



Preparation of the Council of Europe Campaign to stop Sexual Violence against Children 2010:

Consultation with experts on the prevention of sexual abuse of children

Strasbourg, 10-11 December 2009

Overview

The Council of Europe children's strategy for 2009-2011, 'Provision, Protection and Participation for Children in Europe', has amongst its major focuses that of eradicating all forms of violence against children. In particular, it calls upon the organisation to launch comprehensive awareness-raising actions to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children. In response to this mandate, the Council of Europe shall in October 2010, launch a Europe-wide Campaign to stop Sexual Violence against children.

In order to prepare a specific aspect of the forthcoming campaign and following a call for expressions of interest, the Council of Europe will hold a Consultation with experts on the prevention of sexual abuse of children within the family and community in Strasbourg, 10-11 December.

Campaign objectives

The campaign will have two key complimentary objectives:

- To promote the ratification of the Council of Europe's primary legal instrument in this area; the **Council of Europe Convention on the**

Protection of children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse¹ (Lanzarote Convention), as well as the Cybercrime Convention and the Convention on Human Trafficking;

- To promote the full implementation of the Lanzarote Convention, through the creation of tools and materials which can be used by state parties to address some of the Convention's particularly innovative yet challenging provisions.

What will the Campaign focus on?

The Lanzarote Convention addresses the various forms of sexual violence; child pornography, child prostitution, online grooming, child sex tourism and child sexual abuse. Efforts to promote **ratification** of the instrument will therefore deal with all of these issues through the holding of national and regional seminars and conferences aimed at specific target groups including the legal profession, parliamentarians, law enforcement agencies, the private sector etc.

Given that all forms of sexual violence are closely related, actions aiming to facilitate state **implementation** of the provisions of the Convention will also address all of these forms of sexual violence.

Special attention will be given to the **prevention of child sexual abuse** taking place within the family or community setting. This decision is informed by current data which shows that children are most likely to be abused by those closest to them – a family member, friends or someone living close by.² Such a focus shall help also avoid duplication with the valuable work already being undertaken by other international and non-governmental organisations in the field of sexual exploitation.

What kind of actions will be undertaken?

The campaign will reflect the many innovative features of the Lanzarote Convention, particularly related to prevention.³ It shall promote and be informed

¹ Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, CETS 201, Lanzarote, 25/10/2007. (Lanzarote Convention)

² *Child sexual abuse in Europe*, Corrine May Chahal and Maria Herczog (eds), Council of Europe Publishing, 2003.

³ Lanzarote Convention, Articles 4-9 .

by child participation. It will look closely at the processes of recruitment and, in particular, the training of those professionals in regular contact with children. It will promote education on sexual violence and the dissemination of information on child protection services, to enable children to contribute to their own protection. It will look at examples of early intervention for potential offenders (especially minors) Finally, it will seek to raise awareness amongst the general public, including parents on sexual violence. These actions will serve to assist states in meeting their obligations under the Lanzarote Convention.

What next?

Outcomes of the Consultation will be posted on the Council of Europe website at www.coe.int/children/. These outcomes will also serve as the basis upon which the Council of Europe will further define the 2010 Campaign to stop Sexual Violence against Children.