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Ending violence against children: a Council of Europe contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

Report[1]
Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
Rapporteur: Baroness Doreen MASSEY, United Kingdom, Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group

Summary

Half of the world's children suffer violence every year, with the economic costs estimated at 8% of the world's GDP. Target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children should thus be a political priority.

The Council of Europe, including the Parliamentary Assembly itself, has prioritised the fight to end violence against children for over a decade, and is well-placed to support States in addressing the challenges in this field.

To end violence against children, power structures, attitudes and the law will have to change. The Assembly should thus make recommendations to Council of Europe member States to ensure that structures are in place to effectively combat violence against children, to improve levels of funding and resources to poorer countries to this end, and to step up action and support to this target in the United Nations system.

The Assembly should call on national parliaments to step up their involvement in the implementation and monitoring of SDG Target 16.2, and on the Committee of Ministers to focus efforts on accelerating progress towards reaching this target in member States, and on working together with the United Nations to accelerate progress worldwide.

1. Reference to committee: Doc. 14777, Reference 4423 of 21 January 2019.

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A. Draft resolution[2]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children is one of the most important goals of all. It is also one of the top targets for which the contribution of the Council of Europe, the Assembly itself, as well as of member governments and parliaments, will prove to be the most valuable. Ending violence against children should be a political priority: half of the world's children suffer violence every year. The economic costs of this violence are huge, estimated at 8% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), making it difficult, if not impossible, to reach many other important SDGs, such as the elimination of poverty. However, the sheer scale of the ongoing epidemic of violence against children also makes it one of the most accessible and cost-effective ones to address.

2. The Assembly reiterates its commitment to contribute to accelerating the pace of the implementation of the SDGs towards achieving the 2030 Agenda, as decided in Resolution 2271 (2019) on strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With reference to Resolution 2272 (2019) "Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities", the Assembly underlines the urgent need, in this context, to strengthen the role of national parliaments and local and regional authorities in implementing and monitoring the progress on achieving SDGs.

3. The Council of Europe, including the Assembly itself, has prioritised the fight to end violence against children for over a decade, and has developed ground-breaking binding standards and norms; it has monitored their implementation and provided guidance, support and capacity building in ensuring their efficient application. It has also provided a unique multi-stakeholder platform for exchange of good practices and co-operation, data collection and awareness raising. While plenty of work remains to be done, the Council of Europe has built up a host of connected, mobilised and politically influential bodies and institutions which reach right down to the local level, civil society and children themselves, as a driver for positive change.

4. The Council of Europe is thus well placed to support States in addressing the challenges which hinder accelerated progress towards ending violence against children: a lack of reliable and comparable data, problems of co-ordination and clashing strategic priorities at both national and international levels, unhealthy attitudes towards children as independent rights-holders, and lack of funding. The Assembly thus encourages all States, as well as the United Nations, to derive the maximum benefit from the Council of Europe's expertise and experience with a view to addressing these challenges.

5. The Assembly believes that it is clear that violence against children is perpetrated by the powerful against those lacking power. Perpetrators are mainly male and mainly known to the child victims. Some children are particularly vulnerable. To end violence against children, power structures, attitudes and the law will have to change. The Assembly thus reiterates its recommendations contained in Resolution 2056 (2015) on the inclusion of children's rights in national constitutions as an essential component of effective national child policies.

6. The Assembly thus recommends that Council of Europe member States make combating violence against children a national priority and ensure that structures are in place to effectively combat violence against children by providing:

6.1. sufficient allocation of budgets to deliver results and to implement prevention strategies;

6.2. high quality services in education, health, social services and child justice provided by professionals who receive continuous training on evolving forms of violence in different settings which:

6.2.1. put a particular focus on adequate and timely support for child victims of violence;

6.2.2. take concrete steps to prevent peer-to-peer violence;

6.3. structures and funding for local authorities to provide these services, monitor their effectiveness and improve practice;

6.4. consultation, at local level, with communities, including children, on the quality, appropriateness and impact of these services;

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 13 May 2019.

6.5. a national action plan on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and an integrated national strategy on addressing violence against children which is based on a multidimensional and multi-stakeholder approach (involving parliaments, local and regional authorities, civil society and children themselves), as promoted by the Council of Europe Policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence (Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10);

6.6. full implementation of the relevant Council of Europe conventions, as State parties to them:

6.6.1. the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, "Lanzarote Convention");

6.6.2. the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197);

6.6.3. the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "Istanbul Convention");

6.6.4. the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185, "Budapest Convention").

7. The Assembly encourages Council of Europe member States to increase, where necessary, levels of funding and resources to poorer countries in order to provide support for programmes to combat violence against children worldwide. It also encourages member States to step up action and support to end violence against children in the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, making SDG Target 16.2 a top priority, and to report on the relevant work of the Council of Europe in their reporting on its implementation.

8. The Assembly calls on national parliaments to step up their involvement in the implementation and monitoring of SDG Target 16.2 by:

8.1. holding annual evidence-based debates on ending violence against children;

8.2. setting up a permanent child rights committee;

8.3. introducing "child budgeting" principles into their budgetary processes;

8.4. networking across parliaments regionally and globally, including in co-operation with the Inter-parliamentary Union and civil society organisations.

B. Draft recommendation[3]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution … (2019) "Ending violence against children: a Council of Europe contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals", Resolution 2271 (2019) and Recommendation 2150 (2019) on strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Resolution 2272 (2019) "Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities".

2. The Assembly believes that Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children is one of the top targets for which the contribution of the Council of Europe will prove to be the most valuable. It thus recommends that the Committee of Ministers focus efforts on:

2.1. accelerating progress towards reaching this target in member States, including by keeping issues of violence against children high up on the agenda of the Council of Europe's intergovernmental and monitoring bodies dealing with children's rights;

2.2. working together with the United Nations in accelerating progress worldwide.

3. Draft recommendation adopted unanimously by the committee on 13 May 2019.

C. Explanatory memorandum by Baroness Doreen Massey, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. On 10 December 2018, the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development tabled a motion for a resolution on "Ending violence against children: a Council of Europe contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals".[4] This motion was referred to our committee for report during the January part-session, when I was appointed rapporteur. Our committee fast-tracked the preparation of this report with a view to having it debated during the June 2019 part-session, as there are a number of high-level events in the second half of the year which this report could usefully feed into.[5] It will be debated in a joint debate with the report on "Stop violence and exploitation of migrant children" with the participation of Ms Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children.

2. In April 2019, the committee held an exchange of views with Ms Elda Moreno, Head of the Children's Rights and Sport Values Department of the Directorate General of Democracy of the Council of Europe to get the European perspective,[6] and held an exchange of views with Ms Dorothy Rozga, former Executive Director of ECPAT International (Ending the Sexual Exploitation of Children), at its meeting in Vienna on 13 May 2019, to get the global perspective. I also undertook a fact-finding visit to Germany to explore examples of good practice and verify my identification of the key challenges on 6 and 7 May 2019, the results of which can be found in the Appendix to this report.

3. As the motion recalls, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes several Goals (SDGs) and associated targets relating to children's rights which fall within the Council of Europe's mandate and reflect its norms and standards, including:

3.1. Target 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children;

3.2. Target 5.3 to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;

3.3. Target 8.7 which calls for immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

4. It is clear that, worldwide, violence against children is perpetrated by the powerful against those lacking power. Perpetrators are mainly male and mainly (over 70%) known to the child victims. Some children are particularly vulnerable: those with disabilities, migrants and refugees, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children, and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. This report cannot cover these categories in any great detail.

5. For more than a decade, the Council of Europe, including the Parliamentary Assembly, has been actively engaged in making the eradication of all forms of violence against children a political priority at pan-European level and beyond. This report provides a unique opportunity to help accelerate progress towards building a world free from violence for every child, and to discuss how the Council of Europe and the Assembly can best contribute to achieving this goal.

6. One of the weaknesses of the UN 2030 Agenda is perhaps the sheer number of SDGs and associated targets (17 Goals and 169 Targets), as well as the broadness of their scope – even though it is certainly good to be clear on what exactly the Goals are (= targets) and how progress will be measured (= indicators)[7]. While many SDGs are interlinked, and progress on one can thus help progress another, the general public and

4. Doc. 14777.
5. In July 2019, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HPLF) will host the first detailed review of Target 16.2. Under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019, a HPLF summit will be held to review progress achieved in the implementation of the SDGs, including Goal 16. 2019 also marks the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, with several events upcoming. The Council of Europe Children's Rights Division is organising a High-level Conference on the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) to be held on 13-14 November 2019 in Paris, France, to assess progress made and build momentum for future action.
6. See the minutes of the exchange of views in AS/Soc (2019) PV 03.
7. Indeed, the development of specific targets and indicators was one of the lessons learned from the Millennium development goals.

policymakers alike can nevertheless find the UN 2030 Agenda somewhat overwhelming. I have thus decided to focus this report on one target only: Target 16.2, in short – on ending violence against children[8] – which is still a broad topic and ambitious goal on its own.

7. Why focus on this particular target? I believe that ending violence against children is one of the most important goals of all, a precondition for many other goals to be reached, as well as one of the most accessible and cost-effective ones to address. We all agree that violence against children is a human rights violation that must be stopped. We all have laws on our books to prevent it from happening, yet half of the world's children suffer violence every year.[9] The economic costs of this violence are huge, estimated at 8% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP).[10] Because of the intergenerational transmission of violence, we stand practically no chance of reaching other important goals, such as the elimination of poverty, if we do not manage to reach this one. So let's make ending violence against children by 2030 one of our very top priorities, and use this report to give this target the parliamentary momentum it needs and deserves!

2. The contribution of the Council of Europe and of the Parliamentary Assembly to reaching Target 16.2.

8. Both the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly have already made a significant contribution to reaching the United Nations SDGs, in particular Target 16.2, and this contribution has been recognised, welcomed and supported by our partners in the UN family, such as Ms Marta Santos País, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children (UN SRSG VAC),[11] and Ms Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, the Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children.[12] Indeed, the November 2016 seminar "Protecting children from violence: next steps for effective strategies",[13] jointly organised by the Council of Europe Child Rights' Division and our Assembly Committee at Wilton Park (United Kingdom), brought together global actors to map out an action plan in all key areas covered in this report. This concerted action has resulted in the Council of Europe's 47 governments and parliaments being ideally equipped with European legal standards, monitoring mechanism(s), and regional platforms which facilitate the contribution of member States to Target 16.2 through the existing work of the Council of Europe.

2.1. The work of the intergovernmental sector

9. The current Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021)[14] stipulates its mission clearly: to protect children from violence and hence contribute to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on the Council of Europe standards, intergovernmental platforms and monitoring bodies.[15] Since 2006, the Programme "Building a Europe for and with Children" promotes an integrated approach to the elimination of all forms of violence, as well as targeted action to address specific forms of violence. These include sexual exploitation and abuse (online and offline), trafficking, corporal punishment, bullying (including cyberbullying) and gender-based violence. Children's rights are also better protected thanks to the programme's efforts to promote positive parenting and child-friendly justice, health care and social services. Through these efforts, legal norms have been developed, independent monitoring mechanisms have been set up, policy documents adopted, and pan-European campaigns developed to bring the public's attention to the fact that violence against children is still a taboo and indeed a scourge which is challenging to eradicate – in the home, in institutions, in schools, in sports, in places where children are deprived of their liberty, in public life – but which must be tackled nevertheless.

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8. I would like to point out in this context that the Parliamentary Assembly has recently adopted a number of resolutions relevant to Target 5.3 more specifically, such as Resolution 2233 (2018) on forced marriage in Europe and Resolution 2135 (2016) on female genital mutilation in Europe.
9. Speech by Ms Marta Santos País, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Violence against Children, to the committee in Lisbon on 18 September 2018. See the minutes of the hearing on: "The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – how parliaments and member States of the Council of Europe can contribute", AS/Soc (2018) PV 05 add 2 (available on the committee's webpage).
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, UNGA A/73/174, 17 July 2018.
13. Programme and report available here: www.wiltonpark.org.uk/event/wp1472/.
14. All previous strategies pursued the same aims.
15. A life free from violence for all children is one of the Strategy's objectives, but it is also addressed within the other four (equal opportunities for all children, child friendly justice for all children, child participation and the rights of the child in the digital environment).

10. Through its recently set-up intergovernmental body, the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF), a stepped-up and systematic support to the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is in place and follows up on a long tradition of co-operation between the Council of Europe and various UN bodies. An important emphasis is put on responses to violence against children to facilitate and intensify member States' progress towards Target 16.2. In this context, a dedicated Group of Experts on responses to violence against children (CAHENF-VAC) was set up and once again supported by the UN SRSG VAC and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children. These new structures come in addition to the "Lanzarote Committee", which is the Committee of the Parties (a monitoring and strategy-setting body) of the "Lanzarote Convention", the 2007 Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201).[16]

2.2. The work of the Parliamentary Assembly

11. At the level of the Assembly, several committees are mandated to protect children from violence:

– the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development has the broadest mandate, which is reflected in the (re-)creation of its Sub-Committee on Children in 2017.[17] The committee organised the parliamentary dimension of the ONE in FIVE campaign to stop sexual violence against children (2010-2015)[18] and provided the secretariat to the related Network of Contact Parliamentarians (2010-2016) – which met five times a year to discuss selected topics – and ran a three-year pilot project in Cyprus.[19] The committee was at the origin of the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse,[20] the fifth iteration of which will be celebrated on 18 November 2019 (this year, dedicated to the theme of child participation[21]). The committee has brought a large number of reports to the Assembly floor in the field of ending violence against children in recent years, in this decade alone resulting in seven resolutions and an equal number of recommendations.[22] It continues to run a project on empowering and protecting children through parliamentary action (since 2017) with voluntary contributions mainly originating from national parliaments,[23] supporting events on issues such as child-friendly justice and mental health,[24] and campaigns such as the new "Start to Talk" campaign run by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport.[25] Amongst the reports currently under preparation I would like to highlight the one on "Addressing sexual violence against children: stepping up action and co-operation in Europe", which deals with one of the key topics. I would also like to mention the most recently adopted texts: Resolution 2272 (2019) "Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local

16. For more information about the Convention and its Committee, please see the dedicated webpage: www.coe.int/en/web/children/convention. Other relevant Council of Europe standards at Convention-level are: the Convention on Action against trafficking in human beings (CETS No. 197) (2005), the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185) (2001) and the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210) (2011).
17. For six years, the mandate lay with a General Rapporteur on Children.
18. The campaign successfully brought together the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe, national campaigns, the Assembly and national parliaments, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local initiatives, as well as private organisations/enterprises, contributing to the wide ratification of the Lanzarote Convention (now standing at 44-member States of the Council of Europe). See www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/1in5/.
19. Thanks to a voluntary contribution of the A.G. Leventis Foundation.
20. For more information on the European Day: https://rm.coe.int/168069ae00.
21. The committee was recently seized for a report on "Giving a voice to every child: promoting child participation as a foundation for democratic societies", Doc. 14806.
22. Resolution 2204 (2018) on protecting children affected by armed conflicts; Resolution 2119 and Recommendation 2092 (2016) on fighting the over-sexualisation of children; Resolution 2010 (2014) on child-friendly juvenile justice; Recommendation 2045 (2014) on combating sexual violence against children; Resolution 1980 (2014) on increasing the reporting of suspected sexual abuse of children; Resolution 1926 (2013) on fighting "child sex tourism"; Recommendation 2023 (2013) on children's right to physical integrity; Recommendation 2013 (2013) on parliaments united in combating sexual violence against children; Resolution 1834 and Recommendation 1980 (2011) on combating "child abuse images" through committed, transversal and internationally co-ordinated action; Recommendation 1934 (2010) on child abuse in institutions: ensuring full protection of the victims; Recommendation 1905 (2010) on children who witness domestic violence; Resolution 1733 (2010) on reinforcing measures against sex offenders.
23. Voluntary contribution 1364 (in 2017 part of Voluntary contribution 231, "Parliaments and Social Rights").
24. The report on the London seminar organised by the United Kingdom parliament in November 2017 is available here: https://pace.coe.int/documents/19855/4247088/20180424-ChildMentalHealth-EN.pdf/863ffa38-22a1-4269-8a87-0a2d41f12faa.
25. For more information on the campaign, see www.coe.int/en/web/sport/start-to-talk. In 2018, the Council of Europe and the Assembly dedicated the European Day to this campaign.

authorities", which calls for the mobilisation of parliaments and local communities to deliver the SDGs by providing oversight of progress, and Resolution 2271 (2019) and Recommendation 2150 (2019) on strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which emphasise human rights and what the Council of Europe has to offer and the importance of the Council of Europe continuing to work with the United Nations.

– the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons runs the Parliamentary Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children,[26] which is the Assembly's contribution to the Global Campaign to #endchilddetention.[27] The Committee has also created a Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Children and Young People, and was at the origin of a number of Assembly Resolutions and Recommendations in the last five years which touch on the question of violence against migrant and refugee children.[28] Amongst the reports currently under preparation I would also like to highlight two:

  - "Stop violence and exploitation of migrant children", which focuses on the different forms of violence and exploitation that child migrants are experiencing in Europe, such as sexual abuse and exploitation, labour exploitation and discrimination, as well as violence against migrant children in detention facilities, transit zones and migrant centres;

  - "Missing refugee and migrant children in Europe", which is looking into ways to ensure that the tens of thousands of missing refugee and migrant children are found, and that children do not go missing in the first place.

– the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media and its Sub-Committee on Education, Youth and Sport have been particularly active in three fields: fighting violence against children online, through education, and in sports. It has brought a number of related reports to the floor of the Assembly,[29] and has started working on a new report on "Education geared towards pupils' needs".

– the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination runs the parliamentary Network "Women Free from Violence", which also deals with violence against girls. It has brought a number of related reports to the floor of the Assembly,[30] and has started working on a new report on "The Istanbul Convention on violence against women: achievements and challenges".

2.3. Results so far

12. These fora are not just talking shops with no results; and neither are the Council of Europe standards and strategies or the Parliamentary Assembly resolutions and recommendations insignificant: they are the result of, and an engine for, the continuous engagement with member States, their parliaments, other regional and international organisations, local and regional authorities, civil society and children themselves. Many of them provide tangible lists of steps to be taken to achieve progress and can therefore be useful indicators for the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda. As several Council of Europe conventions require reporting by States Parties in the context of monitoring of their implementation, this data should be used also in the United Nations voluntary national reviews that States submit to the High-level Political Forum.

13. To take the example of sexual violence against children, the elaboration of the "Lanzarote Convention", the first international legal instrument aiming to prevent, criminalise and combat all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, with 44 States Parties today,[31] gave rise to the multi-stakeholder Council of Europe ONE in FIVE campaign to stop sexual violence against children, which mobilised governments to sign,

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26. https://pace.coe.int/en_GB/web/apce/children-in-detention.
27. https://endchilddetention.org/.
28. Resolution 2243 and Recommendation 2141 (2018) on family reunification of refugees and migrants in the Council of Europe member States; Recommendation 2137 (2018) on international obligations of Council of Europe member States to protect life at sea; Resolution 2220 (2018) on integration, empowerment and protection of migrant children through compulsory education; Resolution 2195 and Recommendation 2117 (2017) on child-friendly age assessment for unaccompanied migrant children; Resolution 2128 (2016) on violence against migrants; Resolution 2174 (2017) on human rights implications of the European response to transit migration across the Mediterranean; Resolution 2136 (2016) on harmonising the protection of unaccompanied minors in Europe; Resolution 2020 and Recommendation 2056 (2014) on the alternatives to immigration detention of children.
29. Resolution 2256 and Recommendation 2144 (2019) on Internet governance and human rights; Resolution 2097 (2016) on access to school and education for all children; Resolution 2001 (2014) on violence in and through the media; Recommendation 2014 (2013) on young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge; Resolution 1803 and Recommendation 1965 (2011) on education against violence at school.
30. Resolution 2233 (2018) on forced marriage in Europe; Resolution 2144 (2017) on ending cyberdiscrimination and online hate; Resolution 2135 (2016) on female genital mutilation in Europe; Resolution 1927 (2013) on ending discrimination against Roma children.

parliaments to ratify, and countries to implement the Lanzarote Convention, down to the very local level. Thus, the Assembly's pilot project in Cyprus led not only to the adoption of new legislation modelled on the Convention's requirements, but also to the opening of the first *Barnahus* for child victims of sexual violence outside the Nordic countries.[32] More and more States in all parts of Europe are requesting Council of Europe expertise to address violence against children, which allows bridging of the gap between international standards and national implementation: The Children's Rights Division is currently managing projects across Europe to strengthen States' responses to child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

14. In April 2018, the Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement of Sport (EPAS) launched the "Start to Talk" campaign, a call for action to public authorities, the sport movement and other stakeholders to take the necessary prevention and protection measures to stop child sexual abuse in sports. By joining this call, governments, sports clubs, associations and federations, as well as athletes and coaches, pledge to take concrete measures to prevent and respond to abuse. "Start to Talk" is about adults breaking the silence and lending children a voice. In a positive feedback loop of their own, parliamentarians joined the campaign on the occasion of the 2018 European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (itself a result of the ONE in FIVE campaign), elaborating a 10-point action plan and raising awareness of the issue with events such as "blowing the whistle on child sexual abuse in sports".[33] Indeed, organisations in 18 countries have joined the Start to Talk initiative so far, leading to a broad mobilisation of both public authorities and the sports movement.[34]

15. To take another example, empowering and protecting children in the digital environment, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted in June 2018 a Recommendation on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment (drawn up by the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child). The Guidelines provide concrete solutions (prevention strategies, protection and awareness-raising measures, due diligence, impact assessment and remedies), stimulating co-operation at international and national level. In line with previous work in the area, including by the Assembly[35] and by the Lanzarote Committee,[36] the Guidelines also specify the measures which need to be taken regarding child sexual abuse material. To facilitate their proper implementation, an Implementation Guide for Professionals is currently under preparation.[37] A Regional Project to End Online Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse @Europe was also launched in January 2019 and is expected to run until December 2020. Financed by the Fund to End Violence against Children, this Project will address the contextual challenges identified at pan-European and country level by promoting, facilitating and supporting national efforts and actions to prevent and combat child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by information and communications technology (ICT).

16. A third example of the Council of Europe's successful contribution to ending violence against children can be found in its first major campaign following the creation of its programme "Building a Europe for and with children" in 2006: "Raise your hand against smacking"[38] – which followed up on a 2004 Assembly recommendation calling for a Europe-wide ban on corporal punishment of children.[39] Corporal punishment is indeed still the most widespread form of violence against children. Ineffective as a means of discipline, it is a

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31. This is one of the modern, holistic "4 P"-Conventions, combining **p**revention, **p**rosecution, and **p**rotection measures with integrated **p**olicies (and, in this case, also child **p**articipation).
32. The Council of Europe is continuing to provide support to the implementation of the *Barnahus* model in several countries.
33. Two sub-committees of the Assembly met jointly to propose an action plan in Tbilisi, Georgia: see http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-en.asp?newsid=7259&lang=2, and awareness-raising events took place in Strasbourg and elsewhere: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=7269&lang=2.
34. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and the International Olympic Committees are amongst the sports organisations supporting the initiative.
35. See Resolution 1834 (2011) and Recommendation 1980 (2011) on combating "child abuse images" through committed, transversal and internationally co-ordinated action.
36. In June 2016, the Lanzarote Committee adopted a Declaration condemning the registering of web addresses which advertise or promote child sexual abuse material or any other offences established in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention, urging Parties to take all necessary measures to prevent and prohibit such web addresses, and calling on competent authorities and bodies at national and/or international level (Governmental Advisory Committee, ICANN) to take necessary measures to ensure that no new addresses of this kind are registered. In 2017, the Lanzarote Committee also adopted an Interpretative Opinion affirming the applicability of the Lanzarote Convention to sexual offences against children facilitated through the use of ICTs.
37. In addition, the Lanzarote Committee's second monitoring round is currently focusing on the specific challenges that have to be met by Parties to ensure the protection of children against the criminal exploitation of child self-generated sexual content (in particular sexually explicit images and videos).
38. www.humanrightseurope.org/2012/01/raise-your-hand-against-smacking/.
39. Recommendation 1666 (2004) "Europe-wide ban on corporal punishment of children".

violation of their human rights but not always recognised as such.[40] The European Committee of Social Rights has found several States in breach of the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163) for not having prohibited corporal punishment in a sufficiently precise and binding manner. By 2018, the number of member States having banned corporal punishment in all settings (including in institutions and at home) had nearly doubled to 32 – so despite some success, there is still room for improvement. To support governments in their continuing efforts to promote positive and non-violent parenting, the Council of Europe has set up an online repository compiling more than 50 videos, publications, campaigns, and parenting programmes from 13 member States.[41]

17. Finally, the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly have been paying special attention to the need to safeguard children on the move and otherwise affected by migration,[42] as one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe today. As mentioned in paragraph 11.2 above, the Assembly has been particularly active in campaigning to end immigration detention of children, recalling that unaccompanied children should never be detained and that the detention of children on the basis of their or their parents' immigration status is contrary to the best interests of the child and constitutes a child rights violation. The Assembly has thus called on member States to adopt alternatives that meet the best interests of the child and allow children to remain with their family members and/or guardians in non-custodial, community-based contexts while their immigration status is being resolved. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe has thrown his weight behind these recommendations, by appointing a Special Representative on Migration and Refugees in 2016 (with the protection of refugee and migrant children as one of the key priorities for his mandate), and developing an Action Plan which brings together different sectors of the organisation to undertake activities aimed at ensuring access to rights and child-friendly procedures, providing effective protection and integrating children.[43]

3. Identifying and addressing the challenges

18. With so much work already undertaken at the Council of Europe alone, and with so much involvement at governmental, parliamentary, local and civil society level in so many European countries, it may seem strange that Target 16.2 – ending violence against children – still seems so elusive, even here in Europe. Every day, we hear of new incidences of violence, some of it extreme: sexual abuse in a child's circle of trust (in the family, in childcare, in sport and in the church), corporal punishment at home or bullying in schools, institutions and online, children affected by hate crimes, armed conflict or its aftermath, migrant and refugee children going missing, being trafficked or forced into begging or prostitution, etc. – the list sometimes seems endless, and doesn't always seem to tally with the voluntary national reviews submitted to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

19. It is not that countries are "sugar-coating" their voluntary national reviews – though the temptation is there, of course, to concentrate the reporting on those aspects of the fight against violence against children which are going well at national level,[44] along the lines of sharing good practice. Is the participation in regional action plans, campaigns and co-operation measures and strategies such as those of the Council of Europe bringing about complacency? I don't think so. But I do believe that we first need to identify the challenges to Target 16.2, in order help us find a realistic way to address them.

20. I believe that the first challenge is the lack of data. A problem becomes a problem to be solved only when it is measurable, and thus visible. This is certainly not a new insight,[45] but the lack of meaningful data has plagued the fight to end violence against children for years. As we have seen, the most common form of

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40. In the United Kingdom, the creation of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1824) predates that of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (1884). One of the slogans of the campaign was "Children are not mini human beings with mini human rights!".
41. An update of some of the dedicated material is foreseen for the period 2019/2020.
42. Such as those left behind by migrating parents, a subject on which Mr Viorel Riceard Badea (Romania, EPP/CD) is currently preparing a report for our committee.
43. These activities come in addition to those undertaken within the framework of the Council of Europe's binding Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197, "Warsaw Convention") and its independent monitoring body GRETA, to protect from trafficking migrant children and those left behind by migrating parents.
44. Indeed, it can be argued that the way the United Nations has set up and is promoting the national reporting system facilitates this practice (see the 2019 edition of the handbook on the preparation of voluntary national reviews: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20872VNR_hanbook_2019_Edition_v4.pdf: "Consider the candid inclusion of successes, challenges and lessons learned in order to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda", p. 14). The United Nations also encourages countries to draw on existing reports to ease the reporting burden.
45. See the 2018 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, op. cit., pp. 5-8, which points out some problems with the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets.

violence against children is corporal punishment in the home, which is often a "black box" (unless the violence is so extreme it comes to the attention of child protection authorities). Sexual violence against children is still a taboo subject in many countries, including in Europe, especially when it targets specific groups, such as children with disabilities.[46] Even in the #MeToo era, victim-blaming and the sheer imbalance of power between the (often) adult perpetrators and the child victims delay reporting or silence victims altogether: it appears that the ONE in FIVE figure the Council of Europe's campaign was based on should actually have been ONE in FOUR.[47] In these circumstances, collecting the "right" data ("right" as in complete, and properly disaggregated in terms of gender[48] and age, for example), and drawing meaningful conclusions from that data, are a major challenge. In our fast-paced societies dominated by election and news cycles and powerful social media influences, marred by fake news and plagued by populism, acknowledging weaknesses and setbacks and looking into blind spots can be a tall order for a government.

21. The second challenge I have identified is co-ordination and strategic priorities. In order to end violence against children, it is not enough to have one ministry (or part of a ministry – how many countries have ministries dedicated solely to children?) do all the work, even with the best of intentions. Violence against children is still so pervasive that its consideration and the responses to it need to be mainstreamed in order to be successful. It is crucial to work together with all stakeholders, involving parliaments, local authorities, civil society and children themselves. It is essential to ensure that action takes place at local levels, respecting and involving all stakeholders. Monitoring is also essential, in order to define what works and what does not in order to influence future developments. While multilateralism is not exactly in vogue these days in all parts of the world, learning from countries and regions and sharing good practices is key. A country's national action plans and strategies – on the implementation of the SDGs in general[49], and on addressing violence against children[50] – can gain insights and suggested structures from United Nations[51] and Council of Europe recommendations and adapt these to local needs and priorities.

22. The third challenge which comes to mind is attitudes. As long as we still don't acknowledge children as fully fledged human beings with a full set of human rights, violence against them will continue. Unfortunately, some people still seem to believe that children must "deserve" their human rights, and can forfeit them (for example, children in conflict with the law, or migrant children). This attitude must be eradicated! The right of ALL children to live free from fear and violence has been recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); they are independent right-holders, not just objects of protection. However, often people do not feel responsible or do not know what to do, even when they are aware of children's rights; they need to be empowered and involved. Unfortunately, it may seem easier, and in many quarters more popular, to "respect the privacy of the home and the family" and thus allow corporal punishment to continue, than to educate parents – who are at the end of their tether and know no better – in positive parenting.[52] It may seem easier not to have to confront the reality that sexual violence against children is not something that happens only online and is perpetrated by strangers, but is mainly perpetrated by family members or other adults – or peers – the child trusts, before images go online as "child abuse material". It may seem easier to believe that bullying in school is "only a phase" and will cause no lasting harm. It may seem easier to close our eyes to migrant children being detained, going missing, or being trafficked and exploited. But it will not end violence against children.

23. The fourth challenge I have identified is probably the biggest and most important one: prioritisation. With so many other SDGs vying for attention, many of them are considered a bigger priority than ending violence against children: after all, children don't have the vote. However, children themselves have identified ending violence against them as one of their two biggest priorities. The lack of political will to prioritise Target

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46. See European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Violence against children with disabilities: legislation, policies and programmes in the EU (2015).
47. Based on recent studies, such as the 2016 study by the University of Cyprus. The United States National Sexual Violence Resource Center reports a gender difference in that one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18.
48. See FRA, Violence against women: an EU-wide survey (2014) which shows that on average 33% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an adult in childhood – that is, before the age of 15. 12% of women indicated having experienced some form of sexual violence by an adult before the age of 15.
49. As recommended in Assembly Resolution 2272 (2019) "Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities".
50. The Council of Europe has been advocating since 2008 for national strategies on addressing violence against children; so far, 23 Council of Europe member States have adopted such strategies.
51. For example, those made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child or other UN mechanisms, such as special rapporteurs.
52. In particular as ending corporal punishment may also alter the gender dynamics involved all too often – many heads of households "discipline" (read abuse) not only their children, but also their partners.

16.2 also means that not enough resources are made available to reach it, both at national and at international level.[53] Indeed, this summer, the HLPF will showcase several Goals, not just Goal 16 (let alone Target 16.2). But how can we hope to end violence against children if this is not among our first priorities? Making something a priority also means allocating sufficient funding to it. In our relatively rich European countries, we should also be considering our contributions to funding programmes in poorer countries to combat violence against children.

24. The real added value of the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly lies in their potential to address these four key challenges. Both the Council of Europe and the Assembly have prioritised the fight to end violence against children for over a decade. We can offer: binding standards, norms, guidance, support, capacity building, monitoring, a platform for exchange of good practices and co-operation, data collection, awareness-raising campaigns, etc. – plus a whole host of connected, mobilised, and politically influential bodies and institutions which reach right down to the local level, civil society and children themselves.

4. The way forward: conclusions and recommendations

25. As national European parliamentarians, we have the power to use the SDGs to put pressure on our governments to ensure that action to end violence against children is made a national priority, and that structures are in place to combat violence against children by providing:

25.1. sufficient emphasis in budgets to deliver results;

25.2. high quality services in education, health, social services and child justice (with a special focus on adequate and timely support for child victims of violence, and concrete steps to prevent peer-to-peer violence);

25.3. structures and funding for local authorities to provide these services, monitor the effectiveness of services and improve practice;

25.4. consult, at a local level, with communities, including children, on the quality, appropriateness and impact of these services;

25.5. fully implement all relevant Council of Europe Conventions as State Parties.

26. We can also, as parliamentarians, question and seek to improve, where necessary, levels of funding and resources to poorer countries in order to provide support for programmes to combat violence against children worldwide, and encourage the Council of Europe to do likewise – as well as to focus efforts on accelerating progress towards reaching this target in member States, and on working together with the United Nations in accelerating progress worldwide. We can also encourage our governments to report on Council of Europe relevant work in their reporting on the implementation efforts of SDG Target 16.2.

27. I would also encourage the Council of Europe itself, as well as its member States (both governments and parliaments), to support the "The roadmap for peaceful, just and inclusive societies"[54] developed by a coalition of "pathfinders" convened by the governments of Brazil, Sierra Leone and Switzerland. This coalition has identified three transformative strategies, nine areas of catalytic action and four enablers. Crucially, its very top priority catalytic action is "Scale up violence prevention for women, children, and for vulnerable groups".[55]

28. Finally, as members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, we can also bring home and share more globally the *acquis* of the Council of Europe and its Assembly – for example, by sponsoring annual debates on ending violence against children in our national parliaments, setting up permanent children's rights committees if we have not done so already, introducing "child budgeting" in our parliaments, and networking across parliaments regionally and globally, for example in co-operation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We should also renew our efforts to have children's rights included in national constitutions. This way we can build on our experience, both good and bad, to accelerate progress towards building a world free from violence for every child as a top priority.

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53. While the Fund to end violence against children has raised more than US$68 million so far, this money is a drop in the ocean, and is (too) heavily skewed towards keeping children safe online, rather than in the real world. www.end-violence.org/fund.

54. 21 September 2017, https://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/sdg16_roadmap_en_20sep17.pdf

55. Ibid., p. 24.

Appendix – Report on the rapporteur's fact-finding visit to Germany on 6 and 7 May 2019

1. The aim of the visit was to seek information on how Germany deals with violence against children, in particular sexual abuse of children, with regard to: legal frameworks, collaboration between agencies, prevention and recovery measures and social media. I was also interested to learn how Germany is developing child participation, and responding to SDG Target 16.2 related to the abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

2. I met the Independent Commissioner for Child Sex Abuse Issues, Johannes-Wilhelm Rörig, one of the members of the Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in Germany, the former Independent Commissioner Christine Bergmann, Parliamentary State Secretaries Christian Lange and Caren Marks, Members of Parliament (Susann Rüthrich, Andreas Nick and Katrin Werner), and NGO representatives: Dorothea Zimmermann (Wildwasser e.V.), Dorothea Czarnecki (ECPAT Germany), Laura Jäger (Tourism Watch), Linda Zaiane (Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.) and Matthias Katsch (Eckiger Tisch e.V.). All were generous with their time and information and I am grateful to them for making the visit productive and interesting. It was also a particular highlight to visit the Wilhelm-von-Humboldt-Gemeinschaftsschule in Berlin.

3. I am also grateful to the secretariat of the German delegation to the Assembly for the efficient and smooth organisation of the visit.

4. I will divide this report into sections: introduction, political and legal frameworks, collaboration between agencies, the participation of children, the role of social media and contribution to the SDGs.

Introduction

5. It was recognised that the profile of child sex abuse had been raised by the media and campaigners and that the climate of power relations in society generally, and in particular between perpetrators and victims, needed more adjustment. There was recognition that child sex abuse had become more visible, but that data across the spectrum of children related to gender, disability, ethnic groups and sexuality was inadequate. Child refugees and migrants were of particular concern also. Lack of funding for children and youth services at the level of some local authorities was considered a problem, as those in deprived areas tended to have the least funding. The importance of the influence and activity of parliamentarians was recognised as crucial to tackling the issue. Much was said about the importance of agencies and stakeholders working in a collaborative way. The media, in particular social media, was described as needing more control but as also having the potential to be a force for good. The importance of establishing a "protective environment" for children was considered vital in all environments, including legal situations, the home, school, sport and media.

Political framework

6. The Independent Enquiry into Child Sex Abuse in Germany, set up in 2015 under a mandate from parliament, has clearly worked with purpose and produced a report and recommendations in April 2019.[56] An Independent Commissioner was appointed in 2010 when the (second) wave of abuse scandals "became public". At the time, a round table of all stakeholders (including ministers, victims and experts) had been set up to recommend action; there are plans for a new national council on child sex abuse to be set up later this year. The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has the main responsibility for this area, drawing on other ministries and on the voluntary sector. An official sub-committee for children's concerns was set up when Germany ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is an all-party group and has a rotating Chair according to party. The Chair serves for a little less than a year and decides which topic will be the focus for that time. This year, the focus is on "a good start to life" (prenatal, birth, earliest childhood).

7. An NGO expressed the view that, despite positive action, child sex abuse was "not a top priority". Other interviewees were keen to raise its profile in relation to improving the climate of recognition of and respect for the problems.

56. The Commission's remit was extended for another five years in 2018. Its reports are available here: https://www.aufarbeitungskommission.de/.

Legal frameworks

8. We heard from one source that people dealing with traumatised children and adults is a huge problem and that there are concerns about how children are dealt with. Particular concerns include: Judges in children's courts are not obliged to go for special training, although children can have an advocate; systems using video or audio evidence have improved the situation in that children do not have to repeat giving live evidence, but they are not systematically used. Children still often need to testify multiple times. Prevention of abuse, some participants stated, could be helped by more prosecutions, with appropriate punishment, as well as by more widespread adoption of modern and comprehensive safeguarding policies across sectors.

9. Sports clubs must, by law, have protective measures, but one interviewee said that monitoring of these measures' implementation should be mandatory, and rules should be made clear to individuals; proper protective measures (including the elaboration of a prevention and intervention concept) should be made a condition for receiving public funding. Reporting of abuse is not mandatory, but abuse can – and should – be reported – for example by a doctor or a teacher. The Independent Commission's report "recommends conducting scientific studies on the existing standards for the protection of victims and survivors in investigations and criminal proceedings".

Collaboration between agencies

10. There was concern that children in trouble might be passed between different agencies thus causing stress and delay. An NGO worker said collaboration takes place when individuals are committed to it, and gave positive feedback on collaboration with local politicians and with the police. Several of those interviewed felt that there could be greater collaboration between regional and national structures, between different ministries and in local services. The school I visited appeared to have good collaboration with parents and with services for child welfare. The school has a council consisting of parents, teachers and children and a teacher responsible for child protection. Children participate in developing polices on, for example, bullying. Much counselling and recovery work appears to be carried out by NGOs who have a heavy workload and rely heavily on volunteers.

Child participation

11. There were other examples of involving children in consultation and there is a working group on the rights of the child and a youth protection (aged 12 to 27) department within the Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth Ministry. As the minster for this department said: "It is not just about legislation, it is about making young people stronger with age-appropriate participation." There are youth fora (involving around 400 young people) where young people define topics and a young person speaks for a particular group. There are youth parliaments at a local level. They meet once a year in the Federal Parliament to conduct debates and vote on passing laws of their choice. Education in schools to develop resilience and self-confidence was mentioned not only by the school but also by other participants.

Social media

12. It was recognised that social networking is a challenge for our societies nationally and internationally, with young people skilled in its use. Perpetrators of child abuse can take advantage of this and cybergrooming, cyberbullying and sexting are hazards. One interviewee said: "We have laws which are fifteen years behind the development of the internet". Germany has a voluntary code for internet companies. The school we visited has a rule banning the use of mobile phones in school. A campaigner on combating child abuse pointed out that the internet could also help, however, with strengthening communication and support between survivors internationally, and could educate against abuse.

Sustainable Development Goals

13. An MP said that the SDGs could be used to improve initiatives for child sex abuse by facilitating dialogue and reporting. The SDG reporting mechanism is through the Ministry of Economic Co-operation. Departments forward information to it.

14. ECPAT Germany has a briefing paper on SDG Target 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. This points out that the aspirations may not be achievable but that the indicators "provide information on the level of achievement which will help to influence national policies". It also points out that the SDGs "can be an important building block to achieve a more protective world for children".