
Council of Europe: “the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is a crucial duty of the States”. Risks increase in lockdown

“The protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is a crucial duty of all the States. The governments should join forces internationally to effectively fight any form of sexual abuse against children”. This has been stated aloud and united by the leaders of the main bodies that are part of the Council of Europe, on this sixth European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Such call is even more pressing now that in lockdown risks for the younger ones are increasing too: even at this stage, “we have to put children’s interest first, strengthen our efforts to prevent exploitation and abuse, and bring offenders to justice”, the leaders write. To do this, “a long-term multi-stakeholder strategy is required”, that should involve the governments, the MPs, the local and regional authorities, as well as the police, legal and public health authorities, and even the schools, the sports and youth clubs, the parents, every single citizen. In addition, “one should proactively make sure that children are aware of their rights and know how to have access to the services” that may protect them. A key reference for the fight against this form of abuse is the so-called “Lanzarote Convention”, a document enforced ten years ago that is an “ambitious and far-ranging legal instrument” that the governments have at their disposal. Of the 47 members of the Council, only Ireland has not ratified it yet.

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