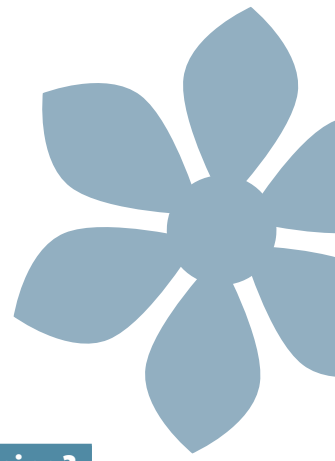




Why join the Council of Europe
Convention on the Protection
of Children against Sexual
Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
(Lanzarote Convention)?





What is the Lanzarote Convention?

— The Lanzarote Convention is the most comprehensive international agreement on protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. It serves as a blueprint for any country developing legislation and policies to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of children, protect victims, prosecute offenders and promote national and international co-operation. It also provides a legal basis for State Parties to co-operate.

Who does it apply to?

— By May 2023, 48 Countries were Parties to the Convention (Council of Europe member states as well as the Russian Federation and Tunisia). These are the members of the Lanzarote Committee. The Committee is also formed of participants (states having participated in the drafting of the Convention, International Organisations and Council of Europe bodies) and observers (Non-governmental organisations with Observer status).

Who can join?

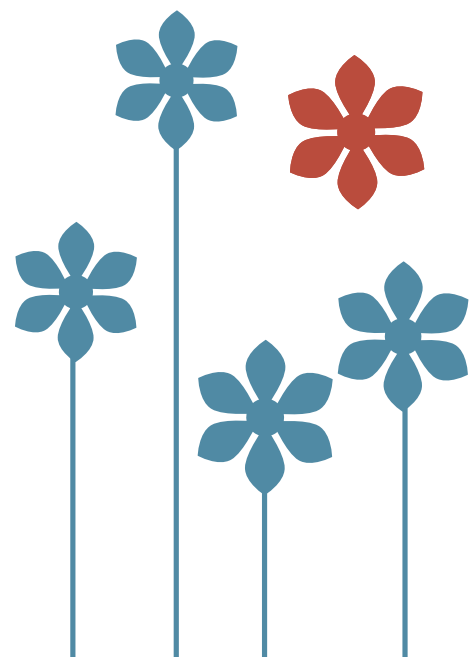
— The treaty is open for accession by any country. States which participated in the negotiations of the Convention (members of the Council of Europe, Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico and the United States of America) can sign and ratify the treaty. Under Article 46, 1 of the Convention any other country can also become a member by "accession". Whether becoming a Party through ratification or accession, the outcome is the same.

What does the Lanzarote Committee do?

— The Lanzarote Committee **monitors** the implementation of the Convention by the Parties, provides additional **opinions and declarations** and **capacity building** activities. In addition, upon requests by States, through dedicated co-operation projects, the Council of Europe can help countries to build the necessary capacities to implement the Lanzarote Convention and follow up on the recommendations made by the Lanzarote Committee.

What are the benefits of joining?

- Any country may use the Lanzarote Convention as a guideline or model law, however becoming a Party provides additional advantages:
- ▶ Stronger legal frameworks: clear set of guidelines for the criminalisation of all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children;
 - ▶ Increased protection for victims: strong rules and procedures to screen and train people in contact with children, provide support to victims and their families and ensure access to helplines and hotlines;
 - ▶ Enhanced international co-operation: to share and build on promising practices and as a basis for mutual legal assistance where appropriate;
 - ▶ Membership of the Lanzarote Committee: provides opportunities to share information, experiences, participate in peer review of the implementation of the Convention and interpret the Convention through statements and opinions;
 - ▶ Access to international experts and activities to strengthen capacities to respond to child sexual abuse;
 - ▶ States requesting accession or having acceded may become priority countries for capacity building programmes and technical assistance to facilitate the full implementation of the Lanzarote Convention.



We are parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC), can we also join the Lanzarote Convention?

Yes, these instruments pursue a common goal: to prevent and protect children from sexual violence. All of the Parties to the Lanzarote Convention are also signatories to the OPSC. The Lanzarote Convention entered into force on 1 July 2010 and builds on the protections set down in the OPSC which came into force on 18 January 2002. Article 42 of the Lanzarote Convention specifically recalls that it is intended to enhance the protection afforded by the OPSC and to develop and complement those standards. These are therefore complementary standards that together serve to better protect children from all forms of sexual violence.

By implementing the Lanzarote Convention your country will ensure that national legislation and policies are in line with international standards reducing the risks of offenders choosing to commit offences related to sexual abuse of children in your country. This is a global phenomenon and the increased use of Information and Communication Technologies means that sexual abuse of children increasingly contains an international element (for example where an image of child abuse is taken in one country and shared with a perpetrator in another country).

The UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children is a participant of the Lanzarote Committee, and regularly contributes to the work of the Committee.

The UN Committee for the Rights of the Child also recognises the added value of the Lanzarote Convention and the guidance provided by the Lanzarote Committee. These synergies are illustrated throughout the explanatory report to the **Guidelines regarding the implementation of the OPSC adopted on 10 September 2019**.

By implementing the Lanzarote Convention your Country will also be complying with requirements set out in the OPSC and contributing towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (particularly goal 16.2).

We are part of the WeProtect Global Alliance (WPGA), can we also join the Lanzarote Convention?

Yes, we are working towards the same goal of preventing and protecting children from sexual violence. One of the WPGA Member commitments is to sign and ratify the Lanzarote Convention, therefore by joining the Lanzarote Convention you will be meeting one of your country's commitments under the WPGA.

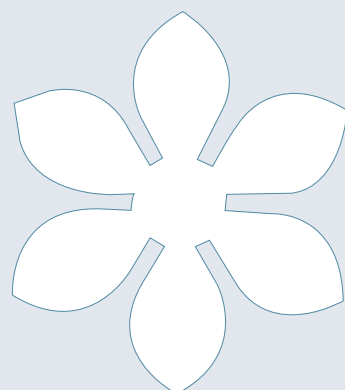
Many State Parties to the Lanzarote Convention along with Lanzarote Committee Participants and Observers are also members of the WPGA. We provide differing but complementary forums for discussion and exchange of good practices. The Council of Europe has previously implemented the **EndOCSEA@Europe** project with the End Violence Against Children Fund to build capacities to protect children from online sexual exploitation and abuse at national level in several member states including enhancing the implementation of several of the capabilities identified in the WeProtect Model National Response.

How to accede to the Convention:

The accession process at the Council of Europe level consists of three steps:

1. Request for accession in an official letter, signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or a diplomatic representative, and addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
2. Consultation of the Parties to the Convention to obtain their unanimous consent
3. Decision on the request by the Committee of Ministers

E-mail: lanzarote.committee@coe.int
TreatyOffice@coe.int



For more information:

lanzarote.committee@coe.int

www.coe.int/children

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.