



## FACTSHEET – POLAND

### 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 Poland in February 2026 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 41<sup>st</sup> meeting (13-15 February 2024), the Lanzarote Committee agreed on a new methodology for the assessment of State Parties’ compliance with the 2<sup>nd</sup> monitoring round recommendations ([see point 4 of the Appendix to the List of decisions](#)). It entrusted the Secretariat to insert boxes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

This document responds to the above decision to use the country factsheets to gather information about follow-up. Blank information boxes have therefore been added to the country factsheets to indicate where Parties are requested by the Committee to provide information about follow-up actions undertaken/underway. Such actions may include changes in law, policy or practice that have taken place since March 2022 to address the Committee’s recommendations. Failure to provide information concerning “request” and “require” recommendations will amount to lack of cooperation with the Committee in exercising its monitoring role and might lead to a non-compliance conclusion because of lack of information.

State Parties are welcome to share any promising practice responding to the “invite” recommendations in the separate information boxes at the end of each chapter. It would also be interesting for the Committee to know whether any of the highlighted promising practices in the implementation report were taken as an inspiration for any measures. This will contribute to measuring the impact of the Committee’s capacity building role.

## 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 Poland

Interplay of the age of criminal responsibility and the age of sexual consent with the criminalisation of conduct related to the production and possession of CSAM and CSGSIV

The Committee observes that the production and possession of CSGSIV by children themselves are criminalised in Poland.<sup>1</sup> However, Poland pointed at the age of criminal responsibility, which is 17 years old, 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.<sup>2</sup>

- Nevertheless, the Committee **requests** that Poland ensures in its legal framework<sup>3</sup> that a child will not be prosecuted when he/she possesses:
  - their own self-generated sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos;
  - self-generated sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos of another child with the informed consent of the child depicted on them;
  - the self-generated sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos of another child as a result of receiving them passively without actively asking for them.<sup>4</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The decision to initiate an investigation cannot be taken solely on the premise of the age of the holder of certain content without first establishing the relevant facts of the case, such as whether the child has been harmed. The mechanisms of collecting information about all materials do not specify the reasons, method or circumstances of acquiring such information; it is only the investigation that

determines the circumstances under which the content was created.

Then, it should be pointed out that in Poland, as a general rule, persons over the age of 17 are liable under the Criminal Code. Persons below that age may be held liable under the Act of 9 June 2022 on the Support and Rehabilitation of Minors (Journal of Laws of 2024 item 978).

The provisions of this Law shall be applied with respect to:

- 1) proceedings in cases of demoralization - to persons who have reached the age of 10 and are not of age;
- 2) proceedings in cases of criminal acts - to persons who have committed such an act after the age of 13 but before the age of 17. A criminal act is an act prohibited by law as a crime.

Under this law, a juvenile may be subjected to educational measures, a therapeutic measure and a corrective measure. Punishment may be imposed only in cases specified in the Criminal Code, if other measures do not warrant full rehabilitation of the juvenile.

The decision in a case involving a person under the age of 18 (pending under the provisions of the Criminal Code or the law) is always made on the basis of an analysis of the established circumstances of the case.

The Criminal Procedure Code determine when the criminal proceedings are not initiated.

According to Article 17 § 1 of the Criminal Procedure Code, proceedings are not initiated,

<sup>1</sup> Paras.67, 68.

<sup>2</sup> Para.71.

<sup>3</sup> The expression “legal framework” is not limited to legislation

but should be understood in a broader way, e.g., through prosecutorial guidance or practice.

<sup>4</sup> Recommendation II-6.

and those initiated are discontinued, when, among others:

1) the criminal act has not been committed, or its commission cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

2) the act does not contain the elements of a criminal act or the law provides that the perpetrator does not commit a crime;

3) the social harmfulness of the act is negligible.

The court in proceedings under the Act on the Support and Rehabilitation of Minors also has the possibility to discontinue the proceedings if it considers that a certain behaviour cannot be considered a criminal act.

Criminalisation of conduct related to “offering or making available” CSAM and its relationship with the sharing their own or 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 Poland.<sup>5</sup> Further, Poland has rules that lead to criminal sanctions against children if they distribute CSGSIV of other children.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, the Committee **requests** Poland to ensure that:

- a child will not be prosecuted for sharing his/her sexual images and/or videos with another child when such sharing is voluntary, consensual, and intended solely for their own private use.<sup>7</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

No legislative action has been taken in this regard.

There are no specific provisions in the Polish law that would regulate the situation when a child shares his own, sexually explicit photos and/or videos with another child, even if such sharing is voluntary, based on mutual consent and intended for private use only. It is thus paramount to conduct a thorough

investigation in such cases. It should be noted that children include persons under 18, so such an exchange of content may occur between a 7, 8, 13-year-old child and a 17-year-old child.

When it comes to criminal proceedings initiated on the basis of the Criminal Code, the proceedings may be discontinued due to negligible degree of social harm involved (art. 17 § 1 point 3 Code of Criminal proceedings).

- 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) Lanzarote Convention.<sup>8</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

Each case is decided on a case-by-case basis, based on the established circumstances.

Having regard to the most important objective - the protection of children - any behaviour which involves self-generated content should be verified to make sure that no offence against a child has been committed. It should be mentioned that the Polish law codifies offences such as child grooming or sexual extortion, as well as using violence, illegal duress or deceit to subject a minor to another sexual activity or perform such an activity.

On the prosecution of conduct amounting to “sexual extortion of children”

The Committee observes that in cases where the sexual extortion is intended to procure additional CSGSIV from the child, Poland would prosecute for offences related to “child pornography”, in concurrence with offences where threat is a core element, such as extortion or coercion.<sup>9</sup> Poland also referred to further offences, such as the offence of corruption of children.<sup>10</sup>

In cases where the coercer possessing the CSGSIV threatens the child for some other kind of sexual gain, Poland would prosecute for offences related

<sup>5</sup> Para.78.

<sup>6</sup> Para.82.

<sup>7</sup> Recommendation II-8.

<sup>8</sup> Recommendation II-9.

<sup>9</sup> Para.98.

<sup>10</sup> Para.100.

to sexual abuse of a child in accordance with Article 18, child prostitution, participation in pornographic performances or corruption of children.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Poland would also prosecute conduct relating to the possession of the initial CSGSIV as an

offence related to “child pornography” under Article 20.<sup>12</sup> If the objective of the perpetrator is a financial gain, Poland would qualify the conduct will as extortion or aggravated extortion.<sup>13</sup>

### Generic recommendations of the Committee on the legal frameworks

On the legal frameworks, the Committee **invites** all Parties, including Poland:

- to introduce a definition of “child sexual abuse material” (CSAM) for material depicting acts of sexual abuse of children and/or focusing on the genitalia of the child, following the guidance set out in the “[Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#)”<sup>14 15</sup>
- 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.<sup>16</sup>
- to rather use the term child sexual abuse material in the development of future national, regional and international legal instruments and policies addressing the prevention of and protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, as the Committee acknowledges that using the term “child pornography” can undermine the gravity of the crimes it refers to.<sup>17</sup>
- 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 Lanzarote Convention.<sup>18</sup>

- 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.<sup>19</sup>
- to consider criminalising the offence of “grooming” (solicitation of children for sexual purposes), even when it does not lead to a face-to-face meeting or producing child sexual abuse material.<sup>20</sup>
- 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.<sup>21</sup>
- to ensure that sexual extortion of children involving CSGSIV is investigated and prosecuted.<sup>22</sup>

#### Promising practices:

In the implementation of the 2023-2026 National Plan to Prevent Offences against Sexual Freedom and Morality to the Detriment of Minors, were prepared (action 2.2.6.):

- Interviewing a minor victim witness in a criminal trial. Guidelines for judges and prosecutors
- Hearing a child in civil proceedings. Guidelines for judges

<sup>11</sup> Para.102.

<sup>12</sup> Para. 103.

<sup>13</sup> Para.106

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> Recommendation II-3.

<sup>16</sup> Recommendation II-2.

<sup>17</sup> Recommendation II-1.

<sup>18</sup> Recommendation II-4.

<sup>19</sup> Recommendation II-7.

<sup>20</sup> Recommendation II-10.

<sup>21</sup> Recommendation II-11.

<sup>22</sup> Recommendation II-12.

- Methodology for questioning a minor. Guidelines for judges and prosecutors
- Methodology for questioning a suspect or defendant who is under the age of 18. Guidelines for judges and prosecutors
- Opinions of expert psychologists in guardianship proceedings of persons under the age of 18. Guidelines for expert psychologists
- Opinions of expert psychologists in criminal proceedings in cases of persons who have not reached the age of 18. Guidelines for expert psychologists

The publications have been produced as part of the project “Implementing the idea of juvenile-friendly justice and strengthening the rights of victims”. The project is implemented by the Institute of Forensic Expertise and the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the UNICEF Office for Refugee Response in Poland.

[Publikacje z serii Wymiar sprawiedliwości przyjazny dzieciom, są już dostępne - Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości - Portal Gov.pl](#)

### 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 Poland

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

- a central unit and regional subdivisions specialised in ICT-facilitated offences against children, which cooperate at different levels within law enforcement.<sup>23</sup>
- training modules in place for law enforcement agents related to aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well as its own training programme, used either in full or in part to carry out training for law enforcement agents.<sup>24</sup>
- its own and external training programmes available for prosecutors and judges on aspects of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.<sup>25</sup> Such training is organised by national judicial academies in Poland and the training content includes online child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and CSAM specifically.<sup>26</sup>
- joint trainings available for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges and other judicial authorities.<sup>27</sup>
- relevant trainings that involve not just theoretical, but also practical elements.<sup>28</sup>
- victim identification units within law enforcement for cases of ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, the Committee observes that there are no specialised units or public prosecutors in the organisational units of the

public prosecutor's office of Poland conducting or supervising pre-trial proceedings for sexual offences against children, the commission of which is facilitated by the use of ICTs by child offenders.<sup>30</sup>

- Therefore, the Committee **invites** Poland 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.<sup>31</sup>

The Committee observed that Poland makes an active contribution to the INTERPOL's international child sexual exploitation (ICSE) database.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, Poland has been carrying out an analysis of the possibility of organising trainings with Interpol trainers on the use of the ICSE database.<sup>33</sup>

The Committee also observes that, pursuant to Article 35 of the Convention, Article 19 of the Polish Law on Police permits the use of special investigative techniques (i.e., covert operations) in case of any sexual offences against children, including offences related to CSAM.<sup>34</sup>

Additionally, Poland indicated to the Committee that a key challenge for a successful prosecution phase is to obtain electronic evidence that can be validly used before courts.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Paras.115, 119.

<sup>24</sup> Paras.145, 146.

<sup>25</sup> Paras.156, 157, 158, 167.

<sup>26</sup> Paras.159, 164.

<sup>27</sup> Para.172.

<sup>28</sup> Para.174.

<sup>29</sup> Para.180.

<sup>30</sup> Para.141.

<sup>31</sup> Recommendation III-11.

<sup>32</sup> Para.186.

<sup>33</sup> Para.187.

<sup>34</sup> Para.197.

<sup>35</sup> Para.203.

## 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.<sup>36</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

The Division dedicated to combating Human Trafficking, located in the Criminal Bureau of the National Police Headquarters (central level) is tasked, among others, with supporting Police units in dealing with such offences. The Central Cybercrime Bureau combats these offences (committed mostly online).

The Human Trafficking Department of the Criminal Bureau of the National Police Headquarters offers a training module for the law enforcement officers, dedicated to the aspects of sexual abuse of minors and victim identification. In addition, the Department attends training for judges and prosecutors on such issues.

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

- 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. Additionally, the Committee invites all Parties to exchange best practices between the relevant investigative units.<sup>37</sup>
- 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.<sup>38</sup>

- 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.<sup>39</sup>
- To ensure that units, services or persons within courts responsible for ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children have sufficient specialisation in offences involving CSGSIV.<sup>40</sup>

### 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.<sup>41</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

Poland has adequate legal framework to prosecute perpetrators of CSGSIV offences.

- co-operation with the Interpol and participation in training is at the satisfactory level.

- proceedings into the sexual abuse of minors are given priority.

In addition, while the Police initiates investigative operations to prevent, detect, identify perpetrators, find and fix evidence of intentional indictable offences defined in Article 19 of the Act on the Police, a regional court may, by way of a decision, order operating surveillance (further referred to as "covert operations") at the written request of the relevant chief of Police.

On 29 August 2024 the Public Prosecutor General issued guidelines on the procedure to

<sup>36</sup> Recommendations III-3 and III-7.

<sup>37</sup> Recommendation III-4.

<sup>38</sup> Recommendation III-5.

<sup>39</sup> Recommendation III-9.

<sup>40</sup> Recommendation III-10.

<sup>41</sup> Recommendation III-30.

be followed by organisational units of the public prosecutor's office in cases involving offences against sexual freedom and morality to the detriment of minors under chapter XXV of the Criminal Code to facilitate effective and proper conduct of criminal proceedings in cases involving offences against sexual freedom and morality to the detriment of minors under chapter XXV of the Criminal Code, pursuant to Article 13 § 1 of the Act of 28 January 2016 on the Law on the Public Prosecutor's office (Journal of Laws of 2024 item 390), including offences relating to pornographic content involving children. The purpose of the guidelines is, among others, to increase protection of minors in the course of the proceedings to prevent their re-victimisation, not only at the stage of preparatory proceedings, but also court proceedings. Prosecutors are obliged to immediately review notifications of suspected offence and immediately initiate procedural actions, and respond to any cases of threats or violence with respect to harmed minors and witnesses, and to any signs of violating dignity of minors in the course of such proceedings.

By virtue of the Ordinance of the Minister of Justice of 23 May 2023 amending the Ordinance - Rules of Procedure of Common Courts, cases from Chapter XXV of the Penal Code (offences against sexual freedom and

morality) were included in urgent cases in the courts.

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

- 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.<sup>42</sup>
- 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.<sup>43</sup>
- 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.<sup>44</sup>
- 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.<sup>45</sup>

### Promising practices

In Poland, the National School of Judiciary and Public prosecution will organise a training course entitled "Crimes against minors committed via the Internet". The proposed key topics included, inter alia, characteristics of internet crime against minors, online threats, grooming offence, child pornography, methodology to conducting proceedings in cases concerning the production and distribution of pornographic content with the participation of a minor. The training will be addressed to judges and judge's assessors adjudicating in criminal divisions, prosecutors and prosecutors' assessors.

Polish judges and prosecutors also participated in international trainings organised in the framework of cooperation with the ERA Academy of European Law on "Soliciting children online for sexual purposes" and on "Preventing child sexual abuse material online".

<sup>42</sup> Recommendation III-24.

<sup>43</sup> Recommendations III-25, III-29.

<sup>44</sup> Recommendation III-31.

<sup>45</sup> Recommendation III-32.

**Promising practices:**

As part of the 2023-2026 National Plan to Prevent Offences against Sexual Freedom and Morality to the Detriment of Minors, the Human Trafficking Department of the Criminal Bureau of the National Police Headquarters has participated in training organised by the National School of Judiciary and Public Prosecution on, among others, practical aspects of prevention and combating offences against sexual offences to the detriment of minors.

The prosecutors have participated in regular training courses organised by the National School of Judiciary and Public Prosecution, also in the course of implementation of the National Plan. Such training courses address offences under chapter XXV of the Criminal Code. In addition, as part of implementation of the National Plan, co-ordinators of prohibited acts against sexual freedom and morality to the detriment of minors have been appointed at regional public prosecutor's offices, who establish active co-operation with police officers and border guard officers to ensure that the proceedings conducted are effective and correct.

## 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 Poland

#### 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 observes that, according to Article 5 of the Penal Code, Polish criminal jurisdiction applies to each and every offender, regardless of his/her nationality, who commits a prohibited act in Poland, or on a Polish vessel or aircraft, unless Poland is party to an international agreement stating otherwise.<sup>46</sup>

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

The Convention provides in Article 25(1)(e) that Parties should take the necessary legislative and other measures to establish jurisdiction over offences committed by persons who have their habitual residence in their territory. However, a minority of Parties including Poland have reserved the right not to apply this jurisdiction rule. Therefore, the Committee observes that Poland does not establish jurisdiction over any offence covered by the Convention on the ground that the offence was committed by a person who has his or her habitual residence in their territory.<sup>47</sup>

- The Committee **invites** Poland to consider removing the reservation it made in accordance with Article 25(3) with regards to Article 25(1)(e) and establish jurisdiction for offences under the Lanzarote Convention when such offences are committed abroad by persons having their habitual residence in their territory.<sup>48</sup>

#### Jurisdiction not subordinated to the condition that prosecution can only be initiated following

#### a report from the victim or denunciation from the State where the offence was committed (Article 25(6))

It appears that Poland does not subordinate its jurisdiction to the condition that prosecution can only be initiated upon a report from the victim or denunciation from the State where the offence was committed.

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

Poland reported that it would assume jurisdiction irrespective of the laws of the State where the offence was committed in case of sexual abuse or exploitation of children, in light of Poland's international obligations under the Convention.<sup>49</sup> The criminal law of Poland has a clause which provides for the possibility of derogating from the general rules on jurisdiction based on international instruments. According to Article 5 of the Polish Penal Code, Polish criminal jurisdiction applies to each and every offender, regardless of his/her nationality, who commits a prohibited act in Poland, or on a Polish vessel or aircraft, unless Poland is Party to an international agreement stating otherwise. Offences committed outside Polish territory are normally subject to the condition of dual criminality, but this does not apply to offences foreseen in international agreements to which Poland is a party, which include offences of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of children.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, the Committee observes that in the case of Poland, reference to international treaties is made to exclude the application of

<sup>46</sup> Para.227.

<sup>47</sup> Para.216.

<sup>48</sup> Recommendation IV-3.

<sup>49</sup> Para.223.

<sup>50</sup> Para.227.

the dual criminality principle, but it does not necessarily relate to the other provisions concerned, including extraterritoriality for acts of habitual residents.<sup>51</sup>

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 as detailed in the Explanatory Report of the Convention, Parties are not obliged, but can endeavour, to establish jurisdiction over an offence committed against one of its nationals or a person having habitual residence in the territory under Article 25(2). In Poland the passive personality principle is applied in respect of offences committed against a national. In order to apply the passive personality principle, the requirement of dual criminality does not apply to offences foreseen in international agreements to which Poland is a party.<sup>52</sup>

- The Committee **requests** Parties that are not already doing so, including Poland, 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.<sup>53</sup>

**Follow-up actions:**

No legislative work has been undertaken in this area.

According to the Criminal Code, Polish criminal law applies to foreigners who have committed a prohibited act abroad that is against i. e. a Polish citizen if, under Polish criminal law, the prohibited act carries a penalty exceeding 2 years' imprisonment, where the offender remains in the Republic of Poland and where no decision to extradite him or her has been issued.

It should be noted that in accordance with Directive 2011/93/EU, Member States shall take the necessary measures to establish their jurisdiction in case the crime was committed in whole or in part in the territory of a given Member State or the perpetrator is a national of a given member state. Member states may only notify the Commission if they decide to establish further jurisdiction over an offense committed outside their territory, particularly if the offender is habitually resident in the territory of the member state in question.

**Promising practices:**

<sup>51</sup> Para.229.

<sup>52</sup> Paras.231, 232.

<sup>53</sup> Recommendation IV-9.

## 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 Poland

The Committee observed that INHOPE,<sup>54</sup> the PROMISE Barnahus Network,<sup>55</sup> WeProtect Global Alliance,<sup>56</sup> INSAFE and Safer Internet Centres,<sup>57</sup> ECPAT,<sup>58</sup> and EMPACT<sup>59</sup> conduct cooperation projects to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Poland.<sup>60</sup>

The Committee notes that the cross-border exchange and competence building is crucial to ensure harmonised practice to implement common legal frameworks that guarantee children's procedural safeguards and protect children from (re-)traumatisation during criminal investigation and judicial proceedings. Child-friendly investigations and judicial proceedings are central to achieving safety, healing and justice for children who have been exposed to online sexual violence. The Promise Barnahus network and competence centre facilitate cross-border exchange on good practice, develop practical tools (including for example the Barnahus Quality Standards and guidance for child-friendly interviews in Barnahus) and provide training for forensic interviewers from Poland. The forensic interviewers have formed an informal network and are engaged in an exchange and common learning through online training and avatar practice.<sup>61</sup>

The Committee also observes that law

enforcement representatives from Poland attend the Europol's central training course "Combatting the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet" (COSEC) and the Europol-Interpol-Cepol co-organised training course on victim identification (VID training course).<sup>62</sup>

- To improve the effective implementation of the Lanzarote Convention, the Committee **requires** Poland to ensure that the victims of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse in matters related to CSGSIV in the territory of the Parties to the Lanzarote 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.<sup>63</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

No legislative work has been undertaken in this area.

Any person staying in the territory of the Republic of Poland may submit a notification of an offence to the Polish law enforcement authorities.

<sup>54</sup> [www.inhope.org/](http://www.inhope.org/)

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.barnahus.eu/en/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.weprotect.org/>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://ecpat.org/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.europol.europa.eu/empact>

<sup>60</sup> Para.255.

<sup>61</sup> Para.266.

<sup>62</sup> Para.259.

<sup>63</sup> Recommendation V-18.

## Generic recommendations of the Committee on international cooperation

- On international cooperation, the Committee **requests** all Parties, including Poland to extend their international cooperation with other Parties to improve the effective implementation of the Lanzarote Convention.<sup>64</sup>

### Follow-up actions:

Polish law enforcement authorities cooperate, among others, with Interpol, Europol, take part in international operations, and participate in the Europol's AP TWINS analytical project or the EMPACT CSE EU priority. Another important issue is the participation in operational meetings related to identification of minor victims whose images are stored in the ICSE database.

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

- 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.<sup>65</sup>
- to expand international cooperation with countries which are not Parties to the Lanzarote Convention to disseminate the standards of the Lanzarote 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 Lanzarote Convention, in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>66</sup>
- to regularly assess the difficulties that they face when dealing with international cooperation and remedy them.<sup>67</sup>
- to strengthen cooperation with relevant intergovernmental bodies and with transnational

networks and other international organisations and initiatives due to their capacity to mobilisation, their worldwide scope, and their flexibility to work, for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children as well as for protecting and providing assistance to victims, in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>68</sup>

- 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.<sup>69</sup>
- to support regional and international capacity building efforts to improve policy and operational measures including the pooling and sharing of successful education and awareness-raising tools for the purpose of preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in matters related to CSGSIV.<sup>70</sup>
- to maintain and develop efforts to strengthen international cooperation with other Parties and non-Parties to the Lanzarote Convention, in investigation and proceedings concerning the offences established in accordance with the Lanzarote 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.<sup>71</sup>
- 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.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Recommendation V-3.

<sup>65</sup> Recommendations V-6, V-11.

<sup>66</sup> Recommendations V-4, V-7, V-12, V-15.

<sup>67</sup> Recommendation V-5.

<sup>68</sup> Recommendations V-8, V-13.

<sup>69</sup> Recommendation V-9.

<sup>70</sup> Recommendation V-10.

<sup>71</sup> Recommendations V-14, V-16.

<sup>72</sup> Recommendation V-19.

Promising practices:

## VI. Assistance to victims

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

### Observations of the Committee on assistance to victims specific to Poland

The Committee observed that there are helplines for children that are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in Poland.<sup>73</sup>

The Committee also observed that in Poland independent psychotherapists and psychiatrists are listed as services that child victims can access free of charge through their health insurance. This practice provides children with greater opportunities to access services.<sup>74</sup>

### Generic recommendations of the Committee on assistance to victims

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

- 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.<sup>75</sup>

- 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.<sup>76</sup>

### Promising practice

In Poland, first contact workers operating within the Network of Assistance to Victims financed by the Justice Fund receive additional training and support of specialists with high qualifications and experience in providing assistance to persons affected by domestic violence and victims of criminal acts of sexual freedoms. The Network of Assistance to Victims provides all victims, including children and the victim's closest relatives, with legal, psychological, therapeutic and if necessary, medical assistance. Free assistance for the victims is provided by legal advisers, attorneys-at-law, psychologists, psychotherapists and doctors authorised to provide the above-mentioned services on the basis of national law, including specific provisions regulating the right to practice a profession. The Justice Fund also provides financial aid for children.

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<sup>73</sup> Para.280.

<sup>74</sup> Para.294.

<sup>75</sup> Recommendation VI-2.

<sup>76</sup> Recommendation VI-4.

## **Promising practices:**

### **1) Better access to information on victims' rights**

The Ministry of Justice has prepared a set of information leaflets for victims and witnesses in a reader-friendly format so that they are understandable and tailored to the individual needs of the recipients.

From 13.08. 2024 – 2.02.2025 the Minister of Justice issued regulations specifying requirements for:

- a) Letter of Rights and Obligations of victims, including those under the age of 18
- b) Letter of rights and obligations of witnesses, including those under 18 years of age
- c) Leaflets with explanations (reader-friendly format) on the scope of rights and obligations and the method and conditions of questioning of the aggrieved party and a witness (including those under 18 and vulnerable due to age or health)
- d) Information (in reader-friendly format) on the course, method and conditions of questioning of the victim and witness under 15 years of age or vulnerable due to age or health

### **2) Better mechanisms for identifying victims' needs**

On 2 February 2025, the Minister of Justice issued a regulation on the specifications of the form of the questionnaire for the individual assessment of the aggrieved party and the witness.

Thanks to this solution, the authority conducting criminal proceedings will determine, before carrying out procedural activities, the characteristics and personal conditions of the aggrieved party, the type and extent of the negative consequences of the crime committed, taking into account the nature of this crime and the circumstances of its commission, based on a standardized questionnaire.

This will allow for quick and efficient identification of the aggrieved party's needs.

### **3) Better access to assistance**

The projects carried out at the Ministry of Justice within the framework of the 2023-2026 National Plan to Prevent Offences against Sexual Freedom and Morality to the Detriment of Minors intend to:

- establish and run a hotline for minors in order to enable anonymous reporting of crimes, obtain information about rights and available support
- increase awareness of minors about helplines for children and possible forms of communication
- disseminate information about places providing specialist assistance and support to minors who have been victims of sexual crimes (cooperation between: Ministry of Justice, Children's Rights Ombudsman, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Police, Border Guard)

#### **4) Barnahus Model**

The Ministry of Justice is currently working on the concept of establishing state-run child support centres, modelled on the Barnahus model, which has proven effective in many European countries.

The aim of this initiative is to create a comprehensive, integrated, and child-friendly system of support for minors who are victims of crime. The current phase involves a detailed analysis of the existing network of facilities providing assistance to children, with particular attention to their accessibility, the scope of services offered, and operational standards.

The new solution is intended to ensure that child victims of crime receive comprehensive, coordinated psychological, legal, and medical support, as well as have procedural activities conducted in one safe and child-friendly environment.

## VII. Civil society involvement and cooperation

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

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

The Committee observes that Poland encourages the implementation of prevention projects and programs carried out by civil society not only at the national level but also at the local level.<sup>77</sup> Poland mentions the training opportunities it offers to civil society actors concerning the online environment and related risks but also the opportunities it presents for children's rights.<sup>78</sup> The interaction with civil society includes preventive, educational and awareness-raising activities to minimise the risk of abuse that children face online,<sup>79</sup> including projects specifically aimed at educating and raising awareness of children on the issue of CSGSIV.<sup>80</sup> Poland also develops and supports different activities which are aimed at raising the awareness of adults, such as parents, educators, doctors and social workers, about existing risks and dangers of ICTs for children.<sup>81</sup>

On the other hand, the Committee observes a **difficulty in implementing the Convention** as in Poland there is no systemic policy to encourage civil society to develop prevention projects in this area. A first difficulty is the lack of financial support provided to civil society, forcing NGOs to secure their own budget and threatening in return the sustainability of the projects. The second problem is that there is sometimes no cooperation plan covering the whole national territory on the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children online. Finally, civil

society organisations are sometimes required to seek formal approval from the State to see their projects implemented in practice.<sup>82</sup>

Therefore, the Committee **invites** Poland:

- 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.<sup>83</sup>
- 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.<sup>84</sup>
- to support civil society to carry out projects and programmes that include the issue of CSGSIV.<sup>85</sup>

The Committee also observes that Poland cooperated with Bosnia and Herzegovina, when one organisation from Bosnia and Herzegovina carried out study visits to Safer Internet Centres in Poland, before setting up its own Safer Internet Centre.<sup>86</sup>

Victim assistance mechanisms in Poland consist of helplines and shelters where victims of violence, including children, can seek support in cases of sexual abuse. Additionally, NGOs offer free psychological support, legal advice and physical assistance to children in Poland during legal proceedings.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Para.307.

<sup>78</sup> Para.311.

<sup>79</sup> Para.320.

<sup>80</sup> Para.321.

<sup>81</sup> Para.315.

<sup>82</sup> Para.316.

<sup>83</sup> Recommendation VII-3.

<sup>84</sup> Recommendation VII-4.

<sup>85</sup> Recommendation VII-5.

<sup>86</sup> Para.324.

<sup>87</sup> Para.329.

## Generic recommendations of the Committee on civil society involvement and cooperation

- The Committee **invites** all Parties, including Poland, to encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives<sup>88</sup> 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.<sup>89</sup>

### Promising practice

Many stakeholders report that civil society uses child-friendly and recreational material to convey preventive information. For instance, in Poland, the National Research Institute NASK developed a campaign addressing teenagers of 13 to 17 years who are active on social media, to build awareness of the threats associated with the distribution of intimate content online and advise on where to seek help when such content is made public. The campaign addressing young people will be conducted on TikTok, while the content addressing adults will be shared on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and the campaign website.

Many Parties, including Poland, run Safer Internet centres established under the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme. Safer Internet Centres inform, advise and assist children, parents, teachers and carers on digital questions and fights against online child sexual abuse. The Polish Centre is formed by the National Research Institute (NASK), the coordinator of the PSIC, and the Empowering Children Foundation (ECF). The Centre undertakes a range of comprehensive measures for the safety of children and young people using the internet and new technologies. The Orange Foundation is partner of many activities undertaken within the Centre.

#### Promising practices:

Under the Minister of Justice there is a Team for the Protection of Minors, hereinafter referred to as the "Team", which is the latter's consultative and advisory body:

The Team's tasks include, in particular:

- Drafting the National Plan Against Violence to the Detriment of Minors and
- The National Plan to Prevent Offences against Sexual Freedom and Morality to the Detriment of Minors and evaluation of their progress
- analysing legal solutions for the protection of minors from abuse and initiating amendments to the legislation in this area
- drawing up reports on the implementation of national plans
- preparing guidelines for the development of standards and updating these guidelines every 2 years.

The Team includes, among others three representatives of non-governmental organizations, unions and associations of nongovernmental organizations, selected from among the persons proposed by these entities and two representatives of churches and other religious associations, selected from among the persons proposed by these entities.

<sup>88</sup> 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.

<sup>89</sup> Recommendations VII-6, VII-7.

Working groups may also be set up within the Team, to which experts from outside the Team may be invited. In 2024 the appointed working groups have prepared guidelines for the standards for the protection of minors, which are posted on the website. Currently, five working groups monitor the implementation of the National Plan.

The working groups are composed, among others, of representatives of science, non-governmental organizations such as experts from Empowering Children Foundation (pl. Fundacja Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę), who have been a leading force in combating sexual crimes against children for many years.

The 2023-2026 National Plan to Prevent Offences against Sexual Freedom and Morality to the Detriment of Minors provides for activities that can also be implemented by interested NGOs.

In the implementation of the 2023-2026 National Plan to Prevent Offences against Sexual Freedom and Morality to the Detriment of Minors (action 3.1.1.), Ministry of Justice cooperate with UNICEF in order to work out effective, streamlined model of collaboration between Police, Border Guard, social welfare centres, superintendents of schools, centres for art education and health care units.

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

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

### Observations of the Committee on promoting awareness of the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing sexual images and/or videos of themselves specific to Poland

The Committee observes that since 2005, Poland has launched many campaigns and projects dedicated to raising awareness of children, parents and teachers of online dangers. As an example, the [Sieciaki.pl](http://Sieciaki.pl) portal was created for children aged 6-12 since 2009 as a response to the growing level of interest in social media that the youngest Internet users were showing. The portal is equipped with social networking functions (a profile, comments, friends etc.), is moderated and creates a space for educating children in the area of safe use of social networks. Another example is the Campaign "I think, therefore I don't send" (*Myślę, więc nie ślę*), which aimed to educate about dangers associated with sexting and rise social awareness around the phenomenon. Although this campaign has already finished, its main product, the film "Forever", is still available online.<sup>90</sup> Another campaign which is currently ongoing, "Careful Parents", addresses the importance of the role of parents in protecting children from online threats.<sup>91</sup> The latest campaign dedicated to the phenomenon of self-generating sexual content by minors is 'Not for Show' (Nie na pokaz), prepared by the National Research Institute as a part of the Safer Internet Project in cooperation with Tik Tok Poland.<sup>92</sup> The main message of this campaign is conveyed through 6 short films broadcasted within this platform.<sup>93</sup>

The Committee also observes a good practice example for the peer-to-peer awareness

raising method in Poland. The Congress of Young Internet Users (KoMIu) was established by NASK (National Research Institute) in order to create a platform of communication for young people from all over the country (as well as for teachers) and serves as a Youth Panel for the Polish Safer Internet Centre (PCPSI). Congress participants consult educational materials, provide information on the emerging trends among youth as well as represent the PCPSI during the pan-European youth participation actions. The idea of the Congress is not only to work during meetings with the selected group but also to multiply the Congress effects on the school level by organising discussions and events locally. Moreover, the Congress empowers and promotes expert knowledge exchange among teachers involved in the project. Representatives of the congress are also involved in activities undertaken within the framework of PCPSI.<sup>94</sup>

Additionally, the Committee draws attention to the Consultation Committee – an Advisory Board which supports implementation of activities undertaken by the Polish Safer Internet Centre (PCPSI) established in 2006. Although it is not necessarily specific to co-ordination of awareness-raising activities about the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse faced by children generating and/or sharing CSGSIV of themselves, the Consultation Committee's tasks include

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kqBu4qZebg>

<sup>91</sup> <https://uwaznirodzice.pl/> English version of the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YAkU63rtQY>. All campaigns can be found on the saferinternet.pl webpage: <https://www.saferinternet.pl/social-campaigns.html>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.saferinternet.pl/nie-na-pokaz/kampania.html> (in Polish).

<sup>93</sup> Para.351.

<sup>94</sup> Para.361.

promoting activities for improving online safety as well as sharing practices which protect children from online threats and assessment of PCPSI projects implementation. Committee stakeholders are also invited to co-

create PCPSI events. The Polish Advisory Board members represent the most important institutions and organisations in Poland working for children online protection and for digital education.<sup>95</sup>

### **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 Poland:

- 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.<sup>96</sup>
- 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.<sup>97</sup>
- to have available awareness-raising tools, materials, and activities suitable for children with disabilities.<sup>98</sup>
- 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.<sup>99</sup>

- 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.<sup>100</sup>
- 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.<sup>101</sup>

#### **Promising practices:**

Since 2021, the Minister of Digital Affairs and the National Research Institute NASK have been implementing a project addressed to teachers and educational counsellors who would like to use their lessons to teach and guide children and youth on how to safely use the Internet.

- The Cyberlekcje (Cyberlessons) project involves 22 ready-made plans for lessons on cybersecurity addressed to students of various age groups in primary and secondary schools.
- The plans developed by experts are ready-made tools which assist teachers in comprehensive education on online security.

<sup>95</sup> Para.378.

<sup>96</sup> Recommendation VIII-2.

<sup>97</sup> Recommendation VIII-3.

<sup>98</sup> Recommendation VIII-4.

<sup>99</sup> Recommendation VIII-6.

<sup>100</sup> Recommendation VIII-8.

<sup>101</sup> Recommendation VIII-9.

- They concern various topics, such as online security, privacy, online relations, online threats, data management, abuse of new technologies, and mental well-being.
- The project also features additional materials such as infographics, presentations, animations and videos with experts.
- September 2023 saw the launch of a new version of the project – Cyberlekcje 3.0, in which all lesson plans are adapted to Problem-Based Learning. It is a method based on problem-solving which challenges students to be actively engaged in education and not be passive recipients of dry facts.
- Comprehensive materials from the 2021-2023 edition of the project have been made available to all interested parties in the publicly accessible cybersecurity knowledge base at gov.pl, under the CyberEdukacja tab, as well as the Integrated Education Platform, the tool recommended by the Ministry of National Education.

The year 2024 saw the pilot of yet another edition which aimed at raising awareness of the materials prepared in previous years through direct contact with educational counsellors. The aim of the pilot was also to organise training for teachers on cyber hygiene and social engineering techniques used by scammers in cyberspace.

The pilot saw:

- Seven full-day cybersecurity training courses for teachers in towns and cities of the Mazovian Voivodeship (Warszawa, Radom, Płock, Siedlce, Pruszków, Maków Mazowiecki and Mława);
- Two-hour-long training sessions in educational establishments for teaching staff;
- Demonstration lessons for teachers of primary and secondary schools;
- Four new lesson plans within the framework of this year's edition.

#### Cyber lekcje 2025-2026

The pilot training for teaching staff and demonstration lessons based on Cyberlekcje 3.0 lesson plans pursued since October 2024 by NASK-PIB proved that it was reasonable to continue the project and expand upon it, taking into account new lesson plans and training sessions in the other voivodeships (during the pilot, the sessions were limited largely to establishments in the Mazovian Voivodeship).

- NASK held a survey among the teaching staff that participated in the two-hour training sessions; over 95% of teachers said the knowledge they gained during the session would be very useful
- 70% of those surveyed would definitely recommend such a form of training to other teachers. Over half of the respondents (54.2%) declared they would use the materials presented as early as in the ongoing school year.
- The areas which the teachers most often indicated as those which should be included in training sessions for teaching staff, were: Cyberviolence and Hate (57.8%), Risky Behaviour Online (51.8%), Threats to Children and Youth in the Internet (44.5%), A Critical Approach to Information Online (27.7%) and Online Scams (27.7%).

The implementation of the project in 2025/2026 will involve:

1. Two-day training sessions for principals and teaching staff of primary and secondary educational establishments. In each voivodeship, training will be provided for 75 principals and 150 members of the teaching staff, bringing the total to 1,125 principals and 2,250 teachers and educational counsellors nationwide.
2. Courses based on Cyberlekcje lesson plans for students of primary and secondary schools, along with training for teaching staff as well as parents/carers in establishments which request such training in various areas of Poland.
3. Publicly accessible online lessons based on Cyberlekcje lesson plans for students of primary and secondary schools – 22 lessons in 2025, 30 lessons in 2026.
4. Development of 15 new Cyberlekcje lesson plans (with such new topics as, among others, Artificial Intelligence in Our Daily Lives, Cyberviolence, Disinformation).

## 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.

### Generic recommendations of the Committee on education for children

- The Committee **requires** all Parties, including Poland, 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.<sup>102</sup>

**Follow-up actions:** The content relating to the risk of sexual abuse through ICT is incorporated in the new school subject called health education, which is scheduled to start at primary and secondary schools from 1 September 2025 (as optional classes, participation to depend on the decision of the parents of a minor student/pupil).

On 15 August 2024 schools and facilities implemented standards for the protection of minors, which also incorporate rules of safe use of the Internet and procedures for intervention if a minor is being harmed. An abridged version of standards for the protection of minors for children and students/pupils has also been implemented on the mandatory basis and is now available. As required by schools and teachers, teacher training centres organise training courses, lectures or webinars on the threats of sexual abuse and cases of abuse related to the use of ICTs.

The Ministry of National Education recommends that prevention programmes that are based on scientific grounds, effective preventive strategies and process evaluation is implemented at schools and facilities.

High quality prevention programmes have been made available to schools as part of the System of Recommendation of Prevention

Programmes and Mental Health Promotion that has been active since 2010 and has been implemented by the National Centre for Counteracting Addictions, Centre for Education Development and Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology. Each programme has class scenarios, presents scientific grounds, risk factors and protection factors, effective prevention strategies, proposed materials and a system of training for facilitators.

Psychological and pedagogical counselling centre may provide support to nursery schools, schools and facilities by organising training courses for teachers, tutors and specialists to help them identify threats and initiate rapid interventions. Workshops and lectures for students about rules of safety, identification of improper conduct and proper response in hazardous situations are an important element of their actions. The centres may also provide support to parents, by offering them consultations on identifying worrying signs manifested by children and by providing them with hints on how to talk to children about protection and safety. At schools, teachers and specialists may organise thematic workshops on body boundaries, consent and safety.

Co-operation between schools and third-party organisations and institutions acting for child protection also plays a major role.

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

- to address in educational contexts the issue of the risks of child sexual exploitation and

<sup>102</sup> Recommendation IX-3.

sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs, including as regards CSGSIV.<sup>103</sup>

- 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).<sup>104</sup>
- to consistently involve children in the development of internet safety awareness programmes.<sup>105</sup>
- to ensure that there is a standing national internet safety resource, with an ongoing programme of activities.<sup>106</sup>
- 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.<sup>107</sup>

- 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.<sup>108</sup>
- 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.<sup>109</sup>

### Promising practices:

The Nationwide Education Network (OSE) is a programme intended to:

- Provide all the schools in Poland with fast, free and safe Internet.
- Improve the level of digital competencies among pupils and students and show them new technologies.
- Facilitate the educational process at schools by providing access to educational resources.
- Promote the rules of safe use of digital technologies (by enabling participation in educational projects on the rules of safe use of digital technologies).

The programme was designed pursuant to the Act of 27 October 2017 on the Nationwide Education Network. It is run by NASK – National Research Institute.

Safe Online is an educational project implemented within the Nationwide Education Network, targeted at teachers and form 7–8 primary school pupils and secondary school students. The purpose of the project is to provide support to the teachers and the youth in raising digital competencies in the field of online safety and security. Educational programme for online e-courses for teachers and students covers seven thematic areas:

1. Privacy in the context of digital technology
2. Cyberbullying
3. Cyberthreats
4. Hazardous and harmful content
5. Digital tracks and online image
6. Fake news
7. Digital hygiene

mOchrona is an application which supports parents in ensuring that their children are safe online. The application facilitates setting up the rules of using the Internet and applications, and provides access to information about child activity on a device. The application also provides parents and guardians with access to up-to-date educational content on the rules of safe use of the Internet by

<sup>103</sup> Recommendation IX-1.

<sup>104</sup> Recommendation IX-2.

<sup>105</sup> Recommendation IX-4.

<sup>106</sup> Recommendation IX-5.

<sup>107</sup> Recommendation IX-6.

<sup>108</sup> Recommendation IX-7.

<sup>109</sup> Recommendation IX-8.

children. It is a free and secure tool that effectively helps to identify and respond accordingly to any potential threats and issues.

## 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 Poland

The Committee observes that in Poland various activities have recently been implemented on education or training of professionals on Internet safety for children.<sup>110</sup>

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

- 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.<sup>111</sup>

#### Follow-up actions:

On 15 August 2024 standards of minor protection became mandatory in Poland. See the attachment.

College curricula provide for training in the recognition of violence against children.

See the attachment.

Teachers are educated at universities pursuant to provisions of Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 on the standard of education that prepares for the profession of a teacher (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2024, item 453).

Among others, a graduate of a university course for teachers knows and understands:

- children rights,
- issues related to children facing crisis or trauma situations,
- threats which children and the youth face: aggression and violence, including electronic aggression, as well as addictions to psychoactive substances or computers,
- issues related to informal groups, subcultures of young people, and sects.

Professional training of teachers in the field of child protection is carried out by teacher.

See the attachment.

- 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.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Para.417.

<sup>111</sup> Recommendations X-5, X-6.

<sup>112</sup> Recommendation X-7.

**Follow-up actions:**

See information below and the attachment.

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

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

- 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.<sup>113</sup>

- 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.<sup>114</sup>

**Promising practices:**

Among others, a graduate of a university course for teachers knows and understands children rights, issues related to children facing crisis or trauma situations, and threats which children and the youth face, such as aggression and violence, including electronic aggression.

Professional training of teachers in the field of child protection against violence is carried out by teacher training institutions and psychological and pedagogical counselling centres.

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<sup>113</sup> Recommendation X-2.

<sup>114</sup> Recommendation X-3.

## XI. Research

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

### Observations of the Committee on research specific to Poland

The Committee observes that Poland has provided information on research undertaken on the issues raised by CSGSIV.<sup>115</sup> The research on CSGSIV was conducted as part of a broader research project<sup>116</sup> on children and the media/the internet.<sup>117</sup>

Additionally, Poland has informed of its participation for one or several years in the EU Kids Online research.<sup>118</sup> These are multinational research networks, which seek to enhance knowledge of children's online opportunities, risks and safety. Surveys carried out under the framework of EU Kids Online collect data and

information on, *inter alia*, children's practice of sending and receiving sexual messages online. The Committee observes that Poland has participated for at least one year in the EU Kids Online surveys.<sup>119</sup> It appears from the EU Kids Online 2020 Report that the civil society in Poland (Orange Foundation) enabled the survey to be carried out.<sup>120</sup>

State authorities in Poland<sup>121</sup> also collaborate with universities and provide financial support for the purpose of undertaking research projects addressing the issues raised by CSGSIV.<sup>122</sup>

### Generic recommendations of the Committee on research

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

- 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.<sup>123</sup>
- 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.<sup>124</sup>

- 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.<sup>125</sup>

### Promising practices

In Poland, specific research exclusively on the topic of CSGSIV has been undertaken. The National Research Institute (NASK) commissioned a quality study in 2021 using the IDI (Individual In-depth

<sup>115</sup> Paras.437.

<sup>116</sup> Study on "Teenagers and the Internet" was carried out by PEDAGOGIUM Higher School of Social Sciences.

<sup>117</sup> Para.438.

<sup>118</sup> Para.440.

<sup>119</sup> Para.440.

<sup>120</sup> Para.455.

<sup>121</sup> The Ombudsman for Children and the National Research

Institute subordinate to the Ministry of Digital Affairs (NASK) commissioned a study realised by PEDAGOGIUM Higher School of Social Science.

<sup>122</sup> Para.448.

<sup>123</sup> Recommendation XI-2.

<sup>124</sup> Recommendation XI-3.

<sup>125</sup> Recommendation XI-4.

Interview) method, on the opinions and views of young people aged 18-24 who have come across intimate content on the Internet. Their opinions and views were to cover their experiences before the age of 18. The results of the study will be published in a thematic report, which is currently being prepared by the Dyżurnet.pl team.

EU Kids Online is a multinational research network, working to increase knowledge of the opportunities and risks children face online. A significant number of Parties, including Poland, have participated in this research network for one or several years.

**Promising practices:**

In 2023 the Institute of Justice conducted a research into court files, which resulted in preparation of a report entitled: "Sexual abuse of children. Analysis of files of criminal proceedings with particular focus on the role of court appointed experts in such proceedings. Part 1. Theory". Part 2 of the report should be published this year.

<https://iws.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Raport.pdf>

## Appendix

### Position regarding the Report entitled

#### **“Protection of children against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICT): facing challenges of child self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGSIV)”**

##### Background information:

1. On 17 October 2023 the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution on adoption of the 2023-2026 National Plan to Prevent Offences against Sexual Freedom and Morality to the Detriment of Minors (M. P. of 2023, item 1235). The Plan provides for a number of measures to prevent any type of the offences against sexual freedom and morality to the detriment of minors (hereinafter: The National Plan).

Pursuant to Article 93(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, resolutions of the Council of Ministers are of an internal nature and are binding only on organizational units subordinate to the body issuing such acts.

<https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WMP20230001235>

2. On 15 August 2024 protection standards for the protection of minors became mandatory (came into effect) in Poland.

Each of the following bodies is obliged to introduce standards for the protection of minors:

1) the body managing an educational system unit as referred to in Article 2 (1-8) of the Act of 14 December 2016 on the Education Law (Journal of Laws of 2024, items 737, 854, 1562 and 1635), and another educational, care, rehabilitation, religious, artistic, medical, recreational, sports or interest development facility attended by minors or where minors stay or may stay;

2) organiser of educational, care, rehabilitation, religious, artistic, medical, recreational, sports activities or activities related to the development of interests by minors.

Article 22c.

1. The standards specify the below-listed rules, taking into consideration the nature and type of the facility or activity:

- 1) rules to ensure safe interaction between a minor and the staff at the facility or the organisers of activities, and in particular prohibited behaviour towards minors;
- 2) rules and the procedure for intervention in cases of alleged harm against the minor or when knowledge of such harm is acquired. done to the minor or
- 3) procedures and persons responsible for reporting alleged offences to the detriment of a minor, notifying the guardianship court and, in the case of institutions that have such powers, persons responsible for initiating the “Blue Card” procedure;
- 4) rules of reviewing and updating the standards;
- 5) scope of competences of the person responsible for training of the facility or organizer’s staff to use the standards [rules governing preparation of the staff to apply the standards

- and the method of documenting such activity;
- 6) rules and method of raising awareness about the protection standards among parents, legal or actual guardians and minors so that they become familiar with the standards and are ready to apply them;
  - 7) persons responsible for receiving alerts about incidents that can pose threat to minors and for providing support to the minor;
  - 8) the method of documenting and the rules of storing disclosed or reported incidents or events that threaten the well-being of a minor.
2. The standards introduced at the educational facility or in another place where such activity with the participation of minors is carried out, pursuant to Article 22b should also specify:
    - 1) rules of safe interaction between minors, in particular prohibited behaviour;
    - 2) rules for using electronic devices with Internet access;
    - 3) procedures for protecting children from harmful content and threats on the Internet and content available in other forms;
    - 4) rules for establishing a support plan for a minor following the disclosure of abuse.
  3. Operators of hotels and providers of tourist services, as well as entities which operate other type of collective accommodation facilities, are also required to introduce the standards to the extent necessary to ensure the protection of minors. The standards, taking into consideration the nature and type of the services provided, specify in particular:
    - 1) rules of conduct which ensure safe interactions between a minor and the staff of the facility, and in particular prohibited behaviour towards minors;
    - 2) rules and procedures for identifying a minor staying in a hotel, his or her relationship to the accompanying.
    - 3) rules and procedures for responding in the event of a reasonable suspicion that the well-being of a minor staying on the premises of a hotel or using tourist services is at risk;
    - 4) procedures and persons responsible for reporting alleged offences to the detriment of a minor and notifying the guardianship court;
    - 5) scope of competences of the person responsible for the training of the facility staff on the standards; rules of preparing the staff to apply the standards and the method of documenting such activities.
  4. The standards take into account special needs of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs.
  5. The standards are prepared in a child-friendly manner, to make them easily understandable and comprehensible to children.

The entities required to apply the standards:

- shall assess the standards at least once every two years to ensure that they respond well to the current needs and comply with the applicable laws. The conclusions of the assessment must be documented in writing.
- publish the standards on their website and display them in a prominent place on their premises, in the full and abridged version intended for minors. The abridged version shall contain information relevant to minors.

**3.** Currently Poland is taking part in negotiations at the EU Council level concerning amendments to Directive 2011/93/UE of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA.

During the meeting of the JHA Council on 12-13 December 2024, the general approach to that legal instrument was adopted. At present, the EU Council (Polish Presidency in the EU Council) awaits the position of the European Parliament to open the negotiations as part of the so-called trilogues.

## **Chapter X**

### Health care sector

The obligation to enforce standards for the protection of minors is also imposed on health-care facilities the attended by minors.

The issue of sexual abuse of minors has already been addressed in pre- and post-graduate education of doctors and nurses.

A doctor gains basic knowledge and professional skills in the process of pre- and post-graduate education. The scope of knowledge and skills gained as part of pre-graduate education of doctors covers, among others, symptoms and course of diseases; methods of diagnostics and therapy for specific medical conditions; forms of violence; models that describe family violence as well as violence in certain institutions; social conditions for various forms of violence and the doctor's role in recognition of violence; identification of risk factors of violence; recognition of and response to acts of violence; the issues related to an abused child and sexual abuse, mental impairment and behavioural disorders – psychoses; addictions; recognition of conditions that are life-threatening which require immediate medical intervention; the meaning of verbal and non-verbal communication in the process of communicating with the patient and the concept of trust in interactions with the patient; ethical, social and legal conditions of performing the profession of a doctor; rules of conduct in emergencies; laws on the provision of health services and patient rights; laws on the doctor-patient privilege and keeping of medical records; and doctor's criminal, civil and professional responsibility.

As part of university education for doctors and dentists, the topics of violence, development of proper doctor-patient relations and identification of violence factors as regards evaluation of both adults and children are widely addressed. The doctor broadens his or her knowledge through specialisations, professional training, e-learning or self-education. The post-graduate course offered as part of GP partial internship presents the protocols to be followed in the event family violence is suspected and rules of communication with the patient and the therapeutic team.

The specialisation course in the field of psychiatry covers:

- 1) doctor training in the fields of self-resolution of all kinds of clinical issues (diagnostics, treatment, certification) related to the provision of psychiatric aid (counselling, consultations, treatment, rehabilitation) to patients under various clinical and organisational conditions (patient environment, in-patient clinics, hospitals, ad hoc assistance, care facilities) as part of public and non-public health care and individual and group specialised practice;
- 2) work with the family, self-help groups, organisation of the welfare support system;
- 3) rules of therapy and rehabilitation of mental disorders (rules of comprehensive treatment, definition of indications and contraindications and method of application and evaluation of effectiveness of various therapeutic methods);

- 4) rules of pharmacotherapy and other methods of biological treatment of mental disorders (detailed knowledge of properties and mechanisms of action of psychotropic medicines, indications and contraindications, adverse symptoms, rules of selection and use, interactions);
- 5) rules of psychotherapy (basic knowledge of modalities and psychotherapeutic techniques and rules for choosing them, rules of formulating the objectives and defining indications, contraindications and rules of therapy in the individual, group and family context);
- 6) social therapies (patient training in social skills, welfare interventions, community care and therapies, welfare support systems and methods of improving and modifying such systems and methods, therapeutic communities);
- 7) community psychiatry (idea, organisational forms, community care programmes, the practice of promotional, educational and consulting actions for the local communities).

The specialisation course in the field of child and youth psychiatry covers doctor training, among others:

- 1) rules and specificity of work with families with the history of abuse (sexual abuse, and physical and mental abuse);
- 2) fundamentals of system-wide family therapy, the meaning of family interactions, transgenerational context and the attachment bond within the meaning of issues of patients of developmental age and in therapeutic interventions;
- 3) the specific nature of work with families with the history of abuse;
- 4) the specific nature of community treatment of children and the youth with various mental disorders related to family violence, preliminary system-wide consultation and ongoing work with the family;

The program in obstetrics and gynaecology provides for the training of physicians in the field of psychosomatic and psychosexual disorders, among others. It is expected that the doctor, after completing specialty training will demonstrate, among other things, knowledge of:

- knowledge of sexual behaviour of humans;
  - psychosomatic disorders in gynaecology and obstetrics;
  - the role of stress in functional disorders, such as chronic pelvic pain;
  - the recognition and treatment of cases of violence, especially sexual violence;
- 5) recognition of domestic violence and provision of support to women who are victims of domestic violence and consequences of such violence;
  - 6) taking a targeted gynaecological history with the evaluation of psycho-emotional state;
  - 7) mastering the rules of diagnosis and treatment when faced with cases of violence, especially sexual abuse, and preparing a medical injury report requested by law enforcement authorities.

The specialisation course in the field of paediatrics covers doctor training, among others, in the fields of:

- 1) various types of child violence and abuse: physical, sexual or emotional;
- 2) legal aspects of non-accidental injuries;
- 3) clinical symptoms of non-accidental injuries;
- 4) clinical symptoms which suggest sexual abuse;

- 5) the importance of keeping proper documentation and storage of judicial evidence and rules of co-operation with law enforcement authorities in the event of suspected abuse of a child;
- 6) role of a paediatrician as a witness during a court trial;
- 7) need to take part in meetings of an interdisciplinary team on violence prevention;
- 8) diagnosis and treatment of symptoms of physical violence including head injuries;
- 9) use of the Blue Card, which is set up in cases of domestic violence.

The specialisation course for general practitioners covers doctor training, among others, in the fields of:

- 1) identification and responding to cases of violence, symptoms of an abused child;
- 2) legal and organisational aspects of primary health care when dealing with suspected cases of family violence;
- 3) setting up the Blue Card.

The role of the doctor is to evaluate patient's health with the patient's current health condition in mind. As a rule, unless the patient refuses to undergo the medical examination, it is carried out based on signs and symptoms. The examination is concluded with a medical opinion which is required for any further steps to be taken with respect to the injured person. Thus, the medical examination is the result of a direct patient-doctor relation, and the medical opinion issued is based solely on that relation. A medical opinion may be prepared as a specific formal document. However, in accordance with governing laws, the doctor must also account for patient rights as the patient may refuse his or her consent to the examination or to the issue of the medical opinion, or refuse to provide information related to the mechanism of bodily injuries when the medical history is taken. Pursuant to provisions of the Act of 5 December 1996 on the Professions of a Doctor and Dentist (Journal of Laws of 2024 item 1287, as amended) if a patient is 16 or over, the patient's consent is also required. However, if a minor who has turned 16, a legally incapacitated person or a mentally ill or mentally retarded patient who is sufficiently aware refuses medical examination, then in addition to their statutory representative or the actual guardian or if they fail to grant their consent, a permit from the guardianship court is necessary. If domestic violence is identified, a doctor is obliged to fill in the document in accordance with the template provided in Regulation of the Minister of Health of 29 August 2023 on the template of a doctor's certificate on the causes and types of bodily injuries related to domestic violence (Journal of Laws 2023 item 1827).

This topic is also the subject of training provided for other medical professions.

Teaching standards in programs for physicians, dentists, nurses, midwives and paramedics (Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 26 July 2019 on the teaching standards in training for the professions of physician, dentist, pharmacist, nurse, midwife, laboratory diagnostician, physiotherapist and paramedic (Polish Journal of Laws of 2011, item 755, as amended)) issued in agreement with the Minister of Health, and teaching standards in graduate and postgraduate programs for teachers (Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 on the teachings standard in training for the profession of teacher (Polish Journal of Laws of 2024, item 453)) issued in agreement with the minister competent for education and upbringing, stipulate that graduates of the respective programs should achieve learning outcomes which pertain to preventing, counteracting, identifying and responding to violence against children, with account taken of the specific nature of work in these professions. Teaching standards in programs for physicians and dentists stipulate learning outcomes pertaining to the knowledge of forms of violence, including domestic violence, the skill of its identification, as well as the rules of procedure in cases of suspected

sexual violence, taking into account the “Blue Card” procedure; as regards the teaching standards for physicians, they also include issues of (sexually) abused children, together with the rules of intervention in cases of such patients, and rules of procedure in cases of suspected sexual violence.

Teaching standards in programs for nurses and midwives include learning outcomes pertaining to the knowledge of children’s rights, as well as the ability to monitor the children’s health and to respond to any danger to their health arising in their residential and educational environments. Furthermore, the teaching standard in programs for nurses includes learning outcomes pertaining to the ability to assess a human being’s functioning in difficult situations, such as those of physical or sexual violence, as well as to use basic forms of psychological assistance and to inform about specialist forms of assistance. In educating midwives-to-be, the teaching standard also includes knowledge about medical and legal actions to be taken in cases of violence against girls and women, and the skills of identifying domestic violence and other pathological situations, intervening in them, and providing professional assistance to the victims. Learning outcomes pertaining to the knowledge of forms of violence (including domestic violence), as well as the skills of identifying risk factors for violence, identifying violence and determining appropriate response efforts, are included in the teaching standards for paramedics.

As regards other professions, the learning outcomes include subjects on following the procedure in the event of suspected cases of violence. The scope of knowledge learned covers:

- 1) dental assistant: recognizes symptoms with victims of mental and physical abuse; defines procedures to be followed in the event of suspected cases of violence; implements procedures if symptoms of violence are found;
- 2) dental hygienist: recognizes symptoms with victims of mental and physical abuse; defines procedures to be followed in the event of suspected cases of violence; implements procedures if symptoms of violence are found;
- 3) health carer: defines the concept of violence; applies procedures to prevent cases of violence; identifies measures to prevent violence that are appropriate in a given case;
- 4) orthopaedist recognizes symptoms with victims of mental and physical abuse; defines procedures to be followed in the event of suspected cases of violence; implements procedures if symptoms of violence are found;
- 5) optometrist: describes symptoms of violence against adults and children; describes types of abusive behaviour and its impact on the mental and physical condition of a person; explains the rules of responding and dealing with suspected or actual cases of direct violence; describes the importance of preventing violence; highlights laws that provide for an obligation to respond to suspected cases of violence; identifies institutions where victims of violence can seek help;
- 6) dental technician: defines the concept of violence including violence at work; applies procedures to prevent cases of violence; identifies measures to prevent violence that are appropriate in a given case;
- 7) electro radiology technician: defines the concept of violence including violence at work; applies procedures to prevent cases of violence; identifies measures to prevent violence that are appropriate in a given case; applies procedures in response to violence;
- 8) massage therapist: describes symptoms of violence; describes measures to prevent violence; identifies procedures in response to violence; applies procedures in response to violence;
- 9) medical sterilisation technician: differentiates forms and types of violence; describes consequences of violence; identifies symptoms of violence; lists laws on the procedure to be followed if violence is suspected; lists institutions that address the issues of violence;

- 10) occupational therapist: describes symptoms of mental and physical violence; prepares therapeutic plan that accounts for measures to prevent violence; analyses information received from the multi-disciplinary team on violence prevention.