



FACTSHEET – ITALY

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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Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Legal frameworks	5
III. Investigations and prosecution	7
IV. Jurisdiction rules	11
V. International cooperation	13
VI. Assistance to victims	15
VII. Civil society involvement and cooperation	16
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	17
IX. Education for children	19
X. Higher education curriculum and continuous training	20
XI. Research	22

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 Italy.

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 Italy 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

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

Procedure.

in March 2022. Parties 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.

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 Italy

On production, possession, and transmission of CSGSIV

The Committee notes that within Italy's legislative framework, the term "child pornography" is used as defined within Article 20(2) of the Convention.²

- The Committee **invites** Italy to rather use the term "child sexual abuse material" (CSAM) for material depicting acts of sexual abuse of children and/or focusing on the genitalia of the child following the guidance set out in the "[Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#)"³ 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 the term "child pornography" can be misleading and undermine the gravity of the crimes it refers to.⁴

As regards adults' role in the production of CSAM through child self-generation, in 2019 the Italian Supreme Court specified that the production of CSAM by "using" a child to generate sexual images and/or videos qualifies as induction or instigation. The Supreme Court also qualified as conduct related to "child abuse material" the dissemination of sexual

images and/or videos self-generated by a child. As of 2019, Italian law explicitly punishes the illicit dissemination of sexually explicit images and videos, including of children.⁵

As regards criminalisation of production and possession of CSGSIV by children themselves, Italy pointed at the age of criminal responsibility (14) below which children cannot be held criminally liable for acts they commit to demonstrate compatibility with the above-mentioned exclusion of criminal liability for the production and possession of CSGSIV.⁶ Italy also noted that self-production and possession of self-generated material were not criminalised when the child(ren) in question have reached the legal age for sexual activities.⁷ The Committee underlines that relying on the age of criminal responsibility and the legal age for sexual activities to exclude the criminal responsibility of children, as advised in its 2019 Opinion, is insufficient as, in such cases, younger and older children may not be covered by the exemption.^{8 9}

The Committee observes that Italy criminalises distribution and transmission by children of their own CSGSIV subject to special circumstances.¹⁰

- The Committee thus **requests** that Italy ensure in its legal framework¹¹ that a child will not be prosecuted for sharing his/her sexual images

coincides with the legal age for sexual activities (14), the situation in practice appears to correspond to the Lanzarote Committee's above-mentioned recommendations. However, Italy would no longer be in compliance with Recommendation II-6 should these legal age thresholds no longer coincide in the future.

¹⁰ Para. 78

¹¹ The expression "legal framework" is not limited to legislation but should be understood in a broader way, e.g., through prosecutorial guidance or practice.

² Para. 49

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-1

⁵ Para. 52

⁶ Para. 71

⁷ Para. 73

⁸ Ibid

⁹ As the age for criminal responsibility in Italy (14)

and/or videos with another child when such sharing is voluntary, consensual, and intended

solely for their own private use.¹²

Generic recommendations of the Committee on the legal frameworks

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

- to strengthen the protection of children by introducing explicit references in their respective legal frameworks to conduct concerning CSGSIV, identifying the circumstances when children should not be held criminally liable and when they should be prosecuted only as a last resort;¹³
- to introduce in their legal framework a definition of “child sexual abuse material” in line with its Recommendation II-1 above;¹⁴
- 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;¹⁵
- 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;¹⁶
- to consider criminalising solicitation of children for sexual purposes (“grooming”), even when

it does not lead to either a face-to-face meeting or to producing CSAM;¹⁷

- when dealing with sexual extortion cases involving children, to take into account the situation where CSGSIV are used to force, coerce or threaten the child to give additional self-generated sexual images and/or videos, other sexual favours, a financial gain or other gain to the offenders by:
 - either creating a specific incrimination to address this situation,
 - or prosecuting both the initial detention of CSGSIV and the act of extortion;¹⁸
- to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.¹⁹

The Committee also **requests** that Parties:

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

¹² Recommendation II-8

¹³ Recommendation II-2

¹⁴ Recommendation II-3

¹⁵ Recommendation II-4

¹⁶ Recommendation II-7

¹⁷ Recommendation II-10

¹⁸ Recommendation II-11

¹⁹ Recommendation II-12

²⁰ Recommendation II-9

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 Italy

On the specialisation and training of authorities

The Committee observes that the investigation and prosecution units in Italy are already in line with some of its recommendations. Thus, it notes that Italy has a specialised unit in the law enforcement dedicated exclusively to child abuse material.²¹ Part of the law enforcement work is outsourced: a list of websites disseminating CSAM, called a "blacklist", is handed over to Internet Service Providers, in order to prevent and block access to these websites through filtering systems. The National Center for the Fight against Child Pedopornography on the Internet (CNCPO), acting as an operational body, frequently liaises with the Observatory for the Fight Against Paedophilia and Child Pornography, which acts at an institutional level. It is Italy's contact point for the police offices of the G7 countries dealing with cybercrime and is part of the Virtual Global Task Force (VGT) network.²²

In prosecution, cases concerning sexual abuse or exploitation of children facilitated by ICTs are managed by offices dedicated to combating cybercrime.²³ Italy has a pool of prosecutors in charge of dealing with ICT facilitated sexual offences against children.²⁴ As regards judicial proceedings, In Italy's

largest cities, there are court sections specialised in offences against vulnerable victims (including children) or crimes against the person, family and children, which include proceedings for sexual crimes committed against children and ICT facilitated crimes.²⁵

It appears that there is no specialised investigative unit in Italy dealing with child offenders; however, there is a specialised prosecution service handling ICT facilitated sexual offences committed by children.²⁶ Italy also has specialised sections within the court system which handle such offences.²⁷

- The Committee **invites** Italy to have units, sections or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences committed by children against other children for authorities responsible for investigation.²⁸

The Committee observes that Italy has training modules in place for law enforcement agents and prosecutors related to aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.²⁹ The content of trainings covers children's rights and international law and sexual offences and violence against children (law enforcement)³⁰, and sexual violence against children (prosecutors)³¹. Italy has specific law enforcement training on production,

²¹ Para. 116

²² Para. 120

²³ Para. 125

²⁴ Para. 126

²⁵ Para. 129

²⁶ Para. 138

²⁷ Para. 139

²⁸ Recommendation III-11

²⁹ Paras. 146 and 150

³⁰ Para. 152

³¹ Para. 164

possession, distribution or transmitting of CSGSIV, and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion.³² In 2018, Italy devoted a training course addressing judges, prosecutors and attorneys on children's rights in the digital environment including topics which were then included among the criminal offenses covered by the so-called "Red Code" (Law No 69/2019).³³

- The Committee **invites** Italy to ensure that training on the challenges raised by CSGSIV and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to prosecutors.³⁴

In Italy, judges and prosecutors are trained together and/or have the same training options available to them.³⁵ The Juvenile Court works with 'honourable judges', with high and proven professionalism and competence, in relation to protection of and problems relating to children.³⁶

- The Committee **requests** Italy to ensure that training on ICT facilitated sexual offences

against children is available for judges who are or will be working on these issues.³⁷

On victim and perpetrator identification

The Committee notes that Italy has victim identification functions located within units dedicated specifically to child abuse material or cyber-related sexual offences³⁸ (CNCPO). Italy makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's International Child Sexual Exploitation image and video database through units dedicated to cybercrime involving children, sexual offences, or child abuse materials.³⁹

- To improve the prosecution of perpetrators, the Committee **requests** Italy to take the necessary legislative or other measures, in conformity with the fundamental principles of their internal law, to ensure an effective investigation and prosecution of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, allowing, where appropriate, for the possibility of covert operations.⁴⁰

Generic recommendations of the Committee on investigations and prosecution

On the specialisation and training of authorities

The Committee **requests** those Parties that are not already doing so:

- to ensure that law enforcement units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children are adequately financed to ensure sufficient resources, including staff, equipment and training;⁴¹
- to ensure that 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.⁴²

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

- to ensure that the capacities of any investigative units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual offences against children take into account evolving technologies and online behaviours, and more specifically, that they reflect current practices used by perpetrators. Additionally, the Committee invites all Parties to exchange best practices between the relevant investigative units;⁴³
- to ensure that law enforcement units, services or persons specialised in ICT facilitated sexual

³² Para. 153

³³ Para. 165

³⁴ Recommendation III-16

³⁵ Para. 167

³⁶ Para. 168

³⁷ Recommendation III-18

³⁸ Para. 180

³⁹ Para. 186

⁴⁰ Recommendation III-28

⁴¹ Recommendation III-3

⁴² Recommendation III-7

⁴³ Recommendation III-4

offences against children adequately cover and/or are specialised in offences against children involving CSGSIV;⁴⁴

- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT facilitated sexual offences against children have the necessary specialisation in the intersecting areas of children's rights, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and ICT technical knowledge;⁴⁵
- to ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT facilitated sexual offences against children have sufficient specialisation in offences involving CSGSIV;⁴⁶
- to ensure that training on the challenges raised by CSGSIV and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion of children is available to judges;⁴⁷
- to ensure that measures, services and technology available to those in charge of identifying child victims of ICT facilitated sexual offences are up to date, reflecting current practices across Parties, include the establishment and use of national child abuse material databases, and that resources are sufficiently allocated.⁴⁸

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

- to provide specific training on ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, including when such offences involve CSGSIV, and ICT facilitated coercion or extortion to law enforcement agents who are likely to come into contact with such cases;⁴⁹
- 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;⁵⁰

- 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.⁵¹

On victim and perpetrator identification, data retention and expeditious proceedings

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

- to engage in and strengthen inter-Party cooperation for the purpose of identifying child victims of ICT facilitated sexual offences, including, where appropriate, by providing access to each other's databases or shared databases;⁵²
- to engage in and strengthen inter-Party cooperation for the purpose of identifying perpetrators of ICT facilitated sexual offences against children, including, where appropriate, by providing access to each other's databases or shared databases containing information on such perpetrators;⁵³
- 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;⁵⁴
- 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;⁵⁵
- 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.⁵⁶

⁴⁴ Recommendation III-5

⁴⁵ Recommendation III-9

⁴⁶ Recommendation III-10

⁴⁷ Recommendation III-19

⁴⁸ Recommendation III-24

⁴⁹ Recommendation III-14

⁵⁰ Recommendation III-20

⁵¹ Recommendation III-21

⁵² Recommendation III-25

⁵³ Recommendation III-29

⁵⁴ Recommendation III-30

⁵⁵ Recommendation III-31

⁵⁶ Recommendation III-32

Promising practices

In addition to training, *carabinieri* in **Italy** receive a handbook on “Guaranteeing the Rights of Minors – Vademecum for Police Forces”, which covers topics such as cyberbullying and CSAM, including that which results from CSGSIV.

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 Italy

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))

Italy did not submit information as to whether it applies the territoriality principle.

- The Committee **requests** Italy to take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish jurisdiction over transnational cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, when one of the constituent elements of the offence has taken place in its territory.⁵⁷

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

Italy informed that it could prosecute offences committed abroad by its nationals.⁵⁸ The Committee notes at the same time that Italy does not establish jurisdiction over offences established in accordance with the Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in its territory.⁵⁹

- The Committee thus **requires** Italy to establish jurisdiction over offences established in accordance with the Convention committed abroad by persons who have their habitual residence in its territory.⁶⁰

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))

Italy did not submit information as to whether it applies this condition.

- The Committee **requires** Italy to remove the requirement that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or a denunciation from the State of the place where the offence was committed for offences of sexual abuse (Article 18), offences concerning child prostitution (Article 19), the production of “child pornography” (Article 20(1)(a)) and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances (Article 21), when committed by one of their nationals or by a person who has his or her habitual residence in its territory.⁶¹

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

Italy did not submit information as to whether it applies this principle.

- The Committee **requires** Italy to remove the requirement for dual criminality 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 their nationals.⁶²

⁵⁷ Recommendation IV-1

⁵⁸ Para. 215

⁵⁹ Para. 217

⁶⁰ Recommendation IV-4

⁶¹ Recommendation IV-5

⁶² Recommendation IV-6

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))

The Committee notes that Italy applies the passive personality principle in respect of offences committed against a national, only for offences punishable of imprisonment of at least 6 years.⁶³ It further notes that in order for this principle to be applicable in Italy, the dual criminality principle is not a prerequisite of

prosecution.⁶⁴

- The Committee **requests** Parties that are not already doing so, including Italy, 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.⁶⁵

Generic recommendations of the Committee on jurisdiction rules

The Committee **invites** those Parties that are not yet doing so:

- to remove the requirement for dual criminality for offences of possessing, offering, distributing, transmitting, procuring child pornography, and the fact of knowingly gaining access to child pornography through ICTs,
- when CSGSIV are involved when committed by one of their nationals,⁶⁶
- to remove the requirement for dual criminality for offences concerning solicitation of children for sexual purposes (Article 23) when committed by one of their nationals.⁶⁷

⁶³ Para. 231

⁶⁴ Para. 232

⁶⁵ Recommendation IV-9.

⁶⁶ Recommendation IV-7

⁶⁷ Recommendation IV-8

V. International cooperation

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

Observations and recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation specific to Italy

INHOPE, WeProtect Global Alliance and ECPAT carry out projects in Italy to prevent and combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children.

Italy did not provide information as to whether it allows victims of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse in matters related to CSGSIV in the territory of a Party other than the one where they reside to make a complaint before the competent authorities of their State of

residence, in accordance with Article 38 (2) of the Convention.

- The Committee thus **requires** Italy to ensure that the victims of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse in matters related to CSGSIV in the territory of Parties to the Convention which are not members of the European Union other than the one where they reside, may make a complaint before the competent authorities of the State of their residence.⁶⁸

Generic recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation

The Committee **requests** all Parties to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Convention.⁶⁹

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

- to consistently analyse the possibilities to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the Convention;⁷⁰
- to assess on a regular basis the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them;⁷¹
- to assess, strengthen and develop international cooperation between the Parties of the Convention for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷²
- to consistently analyse the possibilities to expand international cooperation with

countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the Convention for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷³

- to strengthen cooperation with relevant intergovernmental bodies, and with transnational networks and other international organisations and initiatives due to their capacity to mobilisation, their world-wide scope, and their flexibility to work, for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁴
- 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;⁷⁵
- to support regional and international capacity building efforts to improve policy and

⁶⁸ Recommendation V-18

⁶⁹ Recommendation V-3

⁷⁰ Recommendation V-4

⁷¹ Recommendation V-5

⁷² Recommendation V-6

⁷³ Recommendation V-7

⁷⁴ Recommendation V-8

⁷⁵ Recommendation V-9

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;⁷⁶

- to assess, develop and strengthen cooperation between them to protect and provide assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁷
- to regularly analyse the possibilities to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention to disseminate the standards of the Convention, for the purpose of protecting and providing assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁸
- to assess, develop and strengthen cooperation with relevant intergovernmental bodies, transnational networks and other international organisations and initiatives due to their capacity to mobilisation, their world-wide scope, and their flexibility to work for the purpose of protecting and providing assistance to victims in matters related to CSGSIV;⁷⁹
- to maintain and develop efforts to strengthen international cooperation in investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Convention, in particular in the area of police cooperation,

namely ensuring that their law-enforcement agencies can connect and contribute to the Europol and Interpol databases, and develop the areas of data, training, vetting, and selection, in matters related to CSGSIV;⁸⁰

- to analyse the possibilities to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Convention, on investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Convention, in matters related to CSGSIV;⁸¹
- to further maintain and develop efforts to strengthen international cooperation in investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Convention, with countries which are not Parties to the Convention, in particular in the area of police cooperation, namely ensuring that their law-enforcement agencies can connect and contribute to the Europol and Interpol databases, and develop the areas of collecting data, training, vetting, and selection in matters related to CSGSIV;⁸²
- 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.⁸³

Promising practices

Romania reports European projects with Bulgaria, Italy and Spain for the development of good practice manuals.

The Italian Development Cooperation supports anti-trafficking projects by financing IOs interventions and targeted actions, directly or through IOs and NGOs, to prevent and combat child trafficking, abuse and exploitation, including in travel and tourism, involvement in armed conflicts, child labour.

⁷⁶ Recommendation V-10

⁷⁷ Recommendation V-11

⁷⁸ Recommendation V-12

⁷⁹ Recommendation V-13

⁸⁰ Recommendation V-14

⁸¹ Recommendation V-15

⁸² Recommendation V-16

⁸³ 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 Italy

The Committee notes that in Italy, helplines for children are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.⁸⁴

Generic recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims

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

- to promote awareness raising or specialised training for professionals who provide advice to children through telephone or internet helplines on ICT-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse of children – including the risks associated with CSGSIV – and on how to provide appropriate support to victims and to those who wish to help them;⁸⁵
- to ensure that the assistance measures referred to in Recommendation VI-3 (to assist child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, in the short and long term, in their physical and psycho-social recovery, and taking due account of the child's views, needs and concerns) are available to child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including offences due to the production, possession, distribution or transmission of CSGSIV.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Para. 280

⁸⁵ Recommendation VI-2

⁸⁶ Recommendation VI-4

VII. Civil society involvement and cooperation

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

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

The Committee notes that the Italian state authorities encourage the implementation of prevention projects and programs carried out by civil society not only at the national level but also at the regional/local level.⁸⁷ NGOs are the most involved counterparts in the field of prevention and assistance to child victims, along with the media and different helplines. Schools and other educational institutions are also frequent actors.⁸⁸

Italy's support for the development of prevention activities by civil society takes the form of financial support and grants.⁸⁹ It also 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 existing risks and dangers of ICTs for children.⁹⁰

The interaction with civil society includes preventive and awareness-raising activities to minimise the risk of abuse that children face online.⁹¹ Other civil society projects - whether or not carried out in cooperation with the State - aim at preventing abuses related to the sharing of such content are educational activities, field research and analysis, and surveys.⁹² Civil society also provides shelters where victims of violence, including children, can seek support in cases of sexual abuse.⁹³

Generic recommendations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation

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

- 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;⁹⁴
- 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;⁹⁵

- to support civil society to carry out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV;⁹⁶
- to encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives and to seek children's views at the stage of drafting new legislation concerning the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including when facilitated by ICTs and as regards CSGSIV.⁹⁷

⁸⁷ Para. 307

⁸⁸ Para. 308

⁸⁹ Para. 310

⁹⁰ Para. 315

⁹¹ Para. 320

⁹² Para. 323

⁹³ Para. 329

⁹⁴ Recommendation VII-3.

⁹⁵ Recommendation VII-4.

⁹⁶ Recommendation VII-5.

⁹⁷ 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 and 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 specific to Italy

The Committee notes that in Italy, the Department for Equal Opportunities (DPO) is the organisation responsible for co-ordinating government action and devising national strategies for preventing and combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children. It works with the Paedophilia and

Child Pornography Monitoring Unit, a body set up in the Prime Minister's Office (Law No. 38 of 6 February 2006). The monitoring unit is in charge of acquiring and monitoring data and other information about the work done by all public authorities to prevent and punish the abuse and sexual exploitation of children.⁹⁸

Generic recommendations of the Committee on promoting awareness of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves

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

- 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;⁹⁹
- to ensure that awareness-raising for children about the risks that they face when generating and/or sharing CSGSIV 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;¹⁰⁰
- 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;¹⁰¹
- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities;¹⁰²
- 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;¹⁰³
- 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 CSGSIV of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken;¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Para. 378

⁹⁹ Recommendation VIII-1.

¹⁰⁰ Recommendation VIII-2.

¹⁰¹ Recommendation VIII-3.

¹⁰² Recommendation VIII-4.

¹⁰³ Recommendation VIII-5.

¹⁰⁴ Recommendation VIII-6.

- 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 CSGSIV of themselves and about the preventive measures that can be taken;¹⁰⁵
- 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;¹⁰⁶
- 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.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Recommendation VIII-7.

¹⁰⁶ Recommendation VIII-8.

¹⁰⁷ 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 Italy

The Committee notes that in Italy, the project "School as a place of prevention and protection: how to protect children and teenagers from the phenomena of violence, bullying and cyberbullying, sexual abuse and exploitation" addresses the issues related to

child abuse and sexual exploitation and risks related to CSGSIV. However, it is implemented at national level, in four editions, only in some schools in the four macro-areas North-Centre-South and Islands.¹⁰⁸

Generic recommendations of the Committee on education for children

- The Committee **requires** all Parties, including Italy, to ensure that all children at primary and secondary level receive information about the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs. Organising lectures and/or activities on this topic should not be left to the discretion of schools or teachers.¹⁰⁹

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

- to address in educational contexts the issue of the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV;¹¹⁰
- 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);¹¹¹
- to consistently involve children in the

development of internet safety awareness programmes;¹¹²

- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities;¹¹³
- 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;¹¹⁴
- 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;¹¹⁵
- 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.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ Para. 387.

¹⁰⁹ Recommendation IX-3.

¹¹⁰ Recommendation IX-1.

¹¹¹ Recommendation IX-2.

¹¹² Recommendation IX-4.

¹¹³ Recommendation IX-5.

¹¹⁴ Recommendation IX-6.

¹¹⁵ Recommendation IX-7.

¹¹⁶ 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 Italy

The Committee observes that the higher education curriculum and continuous training in Italy are already in line with some of its recommendations. Thus, teachers and others working in educational institutions in Italy receive continuous training on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. It focuses specifically on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs. Childcare professionals receive continuous training as part of the “Free to be free” project aimed at raising awareness, training and educating them on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and conducts related with CSAM, as well as cyberbullying. Some of the professionals working in contact with children in Italy 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.

Nevertheless, to improve the implementation of the Convention in this regard, the Committee **requires** Italy:

- 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;

- 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 health sector
 - in the social protection sector
 - in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities;¹¹⁷
- to ensure that the persons who have regular contacts with children are informed of the possibility for them to report to the services responsible for child protection any situation where they have “reasonable grounds” for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:
 - in the education sector
 - in the health sector
 - in the social protection sector
 - in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities;¹¹⁸
- 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.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Recommendation X-5

¹¹⁸ Recommendation X-6

¹¹⁹ Recommendation X-7

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

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

- 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;¹²⁰
- 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.¹²¹

Promising practices

In Italy, as part of a project implemented in collaboration between the Department for Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of University and Scientific Research, an experimental distance training course for some primary and secondary school teachers of the first grade is dedicated to the issues of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, which will be further developed through the opening of the distance learning platform available to all school coordinators and teachers in Italian schools.

Further, 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, its 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.

¹²⁰ Recommendation X-2.

¹²¹ 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 Italy

The Committee notes that Italy provided information on research undertaken on the issues raised by CSGSIV in general. It was included in the broader topic of awareness and perception of material shared online. The Polizia Postale e delle Comunicazioni (Postal and Communications Police) collaborated with

“La Sapienza” University in Rome. Italy has participated for at least one year in the EU Kids Online surveys. According to EU Kids Online 2020 Report,¹²² the Italian national authorities supported the research and enabled the surveys to be carried out.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on research

The Committee **invites** all those Parties which have not already done or are not already doing so:

- to collect data and undertake research at the national and local level, for the purpose of observing and evaluating the phenomenon of CSGSIV;¹²³
- to take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or designate mechanisms for data collection or focal points at the national or local levels and in collaboration with civil society, for the purpose of observing and evaluating the phenomenon of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, including on the issues arising from CSGSIV,

with due respect for the requirements of personal data protection.¹²⁴

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

- 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;¹²⁵
- 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.¹²⁶

¹²² 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>.

¹²³ Recommendation XI-1

¹²⁴ Recommendation XI-4

¹²⁵ Recommendation XI-2

¹²⁶ Recommendation XI-3