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FACTSHEET – HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND CONTINUOUS TRAINING

Lanzarote Committee monitoring findings on:

“The protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs): addressing the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGSIV)”

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This thematic factsheet is based on chapter X of the implementation report on higher education curriculum and continuous training. It has been prepared by the Lanzarote Committee Secretariat as a practical tool to clearly identify the Committee’s analysis, its recommendations to States Parties and promising practices, as well as difficulties in implementing the Convention. It does not include updated information on measures implemented by the Parties since the adoption of the report in March 2022. Parties and other relevant stakeholders are encouraged to inform the secretariat of any relevant measures implemented after that date, which may have an impact on the Committee's analysis and recommendations by completing this [online form](#) or by email to lanzarote.committee@coe.int.

General remarks

Persons who have regular contact with children in the education, health and social protection sectors and in areas related to sport, culture and leisure are at the forefront of the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children given their frequent 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 be 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.

Based on the information received from Parties and other stakeholders, the Lanzarote Committee addressed the education and training of professionals in relation to child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in general, and not only where it is facilitated by ICTs or results from the generation by children of sexual images and/videos of themselves. The objective was to provide an overview of the national legislation and practice regarding the inclusion of information on children’s rights, the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well as the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGSIV), in the education and training of professionals working in contact with children, including those working on a voluntary basis.

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

Article 5 of the Lanzarote Convention -Recruitment, training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children

1. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to encourage awareness of the protection and rights of children among persons who have regular contacts with children in the education, health, social protection, judicial and law-enforcement sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities.
2. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the persons referred to in paragraph 1 have an adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, of the means to identify them and of the possibility mentioned in Article 12, paragraph 1.

Information on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse with specific reference to CSGSIV provided to persons working in contact with children

Training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children on the risks associated with CSGSIV

Article 5 of the Lanzarote Convention provides that Parties ensure that persons who have regular contacts with children have adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children. The Convention does not prescribe a specific way of transmitting this information, it leaves it to the Parties to decide how this can be achieved, whether in the form of training, as part of their curricula, or in any other way. However, it does provide that such information should be provided to those who work with children in the education, health, social protection, judicial and law enforcement sectors as well as those who deal with children in the fields of sport, culture and leisure activities, including on a voluntary basis.

In addition, in its [2019 Opinion on child sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos generated, shared and received by children](#), the Lanzarote Committee stressed that “children *should be informed* that “any material that visually depicts a child engaged in real or simulated sexually explicit conduct or any depiction of a child’s sexual organs for primarily sexual purposes” is defined as “child pornography” by Article 20(2) of the Lanzarote Convention and that child self-generated sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos could therefore be considered to constitute “child pornography”.

In other words, children should be made aware of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse with specific reference to the risks associated with CSGSIV, an awareness which can be achieved in particular if those who have regular contacts with them are themselves made aware of such risks.

The Lanzarote Committee observed that persons working in contact with children receive information on the risks associated with CSGSIV in 14 Parties, and 2 other Parties are currently developing trainings or courses on this topic. All these Parties mention that information is provided to current or future school personnel, with only 6 mentioning other categories of professionals (such as, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists). However, the Lanzarote Committee recalled that Article 5 of the Convention also covers the training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children in the health and social protection sectors, and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities, as these extra-curricular professions have a crucial role in the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, as well as in assisting child victims. Parties were therefore encouraged to implement measures to ensure that all professionals who have regular contacts with children, as well as those working on a voluntary basis, receive education and/or training on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, with specific reference to CSGSIV.

Examples of promising practices identified by the Lanzarote Committee

In **Belgium**, schools in the **Flemish Community** can use the eSafety label, consisting of a questionnaire to understand where they stand in terms of ICT safety. On the basis of the questionnaire results, each school receives a personal action plan aimed at addressing weaknesses in school policy and increasing ICT safety. The subject of sexting is part of the questionnaire. In the Flemish community, Child Focus, Mediawijs, Sensoa, Mediaraven and Jong en Van Zin have developed a set of lessons and tools for teachers on sexting. The set contains the interactive online video 'Hé, het is oké' by Mediawijs, the play "Sex-thing" by Child Focus, various lessons, a brochure on the subject, and references to the Sensoa flag system.² A toll-free number "Assistance schools" (0800 /20 410) has been set up to provide guidance and information to educational professionals confronted with violence in schools, and Mediawijs has developed a website for professionals.

In **France**, educators, psychologists and directors of services for the judicial protection of minors receive education on media, image education and digital literacy for adolescents, as well as continuous training (4 to 5) on the place of digital technology in the construction of adolescents' identities and practices related in particular to social networks. These modules include the issue of CSGSIV. A remote training module on the risks associated with digital technology (*dangers du numérique*) is in development and will include elements on different forms of online child sexual abuse material. In addition, personnel of the national education system receive training in sexuality education, delivered during annual seminars and implemented by the Ministry of National Education as part of a national training plan. The personnel have access to pedagogical resources available on the website of the Ministry of National Education. In particular, two thematic fact sheets provide an exhaustive understanding of the issues related to CSGSIV.

In **Romania**, Save the Children, acting as the coordinator of the Safer Internet Centre of Romania, has been organising trainings for teachers and school counsellors certified by the Ministry of Education since 2019, which includes sections outlining the risks associated with CSGSIV, under the general theme of sexting and sextortion. They also provide professional workshops and trainings for social workers on the online risks for children and teens.

Training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

The Lanzarote Committee noted that a 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 24 Parties. In 11 Parties, such teaching focuses specifically on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs.

The Lanzarote Committee further observed that, even where some of the persons working in contact with children receive training or education on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, only a minority of the entire workforce actually benefits from them. While a majority of Parties mention training of professionals in educational institutions, other sectors, such as the medical and the social welfare sectors, remain underrepresented. In particular, only one reference is made to persons working in the field of sport, culture, and leisure activities with children. However, these are privileged sectors in which children generally relate to and where it might be easier for them to open up on these issues. In addition, in recent years, professionals or volunteers working in the sectors of sport, culture and leisure have been accused of sexual abuse and/or sexual exploitation of children, which makes it

² The Sensoa flag system is a tool that helps educators talk about and assess sexually delicate situations. More information can be found at: <http://www.seksuelevorming.be/sensoa-vlaggensysteem>

even more imperative to ensure that those working with children receive comprehensive training on these issues, both to raise awareness of the problem, and to ensure that abuse is identified in a timely manner in order to assist the victims.

In addition, the children themselves pointed to the inadequacy of some of the teachings they receive on these issues. While some of them felt that “teachers, should be more proactive and develop their digital and media literacy and that of the students, including on how to protect oneself from sexual abuse”,³ others stated that the “administration should control that all the necessary information is truly provided by the responsible people so as to ensure that these topics are not skipped by teachers”.⁴

“Educators’ opinions are either prosaic or extreme. We would like to have interactive, creative, understandable, reasonable discussions. Presentation skills and young attitude are cooler than status!” – Extract from consultations with children, 2018.

Examples of promising practices identified by the Lanzarote Committee:

In **Iceland**, the course “Verndum þau” (*Protect them*) is developed by specialists working in the Icelandic Barnahus. It is already available online, free of charge, to staff and volunteers working in sports and youth activities and will be made available to all people working with children as of 2022.

In **Norway**, the teaching aid “Snakke sammen” (“talking together”) was launched in April 2018. “Snakke sammen” is a digital learning platform intended to make adults more confident to talk with children about topics that they are worried about. The core content of “Snakke sammen” is a simulation game that provides practical training and help when it comes to broaching difficult subjects with children and young people, for instance sexual abuse online. The platform also contains films of a child in conversation with an adult, for teaching and inspiration, and articles so one can learn more about the topic. “Snakke sammen” can be used by any adult who is in contact with children in their daily work.

³ Extract from consultations with the National Network for Children, Bulgaria, 2018.

⁴ Extract from consultations with the Public Health Foundation, Georgia, 2018.

Recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee

The Lanzarote Committee **requires** those Parties that are not already doing so⁵ 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.⁶

The Lanzarote Committee **requests** those Parties that are not already doing so⁷ 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 sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs, for example through education or continuous training.⁸

The Lanzarote Committee **invites**:

- those Parties that are not already doing so 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.⁹
- all Parties to ensure that all the sectors where professionals work in contact with children, including when working on a voluntary basis, have an 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, for example through education or continuous training.¹⁰

Training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children on the means to identify sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, and of the possibility to report it

Article 5 of the Lanzarote Convention provides that Parties should ensure that professionals working in contact with children have an adequate knowledge of “the means to identify [sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children]” as well as of the possibility to report to the services responsible for child protection any situation where they have reasonable grounds for believing that a child is the victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, as mentioned in Article 12, paragraph 1. The Lanzarote Committee recalled that professionals’ knowledge of how to identify and report cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is the cornerstone of the protection of child victims, as it may be their only means of getting the help they need without being under the control of their offenders. However, these situations are sometimes not properly identified (see table below).

⁵ Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine.

⁶ Recommendation X-4.

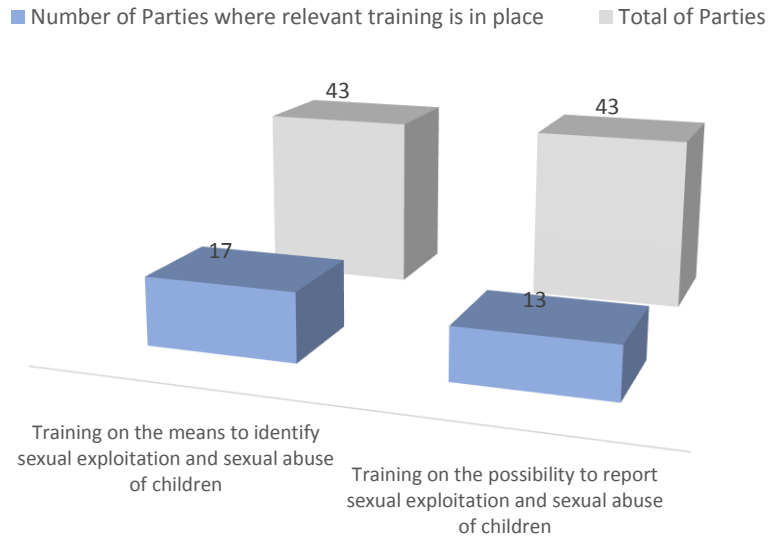
⁷ Albania, Belgium (Flemish and French communities), Denmark, Georgia, Greece, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Sweden, Ukraine.

⁸ Recommendation X-1.

⁹ Recommendation X-2.

¹⁰ Recommendation X-3.

Proportion of Parties in which professionals working with children receive training on identifying and reporting child sexual abuse



Examples of promising practices identified by the Lanzarote Committee

In **Italy**, a seminar entitled "Identification of School Intervention Models to Promote Child Protection from Violence, Abuse and Sexual Exploitation, Bullying and Cyberbullying," is provided in various schools in the country as part of a project implemented in collaboration between the Department for Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of University and Scientific Research. Aimed at school directors and teachers at each school level, as well as representatives of the Regional School Offices, the objective is to take stock of the regulatory and institutional context, to support the development of capacities to identify the phenomena, and to provide an overview of educational tools that can be used in the school environment to plan educational interventions and training courses in relation to these phenomena.

In **Latvia**, the Law on the Rights of the Child provides for the obligation of all specialists who are in contact or may come into contact with children to receive special knowledge in the field of the protection of children's rights, including: social workers, police officers, lawyers, judges, teachers, psychologists, custody court specialists, prosecutors, etc. In practice, specialists undergo a 40-hour training course which includes topics on children's rights, interinstitutional cooperation, violence prevention and identification. Every 5 years, specialists must complete a 24-hour training course on children's rights. Usually, these training courses are financed by the state or the municipality. On average, about 600 specialists attend the training course every year.

In **Monaco**, professionals working in the fields of education, sport, culture and leisure receive training to detect possible trauma caused by corporal punishment or sexual abuse of children. In addition, regular information sessions are organised in schools, in particular on how to identify child victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and on the possibilities to report them.

In **Montenegro**, according to the Professional Development Program for Teacher, members of the professional services of school receive training for identification and intervention in cases or occurrence of all forms of violence.

In the **Netherlands**, multiple knowledge kits have been developed in order to enable teachers and lecturers to signal sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Different programmes are available that can be used by educational institutions. When confronted with these signals, teaching personnel is under a legal obligation to report the exploitation or abuse.

Recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee

The Lanzarote Committee **requires** those Parties that are not already doing so to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts with children are equipped to identify any situation of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:

- in the education sector,¹¹
- in the health sector,¹²
- in the social protection sector,¹³
- in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities.¹⁴¹⁵

The Lanzarote Committee **requires** those Parties that are not already doing so to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts with children are informed of the possibility for them to report to the services responsible for child protection any situation where they have “reasonable grounds” for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:

- in the education sector,¹⁶
- in the health sector,¹⁷
- in the social protection sector,¹⁸
- in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities.¹⁹²⁰

¹¹ Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine.

¹² Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine.

¹³ Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine.

¹⁴ Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine.

¹⁵ Recommendation X-5.

¹⁶ Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine.

¹⁷ Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine.

¹⁸ Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine.

¹⁹ Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine.

²⁰ Recommendation X-6.

Training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children on the protection and rights of the child

Article 5 of the Lanzarote Convention provides that Parties should encourage “awareness of the protection and rights of children among persons who have regular contacts with children”. Its Explanatory report specifies that “rights of children” covers the rights as laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including for example, the right to life (Article 6), the right to be protected from economic exploitation (Article 32), the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, including sexual abuse (Article 19).”

The Lanzarote Committee observed that in a majority of the Parties, some of the professionals or volunteers working in contact with children receive education on the protection and rights of children, in different frameworks and on different topics, and that among these Parties, the focus of training is generally linked to the rights of children in the digital environment.

Examples of promising practices identified by the Lanzarote Committee

In **Bulgaria**, the State Agency for Child Protection conducts meetings on the introduction of media and online literacy as a university subject for teachers and students of education-related subjects. This subject is already taught at the University of Sofia, preparing them to convey this knowledge to children in schools.

In **Sweden**, there are national qualitative targets on the rights of children for programmes such as the Bachelor of Arts in Pre-School Education and other programmes educating future teachers and nurses. The qualitative targets are stipulated in the Higher Education Ordinance and are essential in the governing of Higher Education Institutions. For example, students must have acquired certain knowledge on harassment of children and/or rights of the child to be able to take the degree. The goals are slightly differently formulated for different degrees.

Recommendation of the Lanzarote Committee

The Lanzarote Committee **requires** Parties that are not already doing so²¹ to encourage awareness of the protection and rights of children among persons who have regular contacts with children in the education, health, social protection, judicial and law-enforcement sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities.²²

²¹ Albania, Andorra, Belgium (French community), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine.

²² Recommendation X-7.