



FACTSHEET – ICELAND

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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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Legal frameworks	5
III.	Investigations and prosecution.....	8
IV.	Jurisdiction rules	10
V.	International cooperation.....	12
VI.	Assistance to victims	14
VII.	Civil society involvement and cooperation.....	15
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.....	16
IX.	Education for children.....	17
X.	Higher education curriculum and continuous training.....	18
XI.	Research.....	20

I. 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, including Iceland.

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’s recommendations to improve or reinforce the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse can be found in boxes in each of the 10 thematic chapters. The key messages resulting from the children’s participation are also reflected throughout the whole report. Each chapter also includes examples of promising practices.

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 factsheet is based on the implementation report and has been prepared by the Lanzarote Committee Secretariat as a practical tool to be used by Iceland to clearly identify the relevant recommendations and actions addressed by the Lanzarote Committee to it. Therefore, it does not include updated information on measures implemented by the Parties since the adoption of the report in March 2022. Parties are encouraged to inform the secretariat of any relevant measures implemented

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

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.

Key findings of the implementation report as to all Parties

The Committee raised particular concerns that in the vast majority of State Parties, children are at risk of criminal liability in relation to their own self-generated materials, and that many Parties do not provide for the specific offence where a child is a victim of extortion involving the use of its CSGSIV.

Strengthening international cooperation was identified as of particular importance in this context, given that these offences often contain a transnational element. The Lanzarote Committee also called on Parties to establish jurisdiction where any constituent element of an offence takes place within their territory.

Many Parties were found to provide mechanisms to facilitate reporting of these crimes but without providing specific services to support and assist children who have been victims of online sexual abuse to recover. Lack of public awareness and education, including among children, about the specific risks associated with ICT facilitated sexual abuse and self-generated content was also identified as a common challenge.

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 Iceland

General remarks

The Committee observes that in Iceland, the Minister for Justice has introduced draft amendments to the Criminal Code, which address the issue of child self-generated sexual material in order to improve the protection of sexual privacy. The draft includes references to child self-generated sexual material.²

The Committee **invites** Iceland:

- 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”](#)^{3,4}
- Acknowledging that the term “child pornography” can be misleading and undermine the gravity of the crimes it refers to, to rather use the term “CSAM” 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.⁵

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

In order to demonstrate compatibility with the exclusion of criminal liability for the production

and possession of CSGSIV, Iceland pointed at the age of criminal responsibility, which is 15 years old, below which children cannot be held criminally liable for acts they commit.⁶ The Committee, however, highlights that reliance upon the age of criminal responsibility alone to exclude criminal responsibility does not correspond to a situation of full compliance with paragraphs 3-6 of the 2019 Opinion, since older children (those above the age of criminal responsibility) cannot avail themselves of this exemption.⁷

- The Committee therefore **requests** that Iceland 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.⁸

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 under special

² Para. 43.

³ The Terminology Guidelines also refer to the term “child sexual exploitation material”, indicating that this term can be used in a broader sense, see [“Luxembourg Terminology Guidelines”, pages 38-40 in particular.](#)

⁴ Recommendation II-3.

⁵ Recommendation II-1.

⁶ Para. 71.

⁷ Para. 72.

⁸ Recommendation II-6.

circumstances in Iceland.⁹ Furthermore, Iceland has rules that lead to the criminalisation of the distribution by children of CSGSIV of other children.¹⁰

The Committee therefore **requests** that Iceland ensures that:

- a child will not be prosecuted for sharing his/her CSGSIV with another child when such sharing is voluntary, consensual, and intended solely for their own private use.¹¹
- the distribution or transmission by children of sexual 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.¹²

On the “sexual extortion of children”:

In cases where the sexual extortion is intended to procure additional sexual images or videos, the Committee observes that Iceland prosecutes for offences related to “child pornography”, in concurrence with offences where threat is a core element, such as extortion or coercion.¹³ Iceland referred to further offences, such as corruption of children, which may be established in recognition of the constituent elements of coercion/extortion.¹⁴

When it is intended to procure other sexual favours from the child depicted in the images/videos or from other children, Iceland

reported that it would prosecute for sexual abuse of a child in accordance with Article 18 of the Convention for offences related to child prostitution and to participation in pornographic performances.¹⁵ In addition, Iceland also prosecutes conducts relating to the possession of the initial child sexual image or video as an offence related to “child pornography” under Article 20.¹⁶

In the case where it is intended to procure a financial gain or other property from the child, Iceland indicated that the conduct would be qualified as extortion or aggravated extortion, offences related to child pornography or child prostitution.¹⁷

The Committee **invites** Iceland:

- to take into account the situation where child self-generated sexual images and/or videos 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 child self-generated sexual images and/or videos and the act of extortion.¹⁸
- to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.¹⁹

⁹ Para. 78.

¹⁰ Para. 82.

¹¹ Recommendation II-8.

¹² Recommendation II-9.

¹³ Para. 98.

¹⁴ Para. 100.

¹⁵ Para. 102.

¹⁶ Para. 103.

¹⁷ Para. 106.

¹⁸ Recommendation II-11.

¹⁹ Recommendation II-12.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on legal frameworks

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

- 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.²⁰
- 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.²¹
- to adopt legislative or other measures which promote as a priority educational and other measures that will aim to support children in safely exploring their sexual development while understanding and avoiding risks deriving from the production and possession of CSGSIV.²²
- 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 CSAM.²³

²⁰ Recommendation II-2.

²¹ Recommendation II-4.

²² Recommendation II-7.

²³ 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 Iceland

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

- specialised units dealing with ICT facilitated offences against children within law enforcement,²⁴ and sections/departments dedicated exclusively to cyber or sexual crimes against children.²⁵
- specialised investigative units and prosecution services for handling ICT facilitated sexual offences where these are committed by children.²⁶ The Committee notes that cases concerning sexual abuse or exploitation of children facilitated by ICTs are managed by offices dedicated to sexual crimes in general in Iceland.²⁷
- training modules provided by State authorities and by external organisations for law enforcement agents related to aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.²⁸

- specific law enforcement training on production, possession, distribution or transmission of CSGSIV, and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion.²⁹
- training for prosecutors on aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.³⁰ The Committee notes that training for prosecutors includes investigation of digital offences,³¹ and that a special course for prosecutors addressing the challenges raised by CSGSIV, and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion was held in the autumn of 2019.³²

Additionally, the Committee observes that Iceland makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's international child sexual exploitation (ICSE) database.³³

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.³⁴

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

- 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.³⁵
- to ensure that law enforcement units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children adequately cover and/or are specialised in

²⁴ Para. 115.

²⁵ Para. 116.

²⁶ Paras. 135, 138.

²⁷ Para. 125.

²⁸ Paras. 145, 148.

²⁹ Para. 153.

³⁰ Para. 156.

³¹ Para. 164.

³² Para. 165.

³³ Para. 186.

³⁴ Recommendations III-3 and III-7.

³⁵ Recommendation III-4.

- offences against children involving CSGSIV.³⁶
- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT facilitated sexual offences against children have the necessary specialisation in the intersecting areas of children’s rights, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, ICT technical knowledge, and offences involving CSGSIV.³⁷
- CSGSIV 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.³⁸
- to offer joint (or “joined-up”) training for professionals, and particularly law enforcement, prosecutors and judges, involved in legal proceedings involving ICT facilitated child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, in order to ensure consistency at all stages.³⁹
- to ensure that training on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children for law-enforcement, prosecutors and judges contains a practical element, involving simulated or real cases.⁴⁰

On measures to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution:

- The Committee **requires** all Parties to ensure that investigations and criminal proceedings in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are treated as priority and carried out without any unjustified delay.⁴¹

Promising Practice

In Iceland, there is a specialised team within the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police that investigates sexual offences against children, including offences committed online, and within that team, a specialist is specifically tasked with and trained in analysing material that shows children in a sexually explicit or pornographic manner. Other police districts of the country can contact the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police for advice and assistance. In addition, the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police has hired an expert in digital sexual violence to review and prepare procedures within the national police in order to increase the quality of investigations concerning sexual offenses online, including offences against children.

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

- to ensure that measures, services and technology available to those in charge of identifying child victims of ICT facilitated sexual offences are up to date, reflect current practices across Parties, including establishing and using national child abuse material databases, and that resources are sufficiently allocated.⁴²
- to engage in and strengthen inter-Party cooperation for the purpose of identifying child victims and perpetrators of ICT facilitated sexual offences, including, where appropriate, by providing access to each other’s databases or shared databases, including those containing information on such perpetrators.⁴³
- 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.⁴⁴
- 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.⁴⁵

³⁶ Recommendation III-5.

³⁷ Recommendations III-9, III-10.

³⁸ Recommendations III-17 and III-19.

³⁹ Recommendation III-20.

⁴⁰ Recommendation III-21.

⁴¹ Recommendation III-30.

⁴² Recommendation III-24.

⁴³ Recommendations III-25, III-29.

⁴⁴ Recommendation III-31.

⁴⁵ Recommendation III-32.

IV. Jurisdiction rules

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

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

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))

Iceland has established laws clarifying the circumstances in which its national criminal law will apply to a transnational situation following the territoriality principle. Accordingly, Iceland has jurisdiction over offences covered by the Convention, even if they are committed outside the Icelandic State and irrespective of the identity of the perpetrator.⁴⁶

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

It appears that Iceland assumes jurisdiction in cases where an offence covered by the Convention is committed by one of its nationals or by a person who has habitual residence in its territory.

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))

It appears that Iceland does not apply this condition for prosecution.

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

Iceland has a clause in its criminal law which provides for the possibility of derogating from the general rules on jurisdiction based on international instruments (see, promising

practice below).⁴⁷ Accordingly, Iceland indicated that penalties shall be imposed in accordance with the Icelandic Criminal Code for conduct specified in the Convention, even if they have been committed outside Iceland, irrespective of the nationality of the offender, and even if the deed is not considered a punishable offence under the laws of the state involved.⁴⁸

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))

Iceland applies the passive personality principle in respect of offences committed against persons who have their habitual residence in its territory, only for serious or especially serious crimes. The Committee further notes that the authorities can take jurisdiction over offences committed abroad by a foreign national if they affect its own citizens. This includes all offences under the Convention, without any limitation.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Iceland indicated that in order to apply the passive personality principle, the dual criminality principle is not a prerequisite for prosecution.⁵⁰

The Committee **requests** Parties that are not already doing so, including Iceland, 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.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Para. 214.

⁴⁷ Para. 227.

⁴⁸ Para. 228.

⁴⁹ Para. 231.

⁵⁰ Para. 232.

⁵¹ Recommendation IV-9.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on the Jurisdiction rules

- The Committee **invites** all Parties 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 CSGSIV are involved,⁵²
 - solicitation of children for sexual purposes.⁵³

Promising practices

In Iceland, Article 6 of the General Criminal Code explicitly mentions the Convention among the international instruments on the basis of which specific jurisdictional rules apply. It provides that “punishment shall be imposed according to the Icelandic Criminal Code for the following offences even if they are committed outside the Icelandic state and irrespective of the identity of the perpetrator (...); conduct covered by the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of 25 October 2007”.

Iceland 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: offences under the Convention will be punishable according to the Criminal Code, even if they are committed outside the territory and irrespective of the identity of the perpetrator.

⁵² Recommendation IV-7.

⁵³ Recommendation IV-8.

V. International cooperation

The implementation report also analyses cooperation practices and examples of coordinated international responses, not only in the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse of children, but also in areas related to the prevention, protection and assistance of child victims and persons related to them.

Observations of the Committee on international cooperation specific to Iceland

The Committee observes that INHOPE⁵⁴ and the PROMISE Barnahus Network⁵⁵ conduct cooperation projects to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Iceland.⁵⁶

Furthermore, the Committee notes that European law enforcement representatives from Iceland attend the Europol's central training course "Combatting the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet" (COSEC).⁵⁷

The Committee also notes that the Promise Barnahus network and competence centre

facilitate cross-border exchange on good practices, develop practical tools and provide training for forensic interviewers from various countries, including Iceland. The forensic interviewers have formed an informal network and are engaged in exchange and common learning through online training and Avatar practice.⁵⁸

Iceland indicated that no procedural rules would limit the possibility for a victim to make a complaint before the competent authorities of their State of residence.⁵⁹

Generic recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation

- The Committee **requests** all Parties, including Iceland, to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Convention.⁶⁰

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

- 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.⁶¹
- 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.⁶²

- to regularly assess the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them.⁶³
- 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.⁶⁴

⁵⁴ www.inhope.org/

⁵⁵ <https://www.barnahus.eu/en/>

⁵⁶ Para. 255.

⁵⁷ Para. 259.

⁵⁸ Para. 266.

⁵⁹ Para. 268.

⁶⁰ Recommendation V-3.

⁶¹ Recommendations V-6, V-11.

⁶² Recommendations V-4, V-7, V-12, V-15.

⁶³ Recommendation V-5.

⁶⁴ Recommendations V-8, V-13.

- 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.⁶⁵
- 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.⁶⁶
- 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.⁶⁷
- 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.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Recommendation V-9.

⁶⁶ Recommendation V-10.

⁶⁷ Recommendations V-14, V-16.

⁶⁸ Recommendation V-19.

VI. Assistance to victims

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

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

The Committee observes that there are helplines for children that are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in Iceland⁶⁹ and that it collaborates with different bodies, including ministries and NGOs. This can be very effective for victims who benefit from this synergy and broader services.⁷⁰

To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Iceland to take the necessary legislative or other measures:

- to encourage and support the establishment of information services, such as telephone or internet helplines, to provide advice to child victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs as well as persons

wishing to help them, in a confidential manner or with due regard for their anonymity. Furthermore, these information services should be made available as widely as possible. This can be done in several ways: the service is available at extended hours, it is delivered in a language that the caller, especially the child, can understand, and it is free of charge.⁷¹

The Committee notes that Iceland was one of the few Parties to have provided information on the number of children who received support, assistance, and psychological help in connection with the dissemination of CSGSIV.⁷²

Generic recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims

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

- 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.⁷³

- 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.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Para. 280.

⁷⁰ Para. 277.

⁷¹ Recommendation VI-1.

⁷² Para. 297.

⁷³ Recommendation VI-2.

⁷⁴ Recommendation VI-4.

VII. Civil society involvement and cooperation

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

Observations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation specific to Iceland

The Committee observes that in Iceland, NGOs are the most involved counterparts in this field, along with the media. Schools and other educational institutions are also frequent actors.⁷⁵

Iceland emphasised that its support for the development of prevention activities by civil society takes the form of financial support and grants.⁷⁶

The Committee notes that Iceland develops and supports different activities which are aimed at

raising the awareness of not only children but also adults, such as parents, educators, doctors and social workers, about the existing risks and dangers of ICTs for children.⁷⁷

Iceland indicated that the interaction with civil society includes preventive and awareness-raising activities to minimise the risk of abuse that children face online,⁷⁸ and there are some projects specifically aimed at educating and raising children's awareness on the issue of CSGSIV.⁷⁹

Generic recommendations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation

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

- 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.⁸⁰
- 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.⁸¹
- to support civil society to carry out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV.⁸²
- to encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives⁸³ 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.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ Para. 308.

⁷⁶ Para. 310.

⁷⁷ Para. 315.

⁷⁸ Para. 320.

⁷⁹ Para. 321.

⁸⁰ Recommendation VII-3.

⁸¹ Recommendation VII-4.

⁸² Recommendation VII-5.

⁸³ 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.

⁸⁴ 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.

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 Iceland:

- to ensure that explanations of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves, with or without coercion, are included in the awareness-raising campaigns that they promote or conduct, whatever the target audience.⁸⁵
- 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.⁸⁶
- to use unchanged, wherever possible, the awareness-raising tools, materials and activities mentioned in this report or else to adapt them to their national contexts and their own languages and, if necessary, develop new ones, concentrating on videos and distribution through social media.⁸⁷
- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities.⁸⁸
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children regarding the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse that they face when generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves is led first and foremost by their peers.⁸⁹
- to promote themselves and to encourage the information and communication of the technology sector, the media, and other professionals to raise awareness among children, their parents, persons having regular contact with children, and the general public about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken.⁹⁰
- to step-up awareness-raising for parents and persons with parental authority about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken.⁹¹
- 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.⁹²
- 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.⁹³

⁸⁵ Recommendation VIII-1.

⁸⁶ Recommendation VIII-2.

⁸⁷ Recommendation VIII-3.

⁸⁸ Recommendation VIII-4.

⁸⁹ Recommendation VIII-5.

⁹⁰ Recommendation VIII-6.

⁹¹ Recommendation VIII-7.

⁹² Recommendation VIII-8.

⁹³ Recommendation VIII-9.

IX. Education for children

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

Observations and recommendations of the Committee on education for children specific to Iceland

The Committee observes that in Iceland information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs and the challenges raised by CSGSIV is provided to children in the "Life skills" course.⁹⁴

- Therefore, the Committee **invites** Iceland 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.⁹⁵

The Committee also observes a **difficulty in implementing the Convention** as in Iceland, the

choice to teach subjects related to sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and risks related to CSGSIV is left to the discretion of educational institutions or teachers as each school chooses what they address in classes named "Life skills".⁹⁶

- Therefore, the Committee **requires** Iceland 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.⁹⁷

Generic recommendations of the Committee on education for children

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

- to address in educational contexts the issue of the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV.⁹⁸
- 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).⁹⁹
- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes.¹⁰⁰

- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities.¹⁰¹
- to provide information to children on child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV, in their national curriculum or other non-formal educational contexts, in a form which is adapted to the evolving capacity of the children and therefore which is appropriate for their age and maturity.¹⁰²
- to ensure that parents, caregivers, and educators are involved, where appropriate, in the provision of information to children on the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, in particular as regards CSGSIV.¹⁰³

⁹⁴ Para. 399.

⁹⁵ Recommendation IX-7.

⁹⁶ Para. 387.

⁹⁷ Recommendation IX-3.

⁹⁸ Recommendation IX-1.

⁹⁹ Recommendation IX-2.

¹⁰⁰ Recommendation IX-4.

¹⁰¹ Recommendation IX-5.

¹⁰² Recommendation IX-6.

¹⁰³ Recommendation IX-8.

X. Higher education curriculum and continuous training

Persons who have regular contact with children in the education, health and social protection sectors and areas related to sport, culture and leisure are at the forefront of the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, as they have the most interaction with children under their supervision in these different settings. However, they may not be adequately equipped to inform children about their rights, to detect situations where a child is at risk of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse and to respond appropriately. It is therefore of crucial importance that they are well informed about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, both during their education and continuously during their careers, to enable them to adapt to emerging trends and risks in the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs.

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

The Committee observes that in Iceland, persons working in contact with children receive information on the risks associated with CSGSIV.¹⁰⁴ Further, Iceland indicated that the Action Plan against Gender-based and Sexual violence and Harassment provides for an interactive online course on sexual and gender-based violence available to all persons working with and for children and young people.¹⁰⁵

The Committee notes that at least 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 Iceland.¹⁰⁶ The Committee notes that in Iceland, 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.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, only some of the professionals working in contact with children seem to have been trained on how to report situations where they have reasonable grounds for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.¹⁰⁸

To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Iceland:

- 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.¹⁰⁹
- to ensure that the persons who have regular contact with children are equipped to identify any situation of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and are informed of the possibility for them to report to the services responsible for child protection any situation where they have “reasonable grounds” for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:
 - in the education sector
 - in the health sector
 - in areas relating to sport, culture, and leisure activities.¹¹⁰
- 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.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴ Para. 410.

¹⁰⁵ Para. 413.

¹⁰⁶ Para. 416.

¹⁰⁷ Para. 428.

¹⁰⁸ Para. 429.

¹⁰⁹ Recommendation X-4.

¹¹⁰ Recommendations X-5, X-6.

¹¹¹ Recommendation X-7.

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

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

- 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.¹¹²
- 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.¹¹³

Promising practices

In Iceland, the course “Verndum þau” (*Protect them*) is developed by specialists working in the Icelandic Barnahúsi. 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 the University of Iceland, students in the Faculty of Social Work have courses where they learn to identify situations where children are victims of sexual harassment and abuse, including with regard to online violence. They also discuss the working process in child protection cases, how to report suspected child sexual abuse, and how these cases are handled within the child protection system. In addition, all law students are required to take a course on family and inheritance law, which focuses on children's rights and child protection, and includes a discussion on the obligation to report violence against children.

¹¹² Recommendation X-2.

¹¹³ Recommendation X-3.

XI. Research

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

Observations and recommendations of the Committee on research specific to Iceland

Iceland has provided information on research undertaken on the issues raised by CSGSIV in general.¹¹⁴ The Committee observes that research on CSGSIV was conducted within a wider framework, as part of a broader research project covering online risks.¹¹⁵

The Committee observes a **difficulty in implementing the Convention** in Iceland, as no information was provided as to whether public authorities have collaborated with civil society when undertaking research on the issues raised by CSGSIV.

- Therefore, the Committee **invites** Iceland 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.¹¹⁶

Generic recommendations of the Committee on research

To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee **invites** all Parties, including Iceland:

- to collect data and undertake research at the national and local levels to observe and evaluate the phenomenon of CSGSIV.¹¹⁷
- 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.¹¹⁸

- to build on the findings from existing research on CSGSIV, when available, to ensure that policies and measures are best developed and appropriately targeted to tackle the issues raised by CSGSIV.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Para. 437.

¹¹⁵ Para. 438.

¹¹⁶ Recommendation XI-4.

¹¹⁷ Recommendation XI-1.

¹¹⁸ Recommendation XI-2.

¹¹⁹ Recommendation XI-3.