

Resolution 2294 (2019)¹

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

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 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, 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 in order to ensure the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are reached, 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 multistakeholder 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 interconnected, 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, who are in fact independent right-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 victims. Some children are particularly vulnerable. To end violence against children, power structures, attitudes and the law will have

1. *Assembly debate* on 27 June 2019 (25th and 26th Sittings) (see [Doc. 14894](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Baroness Doreen Massey). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 27 June 2019 (26th Sitting).

See also [Recommendation 2159 \(2019\)](#).



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;
- 6.5. a national action plan on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and an integrated national strategy on addressing violence against children which is based on a multidimensional and multistakeholder 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, 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 children's 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.