

# Child Protection Policy





# Child Protection Policy

## ECPAT Belgium

ECPAT Belgium is a member of ECPAT International, the only network exclusively dedicated to the fight against child sexual exploitation.

ECPAT Belgium focuses its work on three pillars:

- **PREVENT:** Through regular preventive actions with professionals such as tourism professionals, lawyers, guardians, our awareness actions highlight the realities of child sexual exploitation in order to stop abuses.
- **LISTEN:** Our cornerstone is to position children and youth victims at the centre of our movement. Making their voices heard in our studies, strategic choices and actions is essential to stay connected and attentive to their needs.
- **MOBILIZE:** The fight against the sexual exploitation of children must be carried out together. Therefore, ECPAT Belgium mobilizes its partners and civil society as a whole to protect children.

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## 1. GLOSSARY

In the event of dispute over the use of a given word, ECPAT Belgium will refer to the **Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children From Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse used by the ECPAT<sup>1</sup> Group.**

### **Child**

In the specific framework of this document, a child is defined as a human being aged below the age of eighteen years, in accordance with Article 1 of the CRC.

### **Child Abuse**

The World Health Organization defines child abuse or maltreatment as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power<sup>2</sup>.

### **Sexual violence**

According to a report from the Security Council, the definition of sexual violence includes "sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization or any other form of sexual violence of similar gravity, which may include, depending on the circumstances, cases of indecent assault, human trafficking, abusive medical examinations and strip searches"<sup>3</sup>. Sexual violence against children encompasses both sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and can be used as an umbrella term to refer jointly to these phenomena, both with regard to acts of commission and omission and associated to physical and psychological violence<sup>4</sup>.

### **Child sexual abuse**

Child sexual abuse can be defined as engaging in sexual activity with a child, with or without the use of coercion or threats to engage in such activity with the threatening person or a third party.<sup>5</sup> Abusive sexual activities do not necessarily involve physical contact between the abuser and the child. Abusive activities may involve exhibitionism or voyeurism.<sup>6</sup>

### **Child sexual exploitation**

A child is a victim of sexual exploitation when she/he takes part in a sexual activity in exchange for something (e.g. gain or benefit, or even the promise of such) from a third party, the

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://luxembourgguidelines.org/english-version/>

<sup>2</sup> WHO definition in the Consultation Report on the Prevention of Child Abuse. WHO - 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009), UN Doc. A/65/592 - S/2010/604, paragraph 4. See also Security Council Resolutions on conflict-related sexual violence 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1325 (2000),

<sup>4</sup> Terminology Guidelines p.18.

<sup>5</sup> art.18 of the Lanzarote Convention.

<sup>6</sup> Questions and Answers on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, ECPAT International, [http://www.ecpat.lu/sites/default/files/resources/Q&A\\_ESEC.pdf](http://www.ecpat.lu/sites/default/files/resources/Q&A_ESEC.pdf).

perpetrator, or by the child her/himself.<sup>7</sup> Article 34 of the CRC refers to "all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse", and specifically (b) the exploitation of children "in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices" and (c) the exploitation of children "in pornographic performances and materials". What mainly distinguishes the concept of child sexual exploitation from that of child sexual abuse is the underlying notion of compensation present in exploitation. Although these two phenomena must be differentiated, it is necessary to recall that there are certain similarities between the two. Many cases of child sexual abuse also involve some kind of benefit to the child or exchange—often to win trust or ensure silence (especially non-tangible benefits like small gifts, attention, and affection). Similarly, the idea of exploitation is arguably applicable to all victims of abuse in the sense of exploiting the vulnerability of a child<sup>8</sup>.

### **Trafficking of children**

Child trafficking refers to the recruitment and/or transportation of a child by adults for the purpose of exploitation by various means, such as prostitution, begging, child labor, etc. A consistent feature of "trafficking" under international law is that its purpose is the exploitation of a human being (in this case the child). This feature also represents the main distinction between "trafficking" and the "sale" of children<sup>9</sup>.

### **Child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism**

The term "sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism" refers to the sexual exploitation of children by tourists, travelers and long-term visitors, both foreign and national. It is notably defined as a practice involving "persons who travel from one country to another and engage in sexual acts with children for commercial purposes".<sup>10</sup>

### **Child sexual abuse material/child sexual exploitation material**

In English, there seems to be a consensus that the term "child pornography" is harmful to child, since it may associate the child with pornography instead of highlighting the status of victim of sexual exploitation and abuse of the children depicted in it. Instead, it is recommended to use terms reflecting the abuse committed against the child, such as child sexual abuse material.<sup>11</sup>

### **Harmful practices**

Harmful practices are often linked to child and early marriage, but also include other practices that are seen as harmful to the child, such as corporal punishment and female genital mutilation/cutting. In the context of sexual exploitation or abuse of children, it is more appropriate to use the term "harmful practices" instead of "traditional harmful practices",

<sup>7</sup> Terminology Guidelines p.24.

<sup>8</sup> Terminology Guidelines p.27.

<sup>9</sup> Terminology Guidelines p.60.

<sup>10</sup> US Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Fact Sheet, Washington DC, 19 août 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Terminology Guidelines p.40.

since it refers to the more neutral principle of harm and avoids cultural and other relative or more subjective factors. Harmful practices are harmful irrespective of their alleged origin or attempted justification. Not all harmful practices constitute sexual exploitation or sexual abuse. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that the abovementioned forms of harmful practices can seriously affect the sexuality of the victim, and the victim may experience them as a form of sexual abuse.<sup>12</sup>

### **Child victims of sexual exploitation and/or abuse**

In the context of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, the term “victim” should be used in an objective manner to state the fact that the child has been subjected to or has experienced a harmful/criminal act. Taking into account children’s special needs and rights to protection, it is important to use an inclusive notion of the “child victim”, which encompasses not only acts directly aimed at the child but also acts that indirectly cause harm to her/him.<sup>13</sup>

### **Children's participation**

According to the CRC (arts. 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17), children's right to participation includes providing them with age-appropriate information, listening to them, involving them in decision-making, at home, at school, in the village, in their neighbourhood. The role played by minors must be adapted to their maturity.

### **Child protection (in accordance with the best interests of the child, art. 3 CRC)**

General term that encompasses philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures that protect the child from intentional or unintentional harm. In this context, the term applies more specifically to the duties of organisations - and persons in relation to those organisations - towards all children.

### **Direct contact with children**

Being in the physical presence of one or more children in the framework of the organisation's work - whether this contact is occasional or regular, short or long term.

### **Indirect contact with children**

Broad term including all situations of contact with a child that are not direct contact. For example, having access to information about children as part of the work of the organization or being a donor to an organization working directly with children. Even indirect contact can have an impact on children, giving legal responsibility to the organization in charge.

### **Child Protection Policy**

“A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create

<sup>12</sup> Terminology Guidelines p.70-71.

<sup>13</sup> Terminology Guidelines p.78.

a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously”.<sup>14</sup>

### **Informed consent**

The notion of informed consent requires that participants are informed and have an understanding of the research activity, whatever research methodology is being used. Therefore, children must be provided with information that is appropriate to their age and competencies, bearing in mind the environmental context, differing experiences and evolving capacities of each child. An approach to research that is informed by children’s rights and the UNCRC “requires that, in appropriate circumstances, children are given information and adult guidance while their views are in formation, in order to be assisted in determining and expressing what will then be both a formed and informed view. Children must understand what the research involves, including the risks and potential benefits. Giving children information allows them a meaningful choice about participation, preserves their trust in researchers and the research enterprise, and demonstrates respect. Other people giving consent for children’s participation (parents, guardians) must also be provided with information about the research, including information on their own role and responsibilities. For some children, for example, those with particular disabilities, proxies or advocates, who speak on behalf of or about the children and decide whether to consent to their participation in research, make it possible for them to be included. However, to respect children’s autonomy, the use of proxy informants should be minimized. The child needs to give informed consent as well as the person who is acting as the proxy wherever possible.<sup>15</sup>

## **2. REASONS FOR A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**ECPAT Belgium aims to make the right of all children to live free from all forms of sexual exploitation effective.**


Our organization is committed to respecting and enforcing children's right to protection from all forms of abuse in accordance with the terms of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)<sup>16</sup> and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography<sup>17</sup>. A child protection policy provides a framework of principles, standards and guidelines to ensure that individual and organizational practices are consistent with the best interests of the child in relation to the following points:

<sup>14</sup> Child Protection Policies and Procedures, A Practical Guide, Child Hope, <https://www.childhope.org.uk/services-and-resources/downloadable-resources/>

<sup>15</sup> Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. et Fitzgerald, R. (2013). Ethical research involving children. Florence: UNICEF Research Centre - Innocenti, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/706-ethical-research-involving-children.html>, p.58.

<sup>16</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 <https://www.humanium.org/en/convention/text/>

<sup>17</sup> Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc-sale.pdf>

- 
- Being "safe" and "child-friendly" (in terms of safety and protection from physical, psychological and sexual abuse)
  - Preventing abuse
  - Have guidelines for a code of conduct defining (un)appropriate behaviors
  - Having guidelines for staff recruitment and training
  - Hearing, acknowledging, reporting and reacting to alleged abuses
  - Having guidelines for communication concerning children
  - Having guidelines for the use of photographs and images
  - Understanding the use of the Internet

This policy does not focus solely on sexual abuse, but encompasses all aspects of child protection, including: disciplinary measures, health and safety measures, physical harm, use of information about children, recruitment procedures and management of inappropriate behavior. This document helps our staff, donors and partners take responsibility for protecting children by adopting appropriate behavior and reporting suspicious behavior. It also provides procedures and measures for those who abuse or misbehave towards a child.

**ECPAT Belgium, who, through its various fields of action works directly or indirectly with children, must have a clear child protection policy. It is our moral and legal responsibility to protect children, as well as sensitive information about them, from intentional or involuntary harm that may be inflicted on them.**

### **3. FOR WHOM ?**

ECPAT Belgium's child protection policy applies to the following persons:

- Staff under contract or agreement with ECPAT Belgium, whether paid or unpaid, employed short or long term, full time or not, in (in)direct contact with children.
- Members of the decision-making bodies of ECPAT Belgium, i.e. the General Assembly and the Executive Board
- Sponsors of the organization
- All visitors coming into (in)direct contact with children through ECPAT Belgium (e.g. journalists, media, researchers)

The above-mentioned persons agree to respect ECPAT Belgium's Child Protection Policy by signing the Code of Conduct applicable to staff (for the first two categories) or the declaration of commitment to respect ECPAT Belgium's Child Protection Policy (for the last two categories).

ECPAT Belgium will ensure not to associate with partners, commercial or not, who do not respect its child protection policy.

**The list of persons involved may be extended at the discretion of ECPAT Belgium to both natural and legal persons.**

**If the applicable Belgian or international laws are stricter than the internal policy of ECPAT Belgium, the latter shall prevail.**

#### **4. DECLARATION OF IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **Sensitization**

For an effective implementation of the policy, it must be correctly understood by all. ECPAT Belgium will inform the persons previously listed of the existence of its child protection policy, using a methodology adapted to the public concerned.

##### **Protection**

In order to guarantee children's right to protection, ECPAT Belgium is committed to adopting appropriate management practices when dealing with children, including policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff and the election of ECPAT Belgium representatives; risk assessments and management plans; adequate supervision; and a policy for the appropriate use of information and new technologies.

##### **Reports**

Clear steps and guidelines for reporting violations of this policy will be established, and actions to be taken will be determined.

##### **Response**

The persons involved within ECPAT Belgium will ensure that positive action is taken to assist and protect children in all circumstances. ECPAT Belgium will give proper consideration to any concerns raised and will support children, staff or adults who report or are the subject of such concerns. ECPAT Belgium will act appropriately and effectively to investigate or co-operate with the responsible authorities. All responses will be guided by the principle of the best interests of the child.

##### **Disciplinary measures**

Failure to comply with the above will be subject to a serious examination of the facts. This will involve a thorough investigation and the transfer of cases to the police and/or social services if national or international legislation on the rights of the child has been violated. Appropriate disciplinary measures will be systematically adopted.

##### **Follow-up**



All managers and Board members of ECPAT Belgium are responsible for ensuring that child protection measures are implemented and that the latter are subject to the strictest monitoring and evaluation

## 5. REPORTING PROCEDURES

*Any report can be made using the form available in the annex.*

**ECPAT Belgium expects all its staff members to act in accordance with the best interests of the child both inside and outside the workplace. You may have witnessed or heard about a suspicious situation. If so, you must report any abuse (physical, emotional, sexual) or suspicion of child abuse.**

**List of persons entitled to receive a report at ECPAT Belgium :**

**Name : David Boulanger**

Title : Chairman

Contact : david@ecpat.be

**Name : Danielle Van Kerckhoven**

Title : Co-founder and member of the general assembly

Contact : daniellevankerckhoven@ecpat.be

**Name : Ariane Couvreur**

Title : Project manager

Contact : arianecouvreur@ecpat.be

You can notify the person of your choice. If it is impossible to contact one of these people, your report can be sent to the "SOS Enfant" teams or to the Vertrouwencentra. The information received will be studied immediately by a select committee chosen among the above-mentioned persons. The committee will take the necessary measures for the well-being and the safety of the child. Be careful, you must not conduct your own investigation, publicly accuse someone or question the child involved in the case. You are required to maintain the confidentiality of the information exchanged with the persons entitled to handle reports internally.

**Any employee or partner making a purely malicious and unfounded allegation will be subject to disciplinary action or even legal prosecution.**

ECPAT Belgium has developed an outline of reporting procedures to facilitate the identification of the authorities responsible for decision-making and action related to the

protection of the child potentially victim of abuse. If a child is in obvious danger and no person authorized to take a decision is available, the highest available officer has the power to take all necessary decisions to protect the child from immediate danger. Any decision or action taken in this context must be reported to the designated child protection officer. The staff, as designated in the “Persons Involved” section, have the responsibility to inform those entitled to receive reports of any concerns they may have regarding the safety and well-being of a child or regarding the worrisome behavior of an adult, regardless of how they know each other. The employee must be informed that charges have been filed against him or her and must be given the opportunity to respond to the accusation. Following these accusations, ECPAT Belgium is compelled to open an internal investigation. The employee is encouraged to participate in the investigation by providing information and the names of witnesses that should be interviewed. At the end of the investigation, the employee must be informed of the results of the investigation and the measures, if any, that will be taken. All information relating to child protection concerns - including the nature of the dismissal and the persons involved - will remain confidential. If the suspected sexual abuse is confirmed, all necessary efforts shall be deployed in order to support the child (psychological support or any other form of assistance deemed necessary and appropriate).

#### **6. ETHICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN AT RISK OR AFFECTED BY SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

**For further questions on the involvement of children in research, ECPAT Belgium advises to refer to Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. and Fitzgerald, R. (2013) Ethical Research Involving Children, Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.<sup>18</sup>**

Child sexual exploitation is a complex phenomenon requiring research because of the situations of vulnerability in which children affected by the phenomenon find themselves. A situational analysis of this process should not place children as mere subjects of research, but should consult them in a serious and safe setting. Actively involving children in research not only ensures that their right to be heard and to participate actively is respected, but also leads to the production of better quality data, as children share their own perceptions about their own lives.

The research team must be committed to respect a serious child protection framework throughout the study. This protection framework must be based on the following guidelines:

#### **Do not cause any harm**

Assess the risk for the child or his/her peers if they participate in the research. Do not undertake any interview that could make the child's situation more problematic than it

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/706-ethical-research-involving-children.html>.

already is, either in the short or long term. Prior to any fieldwork, identify options for assisting or supporting children victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation. It is also necessary to be prepared to respond appropriately in interviews if children begin to show signs of distress when describing their experiences (see sections below). Children are often able to participate in the process of identifying the risks they face. For this reason, informed consent from the child is essential.

*Examples of useful questions: "Do you have any concerns about your participation in this research project/interview? Do you think talking to me can cause you trouble? Do you think this is a good time and place for us to talk?"*

### **Guaranteeing informed consent (see Glossary)**

Before starting the main research phase, it may be important to seek the support of a wider community (e.g. local leaders) beforehand. However, children themselves must be able to provide free and informed consent to be involved in or withdraw from the research. This process should be carried out throughout the research. A child must be able to stop the interview or withdraw from the project at any time if he or she so wishes.

The information provided must be easily understandable for the child. It is usually easier to work with the child if the initial request for an interview comes from someone the child trusts (e.g. an NGO caring for the child or an adult that the child trusts). A document containing information adapted to children can be prepared for the child to read, or for another person to read to the child. The information can be presented in the form of a list, which the child can initial or sign at the end. It may be useful to include: 1) a clear statement of the research's subject and purpose, and how the child's answers will be used. This statement should be discussed with the child to allow him/her to ask questions and ask for clarification. (2) A statement of the child's right to refuse to take part in this process (without affecting any aspect of his/her life), the right to refuse to answer certain questions and the right to withdraw from the project at any time. These rights should be explained to the child. 3) a discussion on the potential risks and an explanation on how the information will be kept confidential. The researcher should inform the child that confidentiality does not remove the duty to protect children in situations of concern. This can be repeated during the interview if it appears that the child is about to reveal important information (see below for more information). 4) The duration of the interview and a request for agreement, checking that it is the right time and place for the child.

There are advantages and disadvantages to getting a child's signature. In particular, if the child shows signs of illiteracy, asking for a signature may not be appropriate. Thus, and provided that the child is clearly capable and sufficiently mature, verbal consent may be sufficient to signify that the child has been adequately informed of the risks and benefits of the research project, and that his/her consent has been freely given.

### **Preparation of information**

Unless victims of sexual exploitation are already being taken care of and are receiving health care and assistance from a competent institution, it is unlikely that child victims will have access to information that can improve their safety and health. The researcher should be prepared to provide this type of information, as the interview represents an opportunity to inform children about appropriate and legitimate legal services, health services, shelters, and other key services. Support organizations that may be useful to victims of sexual exploitation include local organizations caring for vulnerable groups of children, migrant associations and networks, free health services, shelters and support programs, helplines, embassies, religious groups and centers, or community support groups. It may be useful to prepare small sheets or cards containing relevant information, and to give them to the child after the interview (bearing in mind that in some cases, if the child is in a situation of exploitation, he or she may be in danger if found in possession of this information supports).

### **Ensuring confidentiality**

Protecting the confidentiality of the interviewed child is essential to ensure his or her safety as well as the quality of the information provided. When it is necessary to collect personal information such as names, hometown, nationality, age, etc., it is preferable that this information be collected separately from the interview notes. Codes and numbers are used to link the information during analysis. It is important to inform the child of the precautions taken to protect his or her identity. The content of interviews should only be discussed with colleagues who are bound by the same commitment to confidentiality, and data should be kept in a safe and private location. Personal information should be sufficiently modified to avoid identification when the final research report is published (especially when case studies are presented). As mentioned above, if the child finds him- or herself in a situation of danger or at risk of serious harm, the researcher should discuss the situation clearly with the child, and ask him/her to seek help from an adult (using the reference information). If the child does not wish to tell anyone about the situation, the researcher may need to act on behalf of the child. It is therefore necessary for the researcher to engage carefully in dialogue before any decision is made.

### **Conducting the interview in a child-appropriate manner**

*Before the interview starts:*

- Always treat the child with respect. Explain in detail what you are doing and why you want to talk to him/her. Explain what you are going to use the data for, and make sure that the child has actually chosen to participate in the project.
- Be honest about your objective, and do not create expectations from the child (money, direct assistance).
- Make sure to choose an appropriate, quiet place where the child feels comfortable and relaxed. You can let the child choose the location of the interview.

- Make sure that adults who might intimidate or influence the child are not around. Let the child decide how he/she will be questioned (alone or with a friend, at a time and place of his/her choice, or if he/she has a preference as to the gender of the person conducting the interview, etc.).
- It may be useful to interview small groups of two to five children, so that they can support each other and exchange ideas. Be sure to write down who is speaking and when. It may be best to work with boys and girls separately.
- Try to create a relaxed environment. Put the children at ease and take time to build trust before you start asking questions.

*During the interview:*

- Start by asking simple questions, such as their name, age, etc. Use their names when addressing them. Don't force them to use their names if they don't want to.
- Do not ask questions that could put the child in danger, or expose him or her to any form of humiliation.
- Let the child choose the pace of the interview, and make sure he or she can tell the story at his/her own speed.
- Avoid using all types of labels, clichés and stereotypes; be sure to remain compassionate and non-judgmental.
- Ask open questions. Avoid asking closed questions, such as questions beginning with "do you..." for example, which call for a yes or no answer.
- You may need to repeat questions in different ways before you get the information you need. It may be helpful to persist carefully, by keeping the focus around the question, or even gently pushing the child to think about the question you are asking.
- You can include questions to let children express their ideas they might have to make things better in their own context. This helps to highlight children's rights and capacities to make recommendations and form their own opinions.
- Pay attention to the child's behavior. If he/she seems uncomfortable, don't push him/her to talk about sensitive issues. Don't ask questions that may cause emotional stress or trauma to the child. If a child seems upset during the interview, try to comfort him/her and reassure him/her about his/her strengths. You can also suggest that they take a break, change the subject or end the interview.
- Keep in mind that unaccompanied minors live far from their homes and families and may not know when they will see their families, or if they will ever see them again. Be careful when talking about these kinds of issues, as it can be traumatic for children.

*After the interview:*

- Thank the children for their time and for talking with you.
- Ask them if they have any questions for you.
- Explain again how the information will be used.

- Summarize the interview and ask them if they want anything to be taken out of the interview.
- Make sure that the child is still willing to give consent. Permission should not be obtained under pressure.
- Give your contact information or the contact information of the local organization.

**Consent forms are provided in the annex.**

## **7. COMMUNICATION POLICY**

**ECPAT Belgium's communication policy is based on the principle of the best interests of the child as stated by the CRC. Any information or communication related to the problematic of child sexual exploitation must ensure the well-being of the child and the respect of his or her rights before, during and after the creation and dissemination of information or communication materials. In addition, each employee of ECPAT Belgium is responsible for ensuring that the physical and moral integrity of children is respected in the context of information and communication activities.**

The communication policy of ECPAT Belgium aims to promote a realistic representation of the situation of children and to ensure that the conveyed image of child sexual exploitation is therefore not sensationalist but constructive. ECPAT Belgium insists on recognizing children as actors of their own development, but also of the development of their peers and their community, while also acknowledging their vulnerability.

The issue of sexual exploitation of children is complex and transversal and cannot be addressed in an exhaustive way. This implies that choices have to be made, thereby giving an orientation to the subject. ECPAT Belgium stresses the importance of reflecting on the message that these choices bring out. Moreover, ECPAT Belgium points out that any information support influences the way in which a subject is approached, whether it be through the chosen angle of approach, the interviews, images and comments selected, etc.

**The entire staff of ECPAT Belgium is aware of child protection standards, and ensures compliance with child protection standards in relation to the media.**

ECPAT Belgium is convinced that the media have an important role to play in investigations and in raising public awareness about children's rights and all forms of child sexual exploitation. Media can also help to tackle the sexual exploitation of children by mobilizing the public opinion and by pressuring governments and the private sector.

ECPAT Belgium is convinced that the media can play an important role in promoting the well-being of children and the respect of their rights by depicting children in a positive way, by

asking for their input and by providing them with opportunities to share information as well as their own opinions.

To this end, ECPAT Belgium seeks to establish constructive working relationships with professionals and media organizations in order to raise awareness on these issues and on ECPAT Belgium's work with the public and within the media sector itself.

ECPAT Belgium expects media to respect the right to privacy, and the right to the protection of the reputation of sexually exploited children and to maintain the highest professional ethical standards, especially when reporting on issues involving exploited children.

ECPAT Belgium recommends the guidelines and principles of the International Federation of Journalists<sup>19</sup> for reporting on issues involving children, and encourages all media professionals to endorse and apply these guidelines when reporting on sexually exploited children.

In that sense, ECPAT Belgium insists in particular on the principles described in the "*IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists*"<sup>20</sup> and the "*IFJ Recommendations on Reporting Violence against Women*"<sup>21</sup> (by extending their application to all situations of sexual exploitation of children) such as :

- The principles of freedom and honesty in the collection and publication of information, and the right to comment and criticize without intent to harm
- The use of accurate and non-judgmental language
- Treating the child victim of sexual exploitation and his or her relatives with respect
- Confidentiality: not publishing or mentioning names or identifying locations that could subsequently jeopardize the safety of children victim of sexual exploitation or witnesses.

**To ensure that children victims of sexual exploitation are protected from further exploitation through media exposure, ECPAT Belgium cannot authorize media to use any images in any format that could reveal the identity of a victim. ECPAT Belgium reserves the discretionary right to refuse any communication deemed inappropriate or unsuitable.**

## **8. INTERNAL MEDIA PROCEDURES**

The communication department of ECPAT Belgium is in charge of contact with journalists and the media. It maintains relations with journalists known to the association and creates contacts with new journalists. It is also in charge of institutional communication and regularly produces communication on social media and press releases on behalf of ECPAT Belgium.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ajp.be/telechargements/droitsdevoirs.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.ifj.org/fr/la-fij/code-de-principe-de-la-fij-sur-la-conduite-des-journalistes/>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.ifex.org/international/2008/11/28/recommandations\\_de\\_la\\_fij\\_sur\\_le/fr/](https://www.ifex.org/international/2008/11/28/recommandations_de_la_fij_sur_le/fr/)

ECPAT Belgium's press releases must be validated by the Executive Board before release. They will then be sent to a maximum of journalists in order to ensure a broad dissemination of the information. ECPAT Belgium's communication manager is responsible for monitoring the dissemination of the press release and for correcting, if necessary, the communication made around the press release.

However, in some cases, the request may come directly from journalists. These requests may take different forms, which, depending on the case, may not imply the same commitment on the part of the journalist:

**Requests for information on child sexual exploitation or on the activities of ECPAT Belgium and its partners:** whenever possible the communication department of ECPAT Belgium will propose to the journalist to make a written request (short presentation of the project). In the case of an urgent request, the request can be validated through a phone call. The Executive Board and, in its absence, the advocacy manager, should be informed so that they can answer questions directly or refer the journalist to the appropriate person depending on the request.<sup>22</sup>

**Requests for communication tools:** in the eventuality of a journalist contacting ECPAT Belgium to obtain communication tools developed by ECPAT Belgium and/or its partners in order to publish them, the journalist will have to make a written presentation of his project which will be submitted for validation to the Executive Board<sup>23</sup>.

**Journalists going on the field:** any travel by a journalist to work on the field with any kind of support from ECPAT Belgium must be validated beforehand by the Executive Board of ECPAT Belgium. In this case, the journalist will be considered as a consultant and will therefore have to adhere to each step of the present document.

**ECPAT Belgium may require access to the draft of the publication when the report is finalized and reserves the discretionary right to request its modification/deletion.**

## **9. POLICY ON THE USE OF IMAGES AND VIDEOS**

**The purpose of this policy is to protect the privacy and reputation of children victims of sexual exploitation and to prevent further harm from being caused by the publication of their picture.**

<sup>22</sup> The journalist's written request may be made by letter or e-mail and must contain the following information: surname and first name of the journalist, format of the report, media involved and purpose of the report.

<sup>23</sup> The journalist's written request may be made by letter or e-mail and must contain the following information: surname and first name of the journalist, format of the report, media involved and purpose of the report.



As part of this policy:

- An "identifiable child" refers to a child whose identity is likely to be revealed by showing all or part of his/her face or body, or a specific environment.
- "Information or communication material" refers to any material produced and disseminated to provide information on child sexual exploitation issues or to communicate on the activities of ECPAT Belgium and its partners regarding the fight against sexual exploitation of children.
- "Informed consent" refers to an individual's understanding of the circumstances under which the image/video will be used and any possible implications resulting from its publication, distribution or dissemination.

### **Basic rules regarding images**

1. No image of an identifiable child victim of sexual exploitation may be used in any ECPAT Belgium publication to illustrate the various aspects of child sexual exploitation.<sup>24</sup>
2. No image of an identifiable child may be used in an ECPAT Belgium publication if this could reasonably lead the viewer or reader to believe that the child is a victim of sexual exploitation. This applies even if consent is given either by the child, or by an adult legally responsible for the child, or by an agency that owns the image.<sup>25</sup>
3. Images of identifiable children taken during activities carried out by ECPAT Belgium that clearly do not depict aspects of sexual exploitation may be used if full consent has been obtained from the child and his/her parents or legal guardian. In this case the words "Children whose faces are recognizable are not victims of sexual exploitation" should be included at the beginning of the information or communication material.
4. When the full consent of both the child and the parent/legal representative has not been obtained, no matter for what reason, the photograph may not be used in such a way that the child can be identified.
5. Images of children from royalty-free image banks may be used in ECPAT Belgium's publications provided that they clearly do not represent sexual exploitation. The full consent of the child and the parent/legal representative to use these images is assumed. ECPAT Belgium cannot guarantee that these children are not, have not been or will not be exploited.

<sup>24</sup> The only possible exception is when the child in the image, having reached the age of 18, gives full consent for him or her to be identified as a victim of sexual exploitation in an ECPAT publication. A system must be put in place to ensure that the person can withdraw consent at any time, that the image can be removed whenever possible from dissemination/publication and that his or her (identifiable) image can no longer be used for further printing or for any other communication or information support.

<sup>25</sup> *Ib.*

## Images of child sexual abuse

According to article 383 bis § 4 of the Belgian Penal Code, the possession, dissemination or transmission of child pornographic images is punishable regardless of the age of the recipients. ECPAT Belgium employees must therefore under no circumstances, even in the course of their work, possess pornographic images or videos involving children. For the same reason, ECPAT Belgium is opposed to the use of any type of material depicting child pornography for educational purposes.

## Information Management System <sup>26</sup>

Information about children's lives and images of them (including information stored on the organization's computers) should be kept in secure files and should only be accessible by a limited number of people whose work requires access to this information. Regarding photos and videos, the communication manager must ensure that the images made available to the team (in particular on the server) are controlled and meet ECPAT Belgium's policy on the subject, particularly in terms of respect for the child's right to privacy. Other images where child victims are identifiable should be kept in a file with restricted access to persons whose work requires access to these images. Regular review procedures ensure that ECPAT Belgium updates its child protection policy regarding the media in accordance with changes in national and international legislation on the subject and technological developments.

<sup>26</sup> ECPAT Belgium's data protection policy is available on request. It complies with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (25 May 2018): <https://www.autoriteprotectiondonnees.be/reglement-general-sur-la-protection-des-donnees>.

## ANNEX 1 - CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE STAFF

For any dispute regarding the vocabulary used below, see Glossary. The term "staff" is used in this document to refer to the persons listed in the first two points of the section Persons Involved<sup>27</sup> but may be extended to others at the discretion of ECPAT Belgium.

This Code of Conduct deals with (un)acceptable behavior towards children in the context of ECPAT Belgium's work. Through the definition of behavior standards, ECPAT Belgium wishes to protect children but also to protect any person who comes into (in)direct contact with children from unfounded allegations of inappropriate behavior.

As part of my commitment to ECPAT Belgium, I COMMIT TO :

### Respect the following values, attitudes and behaviors :

- Treat everyone, especially children, with respect.
- Treat without discrimination<sup>28</sup> or favoritism any child or group of children regardless of ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability,<sup>29</sup> sexual orientation, culture, or social or political affiliation.
- Act kindly toward children and empower them as individuals with their own needs and rights<sup>30</sup>.
- Take care of the development and the physical, psychic and moral integrity of every child and young person that I meet.
- Promote children's rights and raise awareness about them among children and adults<sup>31</sup>.
- Participate in promoting the faculties, abilities and potential of each child.
- Implement gender-specific approach<sup>32</sup>.
- Listen carefully to children.
- Develop a participative approach to enable children to share their thoughts and become actors of their own protection<sup>33</sup>.
- Value children's opinions and take their statements seriously<sup>34</sup>.
- Respect each child's right to privacy<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>27</sup>Because of the particular context of the sponsorship, special rules apply, available in Appendix 22, Child Hope, Save the Children's Resources, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_16-30.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_16-30.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Within the meaning of Article 2 of the CRC.

<sup>29</sup> For more information on the protection of children with disabilities, see Appendix 20, Child Hope, Save the Children's Resources Centre, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_16-30.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_16-30.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> As stipulated in legal instruments for the protection of children, including the CRC.

<sup>31</sup> Examples of communication guidelines on children's issues, Annex 7, Child Hope, Save the Children's Resources Centre, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_1-15.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_1-15.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> In compliance with Article 29 of the CRC. Example of concrete practices: [http://www.oejaj.cfwb.be/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecured!&u=0&file=fileadmin/sites/oejaj/upload/oejaj\\_super\\_editor/oejaj\\_editor/pdf/CI\\_DE\\_Adequations\\_Genre\\_CIDE\\_Bruxelles.pdf&hash=f04fa191cb69a15f4618d2392ac720e90481ee4c](http://www.oejaj.cfwb.be/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecured!&u=0&file=fileadmin/sites/oejaj/upload/oejaj_super_editor/oejaj_editor/pdf/CI_DE_Adequations_Genre_CIDE_Bruxelles.pdf&hash=f04fa191cb69a15f4618d2392ac720e90481ee4c).

<sup>33</sup> Annex 2, Child Hope, Save the Children's Resources Centre, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_1-15.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_1-15.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> See continuation and treatment of allegations.

<sup>35</sup> Within the meaning of Article 16 of the CRC.

**Avoid leaving/putting the child at risk by paying attention to the following attitudes and approaches:**

- Plan and organize the work and its framework in such a way as to minimize the risk of potential harm to the children.
- Make all staff members aware<sup>36</sup> of their responsibilities in order to avoid inappropriate conduct or potential abuse.
- Not to maintain personal relations<sup>37</sup> with beneficiaries under the age of 18, whether in the real or virtual world.
- Recognize that special attention<sup>38</sup> should be paid when discussing sensitive issues with children.
- Be alert to potential situations of bullying or harassment<sup>39</sup>.
- Be aware of the unequal power relationship<sup>40</sup> between an adult and a child and therefore be vigilant for possible abuse of this position.
- Be aware of the potential danger of abuse among children.
- Be able to recognize signs of potential abuse<sup>41</sup>.
- Whenever possible, avoid being alone with a child in a closed room or any other out of sight place. Always try to be accompanied by another adult.
- Not to sleep in the same room as a child unless expressly authorized by my superior for special and specific protection reasons.
- Not to perform tasks or actions with or for children that they would be able to do on their own (e.g., going to the bathroom, taking a shower, getting dressed).
- Avoid any physical (or any other kind of) contact with or for children that could be considered suspicious<sup>42</sup>.

**Strictly refrain from the following behaviors:**

- Agree to or participate in an illegal and dangerous situation<sup>43</sup>.
- Engage in any act of abuse or exploitation<sup>44</sup> involving a child.

<sup>36</sup> In particular through staff training courses. Example given by Appendices 26-29, Child Hope, Save the Children's Resources Centre, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_16-30.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_16-30.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Relationships going beyond the work framework and the mandate of the person involved in his activities at ECPAT Belgium.

<sup>38</sup> Adapted to the context and taking into account the specific vulnerabilities of the public concerned, in accordance with the principles of the CRC.

<sup>39</sup> Annex 6 Child Hope, Save the Children's Resources Centre, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_1-15.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_1-15.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Example of guidelines on the subject: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-enfances-et-psy-2002-1-page-47.htm>

<sup>41</sup> Annex 1 Child Hope, Save the Children's Resources Centre, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_1-15.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_1-15.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> In accordance with the rest of this Code of Conduct as well as the Child Protection Policy as a whole and the specifics of the operating context.

<sup>43</sup> Regardless of the context and whatever its nature, in accordance with international and/or national legal frameworks.

<sup>44</sup> As defined in the Glossary

- Engage in any unlawful activity of a sexual nature<sup>45</sup> with a child under the age of 18, regardless of the age of sexual consent. An error of judgment or lack of knowledge about the actual age of the child is not a valid defence.
- Take photos/videos of children in sexually explicit or degrading positions that are detrimental to the child's dignity (see below).
- Have personal involvement in the viewing, possession, production or distribution of child sexual abuse materials<sup>46</sup>.
- Voluntarily access websites that are detrimental<sup>47</sup> to the reputation of ECPAT Belgium.
- Behave in a sexually provocative<sup>48</sup> manner with children.
- Allow children to take part in sexually provocative games<sup>49</sup> or to behave in a provocative way<sup>50</sup>.
- Physically abuse a child or inflict any form of physical abuse or mistreatment on a child<sup>51</sup>.
- Threaten, use a language, make comments or give advice that is inappropriate, humiliating, offensive or insulting to a child or inflicting any form of emotional abuse on a child<sup>52</sup>.
- Put a child in situations where the environment or surroundings may present a significant risk<sup>53</sup>.
- Hire a child under 18 years of age. However, an exception may be made if the child is in a situation of professional insertion/reintegration and if he or she is monitored by association staff to ensure that his or her rights are respected.
- Violate those same rules in the virtual world<sup>54</sup>.

### **I understand and accept that I am required to..:**

- Report to the persons in charge any inappropriate behavior, suspicion or witness of abuse in accordance with the internal reporting procedure in place<sup>55</sup>.
- Report to the persons in charge (see below) any offensive content received or accidentally downloaded.

<sup>45</sup> As defined by the Belgian Penal Code

<sup>46</sup> As defined by the Glossary.

<sup>47</sup> Whose content is illicit or illegal in accordance with the Belgian Penal Code. Nevertheless, ECPAT Belgium reserves the discretionary right to extend this qualification to other sites which may affect its reputation or the validity of its action.

<sup>48</sup> While there is no universal legal definition of this term, this notion must be conceived in accordance with the CRC, this Code of Conduct, the Child Rights Policy and the best interests of the child. A non-provocative behaviour is one that does not lead to a relationship outside the framework of the work with ECPAT Belgium and, potentially, to a situation of abuse.

<sup>49</sup> Going beyond a "normal" age-related framework and "exploratory" needs.

<sup>50</sup> Possible definitions can be found, for example, in media specialized in (early) childhood.  
<https://naitreetgrandir.com/en/feature/understanding-psychosexual-development/>


<sup>51</sup> As defined by the Glossary

<sup>52</sup> Reference example for more information <https://www.psy.be/fr/conseils/les-maltraitances-psychologiques-legard-des-enfants>.

<sup>53</sup> Whatever the nature of this risk and as long as it is against the best interests of the child.

<sup>54</sup> Including, in the broadest sense, anything that doesn't resemble the real world.

<sup>55</sup> How to deal with allegations and reporting protocol, more information Annexes 11 and 12, Child Hope, Save the Children's Resources, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_1-15.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_1-15.pdf)

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- Not to carry out my own investigation, publicly accuse the person concerned or question the child involved on my own initiative.
  - Maintain the confidentiality of information I receive about violations of the Code of Conduct, and more broadly of the Child Protection Policy, within the small circle of people responsible for receiving and handling reports within the organization and within the relevant police and child protection services.
  - Respect the full content of the Child Protection Policy implemented by ECPAT Belgium.

*I declare that I have never been convicted of an offence involving any type of harm to a child, children, young person or vulnerable person, and that I have never been warned or reprimanded about it. I also declare that there are no civil or criminal proceedings of any kind pending against me as of the date of this declaration concerning any alleged harm to a child(ren).*

**I, the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby accept all the terms of this Code of Conduct and pledge to collaborate with ECPAT Belgium in the best interests of the child<sup>56</sup>.**

Date:

Signature:

<sup>56</sup> Any violation of this Code of Conduct or any behavior that is in conflict with the provisions of the Child Protection Policy, or more broadly with applicable laws, will result in an internal investigation or report to the appropriate authority, as well as possible suspension or revocation. ECPAT Belgium will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by the competent authority (such as the police) in the framework of any allegation of abuse or criminal offence involving a child made against a member of its staff. In the best interests of the child and in order to prevent any risk of future danger to the child or children concerned, ECPAT Belgium may be required to take disciplinary action against its staff (suspension/revocation) even in the absence of confirmation of the guilt of the person concerned.

**ANNEX 2 - DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT TO RESPECT THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF ECPAT BELGIUM**

I have read and understand the standards and guidelines contained in this Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles it contains and recognize the importance of its application in the protection of children when carrying out my contribution to the work of ECPAT Belgium.

**Name**

**Date**

**Signature (preceded by the mention "read and approved"):**



### Prerequisite

All offers of paid or unpaid employment published by ECPAT Belgium contain a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities that the position offers in the required interactions with children. These offers should also mention ECPAT Belgium's clear commitment to child protection. All job interviews conducted will include questions relating to the candidates' background and suitability to work for a children's rights organization. At least one member of the recruitment panel will have been trained in issues of abuse/maltreatment and their handling. All candidates will be required to have a minimum of two satisfactory references from former employers. If required, an extract from a criminal record should be provided. All persons hired must adhere to this Code of Conduct. During their probationary period, staff members will be closely monitored in their interactions with children to ensure their understanding of policies and procedures and their ability to work with children.

**For reasons related to the neutrality of the recruitment process and the confidentiality of its unfolding, the above-mentioned guidelines are not public but are available on request ([info@ecpat.be](mailto:info@ecpat.be)).**



**ANNEX 4 - PATTERN: REPORTING PROCEDURE**

**Reporting suspicions**

**This is a person associated with ECPAT Belgium.**

**This is a person not related to ECPAT Belgium**

**Inform at least one person entitled to receive reports**

**Inform the designated child protection officer**

**Contact social services or assistance from child rights NGOs  
SOS Children - VrouwenCentra  
Kindermishandeling**

**Gathering of information and urgent protection measures (medical care, safe place for the child)**

**Verbal report and discussion**

**Inform the child's legal guardians and proceed to a temporary suspension**

**If the seriousness of the allegations so requires: police or child protection services**

**Follow-up with the victim and his/her family/guardian if necessary**

ANNEX 5 – REPORTING FORM

Reporting form in case of suspicion of harm caused to a child <sup>57</sup>

	<p><b>Case n° : 201_ -00_</b></p> <p><i>To be completed by the person receiving this form</i></p>
<p><b>Child involved</b> Name and details</p>	<p><b>Person/organization reporting</b></p>
	Name
	Title
	Date of report
	Details
<p><b>Where is the child currently?/Where does he/she live and who is responsible of him/her?</b></p>	<p><b>Suspect</b> <i>Is a person suspected of harming a child? If the situation involves a particular person, be as specific as possible to enable identification.</i></p>
	Name
	Title
	Location
	Details
<p><b>Is he/she safe?</b></p>	<p>General description of behavior</p>

<sup>57</sup> Adapted from ECPAT International and Jackson, E., & Wernham, M. (2005) and Tearfund Child Protection Policy (2001).

<b>Situation</b> <i>What happened?</i> Description of the suspicious situation		
<i>What were the circumstances (date, place, time, etc.?)</i>	<i>Who else was there?</i>	
<i>Does anyone else know what happened (if yes, be as specific as possible when describing that person to enable identification)?</i>		
<i>What do you think would be best for the well-being of the child?</i>		
<i>What are the immediate needs of the child (medical care) ? Who would be the best person to provide them?</i>		
<i>What would be, according to you, the right procedure to follow?</i>		
<b><i>Follow-up registration</i></b>	<b><i>Action/Information</i></b>	<b><i>Registration done by</i></b>

## Further advice <sup>58</sup>


- Do not hesitate to intervene immediately if you feel that the child's life is in danger, as any delay could make his or her situation even more precarious.
- If you have information about harm inflicted on a child, it is your responsibility to tell someone else.
- In certain situations, the organization, its staff and third parties will be under the obligation to raise their concerns to the appropriate external bodies and agencies, particularly in the context of the consequences of a report. However, while it is essential to take urgent protection measures in the interests of children, these measures will take priority over the reporting procedure<sup>59</sup>.
- Any report made with malicious intent or in dishonesty will be subject to strict disciplinary measures.
- All steps leading up to the decision must be well documented, all facts or allegations as well as the measures taken must be archived.
- When it is decided to drop the prosecution, the reasons for doing so will be communicated to the person who made the alert.

### When a child reports a situation to you:

- Accept the child's affirmation
- Stay calm
- Keep a cool head
- Don't ask for assistance while the child is talking to you.
- Be honest.
- Adapt your non-verbal language to the context in which the child is making the report
- Let the child know you have to talk to someone else.
- Reassure the child: he/she is not responsible.
- Don't ask questions that could influence the child.
- Avoid repeating the same questions to the child.
- Don't overwhelm the child with too many questions.
- Avoid suggesting words, finishing the child's sentences and come up with hypothesis.
- Be aware of the fact that the child may have been threatened
- Take appropriate measures to ensure the physical and psychological safety of the child.
- Avoid confusing what the child actually said with your personal interpretation of it. It is important to report the facts accurately, especially at this stage of the proceedings.
- Do not let yourself be overwhelmed by doubt, systematically report any allegation to the person in charge.

<sup>58</sup> As presented by Save the Children's Resource Centre Annexes and 12, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices\\_1-15.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6063/pdf/appendices_1-15.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> Inspired by « Tearfund Child Protection Policy » (Politique de TearFund pour la protection de l'enfance), Mai 2001, Section C (Report – doing a report)

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- Inform the child of the measures and actions that will be taken regarding this situation and keep him/her informed of the further course of events.
  - What can be said : “I believe you”, “I am going to try to help you”, “I will help you”, “You did the right thing talking to me”, “It is not your fault”.
  - What should not be said: “You should have talked to someone”, “I can’t believe it! That’s awful”, “Now it all makes sense...”, “That’s not possible... It’s a friend of mine”, “Why? How? Who? When? Where?”.
  - Immediately go to the supervisor for help and report precisely what the child said (if notes are taken, sign and date them and keep them in a safe place).
  - Do not hesitate to ask for help or support if you need it.

**Guide for visitors, sponsors, institutions and any other person potentially concerned, applicable in Belgium and abroad.**

1. A local staff member should accompany all visitors to sites, (for visits as part of project visits), institutions and communities.
2. The persons concerned are systematically informed by ECPAT Belgium of the planned visits and their objectives.
3. A local staff member informs ECPAT Belgium staff and visitors about the roles, expectations and habits of the site, institution and/or community they are visiting, including the taking of photographs, videos or audio recordings.
4. ECPAT Belgium ensures not to disturb people's daily and usual tasks during its visits.
5. ECPAT Belgium only visits sites, institutions and communities when necessary to achieve its objectives.
6. Neither local staff nor ECPAT Belgium should disclose information identifying children and/or families to an unauthorized audience without the informed consent of the children and/or family.
7. The staff and visitors of ECPAT Belgium remain close to local staff and do not travel alone to sites, institutions or communities.
8. ECPAT Belgium does not directly exchange home addresses or (private) contact details with the children and/or families visited; any follow-up communication is done through a partner organization.
9. ECPAT Belgium is cautious in disseminating information about children, families and their communities after a visit.
10. ECPAT Belgium takes photos/videos/voice recordings mainly for internal use and endeavors to document as little as possible the actions of children, in accordance with this policy.
11. If, for exceptional reasons, ECPAT Belgium staff transport material or gifts to the children at a project site or institution, these are always distributed by the local organization and only at their convenience.

## ANNEX 7 – VISITOR'S STATEMENT

**Every visitor to ECPAT Belgium commits to respect the following:**

### **Photographs, videos and other images**

- I must always obtain the consent of the children and their parents or guardians before taking photographs or videos.
- I must not take or use photographs or videos of children naked and/or in positions that could harm their dignity, intimacy or privacy, including in poses that could be considered sexually provocative.
- I must not disclose any information that could identify child victims of sexual exploitation to persons outside the association.
- I must not use the photographs, videos and other images as well as the various information collected during visits to the field activities or during meetings with child victims for my personal use (including the use of social networks and blogs).

### **Use of images, information and interviews in information and communication materials**

- I must ensure that all persons interviewed are informed that the information provided is intended to be disseminated and that they understand the implications of such dissemination.
- I must accurately portray any image or situation, both in its immediate and broader context, in a consistent manner with the reality, in order to enhance the public's understanding of the realities and complexities of child sexual exploitation.
- I must not include images, videos and/or testimonies/comments that stereotype reality and the people depicted, and/or that are sensational or discriminatory in nature.
- I must not use language or images that may violate the child's dignity or humiliate the child.
- I must not show the face of a child who is victim of sexual exploitation or for whom there is a reasonable risk of believing that he/she is a victim of sexual exploitation, even if the child, his/her guardian, or the owner of the image has given his/her consent.
- I commit to ensuring that no child victim of sexual exploitation can be identified in the creation or dissemination of the information or communication material<sup>60</sup>.
- I must not use the image of an identifiable child - who is not a victim - if it could reasonably lead the viewer to believe that the child is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation.

<sup>60</sup> The only exception is when the child in the image, having reached the age of 18, gives his or her full consent for him or her to be identified as a victim of commercial sexual exploitation in an ECPAT publication. I must allow at any time that sexually exploited person over the age of 18 who has given permission to be depicted in an identifiable manner to withdraw consent. Whenever possible his or her image will be removed from the broadcast/publication and will not be used for further printing or other new media (unless the person is made non-identifiable).

- In the event of use of images and/or testimonies in accordance with ECPAT Belgium's communication policy, I agree to obtain the express consent of the persons concerned (children and guardians). This authorisation must be in writing, in several copies signed by all the parties involved, i.e. the subject, the guardian (if the subject is a minor), the author of the information material and a representative of ECPAT Belgium and/or its partners.
- I must not use photographs and images of children that I have taken for financial gain other than for purely journalistic purposes.

**In case of doubt, I must absolutely contact ECPAT Belgium**

*By signing this declaration I pledge to abide by these principles and practices during a visit to an ECPAT Belgium project or during meetings with child victims organised with the support, assistance or facilitation of ECPAT Belgium. In the event that the rules of the partners visited are stricter than those described in this document, I commit myself to respect them for the well-being of the children. I also guarantee that, if an information and communication material is produced, these principles and practices will be respected throughout the process of producing such material and until the final version of the material is produced (the version that will be distributed).*

Surname and name:

Date:

Signature (preceded by the mention "read and approved"):



**ANNEX 8 - CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN**

Surname and Name \_\_\_\_\_ ; Age \_\_\_\_\_ ; Sex \_\_\_\_\_

An individual/researcher from ECPAT wants to talk to me, and	<b>I wish to</b> <b>I don't wish to</b>	Speak with that person
They are going to ask me question about my life and my thoughts, and	<b>I agree</b> <b>I don't agree</b>	To answer the questions they are going to ask me.
They will speak to me during 30 to 40 minutes. If the interview is too long for me, I can ask them to stop.	<b>I understand</b> <b>I don't understand</b>	That I can ask for a break at any time or put an end to the questions/interview.
My audition will be recorded, on paper and/or with a tape recorder...	<b>I agree</b> <b>I don't agree</b>	to appear in a report, or to have my voice and/or opinions included in a report.
No one but the researchers will know my real name.	<b>I wish to</b> <b>I don't wish to</b>	Use a fake name if I am mentioned in a report.
They will also talk with my parents/guardians, teachers and friends.	<b>I agree</b> <b>I don't agree</b>	That they talk with them
My parents/guardians/social workers gave permission to the researcher to talk to me.	<b>I agree</b> <b>I don't agree</b>	With parents/guardian's decision
The researchers promised to keep me informed of their research conclusions...	<b>I wish to</b> <b>I don't wish to</b>	be kept informed of the results when the research is completed.
I'm comfortable with the idea of participating in this interview.	<b>I wish to</b> <b>I don't wish to</b>	ask further questions at this stage of the process.

My signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

In:

Project name :

**Name and details of the participant**

		Yes	No
1	I confirm that I have read all available and necessary information concerning the subject of this research. I understand what is expected of me/my child as a participant in this research.		
2	I had the opportunity to ask all the questions necessary for my understanding of the research and I received a satisfactory answer to each of them.		
3	I understand that my/my child's participation is voluntary and that my consent can be withdrawn at any time.		
4	I understand that the information provided may be used in different forms of materials produced by the research team.		
5	I understand that my/my child's name will never appear in published materials.		
6	I understand that photos, videos or images may be taken during this research and may be disseminated in accordance with ECPAT Belgium's communication and media management policy.		

*If your answers are all affirmative, you are ready to give your consent. If not, please contact the person who provided you with this form.*

<b>As parent/legal guardian (cross out what does not apply), I consent to the participation of my child (over 12 years of age)</b>		
Name	Date	Signature
<b>As parent/legal guardian (cross out what does not apply), I consent to the participation of my child (under 12 years of age)</b>		
Name	Date	Signature
<b>I consent to participate in this research (if my participation is required)</b>		
Name	Date	Signature
<b>Researcher</b>		
Name	Date	Signature

<sup>61</sup> Original version developed by Save the Children UK (modified by ECPAT International).