



**Speech by Maud de Boer-Buquicchio
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe**

**On the occasion of the launching of the ONE in FIVE
Campaign at regional level**

Herzen University, St. Petersburg, 18 April 2012

“None of 150 million”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

About 150 million children live in the Council of Europe’s 47 member states. Let me be more concrete: about 150 million children live, learn and play in the villages, towns and cities of all our member states.

According to available data, around 20% of these children are victims of some kind of sexual violence. The magnitude of the problem has pushed the Council of Europe to lead an international effort to eliminate all forms of sexual violence, including sexual abuse within the family.

With the Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (the Lanzarote Convention), we wish governments to commit and to take concrete actions in order to protect children, prevent abuse and prosecute the offenders. With the One in Five Campaign, we want this to become a cause for everybody. A cause for governments, for parliaments, for local and regional authorities, for professionals working with children, for civil society, for the media, for parents and, of course, for children as well.

Most cases of sexual violence occur in the places where children live, play or learn. Most local and regional authorities have competences or at least some degree of responsibility in the running and supervision of kindergartens, schools, leisure centres, sports facilities, detention or retention centres and street safety.

They have staff working with children and multiple points of contact with children and their families. They develop social, education, safety and health policies that have an impact on children. Regional and local authorities also have direct ways of communication with people living in their communities.

Sexual violence against a child is a difficult topic to address, in particular because it implies admitting the existence of abusers operating “under cover” of a father, an aunt, a teacher, a sports trainer, a nurse or a priest. The truth is that abusers take advantage of the secret, of the denial and the embarrassment and keep haunting and preying on children for years. Our first responsibility is therefore to go beyond denial, to break the silence and to put the problem on the table for discussion. So that prevention programmes can be developed.

In this context, empowerment IS the keyword. You can empower people in many ways:

You can start explaining the extent of the problem and invite people to take measures to prevent it. But you can do better: you can listen to people’s needs and create the tools, the training and the opportunities allowing them to play an active role in the solution of the problem. This includes giving parents and carers child-friendly material to better equip them to be able to discuss this topic with children (like Kiko’s material). This also includes training teachers, social workers, police officers and health professionals to make sure they can identify possible abuse cases and know how to react, how to protect and to support the victims and how to make sure that the offender is prosecuted.

You can also create places for professionals from various disciplines to meet and combine expertise and efforts to provide each individual child victim with the best possible support. And the best possible support is one that is child-friendly; because it protects children's rights and best interests. At the Council of Europe, we have explored in depth how to make the justice system, the provision of health care and social services child-friendly. I warmly encourage you to discover the result of this work. You may be surprised to see that many of the proposed measures are extremely easy to put in place.

Last, but not least, let me encourage you to invest in partnerships. The possibilities are endless: Networking and sharing good practices with other local and regional authorities, co-operating with civil society and professional networks, involving parents associations in prevention measures, inviting the media to contribute to awareness- raising campaigns, inviting the private sector to finance concrete measures, using major local events (such as film festivals, football matches or street festivals) to engage in a debate with the citizens, calling upon the creativity of young people to help you to communicate with children...To name but a few.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am easily driven by enthusiasm when I think of the potential of our One in Five campaign.

At the same time, I feel desperate at times because of the slow progress and resistance I still perceive in many fora. I am, however, reassured and confident because, thanks to Ms Svetlana Orlova's tireless efforts and unlimited energy, the campaign is now also in your hands.

I trust that the debates and action generated in Russia by the ONE in FIVE Campaign will pave the way for the next indispensable step: the signature and ratification of the Lanzarote Convention – signed to date by 25 countries and ratified by 18 countries¹. By becoming a member of the Lanzarote family, the Russian Federation will be able to contribute to and take full advantage of the international efforts to combat sexual violence against children.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

One in Five children in Europe may be a victim of sexual violence.

Let's work to make it none of 150 million.

Thank you for your attention.

¹ Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Luxemburg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Spain, Turkey.