



Russian Alliance against CSEC

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The Russian Alliance against CSEC was established in 2004 by Stellit, an NGO in St. Petersburg, and by Sisters, a Russian NGO that helps survivors of sexual violence. The Alliance's objectives are to combine the efforts of government and NGOs in combating CSEC. In this context, the Alliance works on a number of issues, including prevention, rehabilitation, awareness raising and research.



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ECPAT International is a global network of civil society organisations working for the eradication of all forms of sexual exploitation of children. For the past 26 years, ECPAT has acted as the international watchdog, monitoring States' response to sexual exploitation of children, and advocating for robust international measures to protect children from sexual exploitation. ECPAT International currently has 95 network members operating in 86 countries.

Submission on Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Russian Federation

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Justification for Submission

1. The Government of the Russian Federation (GoRF) is committed to eradicate sexual exploitation of children (SEC). In 2013, the GoRF ratified both the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography (OPSC) as the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention). In 2015, the GoRF re-committed itself to the cause through the adoption of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development which aims to eliminate all forms of violence against children, including sexual abuse and exploitation.¹ The GoRF is not only bound by these international instruments to combat SEC, but also by its own national legal framework.
2. The present submission is an update on SEC in the Russian Federation and to review the progress since the last Working Group Report published in July 2013.² The submission has the aim to help to further strengthen political will to focus on the issue of SEC in the Russian Federation and prevent this heinous crime committed against children.

Methodology and Scope

3. The submission is based on the practical experience of NGO Stellit as founder of the Russian Alliance against CSEC and studies conducted by both Stellit and ECPAT International.
4. The scope of the submission is limited to SEC and its different manifestations, including exploitation of children in prostitution,³ online child sexual exploitation (OCSE), child sexual abuse materials (CSAM),⁴ trafficking of children for sexual purposes and sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism⁵ (SECTT).

Sexual exploitation of children in the Russian Federation

5. The Russian Federation is ranked as a high human development ranking with the 49th place in the global ranking⁶ Children comprise less than one fifth of the total population of over 143 million.⁷ The vulnerability to fall victim to SEC varies, with some discernible groups being most at risk, particularly among children from poor families, street children, children from dysfunctional or single parent families, children living in institutions (60,162 children by the end of 2015)^{8,9,10} mentally disabled, orphans (often not technically orphans, but neglected or abandoned by their parents), sexual abused children, and refugee children.
6. Although exact statistics are unknown, the number of children falling victim to SEC is on the rise, not only through CSAM, but through all sexual crimes committed against children with or without force.¹¹
7. **Exploitation of children in prostitution** is still prevalent and mostly involves teenage girls between 14 and 17 years old. Prostitution takes place in brothels, hotels and saunas, but has become harder to detect in recent years. Increased police enforcement has moved the exploitation from the public domain since the beginning of the millennium.¹² And with the strengthening of the state protection system, many vulnerable children were taken off the streets. Visibility of the crime has thus decreased with new pathways to contact victims or pimps, through the Internet, with the crime often taking place in private apartments.
8. As in most countries, **OCSE** and **CSAM** is a growing issue. Internet creates new pathways for child sex offenders to commit their crimes, obtain CSAM and to approach victims. The population of the Russian Federation is increasingly connected through mobile phones – with 155 mobile phones for every 100 people - and 71% of the population using the Internet.¹³ In 2013, the Russian Ombudsman for children's rights reported that Russia was the second-largest producer of CSAM online, after the United States. And according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 'child pornography' websites increased 12-fold during in the four previous years.¹⁴

INHOPE reported that the Russian Federation is second in the top ten hosting countries with 24% of the ‘child pornography’ websites in 2014.¹⁵ In the first half of 2014, Russian law enforcement opened 540 criminal cases related to CSAM.¹⁶

9. **Trafficking of children for sexual purposes** is a serious problem. Children from Europe (predominantly Ukraine and Moldova), Southeast Asia (primarily Vietnam), Africa (particularly Nigeria), Central Asia and Russia fall victim to sex trafficking in Russia. Russian children are trafficked from rural to urban areas subjected to forced prostitution in Russia’s metropolises, but also trafficked abroad.
10. As the Global Study on Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism found, no country is immune to **SECTT**.¹⁷ The crime of SECTT is committed by travelling child sex offenders in Russia. With 31 million arrivals in 2015, the Russian Federation is in the top ten of international tourist arrivals globally.¹⁸ The number of arrivals is steadily growing and resulted in more than USD 8 billion in receipts in 2015.¹⁹ A recent research conducted by NGO Stellit found that, compared to beginning of the millennium, the number of cases of SECTT involving foreign – mostly male – travelling child sex offenders has significantly decreased. Strict police enforcement has reduced SECTT committed by travelling paedophiles and preferential offenders as well as committed by situational offenders travelling without the purpose to offend. However, the research has revealed that domestic travellers are constituting the biggest part of all SECTT crimes.²⁰
11. Although outbound Russian tourism is declining due to mostly economic factors, there were still 31,6 Russians travelling abroad in 2016.²¹ Statistics on cases of SECTT are not systematically collected by the government, but study and media reports mention cases of Russian travelling child sex offenders in Cambodia, Estonia, Moldova, Monaco and Nepal.²² In the last twelve years three cases were revealed in Cambodia alone with Russian child sex offenders.²³ Reported cases are only the tip of the iceberg, as most offenders stay well under the police or judicial radar.

Legal framework and national laws

12. With the GoRF’s ratification of the OPSC and the Lanzarote Convention in 2013, the GoRF has committed itself firmly to eradicate SEC. These ratified international standards are directly applicable and – in case of conflict – the rights afforded in international conventions prevail over national laws, apart from the Constitution.
13. In general, the Russian national laws correctly reflect the international standards on child protection from SEC in important areas. The most significant national laws protecting children from SEC in the Russian Federation are:
 - The Constitution protects the right to life, dignity and childhood.
 - The Family Code and Federal Law No. 124-FZ (1998) on the Basic Guarantees of the Rights of the Child incorporated most rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
 - The Criminal Code criminalises the trafficking of children and abusing children in slave like conditions.²⁴ Rape and sexual acts against children under threat or force are criminalised.²⁵ Coercion is prohibited,²⁶ as well as ‘child prostitution’²⁷ and CSAM.²⁸
 - Federal Law No.436-FZ on Protection of Children from Information Harmful to their Health and Development (2010) prohibits the distribution of e.g. pornography to children.
14. Legal gaps in the international framework and national legislation were identified.
 - Russia has not ratified the CoE Convention on Cybercrime.
 - Russia has not ratified the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
 - There is no legal definition of ‘child pornography’ in Russia’s national legislation consistent with the OPSC and the Lanzarote Convention, although a definition is

provided in comments to the articles 242.1 and 242.2 of the Criminal Code,²⁹ this does not fulfil the legislative requirements of the OPSC.

- There is no legal definition of ‘child prostitution’ consistent with the OPSC and the Lanzarote Convention.³⁰
- Not criminalised are possession or procuring of ‘child pornography’ and grooming.
- Some gaps in the Criminal Procedure Code as well that do not meet the requirements of the Lanzarote Convention. For example, if a criminal complaint regarding certain SEC crimes is withdrawn by the victim, a case can be closed in certain circumstances.³¹ Another example is that the statute of limitations is not providing sufficient time to children to file a criminal complaint after they have reached the age of majority with variable periods between two and fifteen years.³²

Coordination to end SEC

15. In every district in Russia local multi-stakeholder cooperation is achieved by the Commission on Minor’s Affairs and Protection of their Rights, which includes social workers, representatives of law enforcement, medical staff, psychologists and other stakeholders.
16. The Office of the Ombudsman of children’s rights helps in protecting all child rights, and has often been crucial in cases of severe violations of children’s rights.
17. The National Children’s Strategy for 2012–2017 focuses on protecting children in difficult life situations, does not include specific provisions to prevent and combat SEC. However, in May 2017, the President of the Russian Federation signed a decree declaring the period from 2018 to 2027 as the Decade of Childhood (as a continuation of the aforementioned strategy). Some activities specific to combating SEC may be included in the new National Plan.³³
18. At the sub-regional level, the Council of Baltic Sea States, comprising of 12 Member States, promotes cooperation to combat violence against children through its Expert Group on *Children at Risk*. In its mandate from 2017-2020 the combat against SEC is one of its key priorities.³⁴
19. The Commonwealth of Independent States Member States cooperate on counter trafficking measures through an agreement and a program of cooperation against Trafficking in Persons for 2014–2018.

Protection

20. The GoRF has established a Department of Cybercrime with specially trained experts. Over 550 CSAM offences were registered in Russia in 2012, prompting the Ministry of Internal Affairs to launch a large-scale operation, “*Weed*”, to combat CSAM online, in cooperation with police more than 50 countries. Also in 2012, the lower house of the Russian parliament passed a bill authorising a blacklist of Internet sites allegedly containing CSAM, drug-related material, extremist material, and other illegal content. More than 90 websites registered in Russia were closed in 2013.³⁵
21. NGO Stellit has provided trainings for the staff of ACCOR Hotels, but there is a need for systematic training of professionals on identification of victims by staff of child care institutions, social services, law enforcement and the travel and tourism industry.
22. There is a child helpline where SEC cases can be reported and are in high demand.³⁶ Cases of OCSE can be reported through the Safer Internet Center and the Friendly RUNET Foundation, which are both part of the international reporting network of INHOPE.

Recovery & reintegration

23. There is a lack of adequate recovery and reintegration services available to SEC victims. Usually SEC victims are placed in a temporary child shelters and then sent to a state residential institution. But the institutional care provided does not meet children's social and psychological needs, nor prepares them for secure livelihoods outside the institution. Children exploited in prostitution are still seen as committing criminal offences or antisocial. Due to the absence of relevant support, children involved in prostitution are in danger of falling back into prostitution or may even start exploiting other children.³⁷

Prevention

24. Long term prevention strategies include improving the status of children who are most vulnerable to SEC by implementing policies to reduce poverty and social inequality and improving access to education, health and social services. Effective short to medium term strategies include awareness raising campaigns and education and training initiatives for the general public, vulnerable groups and government officials. The resources, expertise and influence of the private sector, particularly the tourism and IT industries, should also be engaged in prevention measures, including awareness raising activities. Furthermore, information, education and outreach programmes should be directed at those engaging in the commercial sexual exploitation of children (e.g., users of children forced into prostitution) to promote changes in social norms and behaviour and reduce the demand for sex with children.
25. In 2011, the Saint Basil the Great Charity Foundation founded the Safe Internet League with the support of the GoRF to eradicate dangerous online content through the professional community and IT industry.³⁸
26. With support from ECPAT International, Nordic Council of Ministers Information Office in St. Petersburg, General Consulate of Finland, General Consulate of Netherlands, EMpower foundation, and St. Petersburg Government, NGO Stellit has undertaken a number of awareness-raising activities on the risks of Internet use. Several sessions are given to children youth and specialists, including lectures, interactive games and discussions. So far over 740 children and youth, and more than 600 specialists have been involved.
27. With the exception of ACCOR Hotels, Cooperation from the travel and tourism sector to prevent and detect SECTT is still minimal. NGO Stellit promotes the Code of Conduct in Russia, but many representatives of the tourism industry in e.g. St. Petersburg are lacking understanding of their role in prevention of SECTT.³⁹

Child & Youth Participation

28. NGO Stellit, in cooperation with the governmental organisation 'House of Studying Youth', launched a youth volunteer movement called '*You know the right way? Have it your own way...*' in Saint Petersburg. Volunteers work actively with youth and children on SEC prevention, especially trafficking and online child abuse prevention. Since the movement's inception in 2009, 216 boys and 354 girls of median age of 19 were involved in the programme. The number of people reached by prevention efforts introduced by the movement since the start of the activities is 45,000.

Recommendations to the GoRF

Gaps in the national legal framework to address SEC (para. 14)

- to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime.
- to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- to bring national legislation fully in line with the rights afforded to Russian children through the OPSC and the Lanzarote Convention.

Coordination to end SEC (paras. 15 - 19)

Create an interagency working group in charge of combatting violence against children, including SEC, and incorporate its strategy into the next National Children's Strategy.

Training of professionals (para. 21)

To systematically train professionals on identification of victims with child care institutions, social services, law enforcement and the travel and tourism industry.

Recovery and reintegration (para. 23)

To provide tailormade recovery and reintegration services to SEC victims.

Prevention (paras. 24 - 27)

To provide preventive and awareness raising activities to protect children from SEC by incorporating awareness raising on SEC and trafficking into school curricula.

Child participation (para. 28)

To support initiatives where children are able to be an agent in the combat against SEC.

Annex 1 - Thematic Lists of Recommendations with assessment/comments on level of implementation

¹ Sustainable Development Goal Targets 5.2, 8.7, and 16.2.

² Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Russian Federation, A/HRC/24/14, 8 July 2013, accessed on 17 August 2017, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/155/09/PDF/G1315509.pdf?OpenElement>.

³ ECPAT prefers the term ‘*exploitation of children in prostitution*’ instead of ‘*child prostitution*’ in line with the recently widely adopted Terminology Guidelines. ECPAT International (2016). Terminology Guidelines. ECPAT International (2016), “*Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, adopted by the Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg, 28 January 2016*”, Bangkok: ECPAT, 29, accessed on 20 May 2017, <http://luxembourgguidelines.org/>.

⁴ ECPAT prefers the term ‘*child sexual exploitation material*’ or ‘*child sexual abuse material*’ over the often in legal context still used ‘*child pornography*’ in line with the recently widely adopted Terminology Guidelines. ECPAT International (2016), “*Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, adopted by the Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg, 28 January 2016*”, Bangkok: ECPAT, 39, accessed on 31 July 2017, <http://luxembourgguidelines.org/>.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶ United Nations Development Fund (2016), “*Human Development Report 2016*”, accessed on 17 August 2017, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf.

⁷ A total population of 160,996,000 of which 57,168,000 are children below 18 years of age. United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2016), “*The State of the World’s Children 2016; A Fair Chance for Every Child*”, 140, accessed on 17 August 2017, https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_SOWC_2016.pdf.

⁸ УСЫНОВЛЕНИЕ В РОССИИ. Интернет-проект Министерства образования и науки РФ/ Департамент государственной политики в сфере защиты прав детей [ADOPTION IN RUSSIA. Internet project of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation / Department of State Policy for the Protection of Children’s Rights], accessed on 27 August 2017 <http://www.usynovite.ru/statistics/2015/6/>.

⁹ Rights Groups in Russia (2013), “*Alternative Report 2013 on children’s rights by a Coalition of Russian NGOs*”, <http://groups.rightsinrussia.info/archive/right-of-the-child/alternative-report-2013>.

¹⁰ Kolpakova, O. I., et al. (2015) “*Prevention of HIV and Associated Infections among Adolescents and Young People at High Risk of Infection: Methodology Guide*”.

¹¹ ICMEC (2013), “*Russian Legislation on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation A Review*”, 7, accessed on 20 August 2017, https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Russian_Legislation_on_Protection_of_Children_Against_Sexual_Abuse_and_Exploitation_FINAL.pdf.

¹² Stellit (2015), “*Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism*”, 7, accessed on 19 August 2017, <http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/3.-SECTT-RUSSIA.pdf>.

¹³ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2016), “*The State of the World’s Children 2016; A Fair Chance for Every Child*”, 136, accessed on 17 August 2017, https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_SOWC_2016.pdf.

¹⁴ Daily News & Analysis, 5 February 2013, “*Russia crackdown on child pornography, shuts 90 websites*”. <http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-russia-crackdown-on-child-pornography-shuts-90-websites-1796469>.

¹⁵ INHOPE (2014), “*Top 10 hosting countries in 2014*”, accessed on 20 August 2017, <http://www.inhope.org/tns/resources/statistics-and-infographics/statistics-and-infographics-2014.aspx>.

¹⁶ Russian Legal Information Agency (2014), “*Over 500 child pornography cases opened in Russia in first half of 2014*”, <http://rapsinews.com/news/20141110/272542178.html>.

¹⁷ ECPAT (2016), “*Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism*”, Finding #4, <http://globalstudysectt.org/findings/>.

¹⁸ UNWTO (2015), “*Tourism Highlights 2016*”, 6, accessed on 17 August 2017, <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284418145>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁰ Stellit (2015), “*Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism*”, 7, accessed on 19 August 2017, <http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/3.-SECTT-RUSSIA.pdf>.

²¹ Tourism Review News, 20 March 2017, accessed on 17 August 2017, <http://www.tourism-review.com/russian-inbound-tourism-growing-news5334>.

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- ²² Stellit (2015), “*Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism*”, 11, accessed on 19 August 2017, <http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/3.-SECTT-RUSSIA.pdf>.
- ²³ Stellit (2015), “*Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism*”, 7, accessed on 19 August 2017, <http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/3.-SECTT-RUSSIA.pdf>.
- ²⁴ GoRF, Criminal Code, articles 127.1 and 127.2.
- ²⁵ GoRF, Criminal Code, articles 131 and 132.
- ²⁶ GoRF, Criminal Code, article 133.
- ²⁷ GoRF, Criminal Code, articles 240 and 241.
- ²⁸ GoRF, Criminal Code, articles 242.
- ²⁹ Comment: “*Materials with pornographic images of minors in this article and in Article 242.2 of this Code shall be understood as materials and objects containing any image or description for sexual purposes:*
- *completely or partially exposed sexual organs of a minor;*
 - *A minor who commits or imitates sexual intercourse or other acts of a sexual nature;*
 - *Sexual intercourse or other acts of a sexual nature committed against or with the minor;*
 - *An adult person depicting a minor who commits or imitates sexual intercourse or other acts of a sexual nature.”*
- ³⁰ Stellit (draft report to be published in 2017), “*The commercial sexual exploitation of children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society*”.
- ³¹ Criminal Procedure Code art. 25 and the Criminal Code art. 76. ICMEC (2013), “*Russian Legislation on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation A Review*”, 38, accessed on 20 August 2017, https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Russian_Legislation_on_Protection_of_Children_Against_Sexual_Abuse_and_Exploitation_FINAL.pdf.
- ³² Criminal Procedure Code art. 25 and the Criminal Code art. 76. ICMEC (2013), “*Russian Legislation on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation A Review*”, 39-40, accessed on 20 August 2017, https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Russian_Legislation_on_Protection_of_Children_Against_Sexual_Abuse_and_Exploitation_FINAL.pdf.
- ³³ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, May 29, 2017, No. 240. On the announcement of the Decade of Childhood in the Russian Federation. Publication date: 05.29.2017, accessed on 10 August 2017, <https://mvd.consultant.ru/documents/1056281>.
- ³⁴ Council of the Baltic Sea States, “*Expert Group on Children at Risk*”, accessed on 21 September 2017, <http://www.cbss.org/safe-secure-region/eg-on-children-at-risk/>.
- ³⁵ Daily News & Analysis, 5 February 2013, “*Russia crackdown on child pornography, shuts 90 websites*”. <http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-russia-crackdown-on-child-pornography-shuts-90-websites-1796469>.
- ³⁶ Russian Association of Child Helplines (RACH) registered almost 92,000 reports in 2011. Stellit (draft report to be published in 2017), “*The commercial sexual exploitation of children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society*”.
- ³⁷ Stellit (draft report to be published in 2017), “*The commercial sexual exploitation of children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society*”.
- ³⁸ Safe Internet League, “*About us*”, accessed on 20 August 2017, <http://ligainternet.ru/en/liga/about.php>.
- ³⁹ Stellit (2015), “*Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism*”, 8, accessed on 19 August 2017, <http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/3.-SECTT-RUSSIA.pdf>.