criminal proceedings.

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 Committee observes that the Estonian national criminal law will apply to any acts committed outside the territory of Estonia regardless of the law of the territory where the offence was committed, if the act is criminalised as a result of an international obligation binding on Estonia.⁵²

There, the penal law applies to the acts of nationals committed abroad in case it is punishable at the place of the commission, except where criminalisation of the act arises from an international obligation which is binding upon Estonia.⁵³

Jurisdiction in cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs committed

⁵¹ Recommendation IV-5

⁵² Para. 226

⁵³ Para. 229

against nationals or habitual residents of a Party: the passive personality principle (Article 25(2))

The passive personality principle is applied in respect of offences committed against an Estonian national, only for offences punishable of imprisonment of at least 6 years.⁵⁴ In order to apply the passive personality principle, the Estonian criminal code requires dual criminality, except when the child is a habitual resident.⁵⁵

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

her habitual residence in its territory.⁵⁶

Follow-up actions:

Penal Code, § 8. *Applicability of penal law to acts against internationally protected legal rights*

Regardless of the law of the place of commission of an act, the penal law of Estonia shall apply to any acts committed outside the territory of Estonia if punishability of the act arises from an international obligations binding on Estonia.

Since Estonia has ratified the Lanzarote Convention, the Lanzarote Convention is also an international obligation binding on Estonia. Therefore § 8 of the Penal Code applies.

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:

⁵⁴ Para. 231

⁵⁵ Para. 232

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 Estonia

Estonia referred to the Council of the Baltic Sea with regard to its participation in an Expert group for the cooperation of children at risk, in the area of prevention, and also in the fields of investigations and prosecution.⁵⁹ In addition, INHOPE, the PROMISE Barnahus Network, WeProtect Global Alliance, INSAFE and Safer Internet Centres, as well ECPAT carry out projects in Estonia aiming to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.⁶⁰

As regards ensuring that victims in the territory of a Party other than the one where they reside may make a complaint before the competent authorities of their State of residence (Article 38(2)), Estonia did not submit any relevant information.

- Accordingly, the Committee **requires** Estonia 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.⁶¹

Follow-up actions:

According to § 195 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, every person, without restrictions, can make a criminal complaint before the competent authorities of Estonia.

Therefore, we 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 Estonia as their country of residence.

After receiving such a complaint, the Estonian authorities may initiate proceedings or to pass on the complaint to the authorities of the State in which the offence was committed, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the co-operation instruments applicable to the States in question.

For example, based on the § 473 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

§ 473. Spontaneous transmission of information

Within the framework of mutual assistance in criminal matters, a competent judicial authority may, without having been requested to do so, transmit to a foreign State and, in relation to criminal offences listed in subsection 2 of § 491 of this Code, to Eurojust, information obtained by procedural operations where such information may constitute an indication for commencing criminal proceedings in that State or may facilitate the ascertaining of the facts of a criminal offence in criminal proceedings that have already been commenced.

⁵⁹ Para. 253

⁶⁰ Para. 255

⁶¹ 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.⁶²

Follow-up actions:

The Police and Border Guard Board has stepped up cooperation and exchange of experience at international level, for example with the CEPOL, INTERPOL, UNDOC/UNICRI trainings and participation in other international training and courses offered by various international partners and cooperation projects.

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

- 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;⁶³
- to assess on a regular basis the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them;⁶⁴
- 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;⁶⁵
- 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;⁶⁶

- 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;⁶⁷
- 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;⁶⁸
- 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;⁶⁹
- to assess, develop and strengthen cooperation between them to protect and provide assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁰
- 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;⁷¹
- 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

⁶² Recommendation V-3

⁶³ Recommendation V-4

⁶⁴ Recommendation V-5

⁶⁵ Recommendation V-6

⁶⁶ Recommendation V-7

⁶⁷ Recommendation V-8

⁶⁸ Recommendation V-9

⁶⁹ Recommendation V-10

⁷⁰ Recommendation V-11

⁷¹ Recommendation V-12

purpose of protecting and providing assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷²

- 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;⁷³
- 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;⁷⁴

- 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;⁷⁵
- 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.⁷⁶

Promising practices

In cooperation with Latvian Dardedze Centre, there have been trainings in Estonia on interviewing children – the specialist from two countries learned how to delicately interview children and ask questions about issues concerning sexuality and violence.

Promising practices:

A competency model for sexuality education for all school levels (2023) has been prepared for the national curricula, the description of the topics and learning outcomes of which is based on the World Health Organization (WHO) European Sexuality Education Standards, which are based on the principles of broad-based sexuality education. According to the broad-based approach, sexuality education is holistic, providing children and young people with balanced and knowledge-based correct information about all aspects of sexuality and at the same time helping them to develop the skills to act in accordance with this information. Sexuality education is part of health education at all school levels. The focus is on issues that are important to students due to their age.

⁷² Recommendation V-13

⁷³ Recommendation V-14

⁷⁴ Recommendation V-15

⁷⁵ Recommendation V-16

⁷⁶ Recommendation V-19

VI. Assistance to victims

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

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

The Committee welcomes the fact that helplines for children in Estonia are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.⁷⁷ A special helpline is available for children located outside the national territory.⁷⁸

- The Committee **requires** Estonia to take the necessary legislative or other measures to assist child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, in the short and long term, in their physical and psycho-social recovery, these measures must take due account of the child's views, needs and concerns.⁷⁹

Follow-up actions:

In Estonia, child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse are offered help via multidisciplinary and interagency Barnahus service of the Social Insurance Board. The Barnahus (Lastemaja in Estonian) operates as a public service under the Social Insurance Board and is regulated by § 29¹ of the Child Protection Act. This legal framework defines the responsibilities and tasks of Barnahus in providing assistance and support to children of the target group. The more detailed assistance rules for the sexually abused children are set forth in the regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs (the regulation in Estonian is available here: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/128062022029>).

In the event of a sexual assault, rape, or suspicion thereof, victims can also contact a sexual violence crisis support centre. The centres are meant for everybody regardless their gender or age. The centres are open 24 hours a day and no referral is needed.

Sexual violence crisis support centres are located in 4 regional hospitals, where victim will be received by a health worker with appropriate training. Victim will be given information and told what help options are available. Centres provide medical examination and treatment and collect and preserve (up to 6 months) evidence that can later be used in the investigation. If there is a risk of pregnancy as a result of sexual violence, centres offer help in preventing pregnancy. As there is a risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases related to sexual violence, the centres advise how and when it is appropriate to test for STDs and whether it is need for preventive treatment. The centre staff will help victims contact a psychologist or other specialist. Often, victims' family members also need counselling to understand how to better support the victim. In the cases of children, sexual violence crisis support centres work in close cooperation with the Barnahus. If during the provision of the service of sexual violence crisis support to a child it becomes evident that the child had been sexually abused or such suspicion arose, the centre transmits, as soon as possible, to the Social Insurance Board the data of the child in the case in order to enable the provision of the support provided by the Barnahus. For further information please see the Articles 22 and 23 of the Victim Support Act and information available on the Social Insurance Board website: <https://sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee/en/child-and-adult-need-help/support-victims/victim-sexual-violence>

As from the 1st of April 2023, the Victim Support Act stipulates that a minor who is a

⁷⁷ Para. 280

⁷⁸ Para. 292

⁷⁹ Recommendation VI-3

victim of sexual violence has the right to receive mental health support aimed at facilitating trauma recovery. Such support is available to the minor regardless of whether the criminal proceedings were initiated and it is available until the need ceases. The purpose of this support is to promote the restoration of the victim's

psychosocial balance and to reduce the likelihood or severity of mental and behavioural disorders. It includes psychological and psychotherapeutic assistance. The respective regulation is set forth in subchapter 10 of the Victim Support Act.

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,⁸⁰
- 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.⁸¹

Promising practices:

The team members and partners of cooperation of the Estonian Barnahus have received specialised training on child online sexual abuse, with the most recent being the BaseCan training, which was offered by the Barnahus Network to its members.

<https://www.barnahus.eu/en/courses-support/basecan-introduction-to-child-abuse-and-neglect/>.

Women support centres offer help for the victims of violence against women. The service is meant for adults, but the victims are welcome to contact the support centres and stay at them with their children. The training programme for the specialists working in the women support centres includes training on sexual violence, incl. training on how to work with sexual violence victims, both adults and children.

The Police and Border Guard can refer to the appropriate services 24/7, for example Child Helpline 116 111, Barnahus etc.

⁸⁰ Recommendation VI-2

⁸¹ 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 Estonia

The Committee notes that NGOs are the most involved counterparts in the field of prevention and protection of child victims, along with different helplines.⁸² Estonia's support for the development of prevention activities by civil society takes the form of financial support and grants.⁸³ The authorities also referred to the coordination of civil projects.⁸⁴ The interaction with civil society includes preventive and awareness-raising

activities to minimise the risk of abuse that children face online,⁸⁵ as well as general prevention projects and programmes on violence against children.⁸⁶ As regards civil society involvement in victim assistance programmes, NGOs offer free psychological support to children.⁸⁷ Telephonic and electronic helplines also exist to address issues related to children's rights in general.⁸⁸

Generic recommendations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation

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

- 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;⁸⁹
- 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;⁹⁰

- to support civil society to carry out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV;⁹¹
- 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.⁹²

Promising practices

In Estonia, most of the national prevention activities are coordinated by the Strategy for Preventing Violence for 2015-2020 and its implementation plan, which is amended annually.

Estonia also organised a child rights film programme, where the issue of sexual violence against children was addressed.

⁸² Para. 308

⁸³ Para. 310

⁸⁴ Para. 314

⁸⁵ Para. 320

⁸⁶ Para. 319

⁸⁷ Para. 329

⁸⁸ Para. 328

⁸⁹ Recommendation VII-3.

⁹⁰ Recommendation VII-4.

⁹¹ Recommendation VII-5.

⁹² Recommendations VII-6, VII-7.

Promising practices:

In November 2023, Estonian children and young people also submitted their report on the situation of the rights of the child to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Children called to review and update school curricula and to listen children's concerns more and to take their concerns seriously. Children also stressed the need of involvement of children in decision-making. According to children adults must ask children more often for their opinion on everything that concerns them. Even very young children need to be asked what they think. This must be done in a way that suits them. Children proposed that even in kindergarten and primary school, attention should be given to the prevention of bullying and violence, and children should be taught to be caring and friendly in their behaviour and communication. This will make it easier to spot bullies and those who really need help, and to report them.

For the Ministry of Social Affairs, one of the most important cooperations with civil society in keeping children safe online is the Safer Internet Centre in Estonia established under the Estonian Union of Child Welfare (Lastekaitse Liit), a NGO. The centre works together with multiple stakeholders to promote safe and smart internet use among the wider public (teachers, children, parents etc). **The project's mission is a smarter Internet use by children and their parents and the prevention of the online distribution of child sexual abuse material.**

The project is co-financed 50% by the the European Commission. The project includes:

- training sessions and seminars for children, parents, teachers and social workers, and awareness-raising events for the general public;
- the drafting of training and awareness-raising materials for children, teachers and parents;
- creative competitions for children and students;
- assistance and counselling from the Children's Helpline 116111 www.lasteabi.ee children and parents on safe Internet and digital mobile devices use by telephone, MSN (user info@lasteabi.ee) and other IM solutions;
- the web-based hotline <https://vihjeliin.targaltinternetis.ee/en/>, which allows Internet users to provide information about web environments which contain material that violates children's right to sexual self-determination; notices about other materials that are inappropriate for children may also be sent to Vihjeliin;
- cooperation among different stakeholders in Estonia and Europe and participation in the INHOPE and INSAFE cooperation networks.

The activities of the project since January 2019 are being implemented by four organisations:

- **Estonian Union for Child Welfare** is a coordinator of the project and contributes to awareness raising activities, coordinates youth participation and operates Estonian Hotline www.vihjeliin.ee;
- **Education and Youth Authority** and **Tallinn University of Technology** carry out awareness raising activities;
- **Estonian Social Insurance Board** (operates Child Helpline 116111) provides help and counselling for children and parents if problems emerge in the use of the Internet and digital media devices, and participates in awareness raising activities.

Furthermore, the project has a youth panel and advisory board, through which representatives of stakeholders are using their knowledge and experience to support its implementation.

Another example of the cooperation with civil society is a project "180 Degrees – New Directions in Supporting Children's Mental Health, Preventing Abuse, and Building a Network", funded under the Strategic Partnership of the Ministry of Social Affairs for the period 01.01.2023–28.02.2025 and developed by Viljandi Hospital Foundation (SA Viljandi Haigla), and the Estonian Sexual Health Association (Eesti Seksuaaltervise Liit). The goal of the project is to enhance awareness of children's and adolescents' mental health and to strengthen cooperation between treatment teams and the

community through network-based work. This aims to prevent mental health problems and abuse in children (including assisting potential offenders) and to promote children's well-being.

Project Themes:

Theme 1: Prevention of Abuse

As the result of the project:

- sexual health counsellors have been trained, and a dedicated website has been created (as part of the Estonian Sexual Health Association's website). This website offers support through anonymous individual online counselling for people who have sexual or romantic interest in children, as well as for professionals working with this target group;
- a study has been conducted to identify gaps in the knowledge of network members regarding sexual (mis)behaviour and child sexual abuse (including abuse committed by children);
- awareness-raising activities have been carried out to introduce the website and the project topic to the public.
- a foundation has been established for a study to assess the effectiveness of the intervention after the project period;
- further training for psychiatrists and psychologists is planned, including internships, international conferences, and specialized training abroad on sexual misconduct and its treatment.

Theme 2: Network-Based Work

As the result of the project:

- network meetings have been conducted by a multidisciplinary team (a treatment team in cooperation with local government specialists working with children and community members) to identify support options for children who have experienced mental or sexual abuse;
- foundation has been established for a study to develop a networking strategy, which will define approaches for assisting mentally or sexually abused children and preventing repeat cases.

Women support centres offer help for the victims of violence against women. The service is funded by the state but provided by the NGOs. The service is available 24/7 and is free of charge in every county of Estonia. The service includes safe temporary accommodation for a victim and their children. Some women support centres are also doing preventative work and go to local schools and youth centres to talk about different forms of violence, incl. sexual violence against children.

Ministry of Education and Research is collaborating with researchers from the University of Tartu, who have prepared thematic teaching materials and conducted in-service training for teachers. Various organizations in society, e.g. Barnahus (Lastemaja), the National Institute for Health Development, have added recommendations to the description of learning processes in the online environment: <https://projektid.edu.ee/site/okmv>, where learning outcomes and learning topics are written out in detail to support teachers in planning the learning process in their schools. The environment also contains examples of teaching methods and materials, including links to free learning materials.

In 2022 ISPCAN conference was organised in Estonia. The 4-day congress „Child Protection for the Most Vulnerable Children and Families“ focused on mental health and disorders, prisoners, aspects of sexual and other abuse, domestic violence, child protection for children of incarcerated (and addicted) parents, cross-border cooperation and the implementation of digital services in the field.

The Police and Border Guard Board will carry out the EU Internal Security Fund project "Preventing child sexual abuse online" from 2023-2027. The project aims to raise awareness among children, parents and professionals working with children about sexual abuse of children on the internet;

carry out research and develop effective research-based prevention measures.

Estonian Center for Integrity in Sports has published Code of conduct for sports personnel to prevent abuse of children and young people and to resolve cases.

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

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

Generic recommendations of the 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 Estonia:

- 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;⁹³
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children about the risks that they face when generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves takes place early enough, before they reach their teens, and that it is “adapted to their evolving capacity” or, in other words, their age and degree of maturity;⁹⁴
- 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;⁹⁵
- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities;⁹⁶
- 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;⁹⁷
- to promote themselves and to encourage the information and communication of the technology sector, the media, and other professionals to raise awareness among children, their parents, persons having regular contact with children, and the general public about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken;⁹⁸
- to step-up awareness-raising for parents and persons with parental authority about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken;⁹⁹
- 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;¹⁰⁰
- 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.¹⁰¹

⁹³ Recommendation VIII-1.

⁹⁴ Recommendation VIII-2.

⁹⁵ Recommendation VIII-3.

⁹⁶ Recommendation VIII-4.

⁹⁷ Recommendation VIII-5.

⁹⁸ Recommendation VIII-6.

⁹⁹ Recommendation VIII-7.

¹⁰⁰ Recommendation VIII-8.

¹⁰¹ Recommendation VIII-9.

Promising practices:

The Safer Internet Centre in Estonia has made it their goal to make children, parents and teachers to be smarter and safer on the internet and to prevent the distribution of CSAM on the internet. They partner with other local and international organisations in order to achieve these goals. A few examples of their activities:

- webinars for parents: "What to know when your child starts using a smart device"; "Sexting and other threats on the internet: what is not okay"; "How are we on the internet? Really." etc
- They have a popular series of cartoons (Netilambad - Internet Sheep) meant for children on different topics. An example concerning CSAM is an episode called "Kasukata" ("Furless"): [Netilambad - Laps internetis](#)
- They issue many informational materials for schools, kindergartens, families. They publish articles, podcasts, arrange competitions and testing events.
- They run multiple websites for different age-groups on the topics of safety on the internet ([Laps internetis](#); [noor.targaltinternetis.ee/en/](#); [For parents - Targalt Internetis](#); [For teachers - Targalt Internetis](#));
- the Child Helpline 116111 is a valuable source of help for children, youth, parents, teachers, specialist working with children etc.

The Estonian Barnahus engages in various prevention activities related to child sexual abuse. These include training sessions for specialists, communication activities (articles, media, etc), awareness-raising campaigns, and educational workshops and presentations in schools and kindergartens. The Barnahus also collaborates with a wide range of professionals and institutions to promote child safety and well-being.

The Children's Helpline website, [lasteabi.ee](#), provides a collection of various resources for children, parents, and professionals. These materials address children's need for help, offer supportive tools, and guide professionals in reporting concerns about a child in need.

The Social Insurance Board has participated in an awareness raising campaign "[Safe Nightlife](#)". It is targeted at adults, but it also affects youngsters. The aim of the campaign is to provide knowledge about sexual harassment and on where to get help if needed. Campaign addresses the bystanders to react and not to tolerate sexual harassment.

According to the Ministry of Education and Research the goal of health education is to support the development of students' social and emotional skills by learning to know themselves, to responsibly shape their relationships, to be health-conscious, honest, caring, and fair. The Education and Youth Board has opened a portal [Teeviit](#), which contains various content articles on the topic of sexual and intimate partner violence. There are also carried out activities aimed at young people and specialists working with young people:

1. For example, podcasts for young people, which, among other things, deal with the topic of sexual education, youth information basic knowledge training for youth workers.
2. Various materials have also been prepared that help specialists working with young people to address the topic of sexual education, for example youth information workshops (including "How to prevent violence?", "Sexual health", "Consent is sexy").

On 18th of November 2024 "Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse" the Police and Border Guard held a seminar on a hybrid format, targeting professionals in contact with children, and was addressed in the broadest sense - teachers, coaches, child protection workers in local authorities, youth workers, district police officers, trainers, health promoters, etc. A major part of the seminar was devoted to presenting the results of a major study commissioned

from research company Emor as part of this project. Speakers included an online police officer from the Police and Border Guard Board, who talked about what they face in their work; the telecommunications company Telia, who talked about what they, as a technology company, are doing to prevent abuse and what everyone can do to protect themselves and their children proactively. The Child Protection Association also gave a brief overview of the hotline's work and statistics.

There is also web police officers. The purpose of the web police is to give advice. Everybody, including children, can turn to the web police, if they:

- would like advice from the police;
- have questions about the law;
- would like to send in a tip or information;
- suspect that someone is impersonating you online;
- are the victim of bullying/harassment;
- would like to report sexual or other abuse.

'Vihjeliin' (www.vihjeliin.ee) is a free online service of the Estonian Union for Child Welfare which enables Internet users to provide information about material being distributed online which depicts illegal content – the sexual abuse or exploitation of minors and child trafficking. The Estonian Union for Child Welfare works closely with other national organisations, including law enforcement authorities, Internet service providers and non-profit organisations, and such international networks as INSAFE and INHOPE.

IX. Education for children

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

Generic recommendations of the Committee on education for children

- The Committee **requires** all Parties, including Estonia, 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.¹⁰²

Follow-up actions:

Sexual education is a mandatory subject in the national curriculum for basic and upper secondary schools with established learning outcomes. Excerpts from the subjects:

Grade 1: Me and us – values friendship, development of communication skills; Me and health – values a healthy lifestyle

Grade 2: Healthy lifestyle; Puberty and physical changes; Safety and risk behavior; Illnesses and first aid; Communication;

Grade 3: The human life span and the place of puberty in it; The person and the group; Safety and risk behavior; The human self and changes in puberty; Health; Relationships and sexuality

Upper secondary school. Family education: Permanent relationship; Marriage; Home and everyday life; Family in a person's life.

The national curriculum includes a list of knowledge, skills, attitudes and learning outcomes by school level, on the basis of which schools prepare their curriculum. School curricula specify the subject content and learning outcomes by grade. Working groups of the Ministry of Education and Research prepared descriptions of learning processes that support schools and teachers, which also include examples of open learning methods, learning materials,

assessment and integration by topic. The topic of sexual education is covered in educational literature. In addition, thematic learning materials have been prepared: Handbook on the prevention of dating and sexual violence among young people for basic schools (2021) and upper secondary schools (2022), and a handbook for teachers on Healthy and safe relationships (2016).

Prevention of dating violence. Teacher's material:

https://sisu.ut.ee/sites/default/files/suk/files/3_kohtinguvv_a4_6petaja_veeb.pdf

(authors Kai Part, Merike Kull, Tiivi Pihla), which are available for free in the opi environment.

Sexual education. 2nd and 3rd grade. Teacher's book. National Institute for Health Development, University of Tartu Sexual Health Research Center, 2021. Freely available online at <https://www.tai.ee/et/valjaanded/seksuaalikasvatuse-ii-ja-iii-kooliaste-0>.

Healthy and safe relationships. Prevention of dating violence. Basic school and upper secondary school. University of Tartu Sexual Health Research Center. Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Estonia, 2019 (based on material compiled in 2016). Freely available online at OPIQ environment at <https://www.opiq.ee/Kit/Details/394>

In cooperation with the Estonian Institute for Health Development and the Ministry of the Interior, the University of Tartu, funded by the Estonian Institute for Health Development (within the framework of the strategic partnership project), has conducted project-based training on the

¹⁰² Recommendation IX-3.

following topics:

- Sexual education in basic schools - basic course.
- Healthy and safe relationships. Prevention of dating violence.

Teachers working in both general education schools and vocational education institutions have been invited to the trainings.

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

- to address in educational contexts the issue of the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV;¹⁰³
- 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);¹⁰⁴

- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes;¹⁰⁵
- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities;¹⁰⁶
- 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;¹⁰⁷
- 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;¹⁰⁸
- 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.¹⁰⁹

Promising practices:

The Safer Internet Centre has many materials for schools and teachers. For teachers - Targalt Internetis: teaching materials, trainings, lesson plans, information on cyberbullying etc.

¹⁰³ Recommendation IX-1.

¹⁰⁴ Recommendation IX-2.

¹⁰⁵ Recommendation IX-4.

¹⁰⁶ Recommendation IX-5.

¹⁰⁷ Recommendation IX-6.

¹⁰⁸ Recommendation IX-7.

¹⁰⁹ 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. However, they may not be adequately equipped to inform children about their rights, to detect situations where a child is at risk of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse and to respond appropriately. It is therefore of crucial importance that they are well informed about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, both during their education and continuously during their careers, to enable them to adapt to emerging trends and risks in the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs.

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

The Committee notes that in Estonia, education on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is provided to professionals who already work with children under the form of continuous training.¹¹⁰ Since 2012, the National Institute of Health offers a variety of trainings to child protection workers as well as specialists working with children (including pre-school teachers and teachers), which cover the topics of child sexual development, sexual education and ways of getting support.¹¹¹

The Committee **requires** Estonia:

- to ensure that teaching or training on the rights of children and their protection for persons who have regular contacts with children (i.e. in the education, health and social protection sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities) is not optional;¹¹²

Follow-up actions:

According to the Child Protection Act, all child protection officials must have professional qualification and higher education. Child protection officials shall acquire the profession of a social worker with specialisation in child protection no later than within two years after starting service as a child protection official.

The school principal is responsible for the employment of teachers. The principal is responsible, within the limits of his or her competence, for the organisation and effectiveness of teaching and educational activities and other activities carried out at the school, and for the general condition and development of the school. (Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act. (2024) Section 3. School management. § 71. Principal)

Teachers are hired by the school principal, who is responsible for ensuring that a competent pedagogue works as a teacher. The qualification requirements for teachers have been established by a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research and described in the professional standard (level 7): § 3. Qualification requirements for teachers. The qualification requirements for a basic school and upper secondary school teacher are a master's degree or equivalent qualification and a teaching profession and proficiency in Estonian in accordance with the requirements set out in the Language Act and legislation issued on the basis of the Language Act. [RT I, 05.07.2022, 1 - entry into force 08.07.2022]

Also, the level of the professional standard

¹¹⁰ Para. 416

¹¹¹ Para. 419

¹¹² Recommendation X-4

for coaches is 6. At the same time, the Professional Council has approved the code of ethics for coaches.

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts with children are equipped to identify any situation of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:
 - in the education sector
 - in the health sector
 - in the social protection sector
 - in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities;¹¹³

Follow-up actions:

The Social Insurance Board has conducted training sessions across Estonia for professionals working with children (teachers, educational support specialists, sports organization and hobby group instructors, coaches, youth workers, police officers, healthcare and victim support workers) on recognizing children in need and at risk. Starting in 2025, a free online course titled "Recognizing and Assisting a Child in Need" has been developed. This course helps participants understand the principles of ensuring children's rights and well-being, how to identify and support a child in need, use tools for assessing and reporting a child's need for assistance, prevent maltreatment, and recognize different types of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual abuse, and neglect).

The Children's Helpline website, lasteabi.ee, provides a collection of various resources for children, parents, and professionals. These materials address children's need for help, offer supportive tools, and guide professionals in reporting concerns about a child in need.

The Social Insurance Board also provides trainings on the Sensoa flag system designed for professionals working with children and young people (aged 0-18) across various fields (child protection, substitute care, education, youth work,

health, police, sports, etc.) to assess whether children's or young people's sexual behaviour is natural, inappropriate, or unacceptable. The flag system encourages open discussions on the topic with children and young people, colleagues, management, and cooperation partners. It also supports parents and is suitable for use in children's and young people's sexual education.

In addition and as mentioned above, the various prevention activities by the Estonian Barnahus include various training sessions for specialists, communication activities (articles, media, etc), awareness-raising campaigns, and educational workshops and presentations in schools and kindergartens. The Barnahus also collaborates with a wide range of professionals and institutions to promote child safety and well-being.

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts with children are informed of the possibility for them to report to the services responsible for child protection any situation where they have "reasonable grounds" for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:
 - in the education sector
 - in the health sector
 - in the social protection sector
 - in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities.¹¹⁴

Follow-up actions:

According to the Estonian Child Protection Act, everybody has an obligation to report on a child in need (a child whose well-being is threatened or in the case of whom doubt has arisen concerning his or her abuse, neglect or any other situation violating the rights of the child and a child whose behaviour threatens his or her well-being or the well-being of other persons) and at risk (a child who is in a situation which endangers his or her life or health and a

¹¹³ Recommendation X-5

¹¹⁴ Recommendation X-6

child who endangers his or her life or health or that of the others through his or her behaviour). In addition, as from the start of 2025 the Child Protection Act sets forth an enhanced obligation to report on a child in need for persons working with children. Such persons include teachers or support specialists in pre-primary, basic, secondary, vocational, or hobby education, childcare providers working in a childcare institution,

employees of a child welfare institution, youth workers, coaches or instructors working with children, healthcare workers, police officers and victim support workers. The Social Insurance Board has created special online forms for the submission of such reports available on lasteabi.ee website together with supporting materials for recognising a child in need and FAQs.

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

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

- 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;¹¹⁵
- 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.¹¹⁶

Promising practices

In Estonia, teachers receive trainings to implement the evidence-based programme “Expect Respect: A toolkit for addressing teenage relationship abuse”.

Promising practices:

As mentioned above, the various prevention activities by the Estonian Barnahus include training sessions for specialists, communication activities (articles, media, etc), awareness-raising campaigns, and educational workshops and presentations in schools and kindergartens. The Barnahus also collaborates with a wide range of professionals and institutions to promote child safety and well-being.

The Social Insurance Board also provides trainings on the Sensoa flag system designed for professionals working with children and young people (aged 0-18) across various fields (child protection, substitute care, education, youth work, health, police, sports, etc.) to assess whether children's or young people's sexual behaviour is natural, inappropriate, or unacceptable. The flag system encourages open discussions on the topic with children and young people, colleagues, management, and cooperation partners. It also supports parents and is suitable for use in children's and young people's sexual education. <https://www.sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee/sensoa-lipususteen>

¹¹⁵ Recommendation X-2.

¹¹⁶ 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 Estonia

The Committee notes that Estonia provided information on research undertaken on the issues raised by CSGSIV in general,¹¹⁷ which was included in research covering several broader topics, such as sexual abuse.¹¹⁸ Estonia has also informed of its participation for one or several years in the EU Kids Online research.¹¹⁹ A Study on Child and Youth Sexual Abuse Prevalence and a Study of Attitudes and Experiences of Sexual Abuse of Children and Young People included information on the proportion of children whose self-generated sexual images/videos have been shared online, as well as on the psychological well-being of

the children who participated in the survey at the time it was completed.¹²⁰ The Estonian State authorities collaborate with universities and academia for the purpose of undertaking research projects addressing the issues raised by CSGSIV. In some cases, they support research by providing financial support. For instance, the Ministry of Justice commissioned a study on the prevalence of sexual abuse of children and young people, which was conducted by the Centre for Applied Social Research of the University of Tartu in cooperation with the Institute of Social Sciences.¹²¹

Generic recommendations of the Committee on research

- The Committee **invites** all Parties: 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.¹²²
- 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;¹²³
- 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.¹²⁴

Promising practices:

The 5-year-old child development assessment tool (LAHE) will be ready in 2024 and is interactive and available to kindergartens. The LAHE user manual can be found at: <https://projektid.edu.ee/display/THO/Viieaasaa+lapse+arengu+hindamise+e-vahend>

A seminar introducing the assessment tool has been held and its recording is currently available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yiibP5nm5Q>

The use of the assessment tool is voluntary for kindergartens.

¹¹⁷ Para. 437

¹¹⁸ Para. 438

¹¹⁹ Para. 440

¹²⁰ Para. 441

¹²¹ Para. 448

¹²² Recommendation XI-4

¹²³ Recommendation XI-2

¹²⁴ Recommendation XI-3

In November, Kantar Emor and the police collaborated on a study entitled "Children's internet use and ways to prevent child sexual abuse on the internet". The survey was conducted among children aged 6-13 and their parents. The study consists of three parts: theoretical background and practice in other countries; results of a survey of parents; a qualitative study of children, available here: <https://www.kantaremor.ee/blogi/voimalike-ohlude-eest-veebis-aitab-lapsi-kaitsta-usalduslik-suhe-lapsevanemaga/>