



FACTSHEET – MALTA

Lanzarote Committee Implementation Report on:

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

This factsheet was prepared by the Secretariat in March 2023.
It has been updated with information submitted by the Government of Malta in March 2025 displayed in orange and blue text boxes.

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I. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. Legal frameworks

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

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

Exemption of criminal liability of children “producing and possessing” self-generated sexual images and videos of themselves as clarified by the Lanzarote Committee’s Opinion of 2019

The Committee observes that the production of sexually explicit images by children themselves, and the possession of such images by children is criminalised in Malta.¹ The Committee understands from the information submitted that there are special circumstances under which the production and possession of CSGSIV by children, although established as crimes in fact and in law, are not prosecuted/punishable under national law, because in light of the child’s age, it may be considered that there is no gross fault and no public interest reason for conviction.²

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

Malta also pointed at the age of criminal responsibility below which children cannot be held criminally liable for acts they commit to demonstrate compatibility with the exclusion of criminal liability for the production and possession of CSGSIV, which is 14 years old.³ The Committee highlights that reliance upon the age of criminal responsibility alone to exclude criminal responsibility does not correspond to a situation of full compliance with paragraphs 3-6 of the 2019 Opinion, since older children (those above the age of criminal responsibility) cannot avail themselves of this exemption.⁴

- Therefore, the Committee **requests** that Malta ensures that a child will not be prosecuted when he/she possesses their own CSGSIV; CSGSIV of another child with the

informed consent of the child depicted on them; or CSGSIV as a result of receiving them passively without actively asking for them.⁵

Follow-up actions:

An amendment was recently introduced in the Criminal Code of Malta, whereby if said minor is a victim of sexual abuse, the authorities may decide not to prosecute (Article 209B added in 2024). The same article also provides that if proceedings would have commenced, the police can decide not to punish when the minor is a victim.

Sharing own self-generated material and other children’s self-generated material

The Committee observes that children are potentially criminally liable for the distribution or transmission of their own CSGSIV in Malta.⁶ Furthermore, Malta has rules that lead to the criminalisation of the distribution by children of CSGSIV of other children.⁷

The Committee **requests** that Malta 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.⁸

Follow-up actions:

An amendment was recently introduced in the Criminal Code of Malta, whereby if said minor is a victim of sexual abuse, the authorities may decide not to prosecute (Article 209B added in 2024). The same article also provides that if proceedings

¹ Paras. 67, 68.

² Para. 70.

³ Para. 71.

⁴ Para. 72.

⁵ Recommendation II-6.

⁶ Para. 78.

⁷ Para. 82.

⁸ Recommendation II-8.

would have commenced, the police can decide not to punish when the minor is a victim.

- the distribution or transmission by children of CSGSIV 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.⁹

Follow-up actions:

An amendment was recently introduced in the Criminal Code of Malta, whereby if said minor is a victim of sexual abuse, the authorities may decide not to prosecute (Article 209B added in 2024). The same article also provides that if proceedings would have commenced, the police can decide not to punish when the minor is a victim.

On the “sexual extortion of children”:

The Committee observes that Malta could not provide data or details about cases of sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV.¹⁰

In cases where the sexual extortion is intended to procure additional sexual images or videos, the Committee observes that Malta prosecutes for offences related to “child pornography”, in concurrence with offences where threat is a core element, such as extortion or coercion.¹¹ Malta also referred to the offence of corruption of children which may be established, in recognition of the constituent elements of coercion/extortion.¹²

When it is intended to procure other sexual favours from the child depicted on the images/videos or from another children, Malta 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, to participation in pornographic performances and corruption of children. In addition to this, in Malta, it is a criminal offence if a person “with violence, threats, coercion or force compels a person under age into

⁹ Recommendation II-9.

¹⁰ Para. 95.

¹¹ Para. 98.

¹² Para. 100.

prostitution or into participating in a pornographic performance”.¹³

In the case where it is intended to procure a financial gain, or other property from the child, Malta indicated that the conduct will be qualified as child prostitution or participation in pornographic performances.¹⁴

The Committee notes that Malta did not refer to extortion or any similar offences; or did not submit information in this respect.¹⁵

- When dealing with sexual extortion cases

involving children, the Committee **invites** Malta to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted¹⁶ and to take into account the situation where CSGSIV are used to force, coerce or threaten the child to give additional CSGSIV, 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.¹⁷

Generic recommendations of the Committee on the legal frameworks

The Committee **invites** Parties, including Malta:

- acknowledging that the term “child pornography” can be misleading and undermine the gravity of the crimes it refers to, 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”](#)¹⁸ 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.¹⁹
- to introduce a definition of 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”](#).²⁰
- 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.²¹

- to contemplate appropriate legal responses to conduct involving non-visual CSGSIV produced by children in the context of offences covered by the Convention.²²
- 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.²³
- 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.²⁴

Promising practices:

¹³ Para. 102.

¹⁴ Para. 106.

¹⁵ Id.

¹⁶ Recommendation II-11.

¹⁷ Recommendation II-12.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Recommendation II-1.

²⁰ Recommendation II-1.

²¹ Recommendation II-2.

²² Recommendation II-4.

²³ Recommendation II-7.

²⁴ Recommendation II-10.

Awareness of sexting is done through the BeSmartOnline! Project, where resources and toolkits are often developed and disseminated among children. This is done on a national level and also involves the cooperation of schools and the Office of the Commission of Children.

The age of sexual consent has now decreased to 16 years of age and no longer 18. It is also important to keep in mind that the minimum age of criminal responsibility in Malta stands at 14 years of age. Thus, if a situation arises involving children below the age of 14, they are referred to services and no action is taken through the formal legal system. Moreover, if the minor is a victim of sexual abuse, the authorities by way of article 209B, can decide not to institute criminal proceedings.

Article 204A and 204C of the Criminal Code provide for the punishment of

- Instigation with violence, coercion, force or threats of persons under age (under 16) to prostitution or to participation in a pornographic performance and the making of any gain or benefit thereof
- participation in sexual activities with persons under the age of sixteen, using violence, coercion, force or threats.

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 Malta

The Committee observes that Malta's investigation and prosecution services are already in line with some of its recommendations as it has a specialised unit dealing with ICT-facilitated offences against children within law enforcement.²⁵

Malta indicated that it does not have specialised investigative units for handling ICT facilitated sexual offences where these are committed by children.²⁶ Investigations related to sexual offences committed by children are instead carried out by a cybercrime unit and police vice squad.²⁷

Malta indicated that training modules are in place for law enforcement agents, prosecutors and judges related to aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.²⁸

- Nonetheless, the Committee **requests** Malta to ensure that training on ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children is available for prosecutors and judges who are or will be working on these issues.²⁹

Follow-up actions:

Training is tapped into through the Cyber Crime Unit within the Malta Police Force, which Unit is also a supporting member of the 'Be Smart Online' project mentioned above. Signature and ratification by Malta of the Convention on Cyber Crime (CETS No: 185) on 17 January 2002 and 12 April 2012 respectively; which entered into force on 1

August 2012. This includes references to offences such as Child Pornography, Grooming, Child Sex Tourism, etc. Officers from the Cyber Crime Unit of the Malta Police Force receive technical training, on a regular basis, so as to improve their skills in this field. Such training allows the Officers working in this sensitive Unit to keep their technical knowledge and competence up-to-date. In 2013, three Officers have already attended a total of five different technical training courses abroad.

There is also the Judicial Studies Committee which is responsible for providing training to magistrates and judges. The Chamber of Advocates is likewise responsible for providing training to legal practitioners and advocates.

On the identification of victims, the Committee notes that Malta has victim identification units within law enforcement for cases of ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children.³⁰ Furthermore, the Committee notes that Malta makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's ICSE database.³¹

- The Committee **requests** Malta to take the necessary legislative or other measures, in conformity with the fundamental principles of its internal law, to ensure an effective investigation and prosecution of ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children, allowing, where appropriate, for the possibility of covert operations.³²

²⁵ Para. 115.

²⁶ Para. 135.

²⁷ Para. 137.

²⁸ Paras. 145, 156, 167.

²⁹ Recommendations III-16 and III-18.

³⁰ Para. 180.

³¹ Para. 186.

³² Recommendation III-28.

Follow-up actions:

The cybercrime unit and the Victim Support Agency³³ have gained the necessary expertise over the years and is continuously attempting to identify more training courses and opportunities that will aid their officers

in improving their skills in this field. This is an ongoing initiative that does not have any particular timeframes.

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

Follow-up actions:

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

- 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 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, and ICT technical knowledge.³⁷
- To ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children have sufficient specialisation in offences involving CSGSIV.³⁸
- To have units, sections or persons specialised in ICT-facilitated sexual offences committed by children against other children for authorities responsible for investigation and for authorities responsible for prosecution.³⁹
- 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.⁴⁰⁴¹
- 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.⁴²to 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.⁴³
- 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.⁴⁴

³³ [About Us - Victim Support Agency](#)

³⁴ Recommendations III-3 and III-7.

³⁵ Recommendation III-4.

³⁶ Recommendation III-5.

³⁷ Recommendation III-9.

³⁸ Recommendation III-10.

³⁹ Recommendation III-11.

⁴⁰ Such trainings can also be part of broader training programmes.

⁴¹ Recommendation III-14.

⁴² Recommendations III-17 and III-19.

⁴³ Recommendation III-20.

⁴⁴ Recommendation III-21.

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.⁴⁵

Follow-up actions:

Through the use of the hotline, reports are received which the general public may not feel at ease reporting to the Police thus more people are reached. Agenzija Appogg hotline passes all Uniform Resource Locators (urls) with illegal content to the Maltese Cybercrime unit with whom Agenzija Appogg has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enable hotline analysts to pursue their work within a legal framework. The Malta Police Force maintains a “stop-list” of known child abuse websites. This “stop-list” is used in the implementation of a Child Abuse Internet Filter that is operated through collaboration with local internet service providers. Since its operation, the hotline has received EU funds through the Besmartonline! project which is made of a consortium of three official members-tech.mt, Agenzija Appogg and the Office of the Commissioner for Children. Other members which support the project are the Cybercrime Unit within the Malta Police Force, the Education Department, the Directorate for Church School Education,

Agenzija Zghazagh and the University of Malta.

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

- 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.⁴⁶
- 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.⁴⁷
- 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.⁴⁸
- 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.⁴⁹

Promising practices:

⁴⁵ Recommendation III-30.

⁴⁶ Recommendation III-24.

⁴⁷ Recommendations III-25, III-29.

⁴⁸ Recommendation III-31.

⁴⁹ 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 Malta

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

The Committee notes that Malta has not established laws clarifying the circumstances in which its national criminal law will apply to a transnational situation following the territoriality principle, or has not communicated so to the Committee.⁵⁰

- Therefore, the Committee **requests** Malta 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 Malta.⁵¹

Follow-up actions:

Malta follows its rules of jurisdiction as found in the Criminal Code. Under article 371(1) the Criminal Code provides that in determining the jurisdiction, regard shall be had to the alleged offence and not to any extenuating circumstances, even though, by reason of any such extenuating circumstances, the accused shall not be liable to punishment or there may be a descent from a higher to a lesser punishment.

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

It appears that Malta assumes jurisdiction in cases where an offence covered by the Convention is committed by one of its nationals or by a person who has its 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))

Malta did not provide information as to whether it applies this condition for prosecution.

- To improve the effective implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Malta to remove the requirement that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or a denunciation from the State of the place where the offence was committed for offences of sexual abuse, offences concerning child prostitution, the production of “child pornography” and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances, when committed by one of its nationals or by a person who has his or her habitual residence in its territory.⁵²

Follow-up actions:

Jurisdiction not subordinated to the condition that the acts are criminalised at the place where they were performed: the dual criminality principle (Article 25(4))

Malta did not provide information as to whether it applies this condition for prosecution.

- The Committee **requires** Malta to remove the requirement for dual criminality when committed by one of its nationals, for offences of sexual abuse, offences concerning child prostitution, the production of child pornography and offences concerning the participation of a child in pornographic performances.⁵³

⁵⁰ Para. 214.

⁵¹ Recommendation IV-1.

⁵² Recommendation IV-5.

⁵³ Recommendation IV-6.

Follow-up actions:

According to article 43 (1) of the Constitution of Malta, extradition is only permitted in pursuance of arrangements made by treaty and under the authority of a law.

Extradition is a very complex legal mechanism and is provided for under the Extradition Act, only for extraditable offences in respect of designated foreign countries. Reference to the Schedule of the Act is to be made.

A proviso to this article adds that nevertheless, the Court of Magistrates shall be competent to try -(a) any crime committed by any person under eighteen years of age or by any deaf-mute where the punishment awardable according to law does not exceed the jurisdiction of such court;(b) any crime excusable according to law where, in the opinion of the Attorney General, the grounds for the excuse appear from the record of the inquiry and the punishment awardable according to law does not exceed the jurisdiction of such court: Provided, in either case, that no other person is simultaneously charged with the crime, whether as principal or accomplice, or that the crime is not otherwise connected with any other crime outside the jurisdiction of such court;

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 observes that Malta is the only Party to have reported explicitly that this principle is not applicable under its domestic law.⁵⁴

- Therefore, the Committee **requests** Parties that are not already doing so, including Malta, to endeavour to take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish jurisdiction over any offence established under the Convention where the offence is committed against one of its nationals or a person who has his or her habitual residence

in its territory.⁵⁵

Follow-up actions:

The Maltese government has enacted several laws that criminalize cybercrime offenses, including the Computer Misuse Act and the Electronic Communications Networks and Services (General) Regulations.

These laws provide law enforcement agencies with the necessary tools to investigate and prosecute cybercrime cases effectively.

Investigating cybercrime can be challenging because perpetrators often operate from outside of Malta's jurisdiction. It can also be difficult to gather evidence due to encryption or other security measures used by criminals.

To address these challenges successfully, law enforcement agencies must work collaboratively across borders.

Despite these challenges, Maltese authorities have had some success in prosecuting cybercriminals in recent years. For example, in 2015 two individuals were arrested and charged with running a phishing scam that defrauded hundreds of people out of over €300k.

While there are still significant challenges associated with investigating and prosecuting cybercrimes under Maltese Criminal Law; ongoing efforts by law enforcement agencies suggest that progress is being made towards addressing this growing threat effectively.

Cybercriminals are always finding new ways to exploit vulnerabilities in software or hardware systems for their own gain.

⁵⁴ Para. 235.

⁵⁵ Recommendation IV-9.

To combat this threat effectively, cybersecurity experts must stay up-to-date with the latest trends in digital crime and continually adapt their strategies accordingly.

This requires ongoing education and training for both individuals and organizations alike.

Understanding the definition and scope of cybercrime is crucial for protecting oneself against these growing threats in today's digitally connected world.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on the Jurisdiction rules

- The Committee **invites** Malta to remove the requirement for dual criminality when committed by one of its nationals, for offences of:
 - possessing, offering, distributing, transmitting, procuring child pornography, and the fact of knowingly gaining access to child pornography through ICTs, when CSGSIV are involved,⁵⁶
 - solicitation of children for sexual purposes.⁵⁷

Promising practices:

Case law also shapes how criminal law is interpreted and applied in Malta. Decisions made by local courts set precedents which guide future decision-making processes for similar cases.

Recent high-profile cases have brought into focus the need for comprehensive legal frameworks to deal with complex issues such as corruption, money laundering, terrorism financing and cybercrime.

This has inspired further efforts towards strengthening relevant legislation to ensure effective prosecution of these crimes.

Keeping up-to-date with evolving legislation and case law is essential for anyone who works within or interacts with the Maltese criminal justice system.

⁵⁶ Recommendation IV-7.

⁵⁷ 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 Malta

The Committee observes that INHOPE,⁵⁸ the PROMISE Barnahus Network,⁵⁹ WeProtect Global Alliance,⁶⁰ and EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) cybercrime CSE/CSA⁶¹ conduct cooperation projects to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Malta.⁶²

Furthermore, the Committee notes that European law enforcement representatives from Malta attend the Europol's central training course "Combatting the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet" (COSEC). They also attend the Europol-Interpol-Cepol co-organised training course on victim identification (VID training course).⁶³

Malta did not provide information as to whether it allows children who fall victims when they are in the territory of a Party other than the one where they reside may make a complaint before the competent authorities of their State of residence.

- To improve the implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Malta 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.⁶⁴

Follow-up actions:

A hotline with the name of

childwebalert.gov.mt was established, and is run by, Agenzija Appogg so that the general public can report online child sexual abuse material: basically websites which contain indecent photos or videos of children and children who are sexually abused and their videos or pictures are circulating online. The general public has the facility of reporting anonymously to the hotline. The Agenzija Appogg hotline team analyses the content received through the online reporting system and verifies whether it contains material related to minors. The team also traces the content to verify in which country it is hosted. Through international cooperation and due to the fact that Agenzija Appogg is a member of International Association of Hotlines (Inhope), upon verification of the hosting country, the hotline reports to the Inhope Report Management System (IHRMS) and the hosting country will be notified that illegal content is hosted in its country's servers.

The Criminal Code specifically provides that where the injured party withdraws his complaint, the Court may decide and direct the continuation of proceedings against the alleged perpetrator, giving particular consideration to the best interests of the complainant, any person under the age of sixteen (16) involved, and any other relevant third parties, and shall cause such request and decision to be registered in the records of the case:

Provided further that proceedings shall be instituted ex officio when the act is

⁵⁸ www.inhope.org/

⁵⁹ <https://www.barnahus.eu/en/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.weprotect.org/>

⁶¹ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/empact>

⁶² Para. 255.

⁶³ Para. 259.

⁶⁴ Recommendation V-18.

committed with abuse of parental authority or of tutorship.

Recent amendments in 2021 also provide, under article of the Criminal Code that, Whosoever, by any means other than those mentioned in article 203(1), instigates, encourages or facilitates the defilement of a minor of either sex, shall, on conviction be liable to imprisonment for a term from three to six years and the provisions of article 203(2) and (3) shall, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to an offence under this article: Provided that the offence shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term from four to eight

years in any of the cases referred to in the proviso to article.

A 2021 amendment found in article 203(1) of the Criminal Code adds: Provided further that when the act is consensual between peers who are close in age and in the level of development and provided that the acts do not involve physical and, or psychological abuse, the punishment shall be decreased by one or two degrees.

Generic recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation

- On international cooperation, the Committee **requests** all Parties, including Malta to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Convention.⁶⁵

Follow-up actions:

Malta makes use of the Child Abuse Internet Filter (CAIF), which has been in operation since 2009. This crime prevention initiative blocks Maltese internet users from accessing known internet websites depicting child indecent material. Reports made to the Hotline are referred to IHRMS, and all reports containing child sexual abuse material and are classified as illegal in the Maltese context. Feedback on these reports is provided by Inhope, in situations when such feedback is provided by the hosting country. Feedback mainly concerns the content reported as illegal in the country where the site is hosted, whether police were involved and whether the website/material was removed from the internet. In line with Inhope policies such feedback is to be kept confidential and cannot be shared in any form with any other entity, nor can it be published.

- 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.⁶⁶
- 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.⁶⁷
- to regularly assess the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them.⁶⁸
- 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

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

⁶⁵ Recommendation V-3.

⁶⁶ Recommendations V-6, V-11.

⁶⁷ Recommendations V-4, V-7, V-12, V-15.

⁶⁸ Recommendation V-5.

- matters related to CSGSIV.⁶⁹
- 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.⁷⁰
 - 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 CSGSIV⁷¹ 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.⁷²
 - 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.⁷³

Promising practices:

Through the BeSmartOnline! Campaign, the Maltese Safer Internet Center organised a number of awareness raising and educational initiatives. A number of resources were also developed and publicly disseminated during various events. Amongst such initiatives, BeSmartOnline! developed resources and held classes for all Form 3 (13/14 year olds) and Year 6 (10/11 year olds) students in all of Malta and Gozo targeting public, private and church schools. The lessons dealt with the themes of digital footprint and digital citizenship. The projects' helpline was also referred to during the lessons thus informing students about where they can access help should the need arise. Children considered more vulnerable to online risks were catered for through direct sessions held in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner for Children. Seminars were also held dealing with teachers' further development, particularly those teaching Personal and Social Development, eLearning, ICT and Health & Safety. Furthermore, awareness raising initiatives on digital parenting have been developed for parents and grandparents. For convenience sake, these sessions were held within numerous local councils around the Island after 18:00hrs and on weekneds. Strong reference to the projet's Helpline was also made during these sessions.

⁶⁹ Recommendations V-8, V-13.

⁷⁰ Recommendation V-9.

⁷¹ Recommendation V-10.

⁷² Recommendations V-14, V-16.

⁷³ 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 Malta

The Committee notes that all Parties, including Malta, have reporting mechanisms in place to assist child victims of criminal offences, including when related to sexual exploitation and abuse.⁷⁴ The Committee observes that part of the team running the assistance service has been specifically trained on the topic of online child sexual abuse and exploitation as the two professionals working for the national hotline have undergone several trainings on the online risks that children may encounter. Both are accredited as analysts by INHOPE and have been trained by Interpol on how to deal with "illegal/indecent online material".⁷⁵

To improve the implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Malta 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.⁷⁶

Follow-up actions:

Officers from the Cyber Crime Unit of the Malta Police Force receive technical training locally and abroad, on a regular basis, so as to improve their skills in this field. Such training allows the Officers working in this sensitive Unit to keep their technical knowledge and competence up-to-date.

- to assist child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, in the short and long term, in their physical and psycho-social recovery, taking due account of the child's views, needs and concerns.⁷⁷

Follow-up actions:

Generic recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims

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

- 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.⁷⁸
- 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.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Para. 275.

⁷⁵ Para. 282.

⁷⁶ Recommendation VI-1.

⁷⁷ Recommendation VI-3.

⁷⁸ Recommendation VI-2.

⁷⁹ Recommendation VI-4.

Promising practices:

In collaboration with local Internet Service Providers, the Cyber Crime Unit within the Malta Police Force has implemented a 'Child Abuse Internet Filter' that directs users attempting to access known child pornography websites to a 'STOP' page. Currently over 2000 internet domains are listed as active websites containing child indecent material. All internet service providers have agreed to collaborate in this initiative. Malta has been one of the fore-runners in an EU-funded initiative known as "Cospol Internet Related Child Abuse Material Project" (CIRCAMP). Through this initiative, the Malta Police Force has participated in a number of joint operations that tackle the dissemination of child abuse material through the internet

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 Malta

In terms of forms of cooperation between state authorities and civil society in prevention and assistance to victims, the Committee notes that Malta uses state sponsorship to civil society campaigns, which is rarely mentioned by Parties.⁸⁰

- To improve the implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requests** Malta to encourage the financing of projects and programmes carried out by civil society aiming to prevent and protect children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.⁸¹

Follow-up actions:

Trying to secure funding in future for the 'Be Smart Online project', which is cofinanced by the European Union, to promote Child Internet Safety, as part of the EU's Safer Internet Programme aimed at empowering and protecting children and young people when online, by supporting awareness-raising initiatives and combating illegal online behaviour as well as harmful content. This project was built on the work initially carried out by the social welfare agency, namely APPOGG- Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS), when a hotline and a helpline were set up. The Cyber Crime Unit within the Malta Police Force actively participates in this 'Be Smart Online' Project. Their involvement in this initiative includes providing advice on the new trends that the Cyber Crime Unit is coming across in its cases as well as participation in public events that are organised as part of this project

Civil society projects in Malta - whether or not carried out in cooperation with the State – are aimed at preventing abuses related to the sharing

⁸⁰ Para. 314.

⁸¹ Recommendation VII-2.

of such content and take the form of educational activities.⁸²

The Committee notes that victim assistance mechanisms in Malta consist of telephonic and electronic helplines, which concern fairly broad issues such as children's rights in general.⁸³ The

Committee notes that beyond reporting mechanisms, in Malta, NGOs offer free psychological support to children, and the assistance of civil society organisations is provided during legal proceedings, through legal advice and physical assistance throughout the proceedings.⁸⁴

Generic recommendations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation

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

- 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.⁸⁵
- 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.⁸⁶
- To support civil society to carry out projects

and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV.⁸⁷

- to encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives⁸⁸ 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.⁸⁹

Promising practices:

The Cyber Crime Unit within the Malta Police Force regularly deploys its Officers to deliver internet safety awareness presentations in schools and youth organisations. These internet safety awareness presentations have been positively received, so much so that the Unit carries out on average around two visits per week during the scholastic year. The Officer attending the school usually addresses the students according to age-groups (age- appropriateness). The internet safety awareness in schools is complimented by wider participation in media initiatives and crime prevention tips through the Malta Police Force official website.

⁸² Para. 323.

⁸³ Para. 328.

⁸⁴ Para. 329.

⁸⁵ Recommendation VII-3.

⁸⁶ Recommendation VII-4.

⁸⁷ Recommendation VII-5.

⁸⁸ 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.

⁸⁹ 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 Malta:

- 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.⁹⁰
- 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.⁹¹
- 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.⁹²
- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities.⁹³
- 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.⁹⁴
- 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.⁹⁵
- 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.⁹⁶
- 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.⁹⁷
- 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.⁹⁸

⁹⁰ Recommendation VIII-1.

⁹¹ Recommendation VIII-2.

⁹² Recommendation VIII-3.

⁹³ Recommendation VIII-4.

⁹⁴ Recommendation VIII-5.

⁹⁵ Recommendation VIII-6.

⁹⁶ Recommendation VIII-7.

⁹⁷ Recommendation VIII-8.

⁹⁸ 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 of the Committee on education for children specific to Malta

Although Malta did not provide information as to whether information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is provided to children in an age-appropriate manner, as required by the Convention, it specified that it is delivered in both primary and secondary education.⁹⁹

The Committee observes that in Malta information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs and the challenges raised by CSGSIV is covered in “Personal, social and career development”.¹⁰⁰

Generic recommendations of the Committee on education for children

- The Committee **requires** all Parties, including Malta 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.¹⁰¹

Follow-up actions:

Information sessions are delivered in PSCD classes (Personal, Social and Career Development) which are taken by all children in primary and secondary level.

Malta through the Office of the Commissioner for Children has produced comic books, video clips and cartoon animations with the collaboration of young students at the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology, to increase awareness among children and teenagers about internet safety. These materials are available online on the website of the Office of the Commissioner for Children: www.tfal.org.mt.

of the risks of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV.¹⁰²

- 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).¹⁰³
- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes.¹⁰⁴
- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities.¹⁰⁵
- 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.¹⁰⁶
- to provide information to children on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs, including CSGSIV, within a

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

- to address in educational contexts the issue

⁹⁹ Para. 392.

¹⁰⁰ Para. 399.

¹⁰¹ Recommendation IX-3.

¹⁰² Recommendation IX-1.

¹⁰³ Recommendation IX-2.

¹⁰⁴ Recommendation IX-4.

¹⁰⁵ Recommendation IX-5.

¹⁰⁶ Recommendation IX-6.

more general context of sexuality education.¹⁰⁷

- 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.¹⁰⁸

Promising practices:

To focus on developing a more holistic and comprehensive sexual education policy for all school children.

¹⁰⁷ Recommendation IX-7.

¹⁰⁸ 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 Malta

The Committee observes that part of the professionals who will or already work with children in Malta receive training and/or education on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (such information is provided to future professionals as part of their curriculum during their education), which focus specifically on the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by ICTs.¹⁰⁹ The Committee however notes that that the people most likely to receive education and/or training on child sexual exploitation and abuse are mostly those working in educational institutions, such as teachers.¹¹⁰

To improve the implementation of the Convention, the Committee **requires** Malta:

- 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.¹¹¹

Follow-up actions:

- to ensure that the persons who have regular contact with children are equipped to

identify any situation of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and are informed of the possibility for them to report to the services responsible for child protection any situation where they have “reasonable grounds” for believing that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:

- in the education sector
- in the health sector
- in the social protection sector
- in areas relating to sport, culture, and leisure activities.¹¹²

Follow-up actions:

- 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.¹¹³

Follow-up actions:

¹⁰⁹ Para. 416.

¹¹⁰ Para. 420.

¹¹¹ Recommendation X-4.

¹¹² Recommendations X-5, X-6.

¹¹³ Recommendation X-7.

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

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

- 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.¹¹⁴
- 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.¹¹⁵

Promising practice

In Malta, The BeSmartOnline project offers material to teachers and other professionals addressing the risks associated with the ICTs faced by children. It helps teachers and professionals to address these issues to their students. It includes a helpline that is promoted in such materials. It also organises events in that sense.

Promising practices:

¹¹⁴ Recommendation X-2.

¹¹⁵ 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 Malta

The Committee identifies a **difficulty to implement the Convention** in Malta as it informed that no research was undertaken on issues raised by CSGSIV and/or on the psychological effects on persons who have had such material shared online. However, the Committee notes that since Malta has participated in the EU Kids Online surveys for at least one year, it can be inferred that some data was collected within the context of these surveys on the practice of sending and receiving sexual messages, including CSGSIV.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the Committee notes that in the context of the EU Kids Online surveys, according to EU Kids Online 2020 Report,¹¹⁷ the national authorities in Malta supported the research and enabled the surveys to be carried.¹¹⁸

Malta not being isolated in this respect, the Committee **invites** all Parties:

- to collect data and undertake research at the

national and local levels to observe and evaluate the phenomenon of CSGSIV.¹¹⁹

- 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.¹²⁰
- 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.¹²¹
- 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.¹²²

Promising practice

EU Kids Online is a multinational research network, working to increase knowledge of the opportunities, risks and safeties children face online. Malta has participated to this research network for at least one year by taking part in the EU Kids Online surveys.

Promising practices:

¹¹⁶ Para. 443.

¹¹⁷ 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>.

¹¹⁸ Para. 454.

¹¹⁹ Recommendation XI-1.

¹²⁰ Recommendation XI-2.

¹²¹ Recommendation XI-3.

¹²² Recommendation XI-4.