Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Resolution 2670 (2026)[1]

Violent pornography: a test for human rights

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is deeply concerned about the growing dissemination of violent and extreme pornographic content, as it normalises gender-based violence and creates an environment conducive to an increase in such violence. Such content also encourages the imitation of violent acts, including dangerous practices such as strangulation.

2. The Assembly notes that, even where not ostensibly violent or extreme, the making and distribution of pornographic content may arise and benefit from situations where participants are affected by violence, coercion and a lack of freedom, including situations of social or economic disadvantage, addiction or where participants have been victims of abuse, and may perpetuate these situations.

3. At the same time, violent pornographic content, which can be defined as sexually explicit material that depicts or simulates acts of aggressive physical or psychological violence, coercion, sexual assault, degradation or non-consensual conduct, in a manner that eroticises, endorses, trivialises or normalises such acts, has become more prevalent. Violence in pornography is not gender neutral: it mainly targets women and girls, dehumanising them.

4. Pornography, understood as sexually explicit material designed to arouse the viewer, has become increasingly widespread in recent years and is now easily accessible, often free of charge, to a much broader audience, in large part due to portable electronic devices, including smartphones. Any content depicting the sexual exploitation or abuse of children should be referred to as child sexual abuse material and in no circumstance considered legal or permissible.

5. The Assembly notes in particular the negative impact of pornography consumption on children's mental health and emotional and sexual development.

6. These developments raise serious concerns that should be addressed by legislators and policy makers in Europe and beyond, such as the protection of children from exposure to pornography and the harmful effects that extreme and violent content may have on individuals and society as a whole. Children must be protected from exposure to any form of pornography.

7. Crucially, the dissemination of violent pornography undermines the principle of consent, which should underpin every sexual interaction. Referring to its Resolution 2650 (2026) "Paving the way for a culture of consent", the Assembly recalls that the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, the "Istanbul Convention") clearly establishes in its Article 36 that sexual violence and rape are defined by the absence of consent, knowing that minors cannot legally consent in accordance with Article 20 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, the "Lanzarote Convention") and its explanatory report.

1. *Assembly debate* on 25 June 2026 (26th sitting) (see Doc. 16422, report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Laura Castel; and Doc. 16444, opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Joseph O'Reilly). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 25 June 2026 (26th sitting).
See also Recommendation 2310 (2026).

8. Similarly, any sexually connotated content, created or shared in the absence of consent of the persons it depicts should be treated as violent pornography. This applies to intimate image abuse, often referred to as "revenge porn" and to deepfakes or other images sexualising individuals.

9. The Assembly recalls that it warned against these dangers in Resolution 1835 (2011) "Violent and extreme pornography" and reiterates that, while freedom of expression is a pillar of democratic societies and a right guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), it is possible to set limits to this right when these limits are prescribed by law and are necessary in the interests of, among others, the prevention of crime, the protection of morals and the protection of the rights of others.

10. The Assembly welcomes that the Istanbul Convention and its monitoring mechanism have significantly strengthened the prevention and combating of violence against women in Europe.

11. The Assembly also welcomes the "Report on the balance between fundamental rights and freedoms relevant to violent pornography in the case-law of constitutional and supreme courts and international tribunals", adopted by the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the "Venice Commission") on 6 and 7 March 2026, which provides valuable guidance for legislators and policy makers in Council of Europe member States and beyond.

12. The Assembly urges public authorities to engage in dialogue and co-operation with online platforms that host or disseminate pornographic content in order to prevent and counter the spread of violent content. A major threat comes from platforms based in third countries outside Europe, which may be beyond the reach of European law-enforcement agencies.

13. As the spread of illegal pornographic content is a cross-border issue, State authorities should foster and engage in international co-operation in criminal matters, backing this with adequate resources and political support.

14. The Assembly highlights that the use of common definitions of violent pornographic content is a prerequisite for effective international co-operation to combat this phenomenon.

15. The Assembly believes in the normative effect of legislation prohibiting the production, dissemination and possession of violent pornography, including through criminal sanctions where appropriate. Legal prohibition both allows for remedy and conveys the message that such behaviours and contents are dangerous and unacceptable.

16. Technological means may be effectively levered to prevent and counter the diffusion of violent pornographic content. This includes artificial intelligence (AI) tools to identify, block and remove illegal content from search engines and online platforms, as well as built-in filters for personal devices.

17. The Assembly reiterates that comprehensive sexuality education, accessible to all students and compulsory, is crucial to prepare young people for a healthy and safe sexual life and relations. This should also include media literacy elements to help young people quickly identify and reject violent pornography and protect themselves from its harmful effects.

18. The Assembly welcomes the fact that a recommendation on an age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education is currently being drawn up and looks forward to its swift adoption by the Committee of Ministers.

19. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as States whose parliament enjoys observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly:

19.1. with regard to the definition and legal regulation of violent pornography, to:

19.1.1. provide in national legislation a clear definition of violent pornography, which includes content depicting rape, coercion, humiliation, degradation, life-threatening acts, psychological and physical harm, non-consensual sexual acts and all forms of sexual violence or degrading treatment;

19.1.2. fully implement provisions to criminalise and combat child sexual abuse material;

19.1.3. prohibit, including through criminal sanctions, the production, dissemination, hosting and possession of violent pornographic material, including non-consensual sexually explicit material, sexually explicit deepfakes and intimate images produced using any technical means without the depicted person's consent;

19.1.4. ensure rapid and effective removal procedures for violent content and non-consensual intimate content, including through binding injunction procedures requiring hosting service providers to remove or block access to such material within 24 to 48 hours following notification by competent authorities;

19.1.5. tackle the dissemination of violent sexual imagery and violent sexual assault in gaming platforms, as a form of violent pornography;

19.1.6. introduce effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions against online platforms and internet service providers that knowingly facilitate the dissemination of illegal or violent pornographic material or systematically fail to comply with removal obligations;

19.1.7. sign, ratify and fully implement the Istanbul Convention, and fully support the work of its monitoring mechanism;

19.1.8. ensure that legislation concerning online pornography and AI complies with the principles established by the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225), notably regarding transparency, accountability, equality, human dignity and effective remedies;

19.2. as regards co-operation with online platforms and internet service providers, to:

19.2.1. engage in structured dialogue and co-operation with online platforms, hosting providers, search engines, payment networks and internet service providers with a view to preventing and countering the dissemination of violent pornographic content;

19.2.2. require online platforms hosting pornographic or sexually explicit material to deploy effective and proportionate age-verification and age-assurance systems that protect minors while respecting privacy and data protection standards;

19.2.3. require online platforms hosting pornographic or sexually explicit content to prevent private individuals from uploading violent content to these platforms and to put in place effective systems to verify the age and consent of the individuals appearing in the content the platforms host;

19.2.4. require online platforms and internet service providers to develop safe technologies and enhance technical detection and response tools to facilitate the prevention, detection, removal, investigation and prosecution of offences involving AI-generated or altered child sexual exploitation or sexual abuse material;

19.2.5. require platforms and hosting providers to use AI tools, hash databases and replica-detection technologies to identify, detect, flag and remove violent, illegal or non-consensual pornographic content and child sexual abuse material, including content that reappears after deletion;

19.2.6. support the development of common classification systems and shared databases for violent and illegal pornographic content, drawing inspiration from existing international systems used to combat child sexual abuse material;

19.2.7. require platforms hosting adult content to publish regular transparency reports concerning moderation policies, algorithmic risks, takedown procedures, response times and the use of automated detection technologies, which are subject to independent audits;

19.2.8. ensure that platforms deploy effective reporting mechanisms that are easily accessible, child friendly and visible to users, including direct links to competent supervisory authorities and support services;

19.3. as regards education, information and awareness raising, to:

19.3.1. ensure that comprehensive sexuality education in schools is mandatory, age appropriate, medically accurate and evidence based, and includes education on gender equality, consent, bodily autonomy, respectful personal relationships, emotional education and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence;

19.3.2. ensure that comprehensive sexuality education also addresses the influence of pornography, with a focus on violent pornography, and equips young people with the skills to critically analyse and reject messages that normalise violence, coercion, domination or the objectification of women and children;

19.3.3. promote media and digital literacy programmes aimed at helping children and young people critically interpret audiovisual and online content, including pornography, advertising, social media and AI-generated material;

19.3.4. support awareness-raising campaigns targeting children, parents, educators, health professionals and the wider public concerning the risks associated with violent pornography, online exploitation, grooming, deepfake pornography and digital violence against women and girls, as well as campaigns addressing the dangers posed by children's exposure to all forms of pornography;

19.3.5. jointly establish an international day for awareness, in order to campaign in public spaces, media, social networks, schools, sport infrastructures including stadiums, as well as at global sport events and concerts and actively promote the Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (18 November), such as the 2026 edition of this day which will highlight ethical media reporting on sexual violence against children;

19.3.6. involve men and boys in initiatives promoting gender equality, non-violence and respectful masculinity, and support educational approaches aimed at challenging harmful gender stereotypes and rape myths;

19.3.7. support research on the social, psychological and behavioural effects of violent and non-violent pornography, including its impact on children and adolescents, gender relations, mental health and attitudes towards violence;

19.3.8. promote the development of educational, cultural and media content encouraging equality, dignity, consent and healthy interpersonal relationships, including documentaries, campaigns and digital content aimed at countering the normalisation of sexual violence;

19.4. as regards international co-operation on criminal matters, to:

19.4.1. strengthen international judicial and police co-operation to prevent, investigate and prosecute offences linked to violent pornography, non-consensual intimate images, sexually explicit deepfakes and online sexual exploitation;

19.4.2. facilitate cross-border co-operation between law-enforcement authorities, judicial authorities, regulators and specialised agencies, including through co-operation with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and relevant Council of Europe mechanisms;

19.4.3. support the establishment of common international terminology, classification systems and databases concerning violent pornographic material and online sexual abuse, in order to improve detection, evidence sharing and prosecution;

19.4.4. promote harmonised implementation of European and international legal instruments concerning cybercrime, violence against women and child sexual exploitation, including the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185) and the Lanzarote Convention;

19.4.5. strengthen co-operation with technology companies and online intermediaries to identify criminal networks, remove illegal content and prevent the dissemination of abusive material;

19.4.6. call for the establishment of international observatories or monitoring mechanisms on digital violence, online sexism and sexual exploitation in digital environments;

19.5. as regards safety and crime prevention in the production of pornographic content, to:

19.5.1. ensure the full implementation of legislation concerning health and safety, labour rights and protection from violence in all contexts related to the production of pornographic content;

19.5.2. ensure that producers of pornographic content carry out effective age verification to ensure that any performers involved in production processes are over 18 years old;

19.5.3. prevent, investigate and prosecute all acts of violence, coercion, trafficking, exploitation, intimidation or abuse perpetrated in the context of the production of pornographic material, on the basis of existing criminal legislation;

19.5.4. ensure that consent to participate in pornographic productions is free, informed, explicit and reversible, and that performers have access to effective remedies and protection mechanisms in cases of violence, abuse or exploitation;

19.5.5. combat trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation linked to the pornography industry, in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197);

19.5.6. encourage the establishment of rapid-response mechanisms and specialised support services for victims of digital sexual violence and violent pornography, including emergency reporting channels and co-ordinated removal procedures;

19.5.7. ensure that victims of violent pornography, online sexual abuse and non-consensual dissemination of intimate content have immediate access to legal assistance, psychological support, protection measures and accessible reporting procedures in order to assess the effectiveness of public policies.

20. The Assembly calls on legislators and policy makers in Council of Europe member States and beyond to make use of the “Report on the balance between fundamental rights and freedoms relevant to violent pornography in the case-law of constitutional and supreme courts and international tribunals”, adopted by the Venice Commission, to identify standards for interpretation and implementation of regulations on violent pornography, the choice of criminal and non-criminal measures, strengthened protection of minors, periodic review in light of technological and empirical developments, and guidance on international co-operation, as well as for the future evolution of such regulations.