Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2629 (2025)[1]

Sexual violence against men and boys

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Sexual violence against men and boys is a reality but also a hidden phenomenon which must be prevented and combated, giving priority to the needs of all victims/survivors and without detracting attention or funding from addressing gender-based violence against women and girls.

2. There is a lack of comprehensive and disaggregated data on sexual violence against men and boys in all their diversity in our member States, as well as limited research, which is partly due to under-reporting.

3. While all victims/survivors of sexual violence share the difficulties of facing stigma, negative attitudes and victim blaming, the specificities of violence against men and boys need to be tackled, including different perceptions of masculinity and sexuality.

4. Sexual violence against men and boys takes place in many different places and contexts: at home and within the closest circles, in educational and religious settings, during sports activities, in a migration context, in closed institutions and in conflict-related and humanitarian settings, among others. Measures to prevent this violence, report it and prosecute the perpetrators, and support victims, need to be applied and adapted to the different contexts.

5. Men and boys in all their diversity can be subjected to sexual violence regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, migration status, disability, origin or any other characteristic. All measures to prevent and combat such violence against men and boys, and to protect victims/survivors, should be applied without discrimination on any ground and by adopting an intersectional approach.

6. Many men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence need a long time to address the feelings of shame, fear and isolation, which leads to non-reporting or to reporting many years after the sexual violence took place. This is also due to the lack of awareness and knowledge of victims/survivors about their rights, reporting mechanisms and support services, as well as a lack of trust in the justice system more broadly.

7. Under-reporting leads to high levels of impunity, which is compounded by the different statutes of limitations for sexual offences against children depending on the country. It is therefore critical to raise awareness about sexual violence against men and boys and to advocate for the abolition of statutes of limitations.

8. Engaging with men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence should be mainstreamed across all relevant activities and policy-making processes, so that their experiences are taken into account in the development and review of relevant policies and laws.

9. Studies indicate that the physical and mental health consequences of surviving sexual violence can include anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies, which need to be addressed as public health issues in national policies and strategies. Official recognition of the sexual violence victims/survivors have suffered is an important part of the healing process. This can also help them to recover and reclaim their lives after the trauma of sexual violence by confirming that they are never responsible.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 3 October 2025 (36th sitting) (see Doc. 16250, report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr Edmunds Cepurītis). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 3 October 2025 (36th sitting).

10. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines the need to meet the targets set out in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including those under Goal 3 (good health and well-being), Goal 5 (gender equality) and Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

11. The Assembly refers to its Resolution 2533 (2024) "Child abuse in institutions in Europe" and its Resolution 2547 (2024) "The protection of children against online violence" as regards preventing and combating sexual violence against boys.

12. It further refers to its Resolution 2607 (2025) "Protecting human rights in and through sport: obligations and shared responsibilities" and draws attention to the widespread and systemic abuse of children and vulnerable adults in sport, including sexual abuse, and the lack of victim-centred reporting mechanisms and trauma-informed redress systems.

13. The Assembly welcomes the work carried out over the years by the Lanzarote Committee, which oversees the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, the "Lanzarote Convention").

14. It further underlines that the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, the "Istanbul Convention") encourages parties to apply this convention to all victims of domestic violence.

15. The Assembly looks forward to the completion of the draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for, *inter alia*, preventing and combating violence against children, as an additional tool to address sexual violence against boys and girls. It also welcomes the forthcoming adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the first legal instrument on the equality of rights of intersex persons.

16. The Assembly calls on the member and observer States of the Council of Europe and States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly:

16.1. with regard to data collection and research, to:

16.1.1. support disaggregated data collection, through official statistics and surveys, from relevant authorities and institutions in different settings and, where appropriate, directly from men and boys victims/survivors themselves, about experiences and reported cases of sexual violence;

16.1.2. encourage and support research into the specificities of sexual violence against men and boys in all their diversity, in order to successfully address the underlying factors that fuel it and barriers to reporting;

16.1.3. conduct research on what does and does not work well to prevent sexual violence against men and boys in various contexts, in co-operation with specialised organisations;

16.1.4. disseminate the data and research results in accessible formats, in order to raise awareness and to guide evidence-based policy making;

16.2. with regard to awareness raising and other prevention measures, to:

16.2.1. conduct awareness-raising and information campaigns about sexual violence against men and boys, targeting different settings and age groups and including accessible information on the rights of victims/survivors, reporting mechanisms and support services;

16.2.2. develop measures to counter and challenge the "social discourse" and cultural assumptions regarding male behaviour, the roles and power dynamics that contribute to sexual violence against men and boys, and their stigmatisation, including harmful masculinities, structural homophobia and traditional gendered roles;

16.2.3. implement prevention programmes and measures by working, *inter alia*, with youth, women's rights and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) organisations, focusing on challenging and transforming gender norms to build more gender-equal societies for the future;

16.2.4. make available preventive intervention programmes and measures to persons prosecuted and/or convicted for sexual violence against children, as well as to children who have committed sexual offences, in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention;

16.2.5. implement age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to provide boys with the knowledge and language to protect themselves and to respect the boundaries of others, and to address bodily integrity and sexual consent in education and outreach measures;

16.3. with regard to detecting and reporting cases of sexual violence in different settings, to:

16.3.1. create an enabling environment for professionals who work with children to report cases of sexual violence, and consider introducing, for certain jobs or professions, mandatory reporting of sexual violence to the relevant authorities;

16.3.2. set up children-centred and trauma-informed safeguards and reporting mechanisms in settings where children and young men are present, such as schools, extracurricular facilities, sports clubs, churches and online platforms;

16.3.3. ensure that systems for reporting sexual violence against men and boys are well publicised and tackle barriers that prevent victims/survivors from reporting such violence;

16.3.4. tackle systemic weaknesses in organisations and institutions which leave men and boys vulnerable to sexual violence, exposed to harm or denied access to justice;

16.4. with regard to legal and policy measures, to:

16.4.1. include men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence and their specific needs in national laws and policies to prevent and combat sexual violence, and consider linking national strategies on gender-based violence with LGBTI strategies;

16.4.2. review relevant criminal law definitions of sexual violence, including rape, and amend them as necessary, to base them on the principle of lack of consent and include men as possible victims;

16.4.3. consider abolishing the statute of limitations for crimes related to sexual violence against children;

16.4.4. apply the Istanbul Convention to men and boys victims of domestic violence, in line with its Article 2.2;

16.4.5. ban so-called “conversion” or “reintegrative” therapies, and conversion practices, aimed at changing or suppressing an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, as they can amount to sexual violence;

16.4.6. implement integrated child protection systems that promote co-ordination among the health, education, social protection, online support and justice sectors, and which address the connections between online and offline sexual violence;

16.4.7. monitor and evaluate laws, policies and measures aimed at preventing and responding to sexual violence against men and boys, in order to make informed decisions about future steps;

16.4.8. take measures to provide full reparation to men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence;

16.5. with regard to providing support to men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence, to:

16.5.1. establish accessible and country-wide specialised and gender-sensitive support services, catering to the needs of men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence without discrimination on any ground and taking into account the specific needs of GBTI men, in co-operation with relevant civil society organisations;

16.5.2. provide age-appropriate and quality support services, including telephone helplines, sexual violence referral centres, healthcare, psychosocial support, legal assistance, shelters, online counselling, as well as group and peer-to-peer counselling;

16.5.3. help and assist child victims of sexual violence in a non-traumatising environment, including through the application of the Barnahus model;

16.5.4. provide training to relevant professionals, such as law enforcement, healthcare, educators and social workers, to raise their awareness about the experiences and needs of men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence, and to prevent secondary victimisation: the

Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse can be a useful tool in this respect;

16.6. with regard to the participation of men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence in the development of measures that affect them, to:

16.6.1. involve and consult men and boys victims/survivors of sexual violence, and the organisations representing them, when developing such measures;

16.6.2. apply the "Guidelines for policy makers on engaging with victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse – 'Nothing About Us Without Us'", published by the Council of Europe, to support the participation of victims/survivors in policy making;

16.6.3. consider adopting the participatory "survivors' council" model to involve victims/survivors of sexual violence in the development of policy and measures.

17. The Assembly invites the Lanzarote Committee to consider dedicating an upcoming Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, held on 18 November each year, to the prevention and combating of sexual violence against boys in all their diversity.