

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CDEF)

Set up by the Committee of Ministers under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe and in accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Type of committee: **Steering Committee**

Terms of reference valid from: **1 January 2022 until 31 December 2025¹**

PILLAR/PROGRAMME/SUB-PROGRAMME ▼
<p>Pillar: Human Rights Programme: Equality and Human Dignity Sub-programme: Children's rights</p>
MAIN TASKS ▼
<p>Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the CDEF will guide the intergovernmental work in the field of the rights of the child and advise the Committee of Ministers on appropriate action to be taken in its field of competence.</p> <p>In particular, the CDEF is instructed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) ensure the follow-up of the relevant decisions taken at the 131st Session of the Committee of Ministers (Hamburg, 21 May 2021),² and in particular contribute to the implementation of the key strategic priorities relating to its specific field of expertise as identified in the Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe, and respond to the respective key findings and challenges set out in the Secretary General's 2021 Report on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law "A democratic renewal for Europe"; (ii) launch and oversee the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), including through a mid-term evaluation; (iii) ensure that the rights of the child are mainstreamed into all relevant Council of Europe committees and bodies and support member States in mainstreaming children's rights; (iv) facilitate regular exchanges of knowledge, good practices and experiences among member States in the areas covered by the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (e.g. through thematic hearings, factsheets, policy briefs, handbooks, thematic visits, and the Clearinghouse to exchange good practices and tools on integrated and systemic approaches for the protection of children from violence); (v) provide expertise to member States on the development of legislation, policies, practice, training schemes and awareness-raising material to support implementation of international standards including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Council of Europe standards related to the rights of the child at national level; (vi) advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on appropriate action to be taken and provide advice as requested; (vii) advise on the priority areas for the development of co-operation activities in the area of the rights of the child; (viii) follow the implementation of the non-binding instruments that it has prepared and, where appropriate, review the implementation of relevant Committee of Ministers' recommendations; (ix) continue work to enhance the implementation of international and Council of Europe standards on the protection of children from violence in member States, notably through the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (18 November) and the development of non-binding instruments; (x) in close co-operation with other relevant Council of Europe committees, undertake actions for the development and promotion of activities and draft non-binding instruments in its fields of competence; (xi) follow, without prejudice to the mandates of intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe that already follow the work of monitoring mechanisms, the activities of the relevant monitoring and other bodies or convention mechanisms, in particular the Lanzarote Committee;³ (xii) ensure co-operation and synergies with relevant UN bodies, notably the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as with the European Union and other relevant international organisations and civil society; (xiii) promote the visibility of the Council of Europe's standards at international level; (xiv) orient and oversee the activities carried out by its subordinate bodies, notably the Committee of experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE) and, jointly with the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ), the Committee of experts on the rights and the best interests of the child in parental separation and in care proceedings (CJ/ENF-ISE) (cf separate terms of reference); (xv) jointly with the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO), develop a guide to good practice concerning the participation of children in decision-making processes on matters regarding their health; (xvi) jointly with the Consultative Committee of the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (ETS 108), develop guidelines on the protection of children's personal data and privacy; (xvii) hold an exchange of views annually in order to evaluate its activities and advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on future priorities in its sector, including possible new activities and those that might be discontinued;

¹ These terms of reference are approved for the first biennial period 2022-2023. For the second biennial period 2024-2025, they are approved on a provisional basis, subject to confirmation upon the adoption of the budget for 2024-2025.

² [CM/Del/Dec\(2021\)131/2a](#), [CM/Del/Dec\(2021\)131/2b](#), [CM/Del/Dec\(2021\)131/2c](#) and [CM/Del/Dec\(2021\)131/3](#).

³ The Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

- (xviii) take due account of the following mainstreamed perspectives in the performance of its tasks: gender, youth, rights of persons with disabilities and of Roma and Traveller⁴ issues;
- (xix) where relevant, contribute to building cohesive societies and to strengthening the role and meaningful participation of civil society in its work;
- (xx) in accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, carry out, at regular intervals, within the limits of the available resources and bearing in mind its priorities, an examination of some or all of the conventions for which it has been given responsibility,⁵ in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, and report back to the Committee of Ministers;
- (xxi) contribute to the achievement of, and review progress towards, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regards to Goal 1: No poverty; Goal 3: Healthy lives and well-being; Goal 4: Quality Education; Goal 5: Gender Equality; Goal 10: Reduce inequality and Goal: 16: Peace, Justice and Strong institutions.

MAIN DELIVERABLES ▼

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the CDENF is instructed to complete the following deliverables, within the following deadlines:

	Deadline ▼
1. Draft Recommendation on strengthening mechanisms for professionals to report violence against children	31/12/2022
2. Draft Recommendation(s) on the protection of the best interests of the child in parental separation and in care proceedings (cf. terms of reference of CJ/ENF-ISE, jointly with the CDCJ)	31/12/2023
3. Implementation tool(s) on the rights and the best interests of the child in parental situation and in care proceedings (cf. terms of reference of CJ/ENF-ISE, jointly with CDCJ)	31/12/2023
4. Guide of good practice for the participation of children in decision making processes on matters relating to their health (jointly with the CDBIO)	31/12/2023
5. Mapping study on children's access to quality mental health care	31/12/2023
6. Report on children as defenders of human rights	31/12/2023
7. Implementation review report of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration	31/12/2023
8. Feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for <i>inter alia</i> preventing and combatting violence against children, including sexual violence and harmful behaviour (cf. terms of reference of ENF-VAE)	30/06/2024
9. Draft non-binding instrument on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for <i>inter alia</i> preventing and combatting violence against children, including sexual violence and harmful behaviour (cf. terms of reference of ENF-VAE)	31/12/2024
10. Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10 on Council of Europe policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence, including the development of model prevention approaches (cf. terms of reference ENF-VAE)	31/12/2024
11. Guidance on effective strategies to prevention violence against children (cf. terms of reference ENF-VAE)	31/12/2024
12. Implementation review report on Guidelines on child-friendly justice and development of further guidance (in co-operation with relevant committees)	31/12/2025
13. Implementation review report on Recommendation Rec(2005)5 on the Rights of Children living in residential institutions	31/12/2025
14. Guidelines on strategic litigation and legal clinics on the rights of the child (in co-operation with CDCJ)	31/12/2025
15. Guidelines on the protection of children's personal data and privacy (jointly with T-PD)	31/12/2025
16. Report on the rights of the child and artificial intelligence	31/12/2025

COMPOSITION ▼

MEMBERS:

Governments of member States are invited to designate one or more representatives of the highest possible rank in the field of children's rights.

The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each member State (two in the case of the State whose representative has been elected Chair).

Each member of the Committee shall have one vote. Where a government designates more than one member, only one of them is entitled to take part in the voting.

⁴ The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "*Gens du voyage*", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

⁵ Cf. relevant decisions of the Committee of Ministers ([CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1168/10.2](#)) and list of Conventions in document [CM\(2021\)132](#).

In accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, in cases where there is no convention-based body including all the Parties, non-member States are invited to take part, with a right to vote, in the committee meetings pertaining to the conventions to which they are Parties.

PARTICIPANTS:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and at the charge of their corresponding administrative budgets:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- European Court of Human Rights;
- Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Committees or other bodies of the Council of Europe engaged in related work, as appropriate.

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- European Union (one or more representatives, including, as appropriate, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA));
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- other international organisations including: United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR); World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (UN SRSG VAC), United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF), Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

OBSERVERS:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- Belarus;⁶
- non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a Neighbourhood Partnership including relevant co-operation activities;
- Eurochild;
- European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC);
- Defence for Children International;
- Child Rights Information Network (CRIN);
- Inter-agency Panel on Juvenile justice (IPJJ);
- End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT international);
- Save the Children;
- SOS Children's Villages;
- Missing Children Europe;
- Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE);
- International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates;
- International Social Service (ISS);
- World Vision International.

Observer status may be requested in accordance with Article 8 of Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

WORKING METHODS ▼

	Plenary meetings ▼			Bureau meetings ▼		
	Members ⁷ incl. Chair	Meetings per year	Days per meeting	Members	Meetings per year	Days per meeting
2022	48	2	3	5	4	1
2023	47	2	3	5	4	1
2024	47	2	3	5	4	1
2025	47	2	3	5	4	1

The rules of procedure of the Committee are governed by Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

The CDENF will appoint from amongst its members up to 4 Rapporteurs on mainstreamed perspectives, including a Gender Equality Rapporteur.

Subject to the agenda, the chairs of its subordinate structures may be invited to attend CDENF's Bureau and/or plenary meetings.

SUBORDINATE STRUCTURE(S) ▼

The CDENF coordinates, supervises and follows the work of its subordinate bodies:

- (2022-2023) Committee of Experts on the rights and the best interests of the child in parental separation and in care (CJ/ENF-ISE) (cf. separate terms of reference);
- (2023-2024) Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE) (cf. separate terms of reference).

⁶ The Committee of Ministers suspended the rights of Belarus to participate as observer as from 17 March 2022 (CM/Del/Dec(2022)1429/2.5).

⁷ In accordance with decision CM/Del/Dec(2022)1428ter/2.3, the Russian Federation ceased to be a member of the Council of Europe as from 16 March 2022. Budgetary information was updated after the adoption of the 2023 adjusted budget.

BUDGETARY INFORMATION* ▼

	Meetings per year	Days per meeting	Members ⁸ reimbursed	Plenary in €K	Bureau in €K	Working groups in €K	Secretariat (A, B)
2022	2	3	48	131.9	-	22.4	1 A; 1 B
2023	2	3	47	130.6	-	-	1 A; 1 B
2024	2	3	47	↔	-	-	↔
2025	2	3	47	↔	-	-	↔

*The costs include the per diem, travel costs, interpretation, translation and document printing. These costs are calculated on the basis of standard costs.

⁸ In accordance with decision CM/Del/Dec(2022)1428ter/2.3, the Russian Federation ceased to be a member of the Council of Europe as from 16 March 2022. Budgetary information was updated after the adoption of the 2023 adjusted budget.