According to available data, one person in five becomes a victim of sexual violence in her or his childhood. It is up to us to break this vicious circle and protect our children from sexual violence. The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (“Lanzarote Convention”) is the first international treaty to require legislative measures in the criminal field against various forms of sexual abuse of children, including when such abuse is committed in the home or in the family. I have the pleasure to inform you that the Russian Federation has recently signed the Lanzarote Convention and the members of parliament and myself will do our best to ratify it in the near future.

We are very proud to have hosted the 10th meeting of the Network of contact parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children in Moscow on 20 November 2012, which permitted an exchange of good practice on the prevention of child sexual abuse in the circle of trust and the protection of child victims. We need to join forces to protect the future of our society and mobilise all means to eradicate sexual violence against children.

A consolidated approach to combating child sexual abuse is required at all levels, including civil society. Improving legislation to protect children from sexual violence is a necessity, in all our countries. Local authorities must also be involved in combating this scourge as they are the institutions closest to the citizens.

Parliamentarians, politicians and civil society, let us unite in combating sexual violence against children.
**News: 11th network meeting, Strasbourg**

**Debate on “Sexual abuse of children with mental disabilities”**

On 22 January 2013, on the occasion of the first part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the 11th meeting of the network of contact parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children will take place.

The debate will be introduced by Hilary Brown, Professor at Christ Church University of Canterbury (United Kingdom) and Dr Jean-Georges Rohmer, Psychiatrist (France).

**Latest event: 10th network meeting, Moscow**

**Debate on “Child sexual abuse in the circle of trust”**

Discussion focused on “Child sexual abuse in the circle of trust” at the 10th meeting of the network of contact parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children held on 20 November 2012.

Olga Borzova, member of the State Duma and the Parliamentary Assembly, and contact parliamentarian for the Russian Federation, opened the meeting together with the Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, Liliane Maury Pasquier, and spoke on the theme of improving legislation to protect children from sexual violence in the Russian Federation.

Róbert Spanó, Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Iceland, Jon Brown, Head of Strategy and Development of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (United Kingdom), Olga Remenets, Partnership Specialist in the UNICEF Moscow Office, and Antonios Stylianou, co-ordinator for the ONE in FIVE Campaign in Cyprus, gave talks on the sexual abuse of children in the circle of trust and prevention in this sphere.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to look at the topics of protection of the rights of child victims of sexual violence, with Olga Pristanskaya, adviser to the Children’s Rights Commissioner for the President of the Russian Federation, and prosecution of sexual abusers of children, with Mary Davtyan, a lawyer from the Consortium of women’s non-governmental associations.

At the end of the meeting, the contact parliamentarians adopted the Moscow Declaration, which you will find enclosed.
**National parliamentary initiatives**

**Azerbaijan**

The German child psychologist Galina Heinzelman was invited to Azerbaijan to take part in promoting the ONE in FIVE Campaign there, at the initiative of Sevinj Fataliyeva, contact parliamentarian for Azerbaijan. She attended the 2nd meeting with representatives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry department dealing with child labour on 8 November 2012 in Baku. From 9 to 13 October 2012, she took part in training at a psychology institute, aimed at combating sexual violence against children. More training courses of this kind might be run elsewhere in the country.

On 10 October 2012, NGOs active in the area of children’s rights took part in a round table looking at the causes and prevention of sexual abuse against children.

**Belgium**

Cindy Franssen, contact parliamentarian for Belgium, tabled a bill in the Belgian Senate aimed at amending the Criminal Code with a view to guaranteeing that children are protected from “grooming” under criminal law.

**Cyprus**

On 22 November 2012, Mr Yiannakis L. Omirou, President of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus, made a statement before the parliament, on the occasion of the International Day for the Rights of the Child. He particularly underlined that sexual violence against children is becoming more and more dangerous due to the numerous possibilities the Internet offers. He pledged to push forward the ratification of the Lanzarote Convention and ensure its implementation thereafter.

**Germany**

Marlene Rupprecht, contact parliamentarian for Germany and Parliamentary Assembly general rapporteur on children, draws attention to an innovative approach to potential child sex offenders taken in Germany: the Charité University Hospital in Berlin launched a prevention campaign in 2005 called “Don’t do it”, which involves organising anonymous group therapy sessions, as well as individual sessions if necessary, aimed at individuals who feel an attraction towards children. The initiative has proved so successful that it has been rolled out to several other German regions (Lower Saxony, Schleswig Holstein and Hamburg) and patients are coming from all over Europe. The aim of the sessions is to enable them to control their impulses. The Charité hospital will now be systematically training medical students in the study of sexual behaviour.

**Switzerland**

The clients of 16- or 17-year-old prostitutes may now be prosecuted under Swiss law. The Council of States unanimously passed this amendment to the Criminal Code, resulting from the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, on 11 December 2012.
Lanzarote Convention

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Italy

By ratifying the convention respectively on 14 November 2012 and on 3 January 2013, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Italy have become the 23rd and 24th states party to the convention.

Agenda

The Network of contact parliamentarians will continue to meet in 2013:

• 14 March 2013: 12th network meeting, in the German Parliament in Berlin. The debate will focus on “National strategies to fight sexual violence against children”;

• April 2013: 13th network meeting on “Sexual abuse of children by their peers”, Strasbourg.

Website

Interviews, handbooks, compendia, newsletters, leaflets... Find information about the parliamentary dimension of the campaign at the following address: www.assembly.coe.int/oneinfive

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Moscow Declaration, 20 November 2012

On the occasion of Universal Children’s Day,

We, the members of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children, attending the Network’s 10th meeting on the theme “child sexual abuse in the circle of trust”, held in Moscow at the invitation of the Russian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly:

Aware of the need to support children who are traumatised by the sexual abuse inflicted on them within their circle of trust, to prevent such abuse, prosecute the perpetrators, establish effective policies and take appropriate action;

Aware of the fact that this serious violation of children’s human rights must be eradicated to allow children to live a full and dignified life in a balanced and cohesive society;

Upholding the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (“Lanzarote Convention”) as the first complete legal instrument to simultaneously cover the protection of children, measures to prevent abuse and the punishment of perpetrators, including in the event of sexual abuse within the home or the family;

Wishing that not only all Council of Europe members but all countries in the world sign, ratify and implement the Lanzarote Convention – to date the Convention has been ratified by 23 member states and signed by 22 others;

Welcome the signature of the Lanzarote Convention by the Russian Federation and encourage the Russian authorities to ratify it as soon as possible;

Undertake to:

ensure that each of our countries puts in place a sound legislative framework to outlaw sexual violence against children, including by people within the child’s circle of trust, which we consider to be one of the most heinous crimes and one of the most serious violations of human rights;

ensure that parents, families and those close to children receive support so that they can give them a positive education enhancing their physical and psychological well-being and their future development as adults;

do our utmost to ensure that each state we represent signs, ratifies and implements the Lanzarote Convention and to ensure that appropriate action is taken, including by parliaments themselves;

become actively involved in the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign to combat sexual violence against children and undertake awareness-raising and prevention activities at local and national, and possibly even international level, in co-operation with our governments and the full range of civil society players;

take initiatives to ensure that our national budgets provide for the funding of such activities.

www.assembly.coe.int/oneinfive