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26 September 2023

## **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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**Statement regarding cooperation by the Russian  
Federation in the context of the questions  
addressed to it under Rule 28 of the Rules of  
Procedure**

Adopted by the Lanzarote Committee  
on 26 September 2023

Recalling the grave concern expressed by the Heads of State and Government at the 4<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Summit in Reykjavik on 16 and 17 May 2023 regarding, *inter alia*, reports of “*sexual abuse of children, unlawful transfers and deportation of Ukrainian children by Russian forces to the Russian Federation [...] or to the areas temporarily controlled or occupied by the Russian Federation and their forcible placement under custody or adoption by Russian citizens*”;

Solemnly reaffirming its [Statement on protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse resulting from the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine](#) adopted on 10 March 2022 and its [Declaration on protecting children in out-of-home care from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse](#), adopted at its 25<sup>th</sup> meeting (15-18 October 2019);

Recalling that the Russian Federation is a Party to the Council of Europe Convention for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Convention), which was ratified by the Russian Federation on 9 August 2013 and entered into force in respect of the Russian Federation on 1 December 2013;

Recalling that under the Lanzarote Convention the Parties are obliged to co-operate widely with one another and in particular to reduce, as far as possible, any obstacles to the rapid circulation of information and evidence (Article 38 of the Convention and Explanatory Report);

Emphasising that it is the role of the Committee of the Parties (Lanzarote Committee) to facilitate the collection, analysis and exchange of information between states, as well as the effective use and implementation of the Convention, including the identification of any problems (Article 41 of the Convention);

#### **The Lanzarote Committee:**

- notes that the communications received from the Russian Federation on 28 July and 15 September 2023 in response to the questions addressed to it by the Committee under Rule 28 of its [Rules of Procedure](#) on special reports and urgent situations contain merely a partial response to only one of the questions posed;
- deplores the lack of appropriate response in a matter of such urgency and importance, contrary to Article 38 of the Convention. By not co-operating with the Committee, the Russian Federation deprives it of the possibility to effectively fulfil its role under the Convention and thwarts the achievement of the “common goal of protecting children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse” as set out in the preamble to the Convention;
- expresses concern that the Ukrainian children who have been unlawfully transferred or deported to the Russian Federation or to the areas temporarily controlled or occupied by it may be at risk of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse; to immediately return these children and reunite them with their families would reduce such a risk;

- urges the Russian Federation to co-operate fully with the Committee, in conformity with its obligations under the Convention, by providing an effective response to the questions addressed to it on 2 June 2023. Failure to do so will amount to a clear situation of non-compliance with those obligations;
- declares more generally that it remains ready to consider, under the Convention and the Rules of Procedure, any relevant and credible information concerning cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of unlawfully deported and transferred children brought to its attention.