



## FACTSHEET – GEORGIA

Lanzarote Committee 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 Georgia in March 2025 displayed in orange and blue text boxes.

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## I. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

## II. Legal 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 Georgia

#### General remarks

The Committee notes that within Georgia's legislative framework, the term "child pornography" is used as defined within Article 20(2) of the Convention.<sup>1</sup>

To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee invites Georgia:

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

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

The Committee observes that the production of sexually explicit images by children themselves, and the possession of such images by children is criminalised in Georgia.<sup>4</sup> The Committee however notes that the majority of Parties do not prosecute such conduct as they may subject the criminalisation to other conditions (e.g. the context of the possession, the legal age for sexual activities, etc). On this, Georgia pointed at the age of criminal responsibility, which is 14 years

old, below which children cannot be held criminally liable for the production and possession of CSGSIV.<sup>5</sup> However, The Committee highlights that reliance upon the age of criminal responsibility alone to exclude criminal responsibility does not correspond to a situation of full compliance with paragraphs 3-6 of the 2019 Opinion, since older children (those above the age of criminal responsibility) cannot avail themselves of this exemption.<sup>6</sup>

Georgia also noted that the production and possession of self-generated material were not criminalised when the child(ren) in question have reached the legal age for sexual activities. However, the Committee underlines that relying on the age of sexual consent alone, to exclude criminal responsibility for the scenarios listed in paragraphs 3-6 of the 2019 Opinion, is insufficient as, in such cases, younger children may not be covered by the exemption from criminal responsibility.<sup>7</sup>

The Committee requests that Georgia ensures that a child will not be prosecuted when he/she possesses:

- 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

<sup>1</sup> Para. 49.

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Paras. 67, 68.

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

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

<sup>7</sup> Para. 73.

without actively asking for them.<sup>8</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The offences provided for in Articles 255 and 255<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code of Georgia correspond to the offences related to child pornography specified in Part 1 of Article 20 of the Lanzarote Convention. Accordingly, a) audio/video material of sexual content generated/created by a child himself/herself, in which this child himself/herself is depicted; b) audio/video material of sexual content generated/created by a child himself/herself, in which another child is depicted with the consent of this child, also does not constitute an offence.

As for the creation of audio/video material of sexual content generated/created by a child, on which another child is depicted without the child's consent, if the creation of such material is not aimed at its sale or distribution, it also does not constitute an offence provided for in Article 255 of the Criminal Code.

#### Sharing own self-generated material and other children's self-generated material

The Committee observes that children are potentially criminally liable for the distribution or transmission of their own CSGSIV in Georgia.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Georgia has rules that lead to the criminalisation of the distribution by children of CSGSIV of other children.<sup>10</sup>

The Committee requests that Georgia ensures that:

- a child will not be prosecuted for sharing his/her sexual images and/or videos with another child when such sharing is voluntary, consensual, and intended solely for their own private use.<sup>11</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

If sexually explicit audio/video material depicting a child is shared with another child voluntarily and by mutual consent, this act is not considered child pornography under the Criminal Code of Georgia and is therefore not a crime. If audio/video material of sexual content is distributed among minors with their consent, they will not be held liable for these crimes either.

- the distribution or transmission by children of self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos of other children is prosecuted as a last resort when such images and/or videos qualify as “child pornography” in accordance with Article 20(2) of the Convention.<sup>12</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

If audio/video material of sexual content, after having been obtained/produced with consent, is shared and distributed to other persons without the consent of the person, this may be considered an act under Article 157<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code - invasion of privacy, and not a crime related to child pornography.

Also, article 8 of the Juvenile Justice code regulates the prioritization of the most lenient remedy and alternative measure against a minor.

Article 8 – Priority of applying the most lenient remedies and alternative measures

1. In juvenile justice procedure, priority shall be given to the most lenient treatment for achieving the purposes of the Criminal Code of Georgia, the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia, the Code of Administrative Offences of Georgia, the Imprisonment Code

<sup>8</sup> Recommendation II-6.

<sup>9</sup> Para. 78.

<sup>10</sup> Para. 82.

<sup>11</sup> Recommendation II-8.

<sup>12</sup> Recommendation II-9.

of Georgia and this Code.

2. In the first place, the possibility of diversion of a minor or the application of a restorative justice measure shall be considered, and it shall be evaluated whether such diversion or such measure will serve the goals of the re-socialisation and rehabilitation of the minor and the prevention of new crimes better than the imposition of criminal liability and punishment.

3. Any measure applied to a minor instead of court proceedings shall contribute to the protection of the rights and legal guarantees of the minor.

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

In Georgia, in cases where the sexual extortion is intended to procure additional sexual images or videos, prosecutions would only be brought for offences related to child pornography, the presence of a threat not being taken into account.<sup>13</sup>

When it is intended to procure other sexual favours from the child depicted in the images/videos or from other children, Georgia reported that it would prosecute for sexual abuse of a child in accordance with Article 18 of the Convention, for offences related to child

prostitution and to participation in pornographic performances.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Georgia also prosecutes conduct relating to the possession of the initial child sexual image or video as an offence related to “child pornography” under Article 20.<sup>15</sup>

In the case where it is intended to procure a financial gain, or other property from the child, Georgia indicated that the conduct would be qualified as extortion or aggravated extortion, as well as child pornography.<sup>16</sup>

Georgia did not submit information as to whether it would prosecute extortion intended to procure any other gain (such as contacts of peers for their sexual solicitation).

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

- 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.<sup>17</sup>
- to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Para. 99.

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

<sup>15</sup> Para. 103.

<sup>16</sup> Para. 106.

<sup>17</sup> Recommendation II-11.

<sup>18</sup> Recommendation II-12.

## Generic recommendations of the Committee on legal frameworks

The Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to introduce explicit references in its respective legal frameworks to conduct concerning CSGSIV, identifying the circumstances when children should not be held criminally liable and when they should be prosecuted only as a last resort.<sup>19</sup>
- 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.<sup>20</sup>
- to adopt legislative or other measures which promote as a priority educational and other measures that will aim to support children in safely exploring their sexual development while understanding and avoiding risks deriving from the production and possession of CSGSIV.<sup>21</sup>
- to consider criminalising the offence of "grooming" (solicitation of children for sexual purposes), even when it does not lead to a face-to-face meeting or producing child sexual abuse material.<sup>22</sup>

**Promising practices:** to consider criminalising the offence of "grooming" (solicitation of children for sexual purposes), even when it does not lead to a face-to-face meeting or producing child sexual abuse material.

Article 255<sup>2</sup> of the Criminal Code of Georgia declares it punishable to offer a meeting to a minor for sexual purposes (even when it does not lead to a face-to-face meeting or producing child sexual abuse material).

Article 255<sup>2</sup> – Offering a meeting of a sexual character to a minor

1. The offer of a meeting knowingly made by an adult to a person under 16 years of age by using information and communication technologies for the purpose of committing the offence defined in Article 140 (Penetration of a sexual nature into the body of a person below 16 years of age) , where the offer was followed by actions directed towards the holding of such a meeting, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of two to six years.

2. The offer of a meeting knowingly made by an adult to a person under 18 years of age by using information and communication technologies for the purpose of committing the offence defined in Article 255(5) (Article 255 – Illegal making or sale of a pornographic work or other items) of this Code, where the offer was followed by actions directed towards the holding of such a meeting, –shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of three to eight years

Under the first part of Article 255<sup>2</sup>, it is punishable to offer a meeting to a person under 16 using information and communication technologies in order to commit a crime against him/her under Article 140 of the code. Article 140 of the code, on the other hand, declares as punishable “penetration of a sexual nature into the body of a person below 16 years of age, committed knowingly by an adult.”

As for Article 255<sup>2</sup> (2), according to it, it is punishable for an adult who has previously reached

<sup>19</sup> Recommendation II-2.

<sup>20</sup> Recommendation II-4.

<sup>21</sup> Recommendation II-7.

<sup>22</sup> Recommendation II-10.

the age of eighteen to offer a meeting using information and communication technologies to him/her for the purpose of committing a crime under Article 255(5) of this code. Article 255(5) itself declares as punishable "the manufacture or sale of a pornographic work containing the image of knowingly a minor".

Thus, the legislation of Georgia provides for criminal liability for "grooming".

### 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 Georgia

The Committee observes that Georgia's investigation and prosecution services are already in line with some of its recommendations as it has a specialised unit dealing with ICT facilitated offences against children within law enforcement.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Georgia has indicated that its specialised investigative unit called the Special Sub-unit for Computer-Digital Forensics within the Forensics-Criminalistics Main Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is able to conduct separate complex forensic examinations as one of its main capacities.<sup>24</sup>

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

- requires Georgia to ensure training on sexual offences against children to all law enforcement agents who are likely to come into contact with such cases, including front desk officers, rather than reserving it to specialised units.<sup>25</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

In order to conduct justice effectively and in a child-oriented way, the employees that are allowed to work on juvenile crimes have to be specialized in juvenile justice. LEPL – Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia conducts training of the employees according to a pre-determined study program, which includes topics on legal procedure and investigation of crimes

committed by/against minors. The specialization program is carried out permanently.

The Human Rights Protection Department at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia closely cooperates with the Academy in regards to enhancing qualifications of police officers.

Since September 2023 the procedure for organizing qualification training courses of investigators within the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia has been approved, in accordance with which, the Human Rights Protection Department and the Academy - at the base of the Academy - take active measures to enhance investigators' qualifications. Qualification enhancement courses include prioritized topics, such as "Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Sex Crime Investigations, and Sexual Harassment."

Apart from courses organized at the Academy, with the involvement of Human Rights Protection Department, numerous trainings and workshops have been held for police officers in regions of Georgia about relevant topics, including, theoretical and practical aspects of sex crime investigations.

Also, police officers of Central Criminal Police Department, namely, employees of

<sup>23</sup> Para. 115.

<sup>24</sup> Para. 121.

<sup>25</sup> Recommendation III-12.

the Cyber Crime Division and the Division on Combating Trafficking and Illegal Migration are actively participating in both local and international, online and offline workshops, seminars and trainings.

With the participation of employees of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, 8 training activities were carried out on the topic of online sexual abuse in 2022-2024, within the framework of which 22 prosecutors were trained.

2 training activities were carried out in 2022:

- Training - "Fighting Child Exploitation - The Perspective of Law Enforcement Agencies";
- USA, Dallas - "34th Annual Conference on Crimes against Children".

In 2023, 3 training activities were carried out:

- USA, Dallas - "35th Annual Conference on Crimes against Children".

In addition to the above, in 2023, 2 training activities were implemented within the framework of cooperation with the Council of Europe project "Ensuring Child-Friendly Justice in Georgia: Protecting and Preventing Children from Violence, Including in the Digital Environment": Training of Trainers - on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA), which was provided for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials to deepen their knowledge in three main areas: practical investigation, reactive investigation and protection of child victims or witnesses in criminal proceedings; Training - on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA), which was held for law enforcement officials and discussed substantive and procedural criminal law, practical and reactive

investigation.

In 2024, 3 training activities were implemented for prosecutors:

- France, Strasbourg - Regional workshop on the analysis of national gaps in the legal and policy framework to combat OCSEA;
- Austria, Vienna, International Conference and Annual Event on Emerging Technologies: Threats and Opportunities for Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, held within the framework of the OCSEA program;
- Conference on "Missing and Sexually Exploited Children", organized by the European Union (EU) and Missing Children Europe;

Government of Georgia pays particular attention to the capacity development for the officials working on Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) issues. The line ministries closely cooperate with each other as well as US Embassy to Georgia/INL, NGOs and international organizations (EU, IOM, ICMPD, OSCE/ODIHR) to identify training needs on THB issues. The cooperation foresees well-structured training planning including analyzing the needs for trainings, identification of the topic, relevant target group, cooperation and communication with relevant agencies and trainers, developing training modules/curriculum/agenda and implementing such trainings on later stage.

In the reporting period (2022-2024) THB personnel participated in 77 trainings/workshops/courses related to child sexual exploitations, including front desk officers (border police, patrol police, community officers etc.).

- requests Georgia to include ICT facilitated sexual offences against children in

training of law enforcement agents who are likely to come into contact with such cases.<sup>26</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

In the reporting period a total of 22 training activities on ICT facilitated THB was conducted with participation of law enforcement personnel. Training topics included victim-oriented approach in investigation of technology facilitated sexual exploitation; technology facilitated recruitment of THB victims; Best practice of investigating cases of child exploitation taking into account a multidisciplinary approach, etc.

In order to enhance the qualifications of investigators who handle investigation of crimes committed using ICT's, a study course on "Investigation of cybercrimes, collection and processing, and cybersecurity" was established within the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

The Committee notes that Georgia has training programmes provided by State authorities in place for prosecutors and judges on aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.<sup>27</sup>

- Nonetheless, the Committee requests Georgia to ensure that training on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children is available for prosecutors and judges who are or will be working on these issues.<sup>28</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Please see previous answers.

In the reporting period 101 prosecutors were

trained on the topics related to ICT facilitated THB mentioned above.

Furthermore, the High School of Justice is an educational institution, which ensures professional trainings for candidate judges, judges, assistants to judges and other court staff. Institution plans and conducts training courses including on THB. Since 2022, a total of 5 courses were held on THB related issues.

In terms of victim identification, Georgia indicated it has access to the US-based National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) database<sup>29</sup> (designed to assist investigators in the automated categorisation of media-evidence files and in the victim identification process).<sup>30</sup> However, the Committee notes that Georgia does not have a victim identification unit within law enforcement for cases of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children.<sup>31</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee requires Georgia to set up victim identification function within law enforcement in charge of combating ICT facilitated sexual offences against children.<sup>32</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Ministry of Internal Affairs has a key role to proactively identify the THB cases. Within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the Division for Fight against Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration was established in the Central Criminal Police Department (CCPD), in 2005. The main purpose of the Division is to fight against human trafficking, including ICT facilitated

<sup>26</sup> Recommendation III-13.

<sup>27</sup> Paras. 156, 157, 167.

<sup>28</sup> Recommendations III-16 and III-18.

<sup>29</sup> National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. See

further <http://www.missingkids.org/home>.

<sup>30</sup> Para. 183.

<sup>31</sup> Para. 180.

<sup>32</sup> Recommendation III-23.

sexual exploitation. Since 2014 special Task Force consisted of highly qualified investigators and prosecutors has been operating in Adjara Region. Task Force also proactively checks the risk places as well as online websites to identify THB cases. Law enforcements are following the detailed instructions provided under National Referral Mechanism on Human Trafficking (Referral Mechanism). The Referral Mechanism was adopted upon a Governmental Decree N284 on Identification of a Victim and Granting a Status of Trafficking in Persons in 2014 and foresees the detailed instructions how to identify the potential victim, to refer to the relevant institution and to provide the victim with assistance in accordance with his/her individual necessity. Apart from the Referral Mechanism, investigators and prosecutors use special guidelines and S.O.Ps to identify the victims of THB, including sexual exploitation.

Criminal Police Department, apart from combating cyber crime, is also actively investigating crimes committed against minors online, including, child pornography and sexual abuse.

In order to identify an minor victim, various complex investigative and operative actions are carried out.

It should be noted that the Central Criminal Police Department has an access to the platform of an international organization - NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN (NCMEC). The organization ensures that Central Criminal Police Department receives files in various formats which contain pornographic material potentially depicting minors and sexual abuse. In addition, Central Criminal Police Department has an access to Interpol ICSE (International Database of Child Sexual

Exploitation) databases.

Due to the sensitive nature of such crimes and the importance for public safety, such information is investigated and the persons who have uploaded the material/committed the crime are identified. In this regard, criminal cases are still being actively investigated in the Division of Cyber Crime.

- The Committee also requests Georgia to take the necessary legislative or other measures, in conformity with the fundamental principles of its internal law, to ensure an effective investigation and prosecution of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, allowing, where appropriate, for the possibility of covert operations.<sup>33</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The Strategy of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia for 2022-2027 identifies the protection of children from sexual violence and exploitation as an important priority area in which the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia pursues a particularly strict policy. In investigative and prosecutorial practice, special attention is paid to the implementation of international principles and standards established by conventions. Sexual violence and exploitation of children are particularly dangerous given the development of cyberspace and the increasing accessibility of digital communication tools. From 2021, criminal cases of sexual violence against children will only be handled by prosecutors and investigators who have completed special training and have been granted specialisation in both juvenile justice and sexual offences. Crimes of sexual violence and sexual exploitation against children are constantly monitored, with attention being paid to the

<sup>33</sup> Recommendation III-28.

prompt recognition of minors as victims and the initiation of prosecutions for these crimes. In addition, statistical data on these crimes is processed, which, together with case monitoring, allows us to analyse and evaluate the existing criminal justice policy on these crimes.

Since May 1, 2024, the Human Rights Protection Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia has been operating with an expanded mandate. The Department, within the scope of competence, ensures a timely response and effectiveness of the investigation of specific criminal cases, including, crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability, domestic crime, domestic violence, violence against women, crimes committed on discriminatory grounds, human trafficking, and crimes committed by/against minors, as well as, ensuring a timely response and effective litigation on administrative proceedings related to domestic violence, discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or minors.

The Department monitors criminal cases and administrative proceedings, identifies errors or missteps of the investigations, provides relevant information, recommendations and/or consultations to investigators conducting investigation or administrative proceedings, if needed, and monitors the implementation of above-mentioned recommendations; For the purpose of implementing subsequent preventive measures, periodically analyzes the outcomes of the monitoring process, informs relevant individuals, drafts relevant legal proposals, etc. A special electronic program and a monitoring methodology have been developed to improve the monitoring process, using which the information processed in the monitoring process is systematized. This program ensures the identification of errors, trends, and existing

needs during the investigation process, in order to subsequently plan appropriate measures and activities. The Department conducts research and evidence-based analysis on different investigative actions and administrative measures, relevant legal framework and case law, in order to establish the best practice and uniform approaches within Ministry's system, developing proposals and recommendations in order to enhance the effectiveness of litigation, analyzing the results of the monitoring process and planning further activities and measures. Recommendations prepared by the Department concern relevant topics, including crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability, and crimes committed by/against minor. The Recommendations are available to the employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

As of May 1, 2024 Service of Witness and Victim's Coordinator became a structural unit of the Department. The aim of these amendments is to strengthen the Ministry's Coordinator of Witness and Victim services, ensure the effectiveness of cooperation, and develop unified approaches and standards, in order to carry out the function of supporting the victim effectively and in a result-oriented way.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia is actively working towards identifying, effectively responding to and preventing violence committed by/against minors, for which, together with specialized employees, creating a child-friendly environment is an important component. Children's rooms are already operating in several territorial bodies of MIA. In this regard, the Ministry continues active work.

Based on the specific nature of crimes committed by/against minors and child's best interests, Main Division of Juvenile Crimes was established within the Tbilisi Police

Department. The Division of Juvenile Crimes started operating in the Adjara Police Department. Divisions are staffed by specialized investigators and detectives.

Chapter XVI<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia regulates the issues of conducting covert operations. Article 143<sup>3</sup> in this chapter specifically establishes procedures for conducting covert operations. According to the first part of the mentioned article, "covert operation is carried out according to the judge's ruling". According to subparagraph "A" of Part 2 of this article, a covert investigative action may be carried out if, "an investigation has been launched and/or criminal prosecution is carried out for an intentional grave and/or especially serious crime or any of the crimes specified in the specifically listed articles and chapters of the Criminal Code of Georgia". It should be noted that the crimes of sexual abuse against minors under the legislation of Georgia belong to serious and especially serious categories of crimes, therefore, the legislation provided for the possibility of conducting covert investigative actions on such crimes.

It should also be noted that after the legislative amendments carried out in May 2022, in the Criminal Procedure Code of

Georgia, computer data-related investigative actions (Chapter XVI) shall no longer apply the restriction established for covert investigative actions, according to which a covert investigative action may be carried out if, "investigation is initiated and/or criminal prosecution is carried out for intentional grave and/or especially grave crime or any of the crimes specified in the articles of Criminal Code. Thus, unlike covert investigative actions, investigative actions related to computer data (Chapter XVI) can be carried out in criminal cases of any category of crime. As a result of the above-mentioned amendments, additional opportunities for more effective investigation of all criminal cases have emerged, where digital technologies and digital evidence are exposed.

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

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

- Mindful of the different contexts in the Parties as recalled in para. 235 of the Explanatory Report, the Committee requests those Parties that are not already doing so to ensure that law enforcement and prosecution units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are adequately financed to ensure sufficient resources, including staff,

equipment and training.<sup>34</sup>

##### Follow-up actions:

Specialized law enforcement officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, are permanently undergoing qualification enhancement trainings organised by the Ministry and in scope of the partnership with international and non-governmental organisations.

<sup>34</sup> Recommendations III-3 and III-7.

Based on the specific nature of crimes committed by/against minors and child's best interests, Main Division of Juvenile Crimes started operating within Tbilisi Police Department. Division of Juvenile Crimes started operating in the Adjara Police Department. Divisions are staffed by specialized investigators and detectives.

In regards to ICT facilitated crimes, Cyber Crime Division of the Central Criminal Police Department and cybercrime division of Tbilisi Police Department operate within the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

The Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to ensure that the capacities of any investigative unit specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children take into account evolving technologies and online behaviours and reflect current practices used by perpetrators.<sup>35</sup>
- to ensure that law enforcement units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children adequately cover and/or are specialised in offences against children involving CSGSIV.<sup>36</sup>
- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT facilitated sexual offences against children have the necessary specialisation in the intersecting areas of children's rights, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and ICT technical knowledge.<sup>37</sup>
- to ensure that units, services, or persons within courts responsible for ICT facilitated sexual offences against children have

sufficient specialisation in offences involving CSGSIV.<sup>38</sup>

- to have units, sections or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences committed by children against other children for authorities responsible for investigation and for authorities responsible for prosecution.<sup>39</sup>
- to provide specific training<sup>40</sup> on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, including when such offences involve CSGSIV, and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion to law enforcement agents who are likely to come into contact with such cases.<sup>41</sup>
- to ensure that training on the challenges raised by CSGSIV and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to prosecutors and to judges.<sup>42</sup>
- to offer joint (or "joined-up") training for professionals, and particularly law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges, involved in legal proceedings involving ICT facilitated child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, in order to ensure consistency at all stages.<sup>43</sup>
- 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.<sup>44</sup>

On measures to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution:

- The Committee requires all Parties to ensure that investigations and criminal proceedings in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are treated as priority and carried out without any unjustified delay.<sup>45</sup>

Follow-up actions:

programmes.

<sup>35</sup> Recommendation III-4.

<sup>36</sup> Recommendation III-5.

<sup>37</sup> Recommendation III-9.

<sup>38</sup> Recommendation III-10.

<sup>39</sup> Recommendation III-11.

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

<sup>41</sup> Recommendation III-14.

<sup>42</sup> Recommendations III-17 and III-19.

<sup>43</sup> Recommendation III-20.

<sup>44</sup> Recommendation III-21.

<sup>45</sup> Recommendation III-30.

Sexual offences against children are constantly monitored; careful attention is paid to the promptness of the investigation's launching, to the planning and implementation of investigative and procedural measures in a child-friendly environment, taking into account the best interests of the child. The prompt recognition of a minor as a victim and the initiation of prosecution on the basis of appropriate evidence.

Department of Human Rights Protection of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, in order to achieve goals determined by legislation of Georgia, is authorized to, within the scope of their mandate, monitor criminal and administrative proceedings.

Employees of the Department specialized in juvenile justice, monitor investigation of the criminal cases committed by/against minors on a daily basis. They constantly consult persons involved in criminal and administrative proceedings, in order to ensure coordination and referral in cases of child abuse.

Apart from monitoring, the Department conducts various activities in order to ensure that legal proceedings are tailored to children's needs, including, drafting and publishing relevant recommendations for law enforcement officers, holding meetings, cooperating with agencies and services, etc.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia is actively cooperating with the Center for Psychological and Social Services („Barnahus“) in order to assist the child and help minimize the damage that can be caused during criminal proceedings. Every investigative or procedural action in Tbilisi takes place in the Center, with exclusions determined by law. During the legal proceedings police officers use Order of the

Minister of Internal Affairs on the „Standard Operating Procedures for Investigating the Facts of Sexual Abuse Against Children“ as a guide.

Article 11 of the Juvenile Justice code deals with the inadmissibility of delaying the juvenile justice process. According to the first part of the mentioned article, "juvenile justice process should proceed without undue delay". Article 3(5) of the same code contains the definition of the term "juvenile justice process". According to the above-mentioned norm, "juvenile justice procedure– administrative offences or criminal proceedings involving minors, including investigation of crimes, criminal prosecution, court trials, enforcement of imposed sentences and other measures, and the re-socialisation and rehabilitation of minors”.

Article 76 of the Code on the Rights of the Child also regulates the priority consideration of a child's case. According to the first part of the mentioned article, "the administrative body and the court should give priority to the consideration of the petition, complaint and claim related to the child". According to Paragraph 3 of the same article, "the law establishes a priority enforcement mechanism for the decision of an administrative body or court related to a child when the best interests of the child require it."

Thus, the Georgian legislation regulates the issue of consideration of child-related cases as a priority and without undue delay.

It also invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to ensure that measures, services and technology available to those in charge of identifying child victims of ICT facilitated sexual offences are up to date, reflect current practices across Parties, including

establishing and using national child abuse material databases, and that resources are sufficiently allocated.<sup>46</sup>

- to engage in and strengthen inter-Party cooperation for the purpose of identifying child victims and perpetrators of ICT facilitated sexual offences, including, where appropriate, by providing access to each other's databases or shared databases, including those containing information on such perpetrators.<sup>47</sup>
- to take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that preservation of

specified stored computer data in connection with a specific criminal investigation or proceedings is made possible, fully upholding the rights of the parties involved.<sup>48</sup>

- to take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the investment in human, financial and physical resources is sufficient to have data generated by ICTs analysed in a timely manner so that investigations are carried out without any unjustified delay.<sup>49</sup>

Promising practices:

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<sup>46</sup> Recommendation III-24.

<sup>47</sup> Recommendations III-25, III-29.

<sup>48</sup> Recommendation III-31.

<sup>49</sup> Recommendation III-32.

#### IV. Jurisdiction rules

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

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

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

The Committee notes that Georgia has not established laws clarifying the circumstances in which its national criminal law will apply to a transnational situation following the territoriality principle or has not communicated this information to the Committee.<sup>50</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee requests Georgia 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 Georgia.<sup>51</sup>

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

According to the first part of Article 4 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, "those who committed a crime on the territory of Georgia will be held criminally liable under this code". At the same time, the code clarifies when a crime is considered to have been committed on the territory of Georgia, in particular, according to Article 4(2) of the code, "A crime shall be considered to have been committed in the territory of Georgia if it began, continued and terminated or ended in the territory of Georgia. The Code shall also apply to crimes committed on the continental shelf and in the Special

Economic Zone of Georgia." The code also establishes the issue of the application of jurisdiction over crimes committed on ships, in particular, according to Article 4(3) of the code, "those who have committed a crime on a ship that is authorized to use the state flag of Georgia or a recognisable sign, or against such a vessel, will be held criminally liable under this code, unless otherwise provided by the international treaty of Georgia. Thus, if a transnational crime started, continued, terminated or ended on the territory of Georgia, the Criminal Code of Georgia shall apply on the basis of the above norms.

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

It appears that Georgia establishes jurisdiction over offences covered by the Lanzarote Convention when committed by one of its nationals. However, the Committee observes that Georgia does not establish jurisdiction over offences established under the Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in its territory.<sup>52</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee requires Georgia to establish jurisdiction over offences established under the Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in Georgia.<sup>53</sup>

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

<sup>50</sup> Para. 214.

<sup>51</sup> Recommendation IV-1.

<sup>52</sup> Para. 217.

<sup>53</sup> Recommendation IV-4.

According to the first part of Article 5 of the Criminal Code of Georgia (CCG), : Citizens of Georgia and persons having a status of stateless person in Georgia, who have committed abroad an act under this Code, which is considered as a crime under the legislation of the state where it was committed, shall be criminally liable under the (CCG),

Citizens of Georgia and persons having a status of stateless person in Georgia who have committed abroad an act under the CCG, which is not considered as a crime under the legislation of the state where it was committed, shall be criminally liable under the CCG, provided that the act constitutes a serious or a particularly serious crime against the interests of Georgia, or if criminal liability for this crime is provided for by an international agreement of Georgia.

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))

Georgia did not provide information as to whether there is a condition requiring prosecution to be initiated only upon a report from the victim or denunciation from the State where the offence was committed.

- To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee requires Georgia to remove the requirement that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or a denunciation from the State of the place where the offence was committed for offences of sexual abuse, offences concerning child prostitution, the production of “child

pornography” and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances, when committed by one of its nationals or by a person who has his or her habitual residence in its territory.<sup>54</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Criminal Code of Georgia (CCG), Article 5 – Criminal liability for crimes committed abroad

1. Citizens of Georgia and persons having a status of stateless person in Georgia, who have committed abroad an act under this Code, which is considered as a crime under the legislation of the state where it was committed, shall be criminally liable under this Code.

2 . Citizens of Georgia and persons having a status of stateless person in Georgia who have committed abroad an act under this Code, which is not considered as a crime under the legislation of the state where it was committed, shall be criminally liable under this Code, provided that the act constitutes a serious or a particularly serious crime against the interests of Georgia, or if criminal liability for this crime is provided for by an international agreement of Georgia.

All crimes related to sexual abuse of minors, pornography and prostitution (articles 137-141, articles 253, 254, 255, 255<sup>1</sup>, 255<sup>2</sup> of CCG) belong to the category of serious and especially serious crimes. Therefore, due to this criterion, there is no legal barrier in terms of spreading responsibility for relevant crimes committed abroad.

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

<sup>54</sup> Recommendation IV-5.

The Committee notes that in Georgia the national criminal law will apply to any acts committed outside the territory of Georgia regardless of the law of the territory where the offence was committed for offences committed by a national or a stateless person (but not in the cases of persons who have their habitual residence in its territory).<sup>55</sup> However, Georgia has also indicated that if an act is not considered a crime under the legislation of the State where it was committed, but it is a crime under Georgian national legislation, a Georgian national or a person who is stateless and habitually resident in Georgia shall be liable only where the act constitutes a serious or particularly serious crime directed against the interests of Georgia, or if criminal liability for this act is prescribed by international treaties to which Georgia is a party.<sup>56</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee requires Georgia to remove the requirement for dual criminality when committed by one of its nationals, for offences of sexual abuse, offences concerning child prostitution, the production of child pornography and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances.<sup>57</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

According to the Criminal Code of Georgia, all crimes related to sexual abuse of minors, pornography and prostitution (articles 137-141, articles 253, 254, 255, 255<sup>1</sup>, 255<sup>2</sup>) belong to the category of serious and especially serious crimes. Therefore, due to this criterion, there is no legal barrier in terms of spreading responsibility for relevant crimes committed abroad.

As for "stateless person with status in

Georgia", its definition is provided in the law of Georgia "on legal status of foreigners and stateless persons". According to Article 2 subparagraph "B" of this law, stateless person is a person who is not considered a citizen by any state under its legislation.

- The Committee also invites Georgia to remove the requirement for dual criminality when committed by one of its nationals, for offences of:
  - possessing, offering, distributing, transmitting, procuring child pornography, and the fact of knowingly gaining access to child pornography through ICTs, when CSGSIV are involved,<sup>58</sup>
  - solicitation of children for sexual purposes.<sup>59</sup>

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))

Georgia did not provide information as to whether it assumes jurisdiction in such cases.

- To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee requests Parties that are not already doing so, including Georgia, to endeavour to take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish jurisdiction over any offence established under 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.<sup>60</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

See above mentioned answers.

<sup>55</sup> Para. 226.

<sup>56</sup> Para. 229.

<sup>57</sup> Recommendation IV-6.

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

<sup>59</sup> Recommendation IV-8.

<sup>60</sup> Recommendation IV-9.

Promising practices:

## 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 Georgia

The Committee observes that the WeProtect Global Alliance,<sup>61</sup> ECPAT,<sup>62</sup> and End Violence against Children<sup>63</sup> conduct cooperation projects to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Georgia.<sup>64</sup>

- To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee requires Georgia to ensure that victims of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse in matters related to CSGSIV 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.<sup>65</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Articles 4 and 5 of the Criminal Code of Georgia are in line with the Article 25 of the Lanzarote Convention on the scope of application of criminal law - jurisdiction, although Article 25, Part 9 of the Convention does not prohibit the establishment of a different rule on jurisdiction by domestic legislation. Accordingly, the author of a report of a possible crime may be both the victim and any person who has information about the crime.

### Generic recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation

- On international cooperation, the Committee requests all Parties, including Georgia to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Convention.<sup>66</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Georgia remains committed to strengthening international cooperation with all Parties to enhance the effective implementation of the Convention.

Georgia will continue to engage in

knowledge-sharing, capacity-building initiatives, and joint efforts with international partners to ensure compliance with the Convention's provisions.

The Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to assess, strengthen and develop international cooperation with other Parties to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and to provide assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>67</sup>
- to expand international cooperation with

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.weprotect.org/>

<sup>62</sup> <https://ecpat.org/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.end-violence.org/>

<sup>64</sup> Para. 255.

<sup>65</sup> Recommendation V-17.

<sup>66</sup> Recommendation V-3.

<sup>67</sup> Recommendations V-6, V-11.

countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the Convention, including for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, for the purpose of protecting and providing assistance to victims and concerning the offences established in accordance with the Convention, in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>68</sup>

- to regularly assess the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them.<sup>69</sup>
- to strengthen cooperation with relevant intergovernmental bodies and with transnational networks and other international organisations and initiatives due to their capacity to mobilisation, their worldwide scope, and their flexibility to work, for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children as well as for protecting and providing assistance to victims, in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>70</sup>
- to consider requesting the establishment of cooperation projects managed by the Council of Europe to assist them in their efforts to preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in

matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>71</sup>

- to support regional and international capacity building efforts to improve policy and operational measures including the pooling and sharing of successful education and awareness-raising tools for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>72</sup>
- to maintain and develop efforts to strengthen international cooperation with other Parties and non-Parties to the Convention, in investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Convention, in particular in the area of police cooperation, namely ensuring that their law-enforcement agencies can connect and contribute to the Europol and Interpol databases, and develop the areas of data, training, vetting, and selection, in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>73</sup>
- to integrate, where appropriate, prevention and the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV, in assistance programmes for development provided for the benefit of third States.<sup>74</sup>

### Promising practices

In Georgia, in case of requests for preservation of data sent by the national contact points of Parties to the Convention on cybercrime (ETS 185) or by the 24/7 national network established under Article 35 of this Convention, the request is recorded, and receipt is confirmed by email upon delivery/opening of the report (if requested by sender). The next step is an initial review to make sure that the conduct at stake constitutes an offence in the jurisdiction of both the requesting State and Georgia (dual criminality) for which the judicial cooperation central authority may be consulted. If approved, the relevant internet service provider (ISP) is approached and requested to preserve data, and if ISP confirms data preservation, the requesting authority will be notified accordingly. If preservation is not available, the requesting country is offered urgent mutual legal assistance procedures. Given the nature of preservation requests, they are all treated as urgent.

<sup>68</sup> Recommendations V-4, V-7, V-12, V-15.

<sup>69</sup> Recommendation V-5.

<sup>70</sup> Recommendations V-8, V-13.

<sup>71</sup> Recommendation V-9.

<sup>72</sup> Recommendation V-10.

<sup>73</sup> Recommendations V-14, V-16.

<sup>74</sup> Recommendation V-19.

Promising practices:

## VI. Assistance to victims

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

### Recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims specific to Georgia

The Committee observes that Georgia did not provide information on assistance to victims.

- Therefore, to improve the implementation of the Convention, the Committee requires Georgia 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, taking due account of the child's views, needs and concerns.<sup>75</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

To safeguard child victims of sexual violence from secondary victimization and facilitate their psycho-social recovery, the State Care Agency established the Psycho-Social Service Centre - Barnahus in Tbilisi in 2022. This center operates on the "one-window" principle, offering a safe, child-friendly environment where children receive both short-term and long-term psychological and social rehabilitation services, with their legal representatives. The center's psychologists assess children's mental and emotional well-being using research-based evaluation methods. Based on their findings, they determine the child's inclusion in crisis and therapeutic interventions and oversee the rehabilitation process (also in relation to the investigative/interrogation process). Barnahus plays a key role in preventing re-traumatization and ensuring children receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs.

To enhance immediate intervention and assistance for child victims of sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse, the State Care Agency has implemented - Children's Helpline (111). This 24/7 helpline is operational since 2020 and provides immediate assistance in cases of child abuse. It offers counseling and response, related to health, education, social and legal.

Mechanism, with a rapid response to cases of violence against children, including minors living and working on the streets is 24-Hour Emergency Response Mechanism, which launched in 2021. This is available nationwide, the response is carried out by on-duty social workers and mobile groups, even during non-working hours and weekends.

Agency for State Care and Assistance to (Statutory victims) of Trafficking in human beings (THB) continuous to provide: a) 3 Shelters and 6 crisis centers; b) Legal aid; c) Physiological and medical assistance; d) Rehabilitation and reintegration measures to the victims and e) one-off state compensation (1000 GEL) since 2006. All services are equally accessible for the adult and minor (presumed) victims of human trafficking without discrimination. All services are free of charge for beneficiaries and financed from the budget of the Agency for State Care. In the case of minor victims of violence, alternative forms of care (foster care, small

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<sup>75</sup> Recommendation VI-3.

family-type homes) are preferentially considered. When determining the place of placement of a minor, his opinion and the best interests of the child are into account.

The shelters for victims/statutory victims of THB are well equipped to receive minor victims, as well as, dependent minors (aged under 18) to the adult victim. When such a need arises, they are also entitled to receive the appropriate accommodation, age specific education and support programs tailored to their needs.

Agency for State Care has amended the internal regulations of each shelter and introduced the service of babysitter/caretaker to further enhance the protective and assisting measures for the minor beneficiaries. The shelter also assesses the psycho-social conditions of the victims and provides the services tailored to the identified needs.

Every year the relevant staff of shelters and crisis centers are trained on victim-centered and trauma-informed assistance. Furthermore, information meetings are permanently conducted throughout Georgia on risks of THB and the services available for the victims of THB, including sexual exploitation.

As mentioned already, Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Trafficking (hereinafter – State Care Agency) among other various state care services, is responsible for supporting child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, ensuring their protection, recovery, and rehabilitation. Recognizing the challenges associated with identifying and addressing cases of child sexual abuse, the State Care Agency has developed specialized guidelines and standards to equip social workers with the necessary skills and knowledge.

- Action Protocol for Cases of Child Sexual Abuse (2023) – This protocol provides clear instructions on recognizing signs of sexual abuse and responding effectively.
- Educational Materials for Social Workers – These materials include guidance on child sexual development and effective communication strategies for working with victims or children at risk of sexual violence.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Barnahus – These procedures outline the fundamental principles for responding to cases of sexual violence against minors and outline the responsibilities of investigators, prosecutors, medical and psychological experts, attorneys, social workers, psychologists, guardianship bodies, and other relevant professionals engaged in investigative/procedural actions and psycho-social rehabilitation processes.
- Since November 7, 2023 Georgia has been a member of the „PROMISE Barnahus Network” - representing a significant step forward for the country. Within this network, specialists from various fields of the Integrated Service Center for child victims of sexual violence regularly attend training sessions and continuously enhance their areas of expertise.

Through these integrated support mechanisms, the State Care Agency continues to strengthen its efforts in protecting child victims of sexual violence, ensuring their safety, recovery, and long-term well-being.

In order to ensure the effective functioning

of the Psychological and Social Service Centre special operating procedures were approved by the Order of the Prosecutor General of Georgia No. 36-g of 2 March 2022 prior to the opening of the Centre. This document serves as a guideline for prosecutors and investigators of the Prosecutor General's Office on how to conduct cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the Psychological and Social Service Centre. The target group of the Psychological and Social Service Centre are alleged victims, victims and injured children of sexual violence who have suffered or may have suffered harm as a result of the crimes provided for in Articles 137-141, 143<sup>2</sup> (if the offence provided for in this article includes coercion to provide sexual services or involvement in prostitution/pornography), Article 1441, Part 3, Subparagraph "a", Article 253, Part 5, Article 254, Parts 4 and 5, Article 255, Parts 3-7, and Articles 2551 and 255<sup>2</sup> of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia is actively cooperating with the Center for Psychological and Social Services („Barnahus“). Every investigative or procedural action in Tbilisi takes place in the Center, with exclusions determined by law.

During the legal proceedings police officers use Order of the Minister of Internal Affairs on the „Standard Operating Procedures for Investigating the Facts of Sexual Abuse Against Children“ as a guide.

It is noteworthy that in addition to the above-mentioned state agencies, the protocols/ special operating procedures are

available to all the authorities that are involved in the work of the Centre.

Taking into account the best interests of a child and the specific nature of juvenile crimes, in order to prevent violations against children during the proceedings, enhance and strengthen the services, Ministry of Internal Affairs shall issue a referral to relevant agencies. The relevant divisions of the Ministry, during the referral procedure of children, are guided by the Ordinance of the Government of Georgia №437 "Regarding the Approval of Child Protection Referral Procedures" and Ordinance of the Government of Georgia №681 "On the Approval of The Procedure for Juvenile Referral." The Ordinance №437 obliges entities to inform the law enforcement agency in case of child abuse.

Additionally, the Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to promote awareness raising or specialised training for professionals who advise children through telephone or internet helplines on ICT facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse of children – including the risks associated with CSGSIV – and how to provide appropriate support to victims and to those who wish to help them.<sup>76</sup>
- to assist child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including of offences due to the production, possession, distribution or transmission of CSGSIV in the short and long term, in their physical and psycho-social recovery, these measures must take due account of the child's views, needs and concerns.<sup>77</sup>

#### Promising practices:

<sup>76</sup> Recommendation VI-2.

<sup>77</sup> Recommendation VI-4.

## VII. Civil society involvement and cooperation

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

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

The Committee observes that civil society encompasses very different actors. While NGOs are the most involved counterparts in this field, in Georgia, schools and other educational institutions are also frequent actors.<sup>78</sup>

In terms of forms of cooperation between State authorities and civil society in prevention and assistance to victims, Georgia mentioned the training opportunities it offers to civil society actors concerning the online environment and related risks but also the opportunities it presents for children's rights.<sup>79</sup> Georgia also indicated that the State is called upon to give its expertise on specific subjects to civil society actors.<sup>80</sup> The Committee recognises Georgia's efforts to develop and support different activities aimed at raising the awareness of not only children but also adults, such as parents, educators, doctors and social workers, about the existing risks and dangers of ICTs for children.<sup>81</sup>

- To improve the implementation of the Convention, the Committee requests Georgia to encourage the financing of projects and programmes carried out by civil society aiming to prevent and protect children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.<sup>82</sup>

Follow-up actions:

In terms of partnership, Government of

Georgia prioritizes enhancement of cooperation with non-governmental sector. For that aim, memorandums of understanding are concluded with local NGOs and international organizations regarding providing services for THB victims, promotion of the capacity building of relevant personnel to enhance their knowledge and skills of combating the crime.

NGOs and IOs are the invited members of the Inter-Agency Council on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, that is main policy-shaper body in the field of combatting the mentioned crime. Civil society sector is actively involved in drafting THB-related legislative amendments and policy documents.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia annually holds grant contests for NGOs and individuals aiming at strengthening human rights protection measures. Interested NGOs and individuals are invited and able to submit applications and implement projects on the prevention of human trafficking, child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Interagency Commission on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was established in 2017 at the Administration of the Government of Georgia and consists of the

<sup>78</sup> Para. 308.

<sup>79</sup> Para. 311.

<sup>80</sup> Para. 313.

<sup>81</sup> Para. 315.

<sup>82</sup> Recommendation VII-2.

representatives of key Ministries, Parliament, Supreme Court, Public Defender's office, UNICEF and non governmental organizations working on child rights issues. The main objectives of the Commission are: development of a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that will be part of the Government's Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights; coordination and monitoring of implementation of Georgia's international and national obligations in protecting child's rights; ensuring compliance of the Georgian legislation with the Convention and other international standards; collection of

relevant data and information and ensuring implementation of the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Notably, the Commission actively cooperates with NGOs within the framework of its competence.

Concerning civil society involvement in prevention activities on combating sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, the Committee notes that Georgia only provided information about general prevention projects and programmes on violence against children.<sup>83</sup>

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

The Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to expand cooperation with civil society to better prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and the challenges raised by the exploitation of CSGSIV.<sup>84</sup>
- to ensure that the forms of cooperation that take place with civil society in the field of prevention and protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse are of a sustainable nature.<sup>85</sup>
- To support civil society to carry out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV.<sup>86</sup>
- to encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives<sup>87</sup> and to seek children's views at the stage of drafting new legislation concerning the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and as regards CSGSIV.<sup>88</sup>

#### Promising practices:

In order to ensure victim-centered approach and make the protection services more accessible to the victims of human trafficking, Georgian National Referral Mechanism on Identification of THB victims ensures two possible ways for a person to be involved in state run services. Georgian law differentiates status of victim of trafficking and status of statutory victim of trafficking. The status of victim of trafficking is granted to the person by Permanent Group (consists of 3 local NGOs and 2 international organizations (IOM and ICMPD) of the Inter-Agency Council within 48 hours based on the special questionnaire of mobile group of the Agency for State Care while the status of statutory victim of trafficking is granted by law enforcement authorities in accordance with Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia. This way, the state ensures the existence

<sup>83</sup> Paras. 318, 319.

<sup>84</sup> Recommendation VII-3.

<sup>85</sup> Recommendation VII-4.

<sup>86</sup> Recommendation VII-5.

<sup>87</sup> Parties are also invited to provide example(s) of how children's views are taken into account in the context of the participation of children.

<sup>88</sup> Recommendations VII-6, VII-7.

of an independent decision-making mechanism, which is fully staffed with representatives of the civil sector.

Georgian National Referral Mechanism is recognized as one of the best and promising practices by international society. OSCE ODIHR reflected Georgian model in the revised Practical Handbook on National Referral Mechanisms - Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons - Second Edition, published on 24 January, 2022.

## 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 risk of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves

The Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to ensure that explanations of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves, with or without coercion, are included in the awareness-raising campaigns that they promote or conduct, whatever the target audience.<sup>89</sup>
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children about the risks that they face when generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves takes place early enough, before they reach their teens, and that it is “adapted to their evolving capacity” or, in other words, their age and degree of maturity.<sup>90</sup>
- to use unchanged, wherever possible, the awareness-raising tools, materials and activities mentioned in this report or else to adapt them to their national contexts and their own languages and, if necessary, develop new ones, concentrating on videos and distribution through social media.<sup>91</sup>
- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities.<sup>92</sup>
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children regarding the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse that they face when generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves is led first and foremost by their peers.<sup>93</sup>
- to promote themselves and to encourage the information and communication of the technology sector, the media, and other professionals to raise awareness among children, their parents, persons having regular contact with children, and the general public about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken.<sup>94</sup>
- to step-up awareness-raising for parents and persons with parental authority about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken.<sup>95</sup>
- to promote or conduct awareness-raising campaigns for the general public providing information about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken.<sup>96</sup>
- to take the necessary measures to ensure co-ordination between the agencies responsible for raising awareness of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing

<sup>89</sup> Recommendation VIII-1.

<sup>90</sup> Recommendation VIII-2.

<sup>91</sup> Recommendation VIII-3.

<sup>92</sup> Recommendation VIII-4.

<sup>93</sup> Recommendation VIII-5.

<sup>94</sup> Recommendation VIII-6.

<sup>95</sup> Recommendation VIII-7.

<sup>96</sup> Recommendation VIII-8.

sexual images and/or videos of themselves.<sup>97</sup>

Promising practices:

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<sup>97</sup> Recommendation VIII-9.

## IX. Education for children

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

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

- The Committee requires all Parties, including Georgia, to ensure that all children at primary and secondary education level receive information about the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs. Organising lectures and/or activities on this topic should not be left to the discretion of schools or teachers.<sup>98</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Georgian National Curriculum covers education on child's rights protection as part of compulsory education. At the primary level of general education, subjects such as Natural Science and Social Science cover topics related to personal safety, protection of personal space, personal hygiene, and body protection. Additionally, students are educated on recognizing and responding to bullying, with special emphasis on cybersecurity awareness and the risks associated with the Internet.

At the lower-secondary education level, subjects like Biology and Civic Education address human rights, puberty, reproductive health, and the risks associated with early marriage, early pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and abortion.

Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions (ORO), an Agency under the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth (MoESY) was established to ensure a safe and psychologically healthy environment for children in schools across Georgia. The ORO

employs resource officers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers.

Teachers, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and school resource officers are among the public sector professionals who work most closely with students and are frequently aware of violations of children's rights. They are required to report any suspected violence to the appropriate authorities according to the legislation.

In this regard, in 2022, UN Women collaborated with then the Ministry of Education Science to develop a training module for teachers, principals, and school resource officers to address violence against women/domestic violence (VAW/DV) and its related reporting obligations. This training module was updated in August 2024 based on lessons learned from previous sessions. Notably, a session on violence facilitated by ICTs was added. Since 2022, with the support of the UN Women, more than 900 resource officers and 40 social workers from ORO have been trained.

To prevent violence in schools, regular informative and educational meetings and training sessions have been organized for students, parents, teachers, and school staff on topics such as human rights, identification, prevention and response to violence, bullying, cyberbullying, hate speech, and anti-discrimination. Additionally, in November 2024, with the

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

support of the Council of Europe's project "Combating Violence Against Children in Georgia" and the Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions, informational and educational meetings were held in Tbilisi, Batumi, and Kutaisi to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence Against Children. A total of 276 students and 45 school representatives participated in these meetings.

Government of Georgia also prioritizes prevention of trafficking through enhancement of education in secondary and high schools. In this regard, issues related to human trafficking is largely covered by the national curriculum. National curriculum at secondary education and subsequent modules, including human trafficking are of a mandatory character and are not left for any discretion.

Department of Human Rights Protection at MIA has been conducting awareness raising campaigns about the dangers of childhood marriages for 5 consecutive years. The campaign was also held in 2023 and 2024.

The aim of the campaign is to prevent crimes surrounding child marriages, raise awareness about the dangers of child marriages and importance of timely notification of law enforcement about this crime.

Within the campaign, the employees of Human Rights Protection Department, along with police officers from local police divisions, hold thematic meetings in Tbilisi and other regions with various target groups about the relevant issues surrounding child marriages. Along with other relevant activities, each year SMS-system text messages are sent to millions of subscribers about ways of notifying law enforcement about the crime.

Campaign "Rights for Children"

In 2024, with the initiative of Human Rights Protection Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, in order to raise awareness of schoolchildren, a campaign "Rights for Children" was launched, within which, the employees of the Department, along with employees of local police units, hold educational meetings (sessions) with schoolchildren.

The campaign has already commenced and aims to include all schools throughout Georgia.

Topics of discussion within the campaign, among others, include violence, unpleasant/unworthy treatment, unwanted communication (including, online) and bullying (including, cyberbullying).

One of the most important components of state policy on combating child sexual exploitation online is to take preventive measures. Central Criminal Police Department at the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducts awareness raising campaigns and holds informational meetings.

Awareness raising activities on the topic of trafficking include informational meetings with target groups, annual mock trials for students, developing and dissemination of informational brochures. Trafficking is also taught in schools and higher education institutions.

Informational lectures/seminars have been held in universities about relevant topics surrounding trafficking.

In order to raise general awareness and inform parents about cybersecurity measures, Cybercrime Division of Central Criminal Police Department along with various divisions of The Ministry are involved in educational activities such as

participation in tv/radio programs, as well as, direct meetings with schoolchildren, where the main topics of discussion are cyber hygiene, dangers of cybercrime, risks of spreading personal information on the internet.

The Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to address in educational contexts the issue of the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV.<sup>99</sup>
- to ensure that information on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV, is provided to children during both primary and secondary education (whether as part of the national curricula or in the context of non-formal education for children at these levels).<sup>100</sup>
- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness

programmes.<sup>101</sup>

- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities.<sup>102</sup>
- to provide information to children on child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV, in their national curriculum or other non-formal educational contexts, in a form which is adapted to the evolving capacity of the children and therefore which is appropriate for their age and maturity.<sup>103</sup>
- to provide information to children on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including CSGSIV, within a more general context of sexuality education.<sup>104</sup>
- to ensure that parents, caregivers, and educators are involved, where appropriate, in the provision of information to children on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, in particular as regards CSGSIV.<sup>105</sup>

Promising practices:

<sup>99</sup> Recommendation IX-1.

<sup>100</sup> Recommendation IX-2.

<sup>101</sup> Recommendation IX-4.

<sup>102</sup> Recommendation IX-5.

<sup>103</sup> Recommendation IX-6.

<sup>104</sup> Recommendation IX-7.

<sup>105</sup> 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 Georgia

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

Therefore, the Committee requires Georgia:

- to ensure that teaching or training on the rights of children and their protection for persons who have regular contacts with children (i.e. in the education, health and social protection sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities) is not optional.<sup>106</sup>

Follow-up actions:

The National Center for Teacher Professional Development (TPDC), an agency under the Umbrella of MoESY provides continuous teacher trainings according to specific training modules. The Module "Cyberbullying Prevention with the Involvement of the School Community" covers sexting and grooming topics in general terms.

One of the resource materials of the training-module is a Parent's Guide to the Digital World, a resource for parents to help them ensure a safe digital life for their children. The following number of teachers

were trained by the training-module:

- 2022 - 341 teachers;
- 2023 - 2325 teachers.

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

- in the education sector
- in the health sector
- in the social protection sector
- in areas relating to sport, culture, and leisure activities.<sup>107</sup>

Follow-up actions:

In the authorization standards for early and preschool education and care institutions (approved by the Government of Georgia decree in 2023), it is mandatory for the institution to have a designated person responsible for referrals in cases of child abuse, including sexual abuse. This person

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

<sup>107</sup> Recommendations X-5, X-6.

must have undergone appropriate training and, in the event of discovering or having reasonable suspicion of such case, must inform the relevant state agencies.

- to encourage awareness of the protection and rights of children among persons who have regular contact with children in the education, health, social protection, judicial and law-enforcement sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture, and leisure activities.<sup>108</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

In order to conduct justice effectively and in a child-oriented way, the employees that are allowed to work on juvenile crimes have to be specialized in juvenile justice. The Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducts training of the employees according to a pre-determined study program, which includes topics on legal procedure and investigation of crimes committed by/against minors. The specialization program is carried out permanently.

Specialized law enforcement officers of the Ministry, along with the Ministry's own administrative resources, are permanently undergoing qualification enhancement trainings in order to handle legal proceedings effectively and in a child-oriented way.

Since September 2023 the procedure for organizing qualification training courses of investigators within the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia has been approved, in accordance with which, the Human Rights Protection Department and the Academy - at the premises of the Academy - take active measures to enhance investigators' qualifications. Qualification enhancement courses include prioritized

topics, such as "Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Sex Crime Investigations, and Sexual Harassment."

Additionally, , numerous trainings and workshops have been held for police officers in central regions of Georgia about the relevant topics, including, theoretical and practical aspects of sex crime investigation.

Police officers of Central Criminal Police Department at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia permanently undergo qualification enhancement trainings and courses. The employees of the Cyber Crime Division and the Division on Combating Trafficking and Illegal Migration are actively participating in both local and international, online and offline workshops, seminars and trainings aimed at practitioners handling cases of child sexual abuse both online and offline.

The Committee also requests Georgia to ensure that the persons who have regular contact with children have adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs, for example through education or continuous training.<sup>109</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The National Center for Teacher Professional Development (TPDC), an agency under the Umbrella of MoESY provides continuous teacher trainings according to specific training modules. The Module "Cyberbullying Prevention with the Involvement of the School Community" covers sexting and grooming topics in general terms.

One of the resource materials of the

<sup>108</sup> Recommendation X-7.

<sup>109</sup> Recommendation X-1.

training-module is a Parent's Guide to the Digital World, a resource for parents to help them ensure a safe digital life for their children. The following number of teachers were trained by the training-module:

- 2022 - 341 teachers;
- 2023 - 2325 teachers.

2. The training module "Overcoming Violence Against Children, INSPAIR

strategies" also covers the topics of violence against children, including sexual violence.

The training was attended by:

- 2022 - 249 teachers.
- 2023 - 364 teachers.

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

The Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- 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 CS GSIV, for example through education or continuous

training.<sup>110</sup>

- to ensure that all the sectors where professionals work in contact with children, including when working on a voluntary basis, have adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and with specific reference to the risks associated with CS GSIV.<sup>111</sup>

Promising practices:

<sup>110</sup> Recommendation X-2.

<sup>111</sup> Recommendation X-3.

## XI. Research

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

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

Georgia informed that no research had been undertaken on issues raised by CSGSIV and/or on the psychological effects on persons who have had such material shared online.<sup>112</sup>

The Committee invites all Parties, including Georgia:

- to collect data and undertake research at the national and local levels to observe and evaluate the phenomenon of CSGSIV.<sup>113</sup>
- to ensure that data on the phenomenon of CSGSIV and the risks associated with it is regularly collected and research on the issue is regularly undertaken.<sup>114</sup>
- to build on the findings from existing

research on CSGSIV, when available, to ensure that policies and measures are best developed and appropriately targeted to tackle the issues raised by CSGSIV.<sup>115</sup>

- to take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or designate mechanisms for data collection or focal points at the national or local levels and in collaboration with civil society to observe and evaluate the phenomenon of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including on the issues arising from CSGSIV, with due respect for the requirements of personal data protection.<sup>116</sup>

### Promising practices:

<sup>112</sup> Para. 443.

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

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

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

<sup>116</sup> Recommendation XI-4.