

## **Florence declaration, 1 December 2016**

### **Adopted by the Network of Contact Parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children of the Parliamentary Assembly**

We, the members of the Network, convened at our 27<sup>th</sup> and final meeting held at the UNICEF Office of Research *Innocenti* in Florence (Italy), on the theme of “sexual violence against children in the digital environment”,

- i) Aware of the continuous need to support children who have been victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, to prevent any form of sexual violence against children - which we consider as the most serious violation of children’s human rights - to prosecute the perpetrators, and establish effective policies and take appropriate action;
- ii) Aware of the fact that the digital environment, including social media, and their active use by children, make it easier for offenders to reach out to children and create ever new forms of abuse of children which are difficult to tackle (grooming, child abuse images, etc.);
- iii) Upholding the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (“Lanzarote Convention”) as the most comprehensive legal instrument in this field worldwide, and recommending that not only all Council of Europe member States, but all countries in the world sign, ratify and implement it;

Undertake to:

- iv) Promote sound legislative frameworks, based on the Lanzarote Convention, in our respective countries, to outlaw any form of sexual violence against children - including in the digital environment - and improve the collection of specific data to allow for the development of targeted policies with a victim-centred approach;
- v) Ensure that parents, families and professionals working with children receive support in providing positive education empowering children against sexual violence, including in the digital environment, thus enhancing their physical and psychological wellbeing;
- vi) Continue to promote the aims and values of the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign to combat sexual violence against children (2011-2015) at local, national, and international level;
- vii) Promote multi-stakeholder co-operation involving public authorities at various levels, law enforcement agencies, industry and civil society organisations;
- viii) In our respective parliaments and constituencies, initiate or contribute to specific and thematic awareness-raising and prevention activities, including every year on 18 November, to mark the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse;
- ix) Take initiatives within our respective parliaments to ensure that national budgets provide for the funding of relevant activities, including voluntary contributions to the new Assembly project “Promoting European and international standards through parliamentary action – parliaments and social rights” (2017-2021);
- x) In all these undertakings, continue to promote an open debate on the protection of children against sexual violence and the imperative to support victims, overcoming persisting taboos and avoiding the stigmatisation of survivors.