



**List of the recommendations addressed to the Hungarian authorities  
further to a visit of a delegation of the Lanzarote Committee  
to transit zones at the Serbian/Hungarian border (5-7 July 2017)**

(adopted by the Lanzarote Committee at its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, 29-31 January 2018)

R1 – In the framework of immigration procedures, the Hungarian authorities should treat all persons under the age of 18 years as children without discrimination on the ground of their age and ensure that all children under Hungarian jurisdiction are protected against sexual exploitation and abuse.

R2 – The Hungarian authorities should care for all the children within its regular child protection system, i.e. in open child protection institutions, especially in light of the very limited number of children falling under the new regulation (19 unaccompanied boys aged 14-18 were accommodated in the specific sector in Röszke transit zone at the time of the visit).

R15 – The Hungarian authorities should pay special attention to the heightened vulnerability of unaccompanied children, especially girls, and systematically place them in mainstream child protection institutions to prevent possible sexual exploitation or sexual abuse against them by adults and adolescents in the transit zones.

***Measures to be taken towards asylum-seeking children***

R3 – The Hungarian authorities should be asked to cooperate with the Serbian authorities as regards the management of the waiting lists to enter the Hungarian transit zones in order to prevent corruption through sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of the asylum-seeking children.

R4 – The Hungarian authorities should cease all push-backs of migrant and asylum-seeking children at the border and ensure that any child on Hungarian territory is immediately referred to the competent child protection authorities to undergo a needs assessment in line with the rights of the child to ensure that they are protected against any risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

R5 – Where age verification is necessary, the Hungarian authorities should reinforce its age verification procedures and complement it by other verification processes than only physical appearance of the person, in order to avoid cases of unaccompanied children under 18 being assessed as being above 18 and held together with single men, thus preventing cases of their being sexually exploited or sexually abused.

R6 – The Hungarian authorities should ensure that the principle of the benefit of the doubt is adequately applied to individuals pending verification of their age when there are reasons to believe that they are children and to individuals when the age verification procedure is over and if doubts about the age of the person remain.

R7 – The Hungarian authorities should protect asylum-seeking children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by strengthening verification procedures to establish family links between these children and the adults who accompany them and, if necessary, separating children from adults who are found to be unrelated to them.

R8 – The Hungarian authorities should repeal their legislation to ensure a full protection of all unaccompanied children aged 14-18 and grant them a guardian with the same qualifications, functions and legal powers as those appointed for children aged less than 14, in order to facilitate disclosure of possible cases of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse. The authorities should make sure that children are informed that they have a guardian and able to contact their guardian directly if they are facing problems or need assistance.

R9 – The Hungarian authorities should take measures to respect the Hungarian legal maximum of 30 children per child protection guardian in order to ensure that guardians receive manageable caseloads (since, in addition to refugee seeking children, they are also in charge of Hungarian children in care). This would enable them to spend more time with each of the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in order to build a relationship of trust with them which, as a consequence, would facilitate disclosure of any possible cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Where a child discloses that they have been a victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse the Hungarian authorities should provide appropriate protection and assistance regardless of the child's age.

R10 – The Hungarian authorities should provide access to interpreters especially during appointments between the child and staff, including medical staff, social workers and guardians to facilitate disclosure of actual or potential sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. In addition, the Hungarian authorities should provide Hungarian language courses for children held in the transit zones (or accept that NGOs provide such courses).

R11 – The Hungarian authorities should take measures to inform children in the transit zones, in a manner adapted to their age and maturity, in a language they understand and which is sensitive to gender and culture, to raise their awareness on the risks they face of being sexually exploited or abused and to inform them of the help and protection available if they are or become victims of such offences.

R16 – The Hungarian authorities should provide specialised training to all personnel, including paid staff and voluntary workers, who come into contact with asylum-seeking children, in the transit zones or in the mainstream child protection institutions. Specialised training should include modules on the specific needs of these children, in particular on prevention, protection and detection of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

***In the meantime, measures to be taken in the transit zones***

R12 – The Hungarian authorities should cease the practice of detaining children in the transit zones as a measure to prevent them from falling victims of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse and to facilitate disclosure of cases of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse. Preventing the direct and uncontrolled access to the Hungarian territory does not necessarily include detaining children in fenced open air areas with shelter containers.

R13 – The Hungarian authorities should take steps to improve the living conditions of children in the transit zones, in particular by providing shaded areas in the courtyards and air conditioning in the containers, providing access to education to children, reinforcing leisure activities and ensuring mobile phone connection in all sectors of the transit zones in order to minimise their vulnerability.

R14 – The Hungarian authorities should provide children with food that is appropriate to their age, free of charge and of adequate quality and quantity. This should diminish the risk of children becoming exposed to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

R17 – The Hungarian authorities should ensure that the social workers in the transit zones make all possible efforts to build up a relationship of trust and confidence with the children in order to facilitate disclosure and prevent their sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

R18 – The Hungarian authorities should ensure that the medical staff in the transit zones practice medical assistance in the state of the art, with a positive attitude of care and concern towards children and in a language children can understand, in order to build up a relationship of trust and confidence to facilitate disclosure of possible cases of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.

R19 – The Hungarian authorities should revise the management procedure of visits of children to the medical staff with a view that, for sake of confidence building towards the doctor, and to limit risks of sexual abuse and facilitate disclosure, children should be accompanied by one of their parents if they wish so. If a parent does not accompany the child, a nurse should always stay in the room during the examination. The latter should always apply in the case of unaccompanied children.

R20 – The Hungarian authorities should provide psychological support to children in the transit zones in a language they can understand in order to accompany those of them who have been victims of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse along the path to disclosure and recovery. Where State provision of psychological support is not possible, the authorities should allow voluntary psychologists access to the transit zones.

R21 – The Hungarian authorities should monitor the requests from children to leave the transit zone to return to Serbia in order to screen these children for possible cases of sexual violence, to remedy the cases and to act in order to limit recurrence of such cases.

R22 – The Hungarian authorities should implement a corporate culture whereby all personnel in contact with asylum-seeking children in the transit zones have a positive attitude of care and concern towards children, are better trained and equipped with trained interpreters, to identify child victims of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.

R23 – The Hungarian authorities should ensure that children in the transit zones and persons wishing to help them have access to information services such as telephone or Internet helplines in order to provide advice on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, in a language they can understand. Then Hungary should inform children in the transit zones of the existence of such helplines.

R24 – The Hungarian authorities should revise their policy of restricting access to the transit zones to a very limited number of NGOs, since NGOs with specific expertise may bring added value to the care provided by the authorities to children seeking asylum and efficiently complement it at no cost for the state authorities (such as psychological care).