The protection of children has long been a priority for the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The adoption and entry into force of the Lanzarote Convention, ratified by 32 member states and signed by a further 15 to date, illustrates the importance governments give to fighting sexual violence against children.

Sexual violence against children is an issue which nobody can ignore. Children have the right to live their lives, free of violence and in a society where their human dignity and fundamental rights are fully protected. They should know that they shall be heard if they feel threatened or are victims of abuse. The Lanzarote Convention contains all the measures needed to protect children and to prosecute abusers. To be effective, these measures need to be promoted; everything possible must be done to raise the awareness of children, families, carers and all other stakeholders involved in protecting the well-being of children.

To this end, the ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children has proven to be an effective tool and the Committee of Ministers recently agreed to its extension until the end of 2015.

Sexual violence against children is abhorrent. The Committee of Ministers is determined to do all it can to eradicate this scourge. But it cannot do it alone. The support of all stakeholders is crucial to making things change. I therefore welcome the commitment of parliamentarians in this area. Let us continue on this road together, for the sake of our children.
News: 20th network meeting, Strasbourg

Debate on “Over-sexualisation of children in society”

The network of contact parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children will hold a joint meeting with the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media on Thursday, 2 October 2014 at 8.30 a.m., during the 4th part-session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. The debate will be introduced by Ms Lucy Emmerson, Co-ordinator, Sex Education Forum (United Kingdom) and Ms Nadine Schirtz, chief editor and project manager, BEE SECURE, National Youth Service (Luxembourg). Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, will give an update on the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign.

Latest event: 19th network meeting, Strasbourg

“Children affected by sexual violence are in reality experts because of their knowledge of the impact of sexual violence on young people and the appropriateness of the messages they pass on.” (Ms Roma Thomas, University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom)

On 25 June, the network met to discuss the topic “Youth participation: a means of preventing sexual exploitation”. Two experts introduced the debate with parliamentarians: Ms Eugenia Maxim, youth representative for eastern Europe and the CIS region in the ECPAT International Child and Youth Advisory Committee (Republic of Moldova), and Ms Roma Thomas, Research Fellow, International Centre, Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, University of Bedfordshire (United Kingdom). They both communicated a common message along with Ms Kyriakides, PACE General Rapporteur on Children: participation by young people, especially adolescents, is a relatively new and powerful means of prevention. Young people are ideally placed to contribute to devising effective strategies; they have experience of sexual violence, sometimes as victims themselves and can co-ordinate their activities with other young people in their regions so as to involve them in a broad movement against sexual violence. There are various ways in which young people can be involved: they can take part in research as advisers, projects can be devised to enable them to develop tools and relevant messages for other young people or they can participate in creative prevention activities. This boosts their own confidence and helps them to avoid becoming victims once again. As pointed out by Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Lanzarote Convention explicitly acknowledges the participation of children as a means of preventing sexual exploitation.
Two national associations – the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities and the Union of Municipalities of Turkey – signed the Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children, launched by the Congress. By signing this Pact, they join the Congress in this campaign to bring about the adoption of measures in favour of child-friendly local and regional services, protecting children and helping prevent sexual violence within the community. “Thanks to their efforts, 10 Portuguese and four Turkish municipalities have now joined the Pact Community,” said Mr Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children. “I hope other national associations will follow the Portuguese and Turkish examples.” The Pact Toolkit is now available in 22 languages: www.congress-1in5.eu/en/page/155-toolkit.html.

Azerbaijan

An awareness-raising programme for young people aged 7 to 12 was carried out in Azerbaijan through sports competitions in schools, following an initiative from Ms Sevinj Fataliyeva, contact parliamentarian for Azerbaijan. Booklets containing basic rules for the prevention of child sexual abuse in sport were distributed.

Czech Republic

The Czech contact parliamentarian, Ms Daniela Filipiová, hosted round-table talks on the role of the media in preventing sexual violence against children, on 17 June 2014 in the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. Mrs Gabriela Pecková, member of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of PACE, participated in the meeting and informed participants about the ongoing Lanzarote Convention ratification process in the Czech Republic. Certain goals have already been achieved in the framework of the ONE in FIVE Campaign: “Kiko and the hand” video clips will soon be broadcast on a children’s TV channel and a radio website.
**Lanzarote Convention**

**Latvia**

By ratifying the convention on 18 August 2014, Latvia has become the 32nd State Party.

**Czech Republic**

The Czech Republic signed the convention on 17 July 2014. All 47 member states of the Council of Europe have thus now signed the Lanzarote Convention.

**Agenda**

The network of contact parliamentarians will continue to meet for an extra year.

**Next meeting:**

- **21st meeting of the network** during the 2015 January part-session

In its Recommendation 2045 (2014), the Assembly called for the prolongation of the ONE in FIVE Campaign (until the end of 2015). This was formally approved by the Committee of Ministers in July 2014.

**Website and social networks**

Interviews, handbooks, compendia, newsletters, leaflets:
find all information about the parliamentary dimension of the campaign at the following address:

[www.assembly.coe.int/oneinfive](http://www.assembly.coe.int/oneinfive)

and on Facebook: “Council of Europe One in Five Campaign”

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