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# Fighting the over-sexualisation of children

**Reply to Recommendation**[1]: Recommendation 2092 (2016)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has noted with interest Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2092 (2016) on "Fighting the over-sexualisation of children" and transmitted it to the relevant sectors for comments.[2] It has also brought it to the attention of the authorities of member States. The Committee of Ministers shares the concern of the Assembly about the over-sexualisation – or indeed any sexualisation – of children and the influence this has on their perception of society as well as of themselves. It shares the view that measures must be taken at different levels including by public authorities, parents, teachers, and other sectors to prevent such trends.

2. To fight the over-sexualisation of children, the Committee of Ministers considers the media and education particularly important target areas for developing preventive action. In this respect, it would recall that it has adopted a number of texts which address issues of protection of children's rights and dignity, not least the Convention for the Protection of Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), Article 6 of which requires States Parties to take the necessary measures to educate and inform children on the risks of sexual violence, as well as on the means to protect themselves. The Committee of Ministers' 2009 Declaration on making gender equality a reality, calls for measures to encourage media professionals and the communication sector generally, to convey a non-stereotyped image of women and men, which is also applicable to girls and boys. The Committee would also highlight the relevance of its Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 to member States on gender equality and media, including its call to adopt an appropriate legal framework to ensure respect for the principle of human dignity.

3. The Committee of Ministers would also encourage member States to promote gender sensitive media literacy – on- and offline – for girls and boys, young women and men, in order to enable them to acquire a critical view of media representations of gender and to decode sexist stereotypes. In this respect, it underlines the relevance of its Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education, such as addressing the role which the media can play in teaching and helping girls and boys to develop critical attitudes to sexist representations of femininity, masculinity and gender relations in society. From an online perspective, the Council of Europe's Guide to Human Rights for Internet Users is an enabling tool for children to understand and exercise their rights in the online environment.

4. The Committee of Ministers would also recall the recommendations put forward at the Council of Europe conference on "Media and the image of women" (Amsterdam, 3-4 July 2013) regarding media content, stereotypes, sexism and freedom of expression. On a practical level, it would highlight relevant Council of Europe publications, including the compilation of good practices from member States on gender equality and the media and the compilation of good practices to promote an education free from gender stereotypes.

5. With regard to paragraph 2 of the Assembly's recommendation, the Committee of Ministers underlines that the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) provides that the Organisation will "continue to address stereotypes and sexism, notably in media and education, as well as over-sexualisation".

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1. Adopted at the 1276th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (1 February 2017).
2. The Ad Hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF), the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) and the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI).

It invites the CAHENF to bear in mind the Assembly's recommendations in its work. Furthermore, the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission (GEC) is currently preparing a draft recommendation to combat sexism, which will take into account the need to protect children from different manifestations of sexism. The Committee of Ministers invites the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) to continue to pay due attention to children's protection and empowerment in all its activities within its remit. Finally, it invites the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) to take into account the recommendations made in the resolution in question − within its competence and if its work programme so permits − and to examine the possibility of developing a specific activity geared to combating the over-sexualisation of children, and also support targeted activities carried out by other Council of Europe bodies in a transversal manner.