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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 25 September 2019

Handbook on Child Participation for professionals working with children

- Call for proposals: Concept note -

Activity	Preparing a Handbook on Child Participation for professionals organising and implementing child participation activities in public debate and decision-making
Awarding entity	Children's Rights Division / Directorate General of Democracy (DGII) / Council of Europe
Estimated start date	24 October 2019
Duration	24 October - 31 December 2019
Deadline for applications	18 October 2019
Response to	children@coe.int by indicating "Handbook on child participation - proposal" in the subject line of your message
Website	www.coe.int/children

Prepared by the Children's Rights Division

Directorate of Anti-Discrimination

CHILD PARTICIPATION UNDER THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE STRATEGY

The [Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2016-2021\)](#), adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in early 2016 and launched at a High-level conference in Sofia, Bulgaria, in April 2016 (“Sofia Strategy”), lists child participation as one of the key priority areas for activities led at the European level and in the 47 member States of the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe itself has been actively involving children in its standard-setting, monitoring and operational work for well over 10 years; it hereby strives to set the example and inspire States to implement children’s right to participate in their activities at national, regional and local level.

Child participation has been instrumental to the development and implementation of the Strategy: [consultations with children informed the development of the Strategy](#) and a group of children participated actively in the Strategy launching conference in Sofia in 2016. In 2018/2019, children took part in the evaluation of the Sofia Strategy, and a group of children will be invited to contribute to the [Mid-term evaluation conference](#) to be held on 13-14 November 2019 in also.

Since 2016, child consultations have also regularly been carried out to inform major Council of Europe outputs developed under the Strategy, including:

- the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment](#) and the preparation of a child-friendly version of the Guidelines;
- research on children with disabilities in the digital environment;
- the second monitoring round of the Lanzarote Committee on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- [child-friendly information for children in migration](#);
- [a draft Recommendation on age-assessment of migrant children](#).

Amongst activities devolving from the Strategy, the Council of Europe continues to promote its [Child Participation Assessment Tool \(CPAT\)](#) which has now been used by a number of countries to evaluate their child participation mechanisms and procedures.

Numerous lessons have been learned through these experiences and concrete opportunities for engaging with children. It has once again become evident that, for all frontline professionals working and consulting with children, training and capacity building is of utmost importance, not only to have the right tools at hand to allow for meaningful child participation, but also to ensure that children’s human rights are fully respected in relevant processes, for example through specific child safeguarding policies.

A HANDBOOK ON CHILD PARTICIPATION – ADDRESSEES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The Council of Europe is issuing a call for the preparation of a Handbook on Child Participation, for professionals organising and implementing child participation activities, notably in the public sphere and decision-making process (including through NGOs and institutions). Since prioritising child participation, the Council of Europe has developed a wealth of good practice and adaptable methodologies, but these have yet to be compiled, reviewed and unified in a single, easily accessible publication in the format of a Handbook. Such a Handbook, relating to the [Council of Europe Recommendation on child participation CM/Rec\(2012\)2](#), would provide professionals with practical tools, a selection of methodologies and checklists, and good practice on child participation which have been means-tested at the national and the European level. Relevant practice shall also be referred back to underlying standards as provided by the UNCRC, and its Article 12 (A12), increasing professionals’ understanding of their role in facilitating and respecting the right of children to be heard. As such, the Handbook to be

elaborated could finally become a resource on practical advice on how to translate Council of Europe standards and A12 into practice in various contexts, based on methodologies used by professionals on child participation.

The Handbook should be helpful for professionals organising and leading child participation and consultation activities. Giving them the capacity to seek the views and input of children in schools, leisure activities, care institutions, facilities or centres where children are deprived of liberty, hospitals, and so forth, it must also illustrate to professionals why they should, or could, involve children in decision making. Target groups include both those in a position to initiate child participation in their respective institutions, and those actually putting it into practice.

For the first stage of the project (until 31 December 2019) the preparation of the Handbook would involve the following tasks:

- A literature review of the latest resources available for professionals regarding child participation, notably publications developing hands-on guidance and methodologies on how to set up and implement child participation activities. This review should also include the Council of Europe's own sources;
- A draft outline of the handbook by the first meeting with the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division;
- A meeting organised with the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division in November 2019, involving further international experts or frontline professionals consulting with children to explore where the knowledge gaps are and what tools would be helpful in improving child participation mechanisms and procedures at various levels (national, regional, local) and different settings (public authorities, schools, associations etc.) in Council of Europe member States and what methodologies should actually look like;
- Interviews conducted with staff and experts of the Council of Europe that have been involved in child participation activities over the last few years;
- Preparation of a final draft in English, to be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat by 31 December 2019 at the latest, after a stage of joint revision with the Secretariat;
- OPTIONAL: Seek the views of children on their experience regarding their participation in projects organised or supported by the Council of Europe. Participative children's organisations frequently voicing children's opinions may have the capacity for a first, quick consultation.

The main working language for this activity shall be English, both for the production of a draft Handbook and exchanges with the Secretariat. Depending on the budget available for this activity in 2020, the Handbook could be consulted with children and translated into further languages (beyond French which shall be provided for a Council of Europe working language).

The addressees of the call are academics, consultants and other experts specialising in matters of child participation, both at a theoretical and practical level, who would be available to prepare a draft Handbook in a very short time-frame (before the end of 2019) and are therefore interested in submitting individual or joint proposals. The actual Handbook would then have to be prepared based on the candidates' own experience and some of the methodologies already used at Council of Europe level.

WORK MEETINGS AND EXCHANGES

The execution of the above tasks will involve the presence at the following meetings and exchanges:

- A kick-off meeting with the Council of Europe Secretariat in October/November 2019 via video-conference (BlueJeans); (date to be confirmed);

- A work meeting with Council of Europe Secretariat and experts to be associated in Strasbourg in early November/late November; (date to be confirmed);
- Regular exchanges (via telephone, BlueJeans etc.) with the Secretariat and potentially an expert editing team (to be set up during the work process);

TIME FRAME

The following time frame is suggested for implementation of the above project:

Phases	Partners	Target date
<i>Preparatory Phase</i>		
Conceptualisation of the Handbook's main features and draft outline; gathering the documentation and sources of information to be used; identification of possible experts for a consultation; planning of child consultation activities; preparation of first meeting in Strasbourg	Service Provider External experts to be involved Secretariat (of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division)	By 8 November
Preparation of documentary review to assess publications and other resources available providing guidance on Article 12, relevant Council of Europe standards and methodologies and the implementation of child participation activities in various settings	Service Provider Secretariat	By 18 November
Meeting in Strasbourg with international experts on child participation (to be selected)	Service Provider Invited Experts Secretariat	Week of 18-22 November (dates to be decided)
<i>Drafting Phase</i>		
Optional: consultation of children	Service Provider NGOs/Academic Institutions Secretariat	By 10 December
Submission of a first draft of the Handbook Secretariat and other editors, for feedback	Service Provider Expert editors Secretariat	By 10 December
<i>Finalisation Phase</i>		
Reception of feedback from expert editors and Secretariat and finalisation of the draft Handbook	Service Provider Expert editors Secretariat	By 16 December
Submission of the final draft to the Secretariat	Service Provider Secretariat	By 31 December 2019

BUDGET

A specific budget is available for this Council of Europe activity to cover the following in particular:

- Working time spent on research and drafting;
- Travel and subsistence costs to one meeting with the Council of Europe (in Strasbourg) for a total of four persons, including additional selected experts on child participation.

APPLICATIONS

- Candidates are invited to submit a proposal of max. 2 pages outlining a draft concept for the project and a work plan;
- Proposals should be submitted to children@coe.int by **18 October 2019** by indicating **“Handbook for child participation – proposal”** in the subject line of your message;
- The evaluation of candidates is provided in accordance with Council of Europe procurement procedures.