



T-ES(2020)20_en

6 July 2020

LANZAROTE COMMITTEE

Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe
Convention on the protection of children against sexual
exploitation and sexual abuse

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List of decisions

27th meeting (remote)

Venue: KUDO platform

Adopted by the Lanzarote Committee on 3 July 2020

The Committee of the Parties (hereinafter referred to as “the Lanzarote Committee” or “the Committee”) to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (hereinafter referred to as “the Lanzarote Convention” or “the Convention”) held its 27th meeting remotely on KUDO on 15-17 June 2020.

During this meeting, the Lanzarote Committee:

1. *Opening of the meeting, adoption of the agenda and up-date on ratifications of the Lanzarote Convention*

1. Warmly thanked the outgoing Bureau for having continued in its functions for three additional months following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which did not allow the plenary to meet and hold elections in March 2020 as was initially foreseen. The Committee approved *ex post* the extension of the Bureau's mandate until June 17, 2020.
2. Appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat to ensure that notwithstanding the cancelling of the March plenary meeting, work was carried forward thanks to the organisation of two remote meetings of the Bureau and regular contacts among Bureau members and the Secretariat to prepare the current plenary meeting.
3. Welcomed the finalisation of the internal procedure for ratification of the Lanzarote Convention in Armenia and looked forward to the forthcoming deposit of its instrument of ratification.
4. Noted that all measures put in place for ratification by Ireland had been reviewed by the Irish Attorney General, who has advised to proceed with ratification, and looked forward to forthcoming governmental action in this respect.
5. Adopted its agenda.

2. *Monitoring of the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention*

2.1. *“The protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by ICTs”*

2.1.1. State of play concerning the updating of observations prepared by Rapporteurs on all questions of the [thematic questionnaire](#) and timeframe for the adoption of the 2nd monitoring round implementation report

6. Noted that all preliminary observations on information submitted by Parties and other stakeholders in reply to the 16 questions of the thematic questionnaire have been made available, and informed that on the basis of these, the Secretariat was preparing a preliminary draft of the implementation report for a first reading during the September meeting.

7. Acknowledged that any additional information to the above-mentioned preliminary observations could be submitted to the Secretariat (lanzarote.committee@coe.int) by Parties and other stakeholders **by 6 July 2020 at the very latest.**

8. Noted that it would also be possible to submit relevant updates following the sharing of the draft implementation report.

9. Reiterated that it aimed to adopt the 2nd monitoring round implementation report by the end of 2020.

2.1.2. Exchange of views on the contributions submitted by children with a view to decide how to reflect them in the implementation report (see documents T-ES(2020)03 and T-ES-BU(2020)01, §§ 4-11)

10. Welcomed progress made by the Bureau in determining the way in which the contributions received by children in the framework of the current monitoring round could best be reflected in the forthcoming preliminary implementation report.

11. Agreed on testing out the whole range of suggestions made in the above documents to ensure a meaningful incorporation of children's contributions.

12. Exchanged views also more broadly on how to ensure an effective implementation of Article 9§1 of the Convention and decided to continue this reflection in one of its forthcoming meetings.

2.2. *"Protecting children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse"*

13. Informed by the Secretariat that a first preliminary assessment of the follow-up by Parties to the 10 "consider" recommendations of the [special report](#) was carried out by the Secretariat with the support of five independent experts. Together they prepared analytical and summary tables of the situations examined based on the information submitted by Parties.

14. Asked the Secretariat to share with the Committee the various "indicators" used to determine the level of implementation of each recommendation.

15. Noted that these tables would soon be circulated to the 41 Parties covered by the special report with a request that they submit the information still lacking **by 10 September 2020** to the Secretariat (lanzarote.committee@coe.int) in order to take stock of the updated tables during the September 2020 plenary meeting.

2.3. Possible focus of the next monitoring round

16. Reiterated that the theme of the next monitoring round should be:
 - on a focused topic;
 - in a priority area; and
 - of critical importance (for the challenges it raises).
17. Highlighted in particular the following themes identified by the Bureau (see document T-ES-BU(2020)01, §§ 12-19), suggested by several Parties (see document T-ES(2020)19_bil) and echoed by other Parties and stakeholders during the meeting:
 - sexual offenders' management (distinguishing between juvenile and adult sexual offenders), covering the whole spectrum from preventative care to treatment and measures to assess the results of such care and treatment;
 - victim assistance, with a particular focus on effective measures for vulnerable categories of victims;
 - sexual offenders' management (with a possible focus on offenders in the digital environment) possibly interlinked with victim assistance;
 - multi-sector and inter-agency coordination at the national level of work related to the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention;
 - protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in times of natural disasters in general and of pandemics in particular.
18. Noted the following additional suggestions put forward by some of its observers:
 - availability of reporting mechanisms, including a focus on issues related to the question of statute of limitations;
 - if the theme of child sexual offenders is chosen, also look into the role of sex offender registers;
 - if the theme of assistance to victims is chosen, also look into legal and practical strategies in place to identify victims, the storage of material to be provided to the judiciary and law enforcement, and the effective support and assistance of the victims;
 - if the theme of coordination is chosen, include a focus on the challenges raised by the collection of relevant information.
19. With regard to all of the above ideas, agreed that a decision on the theme of the next monitoring round and its specific focus should be taken during the September 2020 plenary meeting.
20. Noted that one or several of the above themes could maybe lend itself better to being the topic of a forthcoming capacity-building event to be organised at the initiative of a Party or observer in the Committee in cooperation with the Committee's Secretariat.
21. Noted that one or several of the above themes might be the focus of a cooperation project if a Party so requested in the context of relevant Council of Europe procedures.

3. Exchange of information, experiences and good practices: focus on “Stepping up protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse in times of the COVID-19 pandemic”

3.1. *Update on collection of information, replies to questions and sharing of initiatives by Parties and other stakeholders (see documents T-ES(2020)18_bil and T-ES-BU(2020)02, §§7-9)*

22. Welcomed the [statement on stepping up protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse in times of the COVID-19 pandemic](#) issued early April 2020 by Mr NIKOLAIDIS and Ms DE CRAIM in their capacity as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Lanzarote Committee and reiterated that violence against children is another pandemic that makes millions of victims and should therefore remain at the top of political agendas at all times.

23. Welcomed also the **call to reply to the following four COVID-19-focused questions** addressed by the Bureau of the Committee to its members and observers on 15 May 2020:

1. To what extent, if at all, has the threat of child sexual abuse/exploitation changed due to COVID-19? If so:
 - Please tell us about whether the level of risk has increased/decreased/remained the same and if possible, specify this with regard to the various types of sexual offences against children (Articles 18-23 of the Convention);
 - You may also wish to indicate any emerging trends relating to child sexual abuse/exploitation, as the result of COVID-19, and point at measures taken to address them.
2. Did lockdown cause child sexual abuse/exploitation cases (identified/reported) to increase, decrease or stay the same? Please submit data (number of victims/offenders) and highlight what you think may explain the trend.
3. Please also tell us whether and how general child safeguarding measures were, or are likely to be, affected by measures taken by governments in response to COVID-19. In addition, highlight any additional, specific measures put in place during lockdown to ensure reporting by victims of child sexual abuse/exploitation as well as to support and assist them, and whether these measures will be maintained even when the lockdown is lifted.
4. Finally, please tell us whether children have been duly listened to on decision-making concerning their protection against sexual abuse/exploitation during this period. Please also tell us whether and how children will be involved in decision-making on or assessing the impact of COVID-19 measures in the future.

24. Noted that 29 Parties to the Lanzarote Convention and 6 observer organisations in the Lanzarote Committee had already replied to the above call for information and encouraged those not having replied yet to **respond** by submitting their replies/information to the Secretariat (lanzarote.committee@coe.int) **by 15 July 2020**.

25. Agreed that it was crucial that Parties be informed of available data and known trends as well as measures and tools developed and put in place to step up the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse during lock-down and in view of its aftermath. Accordingly:

- agreed that an updated version of the compilations of information received, following the statement of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and in the context of the above call by the Bureau, be shared with all Committee members and observers during the summer;
- entrusted the Secretariat to publish the above information on the relevant Council of Europe COVID-19 dedicated webpages mentioned below as well as on the Children's Rights Division website;
- asked any Party or other stakeholder not wishing that their information be made public to inform the Secretariat as soon as possible.

26. Informed by Ms JENSDÓTTIR (Head of the Children's Rights Division) of the initiatives taken by the Council of Europe, in particular the preparation of a [toolkit for member states on respecting democracy, rule of law and human rights in the framework of the COVID-19 sanitary crisis](#) and took note of the following websites where this and other documents and initiatives are showcased:

- <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/covid-19>
- <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/covid-19>

3.2. "Lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and challenges ahead to ensure protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse during challenging times"

27. Heard presentations (all made available) and exchanged views with:

- Mr HOWARD, [INHOPE](#)
- Mr TUNKS, [IWF](#)
- Mr KLANČNIK, [EUROPOL](#)
- Mr SADEH, [INTERPOL](#)

3.3. Debriefing of the 28 May webinar on Online child sexual exploitation and abuse in times of COVID-19 pandemic organised by the Council of Europe and the EndOCSEA project

28. Noted the main issues tackled during this webinar and was informed that all presentations are at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cybercrime/online-child-sexual-abuse>

3.4. Exchange of information on any other relevant related initiative

29. Informed by the Chairperson, Mr NIKOLAIDIS (Greece) of the [announcements made by Commissioner Johansson during her speech](#) at a [webinar held on 9 June 2020 on "Preventing and combating child sexual abuse and exploitation: towards a EU response"](#) organised at the initiative of the European Commission and the European Parliament Intergroup on Children's Rights. In this regard:

- welcomed the EU's decision to step up action to prevent and combat child sexual exploitation and abuse and to work out a common and coordinated solution to eradicate these crimes and better protect victims;
- regretted not to have been informed earlier of this decision and of the possible establishment of a European centre in this context;
- looked forward to knowing more about the forthcoming strategy and possible establishment of a centre;
- reiterated its interest at working together to achieve the common goal of eradicating sexual violence against children.

30. Informed by the Chairperson, Mr NIKOLAIDIS (Greece) about his presentation of Lanzarote Committee's work on protecting children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic in several events, including:

- an online interview on "[Protecting children against sexual exploitation and abuse during COVID-19 pandemic confinement](#)";
- the high-level online event organised by the Greek 2020 Presidency of Council of Europe Institutions on "[Protection of human life and public health in the context of a pandemic](#)" held on the 3rd of June 2020;
- the PACE webinar on "[Child Safeguarding and Protection: Lessons from the COVID-19 Crisis](#)" of 18th of June 2020.

31. Informed by Baroness MASSEY (PACE) in particular of the adoption by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of a timely report co-authored by her on "[Addressing sexual violence against children: stepping up action and co-operation in Europe](#)" and took note of its main conclusions and 16 recommendations.

32. Informed ([presentation made available](#)) by Mr PLANKEN (the Netherlands) of recent Dutch policies connected to removal and blocking of web pages containing or disseminating child sexual abuse material (CSAM) to respond to the rising amount of such material in Dutch cyberspace.

4. Council of Europe cooperation projects on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

4.1. Update on progress with the End Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSCEA) @ Europe Project

33. Updated on progress in the Council of Europe "End Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse @ Europe" Project, which promotes a child-friendly/victim-centred approach in all aspects of responses to online child sexual exploitation and abuse

in 10 focus states (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine).

4.2. Update concerning other on-going projects' development

34. Updated on [progress in the Council of Europe cooperation](#) projects with Slovenia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

5. Procedural matters

5.1. Election of the Lanzarote Committee's Bureau

35. Given the online nature of the plenary meeting:
- carried out a mock vote to test the voting functions of the KUDO platform and acknowledged that the verification of the quorum was possible, anonymity of the vote was guaranteed, and results were available rapidly in several visual formats;
 - agreed to have a brief presentation of candidates the day before the vote even if the names of candidates had been circulated in advance of the meeting.
36. Elected by acclamation, for a first term of office:
- Ms DE CRAIM (Belgium) as Chairperson of the Committee;
 - Ms CASTELLO-BRANCO (Portugal) as Vice-Chairperson of the Committee.
37. After a vote carried out online thanks to the KUDO anonymous voting function:
- re-elected, for a second term of office, Mr DEGTEARIOV (Republic of Moldova) and Ms ILCHUK (Ukraine) as members of the Committee's Bureau;
 - elected, for a first term of office, Ms SARTIN (United Kingdom), as member of the Committee's Bureau.
38. Thanked the outgoing Chairperson, Mr NIKOLAIDIS (Greece) for his committed Chairmanship during the last 2 years and additional 3 months because of the lockdown.

5.2. Appointment of a representative of the Lanzarote Committee to the Steering Committee for the rights of the child (CDENF)

39. Appointed Mr NIKOLAIDIS (Greece) as its representative in the CDENF.

5.3. Update on the Bureau's reflection on ways and means to maintain the monitoring process effectively and ensuring that operational follow-up is given to its monitoring findings

40. Noted that the Bureau had made progress in its reflection on ways and means to maintain the monitoring process effectively and ensuring that operational follow-up is given to its monitoring findings, and that the Secretariat was finalising a working document with suggestions to be considered during the Lanzarote Committee plenary meeting in September.

41. Noted that the above-mentioned working document would be shared in due time before the next plenary to allow for possible additional suggestions to be included in it or to forward any comments on the suggestions presented prior to the September meeting.

6. Any other business

42. Discussed whether the Committee should respond to the [EU open call for suggestions on its Strategy to fight child sexual abuse](#).

43. Given the very short deadline (3 July) to respond to the call, decided to entrust its Bureau to prepare the contribution on its behalf, and to this end agreed that:

- members and observers could submit any ideas for inclusion in the contribution by the Bureau to the Secretariat (lanzarote.committee@coe.int) as soon as possible;
- the Bureau would circulate its contribution to the plenary for validation before submitting it to the EU;
- parties to the Convention could flag any major difficulty with elements of the contribution as soon as possible; and
- in the absence of any remarks, the contribution would be submitted by the set deadline (3 July 2020).

44. Informed by the Secretariat that the exact dates (three full days or several half days) and format (in person, remote or hybrid) of its next plenary meetings would be communicated in due course.

45. Noted that the remaining meetings in 2020 are scheduled to take place in the following weeks:

- 21-25 September 2020;
- 7-11 December 2020.

46. Agreed to adopt this list of decisions by written procedure after the meeting.