



FACTSHEET – GERMANY

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)”

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It has been updated with information submitted by the
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displayed in orange and blue text boxes.

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I. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. Legal frameworks

Interpreting the Convention, in conjunction with its [Opinion on child sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos generated, shared and received by children](#) (6 June 2019), the Committee identifies what Parties ought to have in place as well as what they are encouraged to do to better protect children against the exploitation of their self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGSIV).

Observations and recommendations of the Committee on the legal framework specific to Germany

General remarks

The Committee notes that the legal framework of Germany refers explicitly to CSGSIV.¹

Reservations allowed by Article 20(3) as regards own sexual images consensually produced and possessed by children for private use

The Committee highlights that Article 20(3) second indent foresees exemption from liability for the production and possession of one's sexually explicit images only where the children in question are above the age of sexual consent and where the material is produced/possessed with their consent for their own private use. Germany made such a reservation:² "juveniles", i.e. persons between the ages of fourteen and under eighteen years, may produce and possess own pornographic materials, without this necessarily constituting a threat to any legally protected interests, if both persons consent.³

Article 8(3) of EU Directive 2011/93 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography similarly establishes that: "*It shall be within the discretion of Member States to decide whether Article 5(2) and (6)⁴ apply to the production, acquisition or possession of material involving children who have reached the age of sexual consent where that material is produced and possessed with the consent of those children and only for the private use of the persons involved, in so far as the acts did not involve any abuse.*"⁵ The Committee notes from the Commission's report

(COM(2016) 871 final) to the European Parliament assessing the extent to which the Member States have taken the necessary measures to comply with EU Directive 2011/93 that Germany chose to apply the above-mentioned Article 8(3).⁶

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

The Committee notes that the majority of Parties do not prosecute the production of sexually explicit images by children themselves, and the possession of such images by children as they may subject the criminalisation under other conditions (e.g. the context of the possession, the legal age for sexual activities, etc). On this, Germany 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.⁷

Germany also noted that production and possession of self-generated material were not criminalised when the child(ren) in question have reached the legal age for sexual activities. 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 a case, younger children may not be covered by the exemption from criminal responsibility.⁸

¹ Para. 43.

² Para. 55.

³ Para. 56.

⁴ Article 5 (offences concerning "child pornography" of the EU Directive 2011/92 reads:

1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the intentional conduct, when committed without right, referred to in paragraphs 2 to 6 is punishable.

2. Acquisition or possession of child pornography shall be punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of at (...)

6. Production of child pornography shall be punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of at least 3 years.

⁵ Para. 59.

⁶ Para. 60.

⁷ Para. 71.

⁸ Para. 73.

- Therefore, the Committee **requests** that Germany 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 without actively asking for them.⁹

Follow-up actions:

In Germany, children under the age of 14 do not have criminal responsibility (Section 19 of the German Criminal Code - StGB). Therefore, they cannot be subject to any criminal prosecution. The criminal liability of juveniles (i.e. those aged 14 but not yet 18 when the offense was committed, see Section 1 (2) of the Juvenile Court Act - JGG) requires sufficient developmental maturity at the time of the offense to understand the wrongdoing and the corresponding capacity to act (see Section 3 JGG). This may be lacking in individual cases where sexualized images are used carelessly. But even if they have the required moral and intellectual maturity, with regard to the specific case constellations described above there are certain provisions which lead to a complete or extensive exclusion of criminal prosecution of juveniles:

1) and 2): If the child depicted in the sexually suggestive or explicit image is at least 14 years old, the impunity of the juvenile who produced the image with the consent of the person depicted and possesses it exclusively for personal use is ensured by the exclusion of the offense in Section 184c(4) StGB. This provision also leads to impunity for the juvenile in the event of possession of a sexualized self-portrait without the intention of distributing it.

If the child depicted in the sexually

suggestive or explicit image is under 14 years of age, the public prosecutor's office and the juvenile court may dispense with prosecution initiated on the basis of Section 184b(3) StGB in accordance with Section 45(1) or Section 47(1) no. 1 JGG in conjunction with Section 153 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (StPO) at an early stage and without formal consequences for the juvenile. Such a dispense with prosecution was made possible by an amendment to the law in 2024 (Gesetz zur Anpassung der Mindeststrafen des § 184b Absatz 1 Satz 1 und Absatz 3 des Strafgesetzbuches – Verbreitung, Erwerb und Besitz kinderpornographischer Inhalte vom 27.6.2024), which reduced the minimum penalty under Section 184b (3) of the Criminal Code, among others, and thus now opens up the scope of application of Section 153 StPO in relevant proceedings. The requirements of a low degree of the offender's guilt and the lack of public interest in the prosecution are likely to be frequently met in the constellations described. In addition, the JGG contains further options for discontinuing proceedings (see Section 45(2) and (3) JGG).

3): Even in such cases, Section 45(1) JGG in conjunction with Section 153 StPO allows the public prosecutor's office to dispense with prosecution at an early stage and without formal consequences for the juvenile. The required low degree of the offender's guilt and the lack of public interest in the prosecution are likely to be regularly present in the case of unsolicited receipt of the images and/or videos (via group or class chats, for example). In addition, the JGG contains further options for discontinuing proceedings (see Section 45(2) and (3) JGG).

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 Germany.¹⁰ Furthermore, Germany has rules that lead to the

⁹ Recommendation II-6.

¹⁰ Para. 78.

criminalisation of the distribution by children of CSGSIV of other children.¹¹

The Committee **requests** that Germany 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.¹²

Follow-up actions:

In Germany, Section 184c StGB (distribution of youth pornographic content) is interpreted by means of a teleological reduction in such a way that children are not prosecuted or punished for voluntarily and consensually sharing their sexual images and/or videos consensual, and intended solely for private use with another child. After all, the protective purpose of the law, which is aimed at protecting the persons depicted, does not cover the collection of consensual sexual experiences between minors.

In addition, juvenile criminal proceedings initiated because of the accusation of passing on youth pornography (Section 184c (1) no. 2 StGB) may be discontinued by the public prosecutor's office at an early stage and without formal consequences for the juvenile in accordance with Section 45(1) JGG in conjunction with Section 153 StPO. The relevant legal requirements - in particular the low degree of the offender's guilt and the lack of public interest in the prosecution - are likely to be regularly met in the case of a voluntary, consensual sharing of sexualised self-portraits intended solely for private use by a juvenile, especially in view of his particular developmental situation. In addition, the JGG provides the public prosecutor's office and the juvenile court with further options for dispense with prosecution (Section 45(2) and (3) JGG, Section 47 JGG).

- 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.¹³

Follow-up actions:

The decision of the public prosecutor to initiate charges against a child over the age of 14 does not necessarily signify the primary course of action. The governing legislation for the majority of juvenile criminal law in Germany is the Juvenile Courts Act (JGG), which is characterised by the guiding principle of socio-education (see Section 2(1) JGG). The socio-educational concept focuses on which measures are suitable and necessary to counter renewed criminal offences on the part of a juvenile (14 to 17 years old). In order to achieve that goal, methods that are primarily educational in nature and promote positive development are employed, and they are given priority over more repressive measures. Therefore, the JGG provides differentiated and, compared to general criminal law, extended options for discontinuing juvenile criminal proceedings (see Sections 45, 47 JGG). These are now also fully available to the public prosecutor's office and juvenile court in the case of accusations of the distribution or transmission of child (or youth) pornography as a result of the amendment to the law in 2024. This enables an appropriate response to the circumstances of the individual case in line with the special preventive objective of German juvenile criminal law (Section 2(1) JGG).

When deciding whether to discontinue proceedings, it is possible to take into account, for example, the extent to which the distribution or transmission of such content by juveniles was motivated by an impulse typical of the juvenile stage of development, such as naivety, curiosity, a thirst for adventure or a desire to show off. It can also

¹¹ Para. 82.

¹² Recommendation II-8.

¹³ Recommendation II-9.

be taken into account whether the degree of wrongdoing and reproachability of the act can also be classified as low with regard to the interests of the person depicted.

Consequently, the primary consideration has to be whether the conditions are met for discontinuing the proceedings without formal consequences or in connection with a specific educational measure (for example perform certain work tasks, apologise to the aggrieved person, attend a training course) in order to deter the child over the age of 14 from further criminal behaviour and to support their positive development.

On the “sexual extortion of children”

The Committee observes that Germany could not provide data or details about cases of sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV.¹⁴

In cases where the sexual extortion is intended to procure additional sexual images or videos, the Committee observes that Germany prosecutes for offences related to “child pornography”, in concurrence with offences where threat is a core element, such as extortion or coercion.¹⁵ Germany also referred to further offences, such as corruption of children, which may be established in recognition of the constituent elements of coercion/extortion.¹⁶

When sexual extortion is intended to procure other sexual favours from the child depicted in the images/videos or from other children, Germany 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, participation in pornographic performances and corruption of children.¹⁷ In addition, Germany also prosecutes conduct relating to the possession of the initial child sexual image or video as an offence related to “child pornography” under Article 20.¹⁸

Germany would prosecute for sexual assault by use of force or threats. It also reported the possible prosecution for coercion and aggravated coercion.¹⁹

In the case where it is intended to procure a financial gain or other property from the child, Germany indicated that the conduct would be qualified as extortion or aggravated extortion. It identifies the situation as offences related to child pornography or as child prostitution.²⁰

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

- take into account the situation where CSGSIV are used to force, coerce or threaten the child to give additional self-generated sexual images and/or videos, other sexual favours, a financial gain or other gain to the offenders by:
 - either creating a specific incrimination to address this situation,
 - or prosecuting both the initial detention of CSGSIV and the act of extortion.²¹
- to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.²²

¹⁴ Para. 95.

¹⁵ Para. 98.

¹⁶ Para. 100.

¹⁷ Para. 102.

¹⁸ Para. 103.

¹⁹ Para. 104.

²⁰ Para. 106.

²¹ Recommendation II-11.

²² Recommendation II-12.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on legal frameworks

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

- to introduce a definition of “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”](#)^{23, 24}
 - 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.²⁵
 - to rather use the term “child sexual abuse material” 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”](#)²⁶ 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.²⁷
 - 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.²⁸
 - to adopt legislative or other measures which promote as a priority educational and other measures that will aim to support children in safely exploring their sexual development while understanding and avoiding risks deriving from the production and possession of self-generated sexual images and/or videos.²⁹
 - 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.³⁰

Promising practices:

A draft Law to strengthen structures against sexual violence against children and young people was adopted by the German parliament in January 2025. It institutionalizes the Independent Commissioner against Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents, the Survivors’ Board and the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

The law establishes a reporting obligation for the Independent Commissioner on the extent of sexual violence against children and adolescents both online and offline to the German Parliament.

The law explicitly mentions that the mandate of the work of the Independent Commissioner includes the digital environment.

²³ 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.](#)

²⁴ Recommendation II-3.

²⁵ Recommendation II-2.

²⁶ 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.](#)

²⁷ Recommendation II-1.

²⁸ Recommendation II-4.

²⁹ Recommendation II-7.

³⁰ Recommendation II-10.

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 Germany

The Committee observes that Germany's investigation and prosecution services are already in line with some of its recommendations as Germany has:

- specialised units dealing with ICT facilitated offences against children within law enforcement,³¹ and sections/departments dedicated exclusively to cyber or sexual crimes against children.³²
- training modules provided by State authorities for law enforcement agents related to aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.³³ The Committee notes that training is available both in the Federal Criminal Police Office and in the individual Länder.³⁴
- training provided by State authorities for prosecutors on aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.³⁵ The Committee notes that national judicial academies organise trainings.³⁶ The Committee also notes that participation in specialised seminars tends to be voluntary in Germany.³⁷ It observes that trainings include topics such as sexual violence against children, online child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, CSAM specifically, interdisciplinary approaches, and international collaboration.³⁸ Germany indicated that the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection was planning to offer a seminar at the German Judicial Academy in 2022, which would cover, among

other things, the use of investigative authority to combat child pornography. This advanced training measure will be directed both at judges and public prosecutors.³⁹

- training provided by State authorities for judges on aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The Committee notes that judges and prosecutors are trained together and/or have the same training options available to them.⁴⁰
- victim identification functions located within police and investigation services.⁴¹

Additionally, the Committee observes that Germany makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's international child sexual exploitation (ICSE) database through its investigative and police offices. Germany also has ICSE users within its National Central Bureaus for the International Criminal Police Organisation.⁴²

The Committee observes that in Germany, the Central agency combatting sexual offences against children and adolescents operates at the national level, working in cooperation with regional Länder police.⁴³

The Committee also notes that cases concerning sexual abuse or exploitation of children facilitated by ICTs are managed by prosecution offices dedicated to juvenile justice.⁴⁴

The Committee observes that in Germany, cases

³¹ Para. 115.

³² Para. 116.

³³ Paras. 145, 146.

³⁴ Para. 151.

³⁵ Paras. 156, 157.

³⁶ Para. 159.

³⁷ Para. 163.

³⁸ Para. 164.

³⁹ Para. 165.

⁴⁰ Para. 167.

⁴¹ Para. 180.

⁴² Para. 186.

⁴³ Para. 119.

⁴⁴ Para. 125.

concerning ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are heard by specialised sections of the court system dealing with child-related cases as the public prosecutor's office is obliged to file criminal charges in matters concerning the protection of children before youth courts, if this best protects their interests. Criminal proceedings brought for ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are prosecuted before the youth courts and youth court judges of the local courts (Amtsgerichte) and before youth divisions of the regional courts (Landgerichte).⁴⁵

Regarding challenges encountered during investigation and prosecution, Germany mentioned the following:

- the speed of development of modern technologies and the internet is a challenge with respect to training;⁴⁶
- the assessment of (potential) victims' ages is a challenging and time-consuming task.⁴⁷
- perpetrators who have sexually abused children, produced, or disseminated CSAM are often difficult to trace and identify, when child abuse material has been shared multiple times.⁴⁸
- perpetrators also often seek to hide their identity online, for example using fake names, open servers, or software which hides their identity. Germany points out that anonymisation services can make it impossible to locate the IP address of a sender or user and refers to the use of the Darknet and virtual private networks, making it more difficult to detect offences and their perpetrators.⁴⁹
- a key challenge for a successful prosecution phase is to obtain electronic evidence that can be validly used before courts. There is also a high risk that evidence will be erased, either by the perpetrator of the criminal offence, or the victim himself/herself, out of shame or fear.⁵⁰
- where evidence is obtained, searching, isolating, and analysing the data of devices require a considerable amount of time,

resources and work. Where there are complex proceedings, analysis may take between 1.5 to 2 years or even longer; this may also lead to reduced sentences for the perpetrator due to excessively long duration of proceedings.⁵¹

- authorities are increasingly faced with encrypted data. This is the case, for example, of the WhatsApp messaging service, which has end-to-end encryption. The exploitation of encrypted information can be particularly time-consuming, and it may even happen that the encryption is so effective that the law enforcement specialists cannot decode the entirety of the data entered.⁵²

To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requests** Germany 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.⁵³

Follow-up actions:

The Code of Criminal Procedure allows for effective investigations and prosecution of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children. Authorities are entitled to utilize also very intrusive or/ and covert methods. For example: In accordance with Section 100b the Covert remote search of information technology systems is permissible if there is suspicion of the dissemination, procurement and possession of child pornographic content in the cases under section 184b (1) sentence 1 and (2) of the Criminal Code. Furthermore, as a general rule covert investigation by covert investigators are permitted in such cases. Section 110a Code of Criminal Procedure allows for covert investigations if there are sufficient factual indications showing that an offence of substantial significance has been

⁴⁵ Para. 129.

⁴⁶ Para. 173.

⁴⁷ Para. 182.

⁴⁸ Paras. 193, 194.

⁴⁹ Para. 195.

⁵⁰ Paras. 203, 204.

⁵¹ Para. 207.

⁵² Para. 208.

⁵³ Recommendation III-28.

committed for example on a commercial or habitual basis or by a member of a gang or in some other organised way. Covert investigations are also permissible if there is a suspicion of a serious criminal offence and

if certain facts substantiate the risk of repetition.

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.⁵⁴

Follow-up actions:

Within its scope of competence, the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) is constantly reviewing the extent to which appropriate resources (personnel, equipment and training) need to be adapted in order to successfully carry out work in the area of sexual offences against children and young people.

areas of children's rights, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and ICT technical knowledge and in offences involving CSGSIV.⁵⁶

- to provide specific training⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸
- 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.⁵⁹
- 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.⁶⁰

On measures to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution:

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

- 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.⁵⁵
- to ensure that units, services, or persons within courts responsible for ICT facilitated sexual offences against children have the necessary specialisation in the intersecting

- 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.⁶¹

Follow-up actions:

According to section 48a (2) Code of Criminal Procedure, in proceedings with minor victims the hearings, interrogations and other investigative actions concerning the minor must be conducted in a particularly

⁵⁴ Recommendations III-3 and III-7.

⁵⁵ Recommendation III-4.

⁵⁶ Recommendations III-9, III-10.

⁵⁷ Such trainings can also be part of broader training programmes.

⁵⁸ Recommendation III-14.

⁵⁹ Recommendations III-17 and III-19.

⁶⁰ Recommendation III-21.

⁶¹ Recommendation III-30.

expedited manner, insofar as this is necessary for the victim's protection or to avoid loss of evidence, taking into account the personal circumstances of the witness and the nature and circumstances of the criminal act.

This principle is already enshrined in Number 221 of the Guidelines for criminal and fine proceedings (Richtlinien für das Strafverfahren und das Bußgeldverfahren). Hereafter all proceedings with child victims are to be accelerated.

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

- to ensure that measures, services, and technology available to those in charge of identifying child victims of ICT facilitated

Promising practices

In Hesse, Germany, the *Polizeiakademie* offers a course on child pornography and juvenile pornography in Germany on the internet, with a target age range of 14-18. The week-long, non-obligatory course covers the production, possession, procurement, and further dissemination of data or material constituting pornography, including the criteria defining a criminal offence as set out in the Criminal Code. The course covers both legal issues and technical terms.

In 2014, experts from Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (as well as Australia, the USA, EUROPOL and INTERPOL) engaged in a Victim Identification Taskforce (VIDTF) to harness international cooperation in victim identification.⁶⁵ This initiative has been continued, including its 10th edition in October-November 2021.⁶⁶

Other promising practices:

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.⁶²

- 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.⁶³
- 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.⁶⁴

⁶² Recommendation III-24.

⁶³ Recommendation III-31.

⁶⁴ Recommendation III-32.

⁶⁵ See:

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/europol-in-action/operations/victim-identification-taskforce>.

⁶⁶ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/global-europol-taskforce-identifies-18-child-victims-of-sexual-abuse>

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 Germany

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))

Germany has established laws clarifying the circumstances in which its national criminal law will apply to a transnational situation following the territoriality principle. Accordingly, pursuant to section 9(1) of the German Criminal Code, the place of the offence is both the place where an action was taken and the place where the intended objectives were achieved. The place where the action was taken is wherever the perpetrator pursues, during the stage at which the action is being committed, activities directed at realising the constituent elements of the offence. The place at which the intended objectives were achieved is the place where the result occurs or should have occurred according to the intention of the offender, when the result is a part of the constituent elements of the offence. This rule allows for the prosecution of offences whereby either the perpetrator or the victim is in Germany, although the other party is in another State.⁶⁷

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

The Convention provides that Parties should take the necessary legislative and other measures to establish jurisdiction over offences committed by persons who have their habitual residence in their territory (Article 25(1)(e)). Germany has made a reservation to this provision in accordance with Article 25(3). German criminal law does not contain any provision that implements Article 25(1)(e) in its entirety, i.e. there is no provision pursuant to which offences committed abroad by foreigners or stateless

persons who have their habitual residence in Germany are subjected to German criminal law. The kinds of cases relevant in practice are covered by section 7(2) no.2 of the Criminal Code, whereby German criminal law is applicable to offences committed abroad if the offender was a foreigner or stateless at the time of the offence and is discovered in Germany and, although the Extradition Act would permit extradition for such an offence, is not extradited. However, it is conceivable that exceptional cases may arise where such prerequisites are not met.⁶⁸

- Therefore, the Committee **invites** Germany to consider removing this reservation and establish jurisdiction for offences under the Convention when such offences are committed abroad by persons having their habitual residence in its territory.⁶⁹

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))

The Committee observes that Germany did not provide information as to whether it subordinates its jurisdiction to the condition that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or denunciation from the State where the offence was committed.

- To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Germany 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

⁶⁷ Para. 214.

⁶⁸ Para. 216.

⁶⁹ Recommendation IV-3.

where the offence was committed for offences of sexual abuse (Article 18), offences concerning child prostitution (Article 19), the production of “child pornography” (Article 20(1)(a)) and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances (Article 21), when committed by one of its nationals or by a person who has his or her habitual residence in its territory.⁷⁰

Follow-up actions:

No follow-up action is required as German law does not stipulate that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or a denunciation from the State of the place where the crime was committed.

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

Germany reported that the principle of dual criminality is not a requirement for offences of child sexual abuse committed by nationals.⁷¹

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))

Germany applies the passive personality principle in respect of offences committed against a national in Germany, only for offences punishable by imprisonment of at least 6 years.⁷² The Committee further observes that in order to apply the passive personality principle, the German Criminal Code requires dual criminality, except when the child is a habitual resident.⁷³

The Committee **requests** Parties that are not already doing so, including Germany, to endeavour to take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish jurisdiction over any offence established in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention where the offence is committed against one of its nationals or a person who has his or her habitual residence in its territory.⁷⁴

Follow-up actions:

As detailed in the explanatory report to the convention, parties are not obliged, but can endeavour, to establish jurisdiction over an offence committed against one of its nationals or a person having habitual residence in the territory under Article 25(2). Germany already applies the passive personality principle under the conditions of Section 7(1) of the German Criminal code for all offences, not only for offences punishable by imprisonment of at least 6 years. According to Section 7(1) of the German Criminal code German criminal law applies to offences committed abroad against a German national if the act is a criminal offence at the place of its commission or if that place is not subject to any criminal law jurisdiction. An extension of the passive personality principle beyond the provision of Section 7(1) of the German Criminal Code is not intended as this is held to be controversial under international law.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on the jurisdiction rules

- The Committee **invites** Parties, including Germany, to remove the requirement for dual criminality when committed by one of their nationals, for offences of:
 - possessing, offering, distributing, transmitting, procuring child pornography, and the fact of knowingly

gaining access to child pornography through ICTs, when CSGIV are involved when committed by one of their nationals,⁷⁵

- solicitation of children for sexual purposes (Article 23) when committed by one of their nationals.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Recommendation IV-5.

⁷¹ Para. 223.

⁷² Para. 231.

⁷³ Para. 232.

⁷⁴ Recommendation IV-9.

⁷⁵ Recommendation IV-7.

⁷⁶ Recommendation IV-8.

Promising practice

Germany can prosecute persons who are neither nationals nor persons who have their habitual residence in its territory for sexual abuse or exploitation of children committed abroad, including children who are not its nationals, when the offender is present on its territory as it applies a principle of universal jurisdiction in relation to, among other offences, the dissemination of “child pornography” and “juvenile pornography” pursuant to sections 184b and 184c of the Criminal Code.

Other promising practices:

In addition to the aforementioned offences of distributing ‘child pornography’ and ‘juvenile pornography’ in accordance with sections 184b and 184c of the German Criminal Code, German law also waives the requirement of punishability at the place of the offence in accordance with section 5 No. 8 of the German Criminal Code with regard to the sexual abuse of children in accordance with sections 176 to 176e of the German Criminal Code and the sexual abuse of juveniles in accordance with Section 182 of the German Criminal Code.

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 of the Committee on international cooperation specific to Germany

The Committee observes that INHOPE,⁷⁷ the PROMISE Barnahus Network,⁷⁸ WeProtect Global Alliance,⁷⁹ INSAFE and Safer Internet Centres,⁸⁰ ECPAT,⁸¹ and EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) cybercrime CSE/CSA⁸² conduct cooperation projects to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Germany.⁸³

Furthermore, the Committee notes that European law enforcement representatives from Germany attend the Europol's central training course "Combatting the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet" (COSEC) and the

Europol-Interpol-Cepol co-organised training course on victim identification (VID training course).⁸⁴

Lastly, the Committee observes that Germany does not have the limitation introduced in the Directive 2012/29 of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 October 2012, establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA,⁸⁵ on the requirements for victims to report to another country of the European Union if the offense was committed in that country.⁸⁶

Generic recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation

- On international cooperation, the Committee **requests** all Parties, including Germany to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Convention.⁸⁷

Follow-up actions:

In order to successfully and effectively combat crime, it is crucial that national and international authorities work closely together, support each other within the scope of their respective responsibilities and exchange knowledge. The aspect of international cooperation therefore plays an

important role in the fight against sexual abuse of children, as many criminal networks operate across national borders and in the digital space and can therefore only be effectively combated through coordinated, global efforts.

In this context, the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), as a national central office, acts as a link between domestic and foreign law enforcement authorities. For example, in the fight against the phenomenon of livestreaming (a form of abuse in which perpetrators can access children in real time

⁷⁷ www.inhope.org/

⁷⁸ <https://www.barnahus.eu/en/>

⁷⁹ <https://www.weprotect.org/>

⁸⁰ <https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/>

⁸¹ <https://ecpat.org/>

⁸² <https://www.europol.europa.eu/empact>

⁸³ Para. 255.

⁸⁴ Para. 259.

⁸⁵ See, Article 17§2: "Member States shall ensure that victims of a criminal offence committed in Member States

other than that where they reside may make a complaint to the competent authorities of the Member State of residence, if they are unable to do so in the Member State where the criminal offence was committed or, in the event of a serious offence, as determined by national law of that Member State, if they do not wish to do so."?

⁸⁶ Para. 271.

⁸⁷ Recommendation V-3.

via the internet and digital technologies and abuse them without direct physical contact) it has been proven that significant successes can be achieved by way of international cooperation between relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, in October 2024, Germany welcomed the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, Mama Fatima Singhateh to a country visit.

During her two-week stay, the Special Rapporteur engaged in a dialogue with different state and civil society actors and institutions. Her conversations covered various issues relating to her mandate, including the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs). The observations and preliminary recommendations communicated by the Special Rapporteur were highly appreciated. The report on the country visit is expected to be discussed in the Human Rights Council in the spring of 2026.

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

- 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.⁸⁸
- to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the Convention, including for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, for the purpose of protecting and providing assistance to victims and concerning the offences established in accordance with the Convention, in matters related to CSGSIV.⁸⁹
- to regularly assess the difficulties that they

face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them.⁹⁰

- 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.⁹¹
- 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.⁹²
- 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.⁹³
- 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.⁹⁴
- 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.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Recommendations V-6, V-11.

⁸⁹ Recommendations V-4, V-7, V-12, V-15.

⁹⁰ Recommendation V-5.

⁹¹ Recommendations V-8, V-13.

⁹² Recommendation V-9.

⁹³ Recommendation V-10.

⁹⁴ Recommendations V-14, V-16.

⁹⁵ Recommendation V-19.

Promising practices

Germany works with a media centre in Belgium (German-speaking community) for the production of information materials in German.

In particularly urgent cases, the liaison officers of foreign agencies with the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) are involved. This occurs regularly, for example, in connection with combating child abuse committed abroad by German perpetrators who are travelling. Conversely, findings reported by foreign police stations, German diplomatic or consular missions or non-governmental organisations abroad regarding perpetrators or relevant circumstances in Germany are transmitted to the competent *Land* Criminal Police Offices (LKA) for the initiation of further prosecution measures.

Other promising practices:

VI. Assistance to victims

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

Observations of the Committee on assistance to victims specific to Germany

The Committee observes that Germany collaborates with different bodies, including ministries and NGOs. This can be very effective for victims who benefit from this synergy and broader services.⁹⁶

The Committee observes that Germany has legislation containing adequate provisions to assist child victims which focuses on assistance to child victims of sexual violence.⁹⁷

In addition, the Committee notes that Germany has carried out advertising campaigns to raise awareness on violence facilitated by ICTs, informing all children about the possibility of calling for help when encountering sexual abuse and violence.⁹⁸ Germany also indicated that the

"*Hilfetelefon Sexueller Missbrauch*", the hotline for sexual abuse, provides advice to children affected by the situations covered by this report, as well as to "persons in the social environment of children", "specialised staff" and all other interested parties.⁹⁹

The Committee also observes that in Germany, different local authorities have different services available. A standard and congruent service across the country may make it easier for children to access and receive help when they need it.¹⁰⁰

However, Germany acknowledged that it had no specific data on any dimension of the proportion of child victims in the context of CSGSIV.¹⁰¹

Generic recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims

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

- 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.¹⁰²

- 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.¹⁰³

Promising practices:

According to Section 406g of the German Code of Criminal Procedure Minors under the age of 18, who have been victims of sexual crimes or certain violent crimes are entitled to apply for a psychosocial assistant, who is appointed free of charge by the court, without any further requirements. Specially qualified and trained psychosocial assistants offer non-legal support, care for and accompany the minor victim before, during and after court proceedings and can give them general information e.g. about the course of the proceedings. This measure is intended to reduce the strain of the situation for the victims, which they have to undergo as a consequence of the

⁹⁶ Para. 277.

⁹⁷ Paras. 286, 287.

⁹⁸ Para. 279.

⁹⁹ Para. 281.

¹⁰⁰ Para. 300.

¹⁰¹ Para. 296.

¹⁰² Recommendation VI-2.

¹⁰³ Recommendation VI-4.

crime. Psychosocial assistance is a complement to the services offered by victim and witness support services.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, senior citizens, women and youth is also funding the peer-to-peer counselling centre, JUUUPPORT, which primarily helps young people with problems on the internet, such as cybergrooming or cyberbullying.

The helpline of the Office of the Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues (UBSKM) against sexual violence was established in 2014. It is aimed at adults who have experienced CSAE in childhood and adolescence, relatives and adults close to children including professionals; increasingly, young people contact the hotline via online chat.

The helpline is available in several languages and in easy-read German. The helpline is now available in German Sign Language (DGS).

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 Germany

The Committee notes that Germany encourages the implementation of prevention projects and programs carried out by civil society not only at the federal level but also at the regional level.¹⁰⁴ The Committee observes that in Germany, NGOs are the most involved counterparts in this field, along with the media. Schools and other educational institutions, academia and businesses are also frequent actors.¹⁰⁵

Germany emphasised that its support for the development of prevention activities by civil society takes the form of financial support and grants.¹⁰⁶ Germany also indicated that the State is called upon to give its expertise on specific subjects to civil society actors.¹⁰⁷

The Committee recognises Germany'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.¹⁰⁸ Germany indicated that the interaction with civil society includes preventive and awareness-raising

activities to minimise the risk of abuse that children face online,¹⁰⁹ and there are some projects specifically aimed at educating and raising awareness of children on the issue of CSGSIV.¹¹⁰ The Committee notes that Germany has further ensured that resources are made available to all by translating them into other languages, mainly English.¹¹¹

Germany is among the few Parties that mentioned programmes meant to assist victims of offences related to CSGSIV in its reply to the Committee.¹¹² For instance, helplines exist and concern broad issues such as children's rights in general and violence against children, including sexual violence. Reporting illegal material online or offences through these helplines is also possible.¹¹³ The Committee notes that beyond reporting mechanisms, in Germany, NGOs offer free psychological support to children, and the assistance of civil society organisations is provided during legal proceedings, through legal advice and physical assistance throughout the proceedings.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁴ Para. 307.

¹⁰⁵ Para. 308.

¹⁰⁶ Para. 310.

¹⁰⁷ Para. 313.

¹⁰⁸ Para. 315.

¹⁰⁹ Para. 320.

¹¹⁰ Para. 321.

¹¹¹ Para. 325.

¹¹² Para. 327.

¹¹³ Para. 328.

¹¹⁴ Para. 329.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation

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

- 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.¹¹⁵
- 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.¹¹⁶
- to support civil society to carry out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV.¹¹⁷
- to encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹⁹

Promising practice

In Germany, the Ministry for Family Affairs, senior citizens, women and youth launched a network to combat “grey-zone type presentations”, defined as depictions of children that would not be regarded as being liable to punishment under criminal law in every state, but that are disseminated online for sexual purposes.

Other promising practices:

The network “No grey areas on the internet” network was transferred to a working group: “No sexualized violence against children on the internet”. The German INHOPE-hotlines, the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) and the Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media (BzKJ) continue to work closely together in the field of sexualized violence against children and regularly exchange information on so-called “grey-zone type presentations”.

The Federal Ministry for Family affairs, senior citizens, women and youth has organized several workshops with the participation of civil society on the topic of data-saving age assurance. Age assurance can be a very important tool to protect children and young people from cybergrooming, for example.

In 2023 the Alliance against child sexual abuse online was founded by the Independent Commissioner on Child Sexual Abuse Issues and the Federal Agency for child and youth protection in the media. This Alliance serves as a think tank and plans on the elaboration of tangible solutions for concrete problems in the fight against child sexual abuse online.

The Office of the Independent Commissioner on Child Sexual Abuse Issues regularly works with civil society actors within the expert group children’s rights in den the digital world. The group meets every three months and discusses relevant changes within the sphere of child sexual abuse and exploitation online. The last meeting in November 2024 focused on the elaboration of recommendations for the European Commission on Art. 28 Digital Services Act.

¹¹⁵ Recommendation VII-3.

¹¹⁶ Recommendation VII-4.

¹¹⁷ Recommendation VII-5.

¹¹⁸ 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.

¹¹⁹ Recommendations VII-6, VII-7.

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

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

Observations 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 specific to Germany

In terms of awareness-raising tools, Germany indicated that in 2015, Baden-Württemberg developed the “Starke Kisten” (strong boxes) scheme (a “red box” for primary schools and a “blue box” for secondary schools). These boxes provide work materials for the prevention of sexual violence. They also include material on the dangers of new media for sexual self-determination.¹²⁰

The Committee highlights an example of good practice related to the peer-to-peer method of awareness-raising coming from Germany: the Schüler-Medienmentoren-Programm (SMEP, media mentoring programme for pupils) provides twenty hours of training for pupils to become media mentors so that they can then pass on their knowledge and skills to their peers through projects and/or working groups. Topics cover sexting, cyber grooming, and online pornography as well as sexual violence in the media. Similarly, the Webhelm.de project teaches teenagers about their rights and responsibilities online and

how to protect their own boundaries whilst also respecting the personal rights of others.¹²¹

In terms of awareness-raising by other professionals, the Committee notes that the police of the Land Brandenburg offers prevention activities for pupils in the 6th and 7th grades. At these events, children are made aware of the responsible use of “new media” and the dangers and legal aspects associated with it. This form of preventive activity is carried out in police precincts.¹²²

The Committee also observes that in Germany, parents and persons having regular contact with children have access, on request, to training sessions on sexual violence in general and sexual images self-generated by children in particular, that are run by the departments responsible for occupational training (which come under the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the different Länder).¹²³

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 Germany:

- 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.¹²⁴

- 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

¹²⁰ Para. 350.

¹²¹ Para. 361.

¹²² Para. 365.

¹²³ Para. 370.

¹²⁴ Recommendation VIII-2.

their own languages and, if necessary, develop new ones, concentrating on videos and distribution through social media.¹²⁵

- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities.¹²⁶
- 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.¹²⁷

- to take the necessary measures to ensure co-ordination between the agencies responsible for raising awareness of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves.¹²⁸

Promising practices

ECPAT's "make-IT-safe" project is a peer expert training project in which children and adolescents have been taught how to use the internet and smartphones safely and how to use social media, such as Facebook, Myspace, Netlog and WhatsApp in a responsible way. The 2-year project started at the beginning of 2013 and is based on the peer-to-peer principle, which allows adolescents (peer experts) to learn how to use new technologies and the media, as well as prevention of online violence, in a safe way and to pass the information and the knowledge to people of the same age. The project was supported by specially trained teachers and youth leaders, the so-called "coaches". The particularity of the project is the fact that the project was conducted by ECPAT groups in five countries, including Germany. The information is available in seven languages.¹²⁹

In Germany, extensive amendments were made to the Youth Protection Act (*Jugendschutzgesetz, JuSchG*), in May 2021. Special attention was paid to children and youth media protection from risks such as cyber grooming or planning and setting up sexual abuse. Pursuant to the new section 24a *JuSchG*, providers such as social media services or game and film platforms are required to take preventive measures. These include simple reporting and complaint possibilities, reliable age checks, chat moderation, or tools for parents to monitor the media use of their children. Also appropriate in this context may be making available information on potential risks of sexual exploitation and planning and setting up abuse, as well as on behaviour destructive to oneself or others – for example by posting photos and videos – including corresponding aid and support services. The National Centre for Child and Youth Media Protection (*Bundeszentrale für Kinder- und Jugendmedienschutz*), which was established with the reform of the *JuSchG*, reviews the implementation, design and appropriateness of the measures taken by service providers and supports the orientation of children and adolescents, parents and professionals, as well as of providers.

Other promising practices:

The obligation under section 24a of the Youth Protection Act has been fully absorbed into Article 28 of the Digital Services Act (DSA). For this reason, section 24a of the Youth Protection Act was amended in May 2024. The obligation for online platforms to take risk mitigation measures now arises directly from Article 28 DSA. Also, the Federal Office for the Enforcement of Children's Rights in Digital Services (Stelle zur Durchsetzung von Kinderrechten in digitalen Diensten) was established at the Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media, which will enforce the obligations of Article 28 paragraph 1 of the DSA in Germany.

¹²⁵ Recommendation VIII-3.

¹²⁶ Recommendation VIII-4.

¹²⁷ Recommendation VIII-8.

¹²⁸ Recommendation VIII-9.

¹²⁹ <http://www.make-it-safe.net/>

The BMFSFJ and the UBSKM have launched a campaign with the title “Schieb deine Verantwortung nicht weg” (Don’t push away your responsibility) to raise awareness on sexual violence against children and young people. It is intended to create awareness that sexual child abuse can take place anywhere, including in one's own immediate environment. It is also intended to provide knowledge about what can be done when suspicions arise and what help and support services are available. The campaign has started in 2022 and is planned to run for several years.

IX. Education for children

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

Observations of the Committee on education for children specific to Germany

The Committee observes that Germany is one of the few Parties that explicitly address the challenges raised by CSGSIV as part of the information on the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in its national curriculum,¹³⁰ in the context of sexuality education courses.¹³¹ Germany indicated that in the region of Baden-Württemberg, sex education is integrated into various academic subjects on the basis of pedagogical guiding perspectives such as 'Education for Tolerance and Acceptance of Diversity' (*Bildung für Toleranz und Akzeptanz von Vielfalt*), 'Media Training' (*Medienbildung*), and 'Prevention and Health Promotion' (*Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung*).¹³² Moreover, both national curricula and non-formal educational activities address the challenges raised by CSGSIV.¹³³ The Committee further highlights that Germany is one of the few

Parties that provides such information in an age-appropriate manner, whether as part of national curriculum or other non-formal educational settings.¹³⁴

In terms of involvement of the parents in the provision of information to children, the Committee notes that in the region of Baden-Württemberg, the persons legally responsible for the children's education are invited to a meeting of all legal guardians and teachers of a class (*Klassenpflegschaftssitzung*), where they receive timely and comprehensive information on the objectives, subject matter, form, and timing of the sex education offered as part of the school's programme for family life education and sex education, as well as on the learning materials and aids that will be used.¹³⁵

Generic recommendations of the Committee on education for children

- The Committee **requires** all Parties, including Germany, 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.¹³⁶

Follow-up actions:

On January 31st 2025, the Bundestag has passed the "Act to strengthen structures against sexual violence against children and

adolescents". It is due to be discussed and voted on in the Bundesrat in March 2025. The Act shall guarantee that important structures against sexual violence against children and young people exist permanently: The Federal Commissioner for child sexual abuse issues, a board dealing with the concerns of survivors of sexual violence and an Independent Inquiry Commission into Child Sexual Abuse. The situation with regard to sexual violence against children and young people in Germany shall be reported on regularly to

¹³⁰ Para. 383.

¹³¹ Para. 397.

¹³² Para. 400.

¹³³ Para. 385.

¹³⁴ Para. 391.

¹³⁵ Para. 403.

¹³⁶ Recommendation IX-3.

the German Parliament.

In addition, the Federal Institute of Public Health (Bundesinstitut für Öffentliche Gesundheit) shall receive a mandate to prevent sexual violence against children and adolescents. This includes the development and distribution of information material for children, parents and professionals in the education sector which will address different aspects of the issue of sexual violence.

Furthermore, Germany considers preventive and awareness-raising media and public relations work important as well in this respect. With regard to self-produced images and videos by minors, we refer, for example, to the Federal Criminal Police Office's (BKA) prevention campaign 'Don't send it' 2024. Moreover, the "Law4school" project offers nationwide live webinars which raise legal awareness among students, parents and teachers on the topics of cyberbullying, sexting, etc. In Mecklenburg-Western

Pomerania participation in the webinars is financially subsidized.

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

- 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).¹³⁷
- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes.¹³⁸
- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities.¹³⁹
- 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.¹⁴⁰

Promising practices

In Germany, the issue of "sexting" is included in the curriculum of some of the 16 regions (Federal Länder), including Hessen, Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, responsible for the education curricula of all public schools. Moreover, in 2016, all 16 regions, together with the Federal Government's Independent Commissioner for Child Sex Abuse Issues have launched the initiative „Schools against sexual violence". More than 30,000 schools in Germany are to be provided with technical support and are encouraged to develop concepts to protect children against sexual violence and to integrate these into everyday school life. The aim is to break down insecurities of headmasters, teachers, social workers as well as other supporting staff to address the issue of child sex abuse and, by means of prevention and intervention measures, to better children and offer them rapid assistance. Prevention concepts include safeguarding principles dealing with risks of online exploitation as well as sexual education and programmes to empower children and adolescents. A monitoring report issued by the Independent Commissioner in 2018 stated that 6% of schools had carried out a risk analysis for their institution and implemented comprehensive prevention concepts. At present, an increasing number of Länder are in the process of enforcing the implementation of prevention concepts by imposing regional legislation to that end.

In the region of Baden-Württemberg, topics related to sexuality and sexualised violence in a digital context will be addressed in age-appropriate discussions at all scholastic levels, e.g. in connection with questions of personal identity, different sexual orientations, sexual diversity, personality growth or role models, as well as in the context of teaching modules on media usage, social media applications, consumer protection, data privacy, and personal rights. The basic Media Education course taught in

¹³⁷ Recommendation IX-2.

¹³⁸ Recommendation IX-4.

¹³⁹ Recommendation IX-5.

¹⁴⁰ Recommendation IX-7.

fifth grade offers a particularly wide range of tie-in points in this regard.

In the region of Hessen, there is education in the area of media, particularly on the topic of sexting, and parental involvement. Before sex education topics are discussed with the students, the persons legally responsible for their education are invited to a parent-teacher conference where they are briefed in a timely and comprehensive manner on the objectives, subject matter, and learning materials/aids that will be used for teaching. This gives the legal guardians the opportunity to talk to their children in advance about the topics to be covered and about the values given within their family.¹⁴¹ In addition, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs is funding the information portal SCHAU HIN! (LOOK AT IT!),¹⁴² the initiative office “Gutes Aufwachsen mit Medien (“Grow Up Well with Media”),¹⁴³ which provides assistance to parents and educational professionals with their educational mandate in the digital age.

Other promising practices:

¹⁴¹ In [Lehrplan Sexualerziehung. Für allgemeinbildende und berufliche Schulen in Hessen](#). 2016. Page 5.

¹⁴² See www.schau-hin.info

¹⁴³ www.gutes-aufwachsen-mit-medien.de

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 Germany

The Committee observes that part of the professionals who will or already work with children receive training and/or education on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in Germany (such information is provided to future professionals as part of their curriculum during their education), which focus specifically on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs.¹⁴⁴ More precisely, the Committee observes that persons working in contact with children receive information on the risks associated with CSISIV¹⁴⁵ during their professional education.¹⁴⁶ This includes students in social education and social sciences, and in applied sciences at the University of Potsdam in the Land of Brandenburg.¹⁴⁷

The Committee however notes that that the people most likely to receive education and/or training on child sexual exploitation and abuse are mostly those working in educational institutions, such as teachers.¹⁴⁸ The health sector is the second sector most likely to benefit from this education and/or training, and Germany indicated that psychology students focusing on “psychology of children and adolescents” at the University of Applied

Sciences of Potsdam (Fachhochschule) in the Land of Brandenburg receive information on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.¹⁴⁹ Germany further mentioned that students in Media Sciences, Communication Sciences and Social Sciences have courses on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse as an inter-disciplinary topic.¹⁵⁰

- To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Germany 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.¹⁵¹

Follow-up actions:

Medical field:

In the medical field, it is primarily specialists in paediatric and adolescent medicine who regularly come into contact with children. Specialist training in the field of paediatric and adolescent medicine includes the recognition of child endangerment and the initiation of measures, in particular in cases

¹⁴⁴ Para. 416.

¹⁴⁵ Para. 410.

¹⁴⁶ Para. 412.

¹⁴⁷ Para. 415.

¹⁴⁸ Para. 420.

¹⁴⁹ Para. 421.

¹⁵⁰ Para. 423.

¹⁵¹ Recommendation X-4.

of neglect, maltreatment and sexual abuse. In pediatric and adolescent surgery, intensive care medicine and pediatric and adolescent orthopaedics, dealing with child sexual abuse is also part of specialist training. In Germany, the federal states, which have transferred their responsibility to the medical associations, are responsible for specialist training.

The legal regulations on the training of doctors in Germany, which are contained in the licensing regulations for doctors (ÄApprO), also make it possible for medical students to be taught about children's rights and child protection. The specific design of the curricula is the responsibility of the federal states and their medical faculties. They can use the National Competence-Based Learning Objectives Catalog for Medicine (NKLM) as a guide, which is currently still optional for the faculties. Among other things, the NKLM contains learning objectives on child abuse, neglect and maltreatment, risk factors and signs of neglect, maltreatment and abuse of children and adolescents, including preventive measures and relevant legal references to child protection.

In a planned reform of the ÄApprO, it is envisaged that medical studies will be based on the NKLM. This should also make the learning objectives for dealing with child sexual abuse a mandatory part of medical studies.

Psychotherapy:

The issue of child sexual abuse falls into the area of trauma-related disorders. Psychotherapists have been and are qualified in accordance with the requirements of the Psychotherapists Act (PsychThG) as well as the associated training and examination regulations and the associated licensing regulations for psychotherapists (PsychThApprO). The content of the training or study also includes the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills to carry out psychotherapy for mental disorders that are related to illness as well as psychological

aspects of physical illnesses for which psychotherapy is indicated. This generally includes the diagnosis and treatment of trauma-related disorders. In addition, the course must explicitly teach skills for recognizing signs of sexual violence and its consequences. These federal requirements must be fleshed out by the states and universities through the respective curricula. The states and chambers are responsible for further training following the course of study. According to the Federal Chamber of Psychotherapists, the further training content includes, among other things, the mandatory treatment of trauma-related disorders in all specialist areas. Due to their qualifications, psychotherapists are able to comprehensively recognize and treat psychological aspects of child sexual abuse.

General Nurses:

The Training of general nurses and general nurses, who are specialized in Paediatric care in Germany, is regulated by federal law in a professional law and a training and examination regulation. Those regulations set the foundation for graduates to recognise signs of use of violence and abuse, this includes sexualized violence and sexual abuse. They also learn about necessary measures, especially if they are working with children.

Midwives:

The training of midwives in Germany is regulated by federal law in a professional law and a study and examination ordinance. Midwives are already trained during their studies to recognize signs of sexual abuse of infants at an early stage and to intervene preventively. The study and examination regulations for midwives (HebStPrv) stipulate the following competence to be acquired: "Graduates advise women and their families on offers of help in the event of violence, in particular domestic violence, work towards the use of preventive support services in the event of a risk of neglect, mistreatment or sexual abuse of the infant (...)." (Annex 1 III.3 of the HebStPrv)

Occupational therapy and speech therapy:

Training in occupational therapy and speech therapy in Germany is regulated by federal law in a professional law and a training and examination regulation. These also lay the foundation for graduates to be able to recognize situations of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children. In particular, the relevant legal, medical, psychological and pedagogical principles are taught as part of the training.

On a general note:

Germany will also take the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children into account in future reforms of healthcare professions under federal jurisdiction that have regular contacts with children.”

North Rhine-Westphalia decided the set-up of a new professorship for child protection and children's rights.

***See the appendix for information on the other sectors**

The Committee notes that in Germany some of the professionals working in contact with children have been trained and/or received education on how to identify potential situations where a child is a victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.¹⁵² Similarly, only some of the professionals working in contact with children seem to have been trained on the possibility to report situations where they have reasonable grounds for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.¹⁵³

- Therefore, the Committee **requires** Germany 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.¹⁵⁴

Follow-up actions:

¹⁵² Para. 428.

¹⁵³ Para. 429.

Medical field:

In the medical field, it is primarily specialists in paediatric and adolescent medicine who regularly come into contact with children. Specialist training in the field of paediatric and adolescent medicine includes the recognition of child endangerment and the initiation of measures, in particular in cases of neglect, maltreatment and sexual abuse. In paediatric and adolescent surgery, intensive care medicine and paediatric and adolescent orthopaedics, dealing with child sexual abuse is also part of specialist training. In Germany, the federal states, which have transferred their responsibility to the medical associations, are responsible for specialist training.

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¹⁵⁴ Recommendation X-7.

area of trauma-related disorders. Psychotherapists have been and are qualified in accordance with the requirements of the Psychotherapists Act (PsychThG) as well as the associated training and examination regulations and the associated licensing regulations for psychotherapists (PsychThApprO). The content of the training or study also includes the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills to carry out psychotherapy for mental disorders that are related to illness as well as psychological aspects of physical illnesses for which psychotherapy is indicated. This generally includes the diagnosis and treatment of trauma-related disorders. In addition, the course must explicitly teach skills for recognizing signs of sexual violence and its consequences. These federal requirements must be fleshed out by the states and universities through the respective curricula. The states and chambers are responsible for further training following the course of study. According to the Federal Chamber of Psychotherapists, the further training content includes, among other things, the mandatory treatment of trauma-related disorders in all specialist areas. Due to their qualifications, psychotherapists are able to comprehensively recognize and treat psychological aspects of child sexual abuse.

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On a general note:

Germany will also take the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children into account in future reforms of healthcare professions under federal jurisdiction that have regular contacts with children."

In addition to the training offers from the federal states which are responsible for the training of judges and prosecutors the German Judicial Academy which gives nationwide advanced training of judges from all jurisdictional branches and of public prosecutors had provided and is going to provide conferences like

- Forensic interrogation of children: potential and limitations of video interrogation,
- Blended Learning Programme: "The age-appropriate, complete hearing of children without the use of leading questions (psychological skills)",
- Violence in families - family and criminal law aspects, evaluation of credibility in case of suspected sexual abuse,
- Hearing of (child-) victim witnesses,

- Child protection procedures, especially if sexual violence is suspected.

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

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

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts with children (i.e. in the education, health and social protection, sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities), have an adequate knowledge of the risks associated with CSGSIV, for example through education or continuous training.¹⁵⁵
- to ensure that all the sectors where professionals work in contact with children, including when working on a voluntary basis, have adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and with specific reference to the risks associated with CSGSIV.¹⁵⁶

Promising practice

Regular events which include sessions on how to deal with self-generated, sexually explicit images or videos are organised at the Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences of the University of Applied Sciences of Potsdam (Fachhochschule) in the Land of Brandenburg.

Other promising practices:

The Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues and the education authorities of the federal states are providing a free four-hour digital training course, a ‘serious game’, on child sexual abuse. The course ‘What’s wrong with Jaron?’ provides school staff with practical basic knowledge. Only those who know what sexual violence means, who commits it and how it is planned can understand the importance of protection concepts and support their development. The course is recognised as further training throughout Germany. More than 75.000 teachers have taken the course.

The Independent Commissioner on Child Sexual Abuse Issues regularly speaks at universities on the phenomenon of child sexual abuse and the necessity to integrate child protection and specific knowledge on sexual abuse and exploitation within the curricula of university studies (such as social work studies) for professionals working with children (ex. social work studies).

¹⁵⁵ Recommendation X-2.

¹⁵⁶ 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 of the Committee on research specific to Germany

Germany has provided information on research undertaken on the issues raised by CSGSIV.¹⁵⁷ The Committee observes that research on CSGSIV was conducted within a wider framework, as part of broader research projects covering online risks,¹⁵⁸ sexual boundaries and violence using the media,¹⁵⁹ cyber-grooming,¹⁶⁰ and cyber-criminology^{161, 162}.

The Committee notes that courses at the Institute for Police Science of Brandenburg Police University deal with the psychological effects arising when a child's self-generated sexual image and/or video is unwantedly disseminated.¹⁶³ Such psychological effects have also been addressed in a scientific study, which deals with research results up to 2014. The study

notes the lack of and need for further empirical evidence on the "effects of sexting"^{164, 165}

Germany indicated that State authorities collaborate with universities and academia for the purpose of undertaking research projects addressing the issues raised by CSGSIV, and for some of these collaborations, Germany supported research financially.^{166, 167}

Moreover, the Committee notes that in the context of the EU Kids Online surveys, according to EU Kids Online 2020 Report,¹⁶⁸ the German national authorities supported the research and enabled the surveys to be carried out.¹⁶⁹

¹⁵⁷ Para. 437.

¹⁵⁸ See the project "ACT ON! – Aufwachsen zwischen Selbstbestimmung und Schutzbedarf" (Growing up somewhere between self-determination and the need for protection):

<https://act-on.jff.de/die-monitoring-studie/#sr>.

¹⁵⁹ Study on "Sexuelle Grenzverletzungen und Gewalt mittels digitaler Medien" (Transgression of sexual boundaries and violence using digital media):

http://docs.dpaq.de/11763-2a_expertise_sexuelle_gewalt_an_kindern_mittels_digitaler_medien.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Study on cyber-grooming:

https://www.fhpolbb.de/sites/default/files/field/dokumente/Ruediger/oranienburger_schriften_sonderausgabe_2013.pdf

¹⁶¹ Research by Dr. iur. Thomas-Gabriel Rüdiger, MA:

<https://www.hpobb.de/dr-iur-thomas-gabriel-r%C3%BCdiger-ma>

¹⁶² Para. 438.

¹⁶³ See publications by Dr. Thomas-Gabriel Rüdiger:

<https://www.hpobb.de/dr-iur-thomas-gabriel-r%C3%BCdiger-ma>.

¹⁶⁴ Study on "Sexuelle Grenzverletzungen und Gewalt mittels digitaler Medien" (Transgression of sexual boundaries and violence using digital media):

http://docs.dpaq.de/11763-2a_expertise_sexuelle_gewalt_an_kindern_mittels_digitaler_medien.pdf.

¹⁶⁵ Para. 441.

¹⁶⁶ The Federal Ministry for Education and Research funds a junior professorship in Sexual Sciences and Preventive Internet Research and the Independent Commissioner for Matters of Sexual Abuse of Children commissioned a study conducted by the University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf:

http://docs.dpaq.de/11763-2a_expertise_sexuelle_gewalt_an_kindern_mittels_digitaler_medien.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Para. 448.

¹⁶⁸ See EU Kids Online Report 2020:

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/assets/documents/research/eu-kids-online/reports/EU-Kids-Online-2020-10Feb2020.pdf>.

¹⁶⁹ Para. 454.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on research

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

- 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.¹⁷⁰
- 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.¹⁷¹

Promising practices

In Germany, review programmes have been put in place at the Federal Ministry for Education and Research. These programmes control the success of research. This allows the Ministry to become aware of research results and to use these results in practice.

Other promising practices:

UBSKM is funding a new research centre that was established at the German Youth Institute e.V. in late 2024. The current plan is to survey 10,000 students in 9th grade (14-16 years old) in 2026 about their life-time experiences with child sexual abuse and other forms of child maltreatment, including online violence.

¹⁷⁰ Recommendation XI-2.

¹⁷¹ Recommendation XI-4.

Appendix

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 information and communication technologies (ICTs).

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

The Committee observes that part of the professionals who will or already work with children receive training and/or education on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in Germany (such information is provided to future professionals as part of their curriculum during their education), which focus specifically on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs.¹⁷² More precisely, the Committee observes that persons working in contact with children receive information on the risks associated with CSGSIV¹⁷³ during their professional education.¹⁷⁴ This includes students in social education and social sciences, and in applied sciences at the University of Potsdam in the Land of Brandenburg.¹⁷⁵

The Committee however notes that that the people most likely to receive education and/or training on child sexual exploitation and abuse are mostly those working in educational institutions, such as teachers.¹⁷⁶ The health sector is the second sector most likely to benefit from this education and/or training, and Germany indicated that psychology students focusing on “psychology of children and adolescents” at the University of Applied Sciences of Potsdam (Fachhochschule) in the

Land of Brandenburg receive information on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.¹⁷⁷ Germany further mentioned that students in Media Sciences, Communication Sciences and Social Sciences have courses on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse as an inter-disciplinary topic.¹⁷⁸

- To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Germany 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.¹⁷⁹

Follow-up actions:

1. Education sector

a) Baden-Württemberg

First stage of teacher training:

Graduate teacher training is governed by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of Baden-Württemberg in agreement with the Ministry of Science and on the basis of the Framework Regulations for Graduate Teacher Training (*Rahmenvorgabenverordnung*)

¹⁷² Para. 416.

¹⁷³ Para. 410.

¹⁷⁴ Para. 412.

¹⁷⁵ Para. 415.

¹⁷⁶ Para. 420.

¹⁷⁷ Para. 421.

¹⁷⁸ Para. 423.

¹⁷⁹ Recommendation X-4.

Lehramtsstudiengänge, RahmenVO-KM). Due to their overarching significance as cross-cutting skills, prevention and dealing with professional ethics issues are a mandatory part of the curriculum. Universities are at liberty to place greater emphasis on these subjects than the mandatory requirement.

Second stage of teacher training:

In accordance with the pertinent training and examination regulations and training standards, the skills acquired in the first stage of teacher training are extended and deepened through preparatory training, training programs, and direct entry programs, with a strong focus on school practice and on the basis of the relevant curriculums. The topics of the seminars offered for the training and continuing professional development of teachers range from subject-specific didactics to fundamental cross-curricular reflection on ethical, social and legal issues.

Training of educators and “socio-educational assistants” (*sozialpädagogische Assistenz*):

Training programs for both educators and socio-educational assistants cover the topics of child protection and sexual violence. Both programs aim to prepare students for their future careers in day-care facilities for children and other child welfare facilities. They provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify situations where the welfare of a child is endangered, and to protect and support children. Curriculums therefore cover the following topics:

- sexual development of children,
- prevention of sexual violence,
- legal bases for socio-educational work,
- protective mandate where a child’s welfare is endangered,
- attachment-promoting relationships with children,
- cooperation with parents and other institutions,
- resilience and coping skills for children and
- media use and its effects on children.

Continuing professional development of teachers:

In order to support schools and teachers in preventing sexual violence, a range of courses for the continuing professional development of teachers are available in Baden-Württemberg, which are offered by the Centre for School Quality and Teacher Training (*Zentrum für Schulqualität und Lehrerbildung*, ZSL), also in collaboration with other partners.

In addition to this, the ZSL offers a wide range of courses on specific aspects of sexual violence and abuse. Alongside the established materials and training formats in Baden-Württemberg, the ZSL provides further support services that are practice-oriented, easily applicable and readily accessible.

Moreover, since March 2025, all state schools are required to develop and implement protection policies against sexual violence. In this context, it is mandatory for headteachers or deputy headteachers, along with one additional teacher from each school, to attend two basic courses on sexual violence and protection policies by the end of 2026.

b) Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Teacher and educator training

Inclusion of topics of child protection/sexual abuse in teacher and educator training in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (curricular requirements; mandatory or elective subjects):

- Inclusion in the curriculum for education seminars in the second stage of teacher training in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (mandatory).
- Under section 39a of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Schools Act, schools are required to develop policies for protecting students from sexual violence and bullying as part of their school mission and vision.
- The issues of child protection/sexual abuse are addressed in the development of the curriculum for

teacher training in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in accordance with the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Teacher Training Act.

Addressing ICT-specific risks (online grooming and CSGSIV) in professional education and training: The topic is covered in classes such as the media seminar (run by the state Media Education Centre (*Medienpädagogisches Zentrum*)) in the second stage of teacher training in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Educator programs:

There are three types of programs for becoming an educator, each with a set curriculum. “Domestic and sexual violence” is both specified in the curriculum as a topic in its own right, and addressed as part of a range of areas covered in the various modules. This is because domestic and sexual violence is a wide-ranging and complex issue, and varying levels of understanding (from basic to in-depth knowledge) can be required. Areas in which questions of domestic and sexual violence are addressed include:

- legal fundamentals, from basic rights to specific legal provisions for the protection of children under section 8a of Book 8 of the German Social Code (SGB VIII),
- prevention and intervention – the role of education professionals,
- violence in power and gender relations and in parent-child relationships,
- development, development theory and sexual development and
- critical reflections on the role of the educator and the balance between proximity and distance.

The focus in these programs is on the protection of children, and those in the charge of others, from violence.

Educator training follows the provisional curriculum that entered into effect in 2016. The relevant issues are covered as part of section 3 (education mandate) and of modules 2, 4, 5 and 6. The following are topics

in their own right: “working with children who have experiences that threaten their development, such as: physical, emotional or sexual abuse; endangerment of their welfare; and neglect”; sexuality; puberty; addiction prevention and violence prevention; coping with stress; safety skills; legal provisions and available assistance in cases of endangerment of a child’s welfare or of domestic or sexual violence; social work networks and partnerships against domestic violence; sexual violence; gender and sexual diversity; and endangerment of the welfare of a child.

Educator training (for working with children aged 0 to 10):

In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the program for becoming an educator follows the curriculum that entered into effect in 2017. The relevant issues are covered as part of modules 2 and 6, as part of the following topics:

- developmental risks and what education professionals can do,
- working with children who have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse or other threats to their development,
- endangerment of a child’s welfare,
- protective mandate where a child’s welfare is endangered and
- rules of professional conduct.

Socio-educational assistant (*Sozialassistent*) training:

The program for becoming a socio-educational assistant follows the provisional curriculum that entered into effect in 2014. The topic is covered as part of social studies and modules 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

There is also a “current issues” block, which allows teaching staff to specifically address current issues relating to domestic and sexual violence as part of social studies.

Modules 5 and 6 specifically address child protection measures and the legal basis for the concept of endangerment of a child’s welfare.

c) Saarland

Child protection policies in schools

Since 2023/2024, the policy on sexual violence has undergone a significant expansion, now covering the full spectrum of child protection, which obliges all schools in Saarland to establish a protection policy against all forms of violence on their premises.

Saarland Bildungscampus and *SOS Kinderschutz Saarbrücken* work together to help schools implement this obligation by offering relevant training.

In practice, schools fulfil their obligation by

- carrying out staff training days or by using advice services and
- participating in *Land*-wide training programs and certificate courses on child protection.

In summary, around 50% of schools in Saarland (across all types of schools) have received further training within just under two years.

Protection strategies at day-care centers

Since 2016, all day-care facilities have been required to develop and implement child protection policies. The policies must place special focus on sexual violence.

Saarland Bildungscampus supports all day-care facilities by offering *Land*-wide training programs and certificate courses on child protection. Responsibility lies with the service provider operating the day-care center.

2. Child welfare, social work and services, nursing, day care and healthcare

a) Baden-Württemberg

In the state of Baden-Württemberg, continuing education courses for professionals in social work, nursing, and healthcare exist, that encourage awareness of the protection and rights of children. Examples are trainings offered by the DHBW (*Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg*) as e.g. a training course to become a child protection specialist, a continuing education program in transcultural trauma pedagogy or the study program “Protection Concepts for

Vulnerable Groups in Nursing and Healthcare” which is designed to enable persons with regular contact to children to recognize early signs of violence against those in their care and to learn methods of violence prevention and protection concepts.

Child protection-related competencies are taught in relevant degree programs (e.g. social work, health professions), particularly with regard to prevention, the identification of risks to child welfare, and legal foundations. These contents are generally integrated into curricula in a discipline-specific manner rather than being designed as standalone, interdisciplinary modules.

For social work, the Qualification Framework for Social Work (QR SozArb) (version 6.0) represents an important professional point of reference. It describes the competencies to be acquired, but is not legally binding; however, it is regularly taken into account as a professional reference framework, particularly in the assessment of qualification objectives and competency profiles in accreditation procedures. Child protection is not explicitly defined as a mandatory component of training, but is instead implicitly included through requirements relating to working with vulnerable groups and risk situations.

Students completing the university Master’s programs in Psychological Psychotherapy acquire the competencies to appropriately apply diagnostic procedures for identifying risk profiles, suicidality, signs of risks to child welfare, as well as indications of experiences of physical, psychological, or sexual violence and unfavorable treatment trajectories (*vertiefte psychologische Diagnostik und Begutachtung*), and to independently recognize emergency and crisis situations – including suicidality, signs of risks to child welfare, indications of experiences of physical, psychological, or sexual violence, as well as adverse developments in the course of treatment – and to take appropriate measures to prevent harm to patients (*berufsqualifizierende Tätigkeit II – vertiefte*

Praxis der Psychotherapie).

In addition, a range of courses on child protection and prevention are offered for day-care facilities for children; under Section 45 of the Social Code, Book VIII (*Sozialgesetzbuch VIII*), the overall responsibility for ensuring attendance lies with the providers of these facilities.

b) Brandenburg

With the entry into force of the Brandenburg Child and Youth Act (*Brandenburgisches Kinder und Jugendgesetz*), the *Land* of Brandenburg introduced a duty to implement protection policies which applies across all child welfare services specifically aimed at children. These protection policies also ensure that professionals and all those working with children are appropriately qualified and are continuously made aware of child protection issues. They are expected to regularly engage in continuing professional development, to respect the rights of children, to identify risks and to possess clearly defined practical and intervention skills when dealing with situations where the welfare of children is endangered.

c) Bremen

In the *Land* of Bremen, there is mandatory education and training in the area of social affairs. From 2027, relevant courses, which were to date largely voluntary, are to become a mandatory part of initial professional qualifications. The topics covered include recognizing signs of abuse; appropriate intervention measures; legal obligations; and the legal framework. Binding guidelines are already in place for dealing with suspected cases of child abuse (sexual violence against children), with training courses systematically offered in the relevant areas.

d) Hamburg

All staff and volunteers in youth outreach programs in Hamburg who have regular contact with children are required to provide an extended certificate of good conduct in accordance with section 72a of Book 8 of the Social Code. This is not a voluntary

undertaking; it is mandatory requirement that applies to all public and independent providers without exception. Submission of a service-specific child protection policy is also a mandatory prerequisite for the award of funding to independent youth outreach providers. Funding is not provided if a protection policy is not in place.

All parent and family centers in Hamburg are also required to have a child protection policy. The centers are not permitted to operate if they do not have, and comply with, a child protection policy.

Staff at the public health authority who work, for example, in child health services (parent and baby services/early intervention, school medical services and school dental services) or in youth psychiatric services receive relevant training when they take up their posts, and the issue is addressed in team meetings and in professional development courses and symposia. Topics covered: child protection, responses to and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and risks associated with digital media. Participation in professional development is documented and team meetings are minuted. Content is constantly updated in line with the latest developments and emerging risks.

All staff at youth outreach, parent and baby and youth social work facilities receive training in child protection for their facility or organization in collaboration with the German Child Protection Association (*Kinderschutzbund*). The topic is also regularly addressed in team meetings. Hamburg's Social Work Training Centre (SPFZ) also regularly offers professional development courses in this area.

All general social services practitioners receive training as part of their introduction, and attend mandatory, in-depth child protection training provided by the Social Work Training Centre and the deputy general social services directors in the departments in which they work.

Practitioners who undertake the duties of public authority guardians and curators are confronted with many different forms of child abuse, and they are trained accordingly. In their role representing the interests of the child, they receive specific training on the rights of the child when they first take up the role.

Over the last three years, the fostering service has run three training courses with a specialized provider focused on prevention. Methods and procedures are kept up to date with the latest developments in the field.

In 2020 when Hamburg launched the cooperative education social work program in partnership with the Protestant University for Welfare and Social Work (*Evangelische Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit & Diakonie*), children's rights and child protection were set at mandatory topics for all students. All students on the program attend the "Interdisciplinary child protection symposium" ("Frankfurt model") in their second semester. The City of Hamburg and the Protestant University also jointly organize a child protection symposium for all students once a year; the topics vary from year to year. All students on placement in general social services must also take part in a series of training courses entitled "Aspects of child protection in practice in general social services". For all other students, the training course is optional.

e) Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Child welfare professions

The rights of children and child protection are covered by statutory provisions governing, and the curricula for, vocational training and degree programs for child welfare professions.

On 2 April 2024, the Act to Strengthen and Promote Child Participation Initiatives (*Gesetz zur Stärkung und landesweiten Förderung von Vorhaben der Kinder- und Jugendbeteiligung*) entered into force. The purpose of the Act is to create a reliable framework and transparent structures for strengthening the

voices of children and involving them in decision-making processes that affect them (<https://www.landesrecht-mv.de/bsmv/document/jlrKjF%C3%B6BetG MVpP1>).

On 1 January 2026, the Act on Structural Improvements in Child Protection (*Gesetz zur strukturellen Weiterentwicklung des Schutzes von Kindern und Jugendlichen*) entered into force. This Act sets out core elements of child protection aimed at strengthening the rights of children, developing the expertise and practical skills of professionals in the field (through training) and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration (https://www.regierungmv.de/serviceassistent/php/download.php?datei_id=1686016).

Social work degree programs

At the University of Rostock, the Department of Education and Social Work (IASP) does not offer a specific "social education" program; however, it does run a Master's program in education, in which students can specialize in child social education.

Several different modules in this Master's program explore the issues mentioned (for example the modules on "Knowledge, science, and profession studies in social education", and "Social work in schools"). The aim of including issues of sexual violence was one of the main reasons for revising the Master's program, which has been running since the 2022/2023 winter semester.

At Neubrandenburg University of Applied Sciences, domestic and sexual violence is addressed on the social work and early years education Bachelor programs, and on the psychosocial counselling and social work studies Masters' programs, both in mandatory electives and as part of placements/in placement seminars. Nonetheless, this is just one of many topics covered on these general degree programs. It therefore cannot be guaranteed that all students will have systematically engaged with the issues – unlike with the question of child protection, in which all students in the above fields are systematically trained.

f) Saarland

The Saarland Child Protection Act, which entered into force on 21 December 2023, made the development of professional standards to improve child protection in the work of child welfare services a mandatory requirement. Under section 14 of the Saarland Child Protection Act, the state is obliged to further promote the development, application and review of protection policies by providing expert advice and suitable training and qualification programs.

3. Justice sector

a) Federal Level

Section 37 of the Juvenile Courts Act (*Jugendgerichtsgesetz*) and Section 23b of the Courts Constitution Act (*Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz*) require juvenile and family court judges to possess specific knowledge in their respective fields. The German Judicial Academy (*Deutsche Richterakademie*) regularly offers continuing education courses several times a year to provide the necessary training particularly in the areas of criminology, education, social education, youth psychology and communication with children. For the courses see below.

b) Bavaria

Under Article 6 of the Bavarian Judges and Public Prosecutors Act (BayRiStAG), judges and public prosecutors in Bavaria are required to engage in continuing professional development to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills. Professional development, including training on the ethical and social foundations of the law for professional practice, is supported and promoted by their superiors and by the Bavarian Ministry of Justice.

Continuing professional development provided for personnel in the Bavarian justice sector includes a wide range of courses, in particular on family law and criminal law, that address the legal and psychological aspects of working with children (see under the second follow-up actions for details).

Staff working in family and criminal law in particular have to deal with cases in which children are affected. Family court judges therefore have a huge responsibility, and training for family court judges is thus of particular importance. That is why the Bavarian Ministry of Justice has, for many years, offered a comprehensive range of courses for family court judges in Bavaria. A particular focus is on dealing with parent and child matters.

The induction courses for family court judges (Part 1 - Part 3), which are mandatory for all judges joining a family court unit for the first time, cover substantive family law and procedural law in family matters, extensively and in depth. As well as child welfare law, a key focus is the law on parent and child matters and on hearing parents and children. Another example of relevant professional training is the regular "Introduction to family court practice" seminar (Part 3) for family court judges. It teaches attendees (further) key principles of psychology, with a focus on child developmental psychology, and communication skills to ensure that the questioning of children is sensitive and appropriate to their age and stage of development. The seminar also addresses and explores in more depth ways of working with the other parties in proceedings to try and reach a solution, and the relevant aspects of child welfare law for proceedings in family matters.

c) Hamburg

In the justice sector, (youth) criminal court judges, public prosecutors and family court judges in particular have regular contact with children. Those who work in these professions require particular skills and expertise to meet the specific challenges of working with children, particularly where those children have been the victims of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. To meet those requirements, professional development is not only of great significance, it is also, for that very reason, enshrined in law.

In addition to the federal law (section 37 JGG and section 23b GVG), under section 3b sentence 1 of the Hamburg Judges Act (HmbRiG), judges are required to engage in continuing professional development to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills. The same applies for public prosecutors under section 22 of the Hamburg Civil Servants Act (HmbBG). Employers must promote training with appropriate measures (cf. section 3b sentence 2 of the Hamburg Judges Act and section 22 sentences 3 and 4 of the Hamburg Civil Servants Act).

To ensure compliance with statutory requirements, judges and public prosecutors can take part in conferences and seminars organized by the *Land*, and those run by the German Judicial Academy. The events address both questions of substantive law and psychological, behavioral and interdisciplinary topics.

Hamburg responded to the complexities of dealing with sexual offences, in particular sexual offences against children, by setting up special divisions for child protection and sexual offence cases at Hamburg Regional Court with effect from 1 January 2026. The criminal cases that come before those divisions require considerable experience, excellent communication skills, specialist legal knowledge and great sensitivity. The presiding judges in the grand criminal divisions contribute, above all, their expertise in dealing with traumatized witnesses when evaluating evidence and conducting proceedings. Hamburg's Justice and Consumer Protection Authority assists the divisions by providing a range of training courses, addressing in particular psychological and legal aspects and interview techniques in sexual offence cases. The following courses, organized by the *Land*, are among those on offer:

- “Dealing with disturbing evidence in criminal proceedings”,
- “Judgments in criminal cases: the evaluation of evidence in complex situations” and
- “Selected aspects of the law on sexual offences”.

d) Lower Saxony

The *Land* government of Lower Saxony is committed to improving the situation of children who come into contact with the Lower Saxony justice system. These children often find themselves in difficult circumstances – whether as victims in criminal proceedings or as parties to be heard in family court proceedings. On 12 November 2025, the parliamentary groups of the *SPD* and *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* submitted a motion entitled ‘Making court proceedings child-friendly – Setting up a coordinating body for child-friendly justice in Lower Saxony’ (Printed Paper 19/8965). The *Land* parliament has yet to decide on this issue. The aim of the newly established Coordination Unit for Child-Friendly Justice – which has already been created within the Division for Prevention and Victim Protection at the Lower Saxony Ministry of Justice – is to improve the situation by embedding within the system a consistent framework of criteria for protecting children's rights in terms of information, support, participation, facilities, etc.

In order to ensure effective victim protection, Lower Saxony is already making extensive and successful use of the alternative option of judicial examination by video under sections 58a and 255a of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and training courses are being made available to justice system employees, focusing on the particularly vulnerable group of child victim-witnesses. These (often interdisciplinary) training courses teach criminal court judges about child-friendly case management, how crime impacts victims and their behavior during proceedings, how to deal with those affected, and how to conduct examinations by video link. Special training courses looking at the nexus between trauma, victim protection and fact-finding strategies are also available.

In order to reduce the stress to which children are exposed during proceedings, the National Council against Sexual Violence Committed against Children and Adolescents – in collaboration with experts – has developed

guidelines for child-friendly justice and child-friendly questioning in criminal proceedings. These guidelines are available to those working in the justice system. In addition, efforts are currently underway within a federal/*Länder* working group to develop interdisciplinary standards for the interviewing of minors in criminal proceedings. The focus of all these measures is (also) on ensuring that the justice system deals with child witnesses in a trauma-sensitive and child-friendly manner.

Psychosocial support in court proceedings

For several years now, there has been a highly specialized psychosocial support service in Lower Saxony designed to assist people – particularly children – in the stressful circumstances of criminal proceedings. Victims of crime who are involved in criminal proceedings as witnesses or joint plaintiffs are supported throughout the entire process by specially trained staff. The focus is on providing support to help them cope psychologically and emotionally with the proceedings. Training courses are available to those working in the field, covering both specialist knowledge in the area of psychotraumatology and practical methods for stabilizing the children. Each year, more and more victims in Lower Saxony are making use of the vital support offered by the service of psychosocial support in court proceedings.

e) North Rhine-Westphalia

Pursuant to section 13 of the North Rhine-Westphalia *Land* Judges and Public Prosecutors Act, judges and public prosecutors have a general obligation to undertake further training. Employers must promote training with appropriate measures. Pursuant to section 42 (2) of the North Rhine-Westphalia Civil Service Act, civil servants are likewise obliged to maintain and develop their knowledge/skills and, in particular, attend training courses in the interests of their employer. Furthermore, under section 42 (2) sentence 1 of the North Rhine-Westphalia Civil Service Act, civil servants are entitled to undertake training measures conducive to their professional activities, provided that this

does not conflict with official duties.

There is a wide range of training options permanently available, not least because people who work in areas which can have a profound impact on fundamental rights and which carry major implications – such as family law and criminal law – need to have special training depending on the role in question.

Against this background, there is a strong expectation that civil servants, judges and public prosecutors are be willing to undertake training. This willingness is also a factor taken into account in performance appraisals, in accordance with the relevant assessment guidelines within the justice system. Experience has shown that civil servants, judges and public prosecutors are aware of their particular responsibility in this regard.

f) Thuringia

Section 9 of the Thuringian Act on the Legal Status of Judges and Public Prosecutors in Thuringian Service (*Thüringer Gesetzes über die Rechtsverhältnisse der Richter und Staatsanwälte im Landesdienst*) provides for a general obligation of judges and public prosecutors to continue their professional development. According to section 55 of the Thuringian Ordinance on the Careers of Civil Servants (*Thüringer Laufbahnverordnung*), civil servants are required to participate in training courses providing introductory knowledge, skill upgrades or career advancement. In addition, they are required to undertake training on their own initiative to ensure they can meet the evolving demands of their duties. Professional development is supported and promoted by the highest service authority.

Willingness to engage in professional development is taken into account in performance appraisals. Regardless of this, a high level of willingness to engage in continuing professional development is evident in practice.

4. Police/law enforcement

a) Baden-Württemberg

During both their training and their studies, trainee police officers with the Baden-Württemberg State Police focus on the rights of children and young people and the state's duty to protect them from danger and harmful influences. This includes, for example, recognizing suspicious circumstances, interacting with the target group in an appropriate manner, and facilitating contact with support services and victim protection agencies.

In the event of concrete grounds for suspicion of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, the case is generally taken over by specialist investigators for sexual and child protection offences, who receive further specialized training for this task. This includes the conduct of criminal investigations relating to child or youth pornography produced by the suspect or by others, or other acts of sexual abuse committed via the internet.

b) Brandenburg

In the training programs provided by Brandenburg Police, the topic of sexual offences is covered primarily within the subjects of criminalistics / forensic science (securing of evidence and interrogation) and criminology.

The bachelor's degree program for the higher intermediate police service and the master's degree program in criminalistics both address various aspects of digital sexual offences under the heading "digital policing". These aspects range from sexualized deepfakes, through various aspects of child pornography, to the phenomenon of cybergrooming. In addition, the programs address options for prevention and repression.

c) Saarland

Saarland University of Applied Sciences for Administration gives an introduction into the phenomenology of sexual offences and child pornography and investigative measures to investigators.

5. Sport, culture and leisure

a) Federal level

The German Olympic Sports Federation and its youth arm, *Deutsche Sportjugend*, have called on member organisations to implement measures against sexual violence in a phased model, and proof of implementation is required before funding is released. One measure requires associations to examine the suitability of all full-time, part-time and volunteer staff working in youth sports. This includes the signature of an undertaking (code of ethics) to comply with standard, responsible values in contact with children, and the submission of an extended certificate of good conduct. Another measure is covering the gender-, age- and target-group-appropriate prevention of sexual violence as an integral part of training for sports licences. Specific learning outcomes are defined in the applicable framework curriculum. Topics addressed include forms of violence, risk factors, prevention strategies and protection. To date, the focus has been exclusively on sexual violence.

b) Bremen

In the *Land* of Bremen, there is mandatory education and training in the area of sport and culture.

The relevant topics are an integral part of vocational training for swimming pool attendants.

There are mandatory training courses in some particularly sensitive sections of the culture sector (such as in the national youth theatre programme). Mandatory courses for music schools and for education staff in public libraries is currently at the planning stage.

c) Hamburg

In the field of organised sports, coaches, instructors and supervisors in particular have regular contact with children. The structure of organisations varies widely across the sports sector. Some of those involved in organised sports are full-time, paid staff. In the majority of sports clubs and associations, however, those coaching or helping with youth sports are volunteers.

The Hamburg sports association (HSB) and its youth arm, HSJ, meet the federal child protection requirements. With both public grants and internal funding, the HSB/HSJ implement the following measures: all HSJ staff take part in mandatory awareness training on the prevention of sexual violence. A module on the prevention of sexual violence is mandatory in all training courses for sports licences, and in all courses for those training to be youth leaders. Further measures are a matter for the Land sports associations and the regulations differ from *Land to Land*.

The HSB and HSJ work to ensure that HSB member organisations also implement the requirements set by the German Olympic Sports Federation. To this end, the HSJ signed an agreement with the Social Affairs Authority (now called the Authority for Schools, Family and Vocational Training) in accordance with section 72 a of Book 8 of the German Social Code (SGB VIII) on stopping individuals with relevant criminal convictions from working in this area. The child protection measures set out in that agreement must be in place for the receipt of HSJ funding. The child protection measures are as follows:

- Checking extended certificates of good conduct,
- The appointment of an officer for the prevention of sexual violence, their training by the HSJ and the publication of their details on the club/association website,
- Signature of an undertaking (code of ethics),
- Risk analysis,
- Development and implementation of intervention guidelines,
- Development and implementation of a code of conduct,
- Development and implementation of a complaints management system,
- Addressing the prevention of sexual violence in the youth work rules/statute (recommendation),
- Ensuring that no full-time staff, part-time staff, volunteers or individuals on a volunteering year who become the subject of police investigations or

prosecution by the public prosecution office have contact with minors, in accordance with section 72a(1) of Book 8 of the Social Code.

To date, all measures have related to the prevention of sexual violence. The HSJ is planning to expand the range of topics covered in the near future to address all forms of violence, and to extend the focus on digital violence and addiction. Although, as mentioned, funding is conditional on meeting requirements, there is no body that sets requirements and monitors sports clubs' implementation of child protection measures or their compliance with statutory obligations on the training of coaches, instructors and supervisors.

The Committee notes that in Germany some of the professionals working in contact with children have been trained and/or received education on how to identify potential situations where a child is a victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, only some of the professionals working in contact with children seem to have been trained on the possibility to report situations where they have reasonable grounds for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.¹⁸¹

- Therefore, the Committee **requires** Germany 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.¹⁸²

Follow-up actions:

1. Education sector

a) Baden-Württemberg

See above.

b) Bremen

In the *Land* of Bremen, awareness of these issues is ensured through an extensive (if largely voluntary) range of training courses and projects in all relevant fields.

School as an institution is for all children, and therefore has a central role in child protection. Improving child protection in school means engaging with the issues at various levels:

- Internal school protection policies ensure the consistency and quality of safeguarding measures. They define clear responsibilities and set out the procedures to follow in specific cases. This reduces the burden on staff.
- Specially appointed guidance teachers provide an official point of contact for children and can seek further assistance where required.
- All staff work to create an “eyes open” culture. They know what signs to look

out for and recognise when children are in difficulty. The pupils know that they can confide in them.

The following training courses for schools are held on a regular basis (for all education staff):

- Acting professionally in cases of suspected sexual abuse; *Land* School Institute (LIS),
- “Stop that!” – When students overstep sexual boundaries: how can schools respond?; LIS,
- Talking to pupils one-on-one in cases of sexual violence; LIS,
- “Is something wrong?” Endangerment to the welfare of the child in a school context; LIS and Regional Support Centres (ReBUZ) in collaboration with the Office of Social Services,
- Acting professionally in cases of suspected abuse; *Bremer Jungenbüro* support organisation in collaboration with the counselling centre *Schattenriss e.V.* and
- Discussion techniques in cases of abuse; *Bremer Jungenbüro* in collaboration with *Schattenriss e.V.*

More advanced training courses are offered for guidance teachers.

“Sounds wrong: civic courage in combatting depictions of abuse” is a project run in partnership with the police. The focus of this police campaign is on the criminal nature of abuse images. Videos and other material are designed to inform young people and their parents about the issues. There is also targeted information for education professionals (pre-school and school), including teachers.

¹⁸⁰ Para. 428.

¹⁸¹ Para. 429.

¹⁸² Recommendation X-7.

b) Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Inclusion of topics of child protection/sexual abuse in teacher and educator training (curricular requirements; mandatory or elective subjects):

- Inclusion in the curriculum for education seminars in the second stage of teacher training in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (mandatory)
- Under section 39a of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Schools Act, schools are required to develop policies for protecting students from sexual violence and bullying as part of their school mission and vision.
- The issues of child protection/sexual abuse are addressed in the development of the curriculum for teacher training in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in accordance with the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Teacher Training Act.

Continuing professional development for teachers and other education staff (course title, organiser and frequency):

- “Analogue. Digital. Safe. Protection policies for a good school culture” symposium, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children,
- “Combatting sexual abuse in the digital space. Empowering young people” symposium, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children, one-off event,
- 5th Child Protection and Media Conference, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children,
- Series of courses on “Protection policies for prevention and intervention – combatting sexual violence in schools”, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children, 2021 to 2024 (courses for 2026 are currently at the planning

stage),

- Basic training course as part of training in leadership roles, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children,
- “Safety in sport and preventing sexual violence” as part of the Sport Symposium, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children in collaboration with the *Land* sports association, twice a year, “bewusstSIGN” (project providing easy access to information on support services in cases of sexual violence), Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children, 2022-2024
- “Online grooming: (re)acting together”, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children in collaboration with fobizz, on-demand online training course,
- Preventive discussions in the classroom on sexting and naked images, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children in collaboration with fobizz, on-demand online training course,
- Can we recognise child sexual abuse? Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children in collaboration with M.I.S.S. sexual violence counselling centre, individual sessions,
- “Heroes, not trolls” project, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children in collaboration with the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania police, regular sessions,
- “Combatting sexual abuse in the digital space. Empowering young people” symposium (February 2025).

Addressing ICT-specific risks (online grooming and CSGSIV) in professional education and

training: The topic is covered in classes such as the media seminar (run by the state Media Education Centre) as part of the second stage of teacher training in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Day care:

Under section 17(2) of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Childcare Act (KiföG M-V), the operators of daycare facilities have a duty to ensure that their education staff take part in a reasonable level of regular professional development and are supported by the professional development and advisory service. Training courses are to include child protection and early intervention. Subject to the provisions of the relevant collective agreements, the employer has a duty to allow each employee at least five working days for continuing professional development. At least three of those five days are to be spent on training in line with the curriculum set out in the "Guidelines for the education of 0-10-year-olds in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania".

Local public agencies providing youth welfare services have a duty to organise sufficient professional development opportunities for education staff if daycare facility providers or their associations do not do so themselves.

The prevention of sexual abuse is part of the "body, movement, health and prevention" component of education. This is enshrined in section 3(1) no. 6 of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Childcare Act, and set out in practice in the "Guidelines for the education of 0-10-year-olds in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania".

c) Saarland

Since 2016, Saarland has been committed to child protection in day-care centres and schools by implementing preventive protection strategies. The goal of the Saarland government is to create conditions that reduce the risk of violations of (sexual) boundaries, (sexual) assaults or (sexual) violence in schools, and to establish preventive support structures that protect and support girls and boys who are at risk or

have already become victims.

In cooperation with the counselling service "Kinderschutz" at SOS Kinderdorf Saarbrücken and the Federal Government's Independent Commissioner Against Child Sexual Abuse ("No Room for Abuse" initiative), Saarland has been addressing this issue since 2018 by providing voluntary training and advice for all types of schools at the *Land* Institute for Education and Media as well as, since 2024, at the Saarland Education Campus.

The initiative has been implemented and fostered through a series of training courses focused on the development and refinement of preventive protection frameworks.

The focus is on information regarding

- child protection (legal basis and intervention plan, sexual violence as a threat to the child's welfare),
- the design of protection policies (definition, responsibility, aspects of an effective strategy) and
- the effective implementation of the policy at the local level (organisation, management, potential and risk analysis, procedures).

The following topics are explored in more depth:

- Sexual violence against children: risk potential, potential analysis: preventive structures at the school, intervention tools, (further) development of binding procedures for dealing with suspected or proven cases,
- Prevention: programmes for pupils and parents, school's code of conduct and mission statement
- Children's rights: participation, complaint structures
- Cooperation: training and advice structures,
- sharing of experiences and knowledge, work on case studies from schools

In the period from 2018 to 2023, the initiative reached almost 50 percent of all schools in

Saarland.

2. Child welfare, social work and services, nursing, day care and healthcare

a) Baden-Württemberg

In the area of child welfare, various local government, non-public and independent providers offer regular continuing professional development courses on a wide range of topics pertaining to child protection. Persons working in child welfare services can also obtain certification as child protection professionals or professionals with relevant experience by completing a qualification programme of several weeks. Courses are offered on a regular basis by organisations such as the Child Protection Association (*Kinderschutzbund*) and the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University (*Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg, DHBW*). To be eligible, applicants must hold a degree in the field of social education (or a similar qualification) and have several years of relevant professional experience.

In addition, the Municipal Association for Youth and Social Affairs in Baden-Württemberg (*Kommunalverband für Jugend und Soziales in Baden-Württemberg, KVJS*) offers a wide range of courses for the continuing professional development of professionals working in child welfare services. These include:

- From violence in the family to respecting boundaries – a series of courses on systemic work in the General Social Services of the Youth Welfare Offices,
- Legal topics in the field of school social work (module 2) – protective mandate,
- Fulfilment of the protective mandate by the General Social Services – risk assessment and support where there are indications of neglect of and violence against children,
- Recourse to the family court by the Youth Welfare Office where the welfare of a child is endangered,
- Starting a career at the General Social Service – qualification program for

new professionals,

- Sexual education for juveniles – promoting health and prevention work,
- Trauma-informed education,
- Trauma, triggers, flashbacks – explanation of terms and ideas to support work with children who may have experienced trauma,
- Clarifying suspected cases of sexual abuse

and many more.

The Municipal Association for Youth and Social Affairs in Baden-Württemberg offers a wide range of courses for the continuing professional development of professionals working in child day care. These include:

- Every child has the right to a non-violent upbringing – migration-sensitive child protection: Momentum for those who show commitment,
- Sexual education policy – theoretical foundations and practical implementation in day-care facilities for children,
- Protection policy on sexual violence in day-care facilities for children,
- Thinking ahead together – exchange meetings and counselling on how to further develop protection policies against sexual violence in day-care facilities for children,
- Recognising, naming and responding to boundary violations in day-care facilities for children; assaults perpetrated by educational professionals – providing team members and managers with expertise and practical skills,
- Changing perspectives! Specialist counselling and management of facilities in institutional child protection,
- Conducting meetings with parents in accordance with Section 8a of the Social Code, Book VIII: Protecting children and supporting parents,
- Implementing child protection professionally using the so-called

child welfare assessment scale (*KiWo-Skala*) - gaining expertise and practical skills in dealing with suspicions and

- Culturally sensitive prevention work in order to provide protection against sexual violence – dealing with sexuality, sexual education and sexual violence in intercultural work with parents.

b) Brandenburg

The *Land* of Brandenburg promotes awareness of the protection and rights of children, primarily through statutory qualification requirements and structural stipulations.

Providers and institutions in the child welfare sector are required to ensure that professionals regularly engage in continuing professional development. The *Land* of Brandenburg supports these efforts, for example, by providing expert counselling or handouts and by organizing symposiums.

The Berlin-Brandenburg Institute for Socio-Educational Training (*Sozialpädagogisches Fortbildungsinstitut Berlin-Brandenburg, SFBB*) is the main provider of continuing professional development courses in the *Land* of Brandenburg, offering specific training on protection against sexual violence for professionals working in child welfare services.

Regarding the health sector, courses on these topics are not governed by the *Land* law. However, we can inform that the German Midwives Association (*Deutscher Hebammenverband e.V.*) offers courses on this topic throughout Germany.

c) Bremen

In the child welfare sector, extensive training is offered both for public-sector staff and for employees of recognized non-state welfare service providers. Courses cover prevention, recognition and action in (suspected) cases of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.

d) Hamburg

A key priority for the public health authority is

raising awareness on the part of all staff for child protection and children's rights issues. In child health services (parent and baby services/early intervention, school medical services and school dental services) and youth psychiatric services, regular interdisciplinary case reviews are held, and the issues covered include sexual exploitation and abuse. Material on children's rights and protection is available and provided to families and partners (such as nurseries, schools, midwifery services and youth welfare services). Joint working groups and training courses promote and strengthen collaboration with the youth welfare offices, the police and other network partners.

Every year at its Social Work Training Centre, Hamburg offers seminars on child protection, children's rights and specifically on sexual violence. The seminars are aimed at social work, nursery and daycare practitioners.

e) Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

The providers of facilities and services have a statutory duty under the Act on Structural Improvements in Child Protection in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania to work to ensure that all individuals who are in direct contact with children as part of their work undertake a reasonable level of regular, appropriate professional development and are given sufficient time for reflection and supervision.

The professional development provider "*Schabernack - Zentrum für Praxis und Theorie der Jugendhilfe e. V.*", which receives institutional assistance from the *Land* of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, runs annual training courses on child protection and children's rights. The topics addressed in the courses include issues such as online grooming and self-generated images.

f) Saarland

As part of the professional development program of Saarland Youth Welfare Office, needs-based training courses related to child protection are offered on a regular basis. They are aimed at professionals working in child

welfare services as well as other professionals working with children, including those in related fields.

The training courses are offered in various formats, including one-day and multi-day training events, specialised workshops, and multi-part advanced training courses. The courses address key topics of child protection. These include prevention and intervention approaches in the context of sexual violence, including digital sexual violence, issues related to the protection of children in the media, the promotion of media literacy, the strengthening of professional confidence in handling suspicions of sexual violence and high-risk situations, and raising awareness of the specific risks faced by children as well as their needs. These programs are implemented either by the youth welfare office alone or in collaboration with specialised agencies and partners from civil society.

3. Justice sector

a) German Judicial Academy seminars

All judges and public prosecutors in Germany can attend seminars of the German Judicial Academy, for example:

- “Basic principles of juvenile criminal law: online symposium for newcomers in the juvenile criminal law department”,
- “The best interests of the child in European Law – the role of the family court”,
- “Child protection proceedings with a focus on sexual offences”,
- “Violence in the family: family and criminal law aspects and evaluations of credibility in cases of suspected sexual abuse”,
- “Blended learning course on the age-appropriate, complete hearing of children without the use of leading questions (psychological skills)”,
- “Psychology for family court judges: basic knowledge under section 23b(3) sentence 3 GKG”,
- “The examination/hearing of (child) victims”,
- “Hearing children in family court

proceedings”,

- “Psychological assessments in family law cases and conflict resolution by consensus”,
- “Forensic questioning of children: potential and limitations of video hearings”,
- “Practical questions of family law”,
- “Solution-driven approaches and the best interests of the child in custody and access proceedings”,
- “Psychiatry and psychology in criminal proceedings”,
- “Sexual offences and forced prostitution”,
- “New developments in criminal law”,
- “Victim support, victim protection and a trauma-informed approach to victims in criminal proceedings”,
- “Audiovisual media in criminal proceedings”,
- “The law on parent and child matters in family court practice; interdisciplinary aspects”,
- “Proceedings in parent and child matters in cases of parental intimate partner violence” an
- A new seminar in 2026: “The best interests of the child under European law: what should the family court do?”, which explores the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on the best interests of the child and the two new recommendations from the Council of Europe.

Relevant courses run by the German Judicial Academy include the regular multi-day seminars. Topics covered take account of the latest legal developments; the overall statutory framework, and international legal requirements. Many of the seminars/conferences listed here have been run multiple times before; key topics are therefore being addressed regularly and repeatedly.

b) Baden-Württemberg

In terms of continuing professional development, Baden-Württemberg offers a

wide range of specific training courses designed to raise awareness of child protection and children's rights.

The courses for judges and prosecutors offered by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Justice and Migration comprise multiple tiers. First of all, courses that are run by the *Land* itself are planned and hosted. In addition, courses are planned which are then hosted by the German Judicial Academy and which are open to judicial staff from other Länder. In turn, judicial staff in Baden-Württemberg have the opportunity to participate in courses planned by other Länder or the federal government and hosted by the German Judicial Academy. Furthermore, external training courses are regularly advertised.

In the area of criminal law, the two-day training course on “Questioning children in criminal proceedings” is of particular note. It is designed to teach practical skills in interrogation techniques and addresses procedural law issues in connection with proceedings relating to the protection of children, so-called “child protection proceedings”. The three-day training course on “Criminology and interdisciplinary skills in juvenile criminal proceedings” addresses the specific requirements for juvenile court judges and prosecutors established by the Act to Combat Sexual Violence against Children (*Gesetz zur Bekämpfung sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder*) and is designed to impart the relevant skills.

In the area of family law, a four-part series of modules entitled “Introductory training for family court judges” is offered annually. Each module is offered twice a year. With the exception of module 2, the modules are offered once in-person and once online in order to reach as wide a range of participants as possible. Among other topics, module 1 covers custody and rights of access. The three-day module 2 is dedicated to child hearings in family court proceedings and, among other things, aims to explore the fundamental psychological aspects involved in the hearing of children, with a particular focus on

suspected sexual abuse cases.

Special mention is made of the seminar offered by Baden-Württemberg, “Child protection proceedings with a focus on sexual offences”, which is targeted at public prosecutors, criminal judges and senior prison service staff. On the basis of practical cases, lectures and discussions, the seminar addresses, among other things, specific challenges in investigative proceedings – particularly the questioning of children – current legal developments in the area of sexual offences against children, the effects of sexual abuse and treatment options for victims.

c) Bavaria

Apart from the induction courses for family court judges (Part 1 – Part 3, see details above), the state-wide professional development program for Bavarian justice system personnel includes a wide range of courses for family court judges, including a number of seminars specifically focusing on parent and child matters. The regular four-day seminar “Children in family law proceedings: the best interests of the child versus rights, obligations and emotions” explores, in depth, questions such as: of a child; rights of access; and the psychological aspects of the will of the child, and of hearing children. Developmental psychology and communication with children are specifically addressed in a regular three-day seminar on interviewing and hearing children in family court proceedings. The seminar focuses in particular on interview techniques and on fundamental psychological principles when examining children.

A week-long seminar is organized each year for senior judicial officers who work on family law cases. It covers questions such as the structure of proceedings in guardianship and curatorship cases; international elements in parent and child matters; and the legal framework for hearing children. Regular regional training courses and dialogue also take place at the level of the higher regional courts for senior judicial officers who work on family law cases.

In the field of criminal law, too, a wide range of courses are offered that address interaction with child victims of crime, in general and in criminal proceedings.

Examination by video link and interaction with victims are covered in the following seminars, for example: "The forensic questioning of children: possibilities and limitations of video hearings", and "Victim support, victim protection and a trauma-informed approach to victims in criminal proceedings".

d) Berlin and Brandenburg

The Joint Legal Examination Office of the states of Berlin and Brandenburg (GJPA) is responsible for the continuing education of judges and public prosecutors in Berlin and Brandenburg.

As part of this responsibility, the GJPA offers numerous state-run events annually for judges and public prosecutors in Berlin and Brandenburg focusing on child and victim protection. These state-run events are held either in person at the Brandenburg State Judicial Academy in Königs Wusterhausen or online. They are generally offered annually. In appropriate cases, individual events are also opened to other professional groups, such as police officers or youth welfare office staff, to facilitate the interdisciplinary exchange required by the Istanbul Convention.

The primary goal of these events is to raise awareness among participating professionals regarding the handling of children, especially those affected by violence. The following state-run training courses, which address the topic of child/victim protection, serve as examples:

- "Introduction to the initial interview of children and adolescents, taking into account developmental and forensic psychological aspects,"
- "Audiovisual questioning in criminal proceedings pursuant to Section 58a of the German Code of Criminal Procedure,"
- "Psychological and psychotraumatological aspects of criminal

proceedings in cases of sexual offenses,"

- "Fundamentals of interviewing traumatized individuals and dealing with traumatized children,"
- "Psychosocial support during legal proceedings" and
- "Trauma and its consequences in court proceedings".

e) Bremen

In the *Land* of Bremen, awareness of these issues is ensured through an extensive (if largely voluntary) range of training courses and projects in all relevant fields.

Professional development available for judges and public prosecutors currently includes the following courses, which both raise awareness and provide practical guidance:

- "Key principles: proceedings in parent and child matters with a focus on child protection" (for family court judges),
- "The juvenile criminal law division" (for youth court judges),
- "Power, sexuality and masculinity. On the root causes of violence against women and children" (judges and public prosecutors),
- "Diversity questions in the context of sexual contact/grooming and child abuse" (judges and public prosecutors) and
- "Examining children in family law cases" (judges).

f) Hesse

The Hesse Judicial Academy offers a regular training course for judges and prosecutors in Hesse on "Proceedings relating to the sexual abuse of children." Judges and prosecutors in Hesse can also attend a seminar on "Questioning children in criminal proceedings", organized by the Baden-Württemberg judiciary.

g) Lower Saxony

The Lower Saxony Ministry of Justice ensures that judges and public prosecutors who regularly come into contact with children receive training on children's rights and on

protection against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. There are numerous training courses available for judges and prosecutors working in the courts and public prosecution offices in Lower Saxony; the program is regularly updated, expanded and adapted.

The content of specialist training courses for employees in the higher and higher-intermediate bands of the civil service includes, among other things, the legal and psychological aspects of hearing children, appropriate questioning techniques, and dealing with (traumatized) child witnesses.

As an example, the nationwide training seminar entitled 'Video examinations and forensic questioning of children who are victims of (sexual) violence' is described here in detail:

The seminar is targeted at criminal court judges and public prosecutors. It includes presentations on the legal framework for video examinations, while also covering topics such as forensic medical issues and child-friendly questioning.

The seminar begins by addressing the practical relevance and legal requirements of audiovisual examinations. The technical implementation and the related problems that frequently arise are discussed. Furthermore, the legal particularities of the examination of child witnesses (such as the right to refuse to give evidence, the appointment of a supplementary guardian, etc.) are addressed.

The second thematic block concerns forensic aspects of criminal offences against children. It looks at the range of services provided by the Department of Forensic Medicine at Hannover Medical School, as well as the procedures for requesting physical examinations and expert reports, and it outlines the easily accessible services offered by the Forensic Child Protection Clinic and the ProBeweis network. The lecturer sheds light on the (differential) diagnosis of symptoms in children resulting from physical and/or sexual violence. Particularly in the sensitive area of child abuse and sexual abuse, incorrect

diagnoses and a lack of confidence in how to proceed can have serious consequences for the children and their families. As a way of illustrating the forensic medical approach to the assessment of children, various types of injury are presented, along with potential pitfalls, necessary guidelines and examination methods, and the possibilities and limitations of diagnosis are discussed using examples. Drawing on numerous case studies, the differences between accidental and non-accidental injuries are outlined, and typical signs of violence and injury patterns are identified. In addition to physical symptoms, the course covers aspects of so-called 'shaken baby syndrome', investigative methods in cases of sexual offences, and typical differential diagnostic considerations. It also outlines how findings and documentation gathered through low-threshold procedures can be incorporated into a court-relevant expert report or a court hearing.

The second day of the course looks at child-friendly questioning in criminal proceedings.

Another key focus is on conferences and seminars dealing with child-friendly hearings in family law, which are regularly organized by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Justice. These events provide participants with the latest academic findings, practical methods and interdisciplinary approaches to ensure that hearings with children are age-appropriate, empathetic and as stress-free as possible. Participants receive practical recommendations on conducting interviews, avoiding traumatization and assessing the credibility of statements. A practical guide also provides additional support for judges and senior judicial officers during questioning.

h) North Rhine-Westphalia

The specific needs of children have been addressed for many years now by the central training program run by the Judicial Academy of North Rhine-Westphalia (JAK), taking into account the overall training requirements within the justice system. Seminars are held for judges specialized in criminal law or family law and for public prosecutors. This offering is

supplemented by seminars organized by the German Judicial Academy as well as local programs.

Training sessions provide comprehensive information on both the legal and psychological aspects of interviewing children, and are designed to equip participants to handle challenging situations when interviewing children of different age groups. Participants are made aware of and trained in how to deal with (traumatized) child witnesses and how to conduct interviews in a manner that is both empathetic and efficient, whilst also taking into account any psychological symptoms.

For child witnesses who are (potential) victims of physical, sexual and/or psychological violence, being questioned during criminal proceedings can be a source of psychological distress. In order for them to be able to speak reliably about their experiences and to help them come to terms with what has happened, interviews must be conducted with the necessary expertise. Training courses therefore impart knowledge about the consequences of victimization and provide an understanding of appropriate interviewing techniques to ensure that statements are not influenced or rendered worthless by inappropriate (suggestive) questioning. Using case studies as a starting point, participants learn how to assess the credibility of statements and how to plan interviews with children. The training also includes learning about the specific features of the *Childhood-Haus* in Düsseldorf, which is equipped with technology that enables audio-visual interviews to be conducted from spatially different locations. The aim – through better coordination of procedures, consultation among those involved and the use of video technology – is to reduce the number of interviews with children and, consequently, to minimize any resulting stress or traumatization.

In addition to providing an overview of the legal framework and the roles and options available to the other parties involved in the

proceedings, the course also presents psychological insights relevant to interviewing children, such as aspects relating to successful socio-emotional interaction with the children concerned.

The training options also include courses designed to provide qualifications/further training for psychosocial support workers who assist victims of violent crime during criminal proceedings. Here too, empathetic communication with children is a topic.

It is also worth mentioning that judicial and prosecutorial coordinators receive training in victim protection within criminal proceedings. Here too, the specific rights and obligations of children are addressed.

There are also training courses that focus on criminal offences directed at children. Examples here include child pornography and forced prostitution ('loverboys').

Stalking and protection against violence are also covered. The target group here includes family court judges and senior judicial officers.

It is also worth noting that there are training courses that address the issue of young people as perpetrators.

To help prepare for court hearings, a comprehensive practical guide is available in addition to the regular training courses offered by the Judicial Academy. This guide not only provides recommendations regarding the layout of the room but also includes templates for child-friendly instructions and questioning.

i) Saarland

The Ministry of Justice offers a wide range of training courses for all staff within its remit. These include, in particular, regular and continuing professional development courses focused on specific topics, such as protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well as issues related to dealing with children.

The range of training opportunities also includes conferences organized by the Ministry of Justice, for example the events “Conduct of proceedings dealing with parent and child matters in cases of violence within the parental relationship” and “Video-recorded judicial examination under Section 58a of the Code of Criminal Procedure – Theory and practice”.

In addition, professional development courses are also offered by the Commissioner for Child-Friendly Justice and Victim Protection at the Ministry of Justice, such as the event “The role of the public prosecution offices at the nexus between law, ethics and society” (2024).

In addition, all staff members can take part in the interdisciplinary e-learning program “Protection and support in cases of domestic violence – An interdisciplinary online course” which is available for interested professionals.

A joint training program by the **Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate** justice departments further offers the following events: “Violence within partnerships and domestic violence – Impacts on children”, “Forensic and criminological foundations for the practice of juvenile criminal law”, “Interministerial symposium: Violence in close social relationships/domestic violence”, “A psychological perspective on family courts – Part 1”, “Dealing with child access – Module II: Acrimonious couples”, “Criminal offences on the Internet”, “International and European family law: Divorce and parent and child matters”, “Introduction to the psychology of testimony”, “Symposium on digital policing – Transferring knowledge – Sharing experiences”, “Learning to deal with the particular psychological stress associated with the questioning of victims of sexual offences or abuse”, “(Socio-)Educational and psychological foundations and ideas for the practice of juvenile criminal justice”, “Proceedings concerning child abuse and child pornography”, “Video-recorded judicial examination under section 58a of the Code of Criminal Procedure – Theory and practice”, “Probation service conference – Violence”, “Cyberstalking – When victims are

defenceless”.

j) Saxony

In addition to the training offers that are provided by the German Judicial Academy, the *Land* of Saxony has provided and is going to provide the following conferences for judges and public prosecutors in Saxony:

- Examination of children and
- Forensic Psychiatry.

Beyond that, there has been a training offer in the section of Psychosocial Process support and Trauma (*Psychosoziale Prozessbegleitung und Trauma*) in the year 2024.

Additional to those training offers, Saxony takes part in interstate cooperations with other *Länder*. Those cooperations have provided and are going to provide the following training offers for judges and public prosecutors in Saxony:

- Basics of child custody proceedings with a main emphasis on child protection,
- Violence against children and
- Violence in families.

k) Saxony-Anhalt

At the state level, in Saxony-Anhalt, the following training courses were offered in addition to the continuing education programs of the German Judicial Academy:

- “Violence against Children,”
- “It Will Never Happen Again – Violence in the Family,” and
- “Psychological Training for Judges in Dealing with Child and Adolescent Witnesses.”

l) Thuringia

The German Judicial Academy regularly offers training courses that focus on the specific needs of children. In addition to the Academy’s course program, some training courses are offered by the *Land* Thuringia on its own or in collaboration with other *Länder*. For details on the training content, please refer to the comprehensive overview provided in the statement from North Rhine-Westphalia.

4. Police/law enforcement

a) Baden-Württemberg

Investigations by the Baden-Württemberg State Police relating to child protection or sexual offences (including those involving children) are always conducted by specially trained investigators. These investigators also provide advice to other agencies on identifying situations of risk and assessing the situation when initial suspicions arise.

As part of the 'Child Protection Offences' training course, investigators learn the specific requirements for conducting investigations. These include specific methods of committing sexual offences, including the use of information and communication technology, age-appropriate questioning of child victims and witnesses, specific aspects of forensic medicine, and the tasks and options available in witness support and psychosocial support during legal proceedings.

b) Brandenburg

In the context of the prevention work carried out by Brandenburg Police, subject-specific information is imparted in particular by the continuing professional development courses entitled "Social media" and "Special course on prevention".

The content of these courses includes topics such as age ratings, media counselling for parents and legal tools for dealing with digital violence, as well as information on the phenomena of cyberbullying, sexting and cybergrooming.

Topics such as the following were covered at the 2024 "Prevention Symposium":

- #seinkeinTeildavon ["don't be part of it"] – a campaign against child pornography run on Brandenburg Police's Instagram channel,
- cyberbullying,
- violence against women and children with a focus on impact-driven prevention,
- digital parents' evening,
- digital driving licence and
- youth media protection and media literacy.

The following seminars are offered as part of the continuing professional development provided by Brandenburg Police: The seminar "Violence in close social relationships – special module on domestic violence" addresses the specific group of child victims in the context of domestic violence. It presents the victim protection policy, provides information on available support, and highlights the particular importance of securing evidence. In addition, it covers the topic of "The dynamics of domestic violence and proactive counselling". The course "Psychological aspects in the hearing of children" covers topics including child victims, child witnesses and child perpetrators.

c) Hesse

In the Police Studies department at the Hesse University of Applied Sciences for Public Management and Security (HöMS), students gain an insight into a wide range of types of offence and criminal phenomena. The curriculum also examines children as victims of violence and abuse – including cyber-enabled abuse – and explores the consequences, in particular the psychological impact, from an interdisciplinary perspective. Child Advocacy Centres and "Houses of Juvenile Justice" (*Häuser des Jugendrechts*) are established models that are well known to the students.

As part of the specialist professional development programme for the police at HöMS, in-depth seminars are regularly offered to serving officers. These seminars cover a broad range of topics, including the video examination of (child) victims, sexual abuse, child abuse, rape, child pornography, domestic violence and intimate partner violence, as well as youth case management, victim protection and victims' rights.

In these seminars, participants not only learn about appropriate police procedures when dealing with minors, but also gain insights into prevention strategies relating to sexual abuse and child pornography. The provision of robust theoretical foundations alongside targeted awareness-raising measures empowers participants to act effectively and

confidently in their professional practice.

d) Saarland

Saarland University of Applied Sciences for Administration offers training sessions on “Hearing children as victims or witnesses in cases of sexual offences” to improve the ability of investigators to act with confidence in criminal proceedings. In addition, the University gives an introduction into the phenomenology of sexual offences and child pornography and investigative measures.

5. Sport, culture and leisure

a) Bremen

Training offered in the field of culture differs widely between the various cultural institutions. The most extensive range of professional development is provided in the theatre, dance and cultural education sectors.

In the sector of sport, alongside the swimming pool attendant training mentioned above, the *Land* sports association runs online seminars on child protection, prevention, and sexual violence in sport. These are aimed at instructors, general staff and sports club managers. Bremen’s gymnastics association runs a course entitled “Safe sports”, and violence in sport is one of the topics covered.

b) Hamburg

In addition to the measures above, the HSJ recommends that all individuals working in youth sports receive awareness training, and it offers training courses specifically for this purpose. The recommendation is not followed across the board. The HSJ also offers training for multipliers, who can then work within their organizations to raise awareness of sexual violence prevention on the part of coaches and instructors.

The HSJ is also committed to raising awareness of children’s rights, and works to develop good professional development options in this area for its member organizations. In 2024, for example, workshops (with project funding) were held for sports instructors on children’s rights and strengthening the role and voices of children

in sport.

c) Hesse

Child protection is also structurally embedded in Hesse’s sports sector. The following modules/courses on child welfare and safeguarding are currently an integral part of the training programmes run by the *Land* sports association and Hesse’s youth sports association.

Qualification programs

Instructor license C, Profile: children, 4 units (45 min each)

- Content: Relevance of the topic in sport; children’s rights and basic needs; boundaries and boundary violations; interpersonal violence in sport; prevention / development of protection policies (including minimum standards); appropriate responses to (suspected) cases; counselling and support services offered by Hesse’s youth sports association.

Intercultural instructor license C training, 4 units

- Club manager training, 2 units
- Youth instructor training, 4 units
- Supplementary “Inclusion” module, 2 units

Training courses:

- Introductory module: The welfare of the child. Practical approaches for the sports sector, 4 units,
- The welfare of the child in sports: Qualification for newly appointed guidance officers and
- Evening briefings on key topics (2–4 units); Possible topics: Intervention guidelines, risk assessment, public relations, minimum standards, parental engagement in sports clubs, legal framework, safeguarding/child welfare on trips and excursions.

Advanced training courses:

- Peer-on-peer abuse in sport: 4–8 units,
- Children’s rights: 4 units,

- Respect in elite sport: 4–8 units and
- Duty of care and social competence: 4–8 units.

Workshops for children within clubs:

- Loud & clear, 4 units

Members of the Hesse Youth Sports Association frequently participate in modules conducted by other sports federations:

- Introductory module: The welfare of the child, 4 units as part of sport-specific Level C instructor license qualifications.

d) Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Children’s rights and child protection are an integral part of various projects (for example: “*Kontaktstelle Kinderschutz*” supporting young people affected by crime, the “*Bündnis Kinderschutz*” child protection association, the “*Childhood-Haus Schwerin*” child advocacy centre; and “*Transferzentrum*”, a child protection and children’s rights knowledge transfer project at the University of Rostock), which organise relevant training courses for the fields of sport, culture and leisure. Online grooming, self-generated images and similar issues are covered in those courses too.

6. Interdisciplinary

a) Baden-Württemberg

As far as interdisciplinary programs are concerned, attention is drawn to the annual Child Protection Day. In 2026, the 17th Child Protection Day will be hosted by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Municipal Association for Youth and Social Affairs in Baden-Württemberg. Alongside specialist presentations, this interdisciplinary symposium primarily provides a platform for exchanging experience, thus offering an opportunity for improved networking in the field of child protection.

In addition, the “Joint Conference of the Ministry of Justice and Migration and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, and Integration of Baden-Württemberg on the

topic: ‘parental consensus – interdisciplinary cooperation for the welfare of the child’” is held twice a year. This conference is targeted at family court judges, lawyers specializing in family law, staff at Youth Welfare Offices and counselling centers, as well as experts. The aim of these programs is to achieve interdisciplinary cooperation among all professional groups involved, in the interests of child welfare. In 2025, for example, the topic addressed was “Children’s rights and justice: workshop on the content of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-friendly Justice, and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ Checklists for Professionals”.

To impart skills for action in suspected cases of sexual violence against children and young people, and to demonstrate ways to prevent sexual violence in one’s own environment, the regional police headquarters of the Baden-Württemberg police are currently implementing this topic in a situation-oriented manner across the region. The target groups include those responsible for upbringing, educators, and other persons with a duty of care for children and young people, particularly in the early childhood and primary school sectors.

b) Berlin and Brandenburg

The GJPA offers also events for an interdisciplinary exchange, i.e. “Joint exchange of experiences between the judiciary, police, and youth welfare office – Topic: Domestic violence and child custody matters”.

c) Hamburg

In addition to the (training) measures already mentioned, Hamburg has a specialised interdisciplinary Child Advocacy Centre (“*Childhood-Haus*”), which brings together child protection expertise from a range of sectors.

The Child Advocacy Centre has a multi-disciplinary team that works closely with the youth welfare offices, the police and the

justice sector. The Centre provides advice and support for children who have been victims or witnesses of abuse, sexual violence or neglect. Children who have suffered physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect can be examined in the Child Advocacy Centre by specially trained staff in a child-sensitive environment. In the event of an investigation or criminal or family court proceedings, the Child Advocacy Centre also provides a child-sensitive environment for police interviews or examination by prosecutors or judges.

The Child Advocacy Centre works in close collaboration with Hamburg's Social Affairs Authority, Justice and Consumer Protection Authority, and Authority for Internal Affairs and Sport.

Hamburg also provides support for witnesses in criminal proceedings to reduce the psychological impact on them. The service is free of charge and its use is entirely voluntary. Victims of serious crimes can also access psychosocial assistance in legal proceedings.

d) Hesse

Children's rights are enshrined in Hesse's constitution, making them a binding standard. An important element in implementation is the *Land* Action Plan for Protecting Children against Sexual Violence. Since 2012, the Action Plan has served as a strategic guideline for the *Land*. In 2023, following a broad-based interdisciplinary consultation process, the *Land* government adopted comprehensive amendments to the Action Plan. The Action Plan provides an inter-ministerial and interdisciplinary guideline for child protection across the entire *Land*. One of its central pillars is professional training. Among other things, the State Action Plan aims to systematically integrate child protection matters into the education curriculum and professional development programmes for all professional groups whose work involves regular interaction with children. Within the framework of the National Action Plan, Hesse is embracing the concept of cross-sectoral Child Advocacy Centres ("*Childhood-Häuser*") and addressing the resulting training needs of participating professionals from the fields of

medicine and psychology; from state and independent youth welfare providers, the police, the judiciary and specialist advisory centres, for example, with a *Land*-wide interdisciplinary range of training courses.

As part of the Action Plan, topics such as child protection and endangerment to the welfare of the child have been incorporated into further training and degree programmes for the police.

The Ministry provides around 200,000 euros in funding for *Land*-wide training courses on child protection issues. These courses enable a range of key practitioners, including those in child welfare services and disability support, to identify signs of ICT-facilitated abuse at an early stage, and teaches them how to address phenomena such as peer-on-peer abuse.

Following an interdisciplinary conference in 2023 to mark the establishment of Hesse's first Child Advocacy Centre in Frankfurt, additional training courses on interdisciplinary approaches to child protection have been made available to practitioners. These courses are designed to provide expertise in areas such as sexual violence in childhood and adolescence, child-centred and trauma-informed approaches, communication with children in different professional contexts, the psychology of testimony, and audiovisual examination. Particular emphasis is placed on drawing on the perspectives of those affected alongside insights from various professional disciplines.

Hesse has appointed a Child Protection Commissioner, thereby establishing a new office with a prominent public profile. The Commissioner promotes civic engagement and the implementation of child protection measures, and provides expert guidance during the implementation of new initiatives. The Commissioner's mandate includes further enhancing cooperation between academia, practitioners and the political sphere in the field of child protection, with a specific focus on sexual violence and digital forms of abuse.

e) Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

There are annual interdisciplinary child protection conferences covering various aspects of child protection.

f) North Rhine-Westphalia

There are numerous opportunities for developing professional expertise beyond traditional judicial training. These include participating in inter-institutional discussion groups run by child protection services, or taking part in networks aimed at combating sexual abuse. Many local courts take part in interdisciplinary knowledge-sharing events in their area.

Furthermore, 'interdisciplinary family law case conferences' are held in some areas. These bring together participants from various specialist fields (family courts, youth welfare offices, the police, the public prosecution office, experts, guardians ad litem and child protection services) who discuss a hypothetical practical case.

g) Saarland

Child protection platform/e-learning platform:

Under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Women and Health, the Saarland child protection platform www.Kinderschutz-im-Saarland.de was launched in 2020, featuring an e-learning platform available throughout the *Land* of Saarland. It provides professionals from various disciplines as well as volunteers with free access to the specialised and extensively evaluated professional development courses on child protection developed by Ulm University Hospital. As these course modules, which are directed at professionals from various disciplines, are closely aligned with one another both in terms of didactics and content, a common language for child protection among all professionals in Saarland can be implemented. This helps improve the cross-disciplinary collaboration in child protection cases. This helps prevent avoidable friction and misunderstandings and ultimately benefits children affected by sexual violence.

Currently, the following course modules are available free of charge to people in Saarland via the child protection platform:

- Trauma-informed pedagogy,
- Child protection in healthcare – A basic course for all healthcare professionals,
- Leadership skills relevant to child protection within institutions – An online course for senior staff,
- Protection policies in organisations – Designing protection processes in a participatory and mindful way,
- Trauma therapy,
- Sexual violence against children – Fundamentals, prevention and intervention,
- Good child protection practices,
- Developing protection policies in the context of voluntary work and
- Violence prevention in the context of voluntary work.

Since its launch, the portal has become well established within the work of the Saarland Child Protection Commission and has turned out to be a valuable source of information and training within the Saarland child protection landscape, benefitting both professionals and people volunteering in the leisure sector. Since May 2023, the Child Protection Officer Kai Frisch has been responsible for operating the platform. It has since been further developed as a knowledge platform for the child protection landscape of Saarland.

(Regular) professional development programs offered by specialised sexual abuse counselling services:

Since mid-2000, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Women and Health – which is responsible for child protection – has been working with the district youth welfare offices and the Saarbrücken Regional Association to achieve structural improvements in the field of child protection, in particular better coordination of protection and support services for victims of sexual abuse, as well as on the further development of quality standards. In 2003, a joint prevention policy against sexual abuse was developed, bringing

together the counselling services *PHÖNIX*, *NELE* and *SOS Beratungszentrum Saarbrücken*. The counselling service *Neue Wege* is involved in Saarland's prevention policy on offender work and offers specialised relapse prevention for children who have committed sexual offences.

Grant agreements were drawn up between the *Land* of Saarland, the relevant sponsoring associations, the districts and the Saarbrücken Regional Association to serve as the basis for the cooperation with local providers of child welfare services and for the funding of the counselling centres. In addition to setting professional standards for counselling work,

the grant agreements also stipulate the providers' obligation to offer target-group-specific training events for professionals from various disciplines as well as for multipliers active in clubs and associations. Consulting on the development of protection policies is a priority in this context.

h) Thuringia

Interested professionals can expand their expertise by participating in inter-institutional exchanges of experience.

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

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

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts with children (i.e. in the education, health and social protection sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities), have an adequate knowledge of the risks associated with CSGSIV, for example through education or continuous training.¹⁸³
- to ensure that all the sectors where professionals work in contact with children, including when working on a voluntary basis, have adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and with specific reference to the risks associated with CSGSIV.¹⁸⁴

Promising practice

Regular events which include sessions on how to deal with self-generated, sexually explicit images or videos are organised at the Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences of the University of Applied Sciences of Potsdam (Fachhochschule) in the *Land* of Brandenburg.

Other promising practices:

1. Baden-Württemberg

The Child Protection Day in Baden-Württemberg is worth mentioning (once again) as an example of practices aimed at encouraging 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 [...]. In 2026, the 17th Child Protection Day will be hosted by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Municipal Association for Youth and Social Affairs in Baden-Württemberg under the theme "Strong together for child protection". Shared responsibility for child protection makes it necessary to consider child protection from various perspectives and to develop joint solutions for providing more effective support to children. Therefore, professionals from the social,

¹⁸³ Recommendation X-2.

¹⁸⁴ Recommendation X-3.

justice and child welfare sectors, as well as from education, internal security and other relevant fields, are invited to come together to discuss the issues at stake and learn from one another. Hence, alongside specialist presentations, this interdisciplinary symposium primarily provides a platform for exchanging experience, thus offering an opportunity for improved networking in the field of child protection.

2. Brandenburg

The Healthy Children Network (*Netzwerk Gesunde Kinder*) and the Early Intervention Networks (*Netzwerke Frühe Hilfen*) strengthen preventive child protection within families and contribute to protection against sexual violence. They focus on early childhood (0–3 years), identify early signs of stress, neglect or risks, and reduce risk factors. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the networks (youth welfare and health), suspected cases of sexual violence can be handled in a more coordinated, rapid and professional manner.

In addition, the practical implementation of protection policies results in associations and organisations developing binding guidelines and tools for protection against sexual violence.

Furthermore, the Standing Conference of the Ministers for Equality and Women's Policy of the *Länder* is currently considering whether to launch a nationwide process to develop “Guidelines for the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence in the healthcare sector”. At the same time, efforts are underway (most recently at the Conference of Minister-Presidents in early March 2026) to launch a “Campaign to strengthen child protection”.

3. Hamburg

Legal education:

Law students engage with the topic of criminal law on sexual offences as part of their degree. One example is the “Insights into the law on sexual offences” class at the University of Hamburg, which won the Hamburg Teaching Prize. The class made the topic of criminal law on sexual offences, which is of great societal relevance and highly important in practice, accessible to all students as it allowed for this particular part of the law to be taught and discussed as part of their law degree. The class took account of and addressed the issue of potential trauma. A safe space was created to allow the topic to be discussed in a trauma-informed way and with the necessary sensitivity. Attendance was voluntarily, and care was taken to ensure that students knew what topics were coming up and were treated with respect.

Organized sport:

Various sports organisations have produced material to raise awareness. Hamburg's youth sports association (HSJ) publishes material on the prevention of sexual violence here: <https://hamburger-sportjugend.de/praevention-sexualisierter-gewalt>.

Parent and family centres:

In the future, parent and family centres in Hamburg's various districts are not to be set a standard child protection policy template. Instead, the conference of Hamburg parent and family centres is working collaboratively and participatively on a new approach: each policy is to be tailored to the circumstances of the specific centre. This process is deliberately moving beyond simply issuing a standard policy, and is ensuring that practitioners at each centre are actively involved in addressing child protection questions. Work on updating and adapting the policies is due to be completed in the summer of 2026.

Multidisciplinary network:

Child health services (parent and baby services/early intervention, school medical services and

school dental services), the youth welfare offices and the youth psychiatric services have established a multidisciplinary network. The network runs/facilitates regular meetings and training courses on topics including child protection, sexual exploitation and digital risks. Of particular note is the close collaboration with schools, nurseries, independent providers and youth welfare services to give families easy access to advice and support alongside the services of the public health authority.

4. Hesse

Hesse has set up an Advisory Council of Survivors, in which individuals who experienced sexual violence as children contribute to child protection initiatives and advise the *Land* government. This ensures that child protection efforts are informed by lived experiences and vital perspectives, facilitating the provision of appropriate information and more effective engagement with target groups.

To ensure *Land*-wide excellence when it comes to prevention and intervention, Hesse has also set up the *Land* Coordination Centre for Specialist Counselling on Sexual Violence in Childhood (LKSF). The LKSF is mandated to establish uniform quality standards for all counselling providers across Hesse. It also facilitates networking and the dissemination of information as well as the provision of contact points in respect of sexual violence and child protection.

5. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Continuing professional development for teachers and other education staff (course title, organiser and frequency): Online course for teachers in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania on preventing online grooming in primary schools, run by the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education and Daycare Facilities for Children; two sessions. Courses are also provided by external partners such as Law4School and by prevention officers from the police.

Addressing ICT-specific risks (online grooming and CSGSIV) in professional education and training: The Mecklenburg-Western Pomeranian Child Protection Agency (*Kinderschutzbund*), the Media Education Centre, the *Land* Criminal Police Office and the *Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater* theatre run training on online grooming in primary school (including “Internet ABC” material).