

COPEAM Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators (COPEAM) is committed to upholding the rights of children and minors, ensuring their protection and well-being in all activities and initiatives. This policy outlines COPEAM's approach to safeguarding and emphasizing the importance of creating a safe environment for young individuals engaged in its programs and activities.

1. Commitment to Child Protection

COPEAM acknowledges the inherent dignity and rights of every child, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The organization is dedicated to:

- Preventing abuse, exploitation, and neglect of children and minors.
- Promoting the active participation of children in matters affecting them.
- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and partners adhere to safeguarding principles.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all COPEAM activities, including:

- Educational and training programs.
- Cultural and media events.
- Collaborative projects with member organizations.
- Any other initiatives involving direct or indirect interaction with children and minors.

3. Safeguarding Principles

COPEAM's safeguarding approach is grounded in the following principles:

- **Best Interests of the Child:** All decisions and actions should prioritize the well-being and development of the child.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Equal protection and opportunities for all children, regardless of background or status.
- **Participation:** Encouraging and respecting the views of children in matters that affect them.
- **Accountability:** Clear responsibilities and procedures for safeguarding within the organization.

4. Definitions

Minor: According to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a minor is defined as “every human being below the age of 18 years.”

Child Abuse: "child abuse" as outlined by the World Health Organization includes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, 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.”

Child Protection: A broad term used to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it particularly refers to the duty of organizations—and the individuals associated with them—toward the children in their care. (UNICEF)

5. Code of Conduct

COPEAM is firmly committed to the responsible and lawful use of any image depicting minors. In all audiovisual productions, publications, and communications, COPEAM ensures that images of children are used with full respect for their dignity, privacy, and rights, in accordance with national and international legal standards. Consent must be obtained from a parent or legal guardian before any image of a minor is captured or shared, and such images must never expose children to harm, misrepresentation, or exploitation. The portrayal of minors must always be appropriate, respectful, and aligned with the principles of child protection.

All individuals associated with COPEAM are expected to:

- Treat children and minors with respect and dignity.
- Avoid situations where they are alone with a child or minor.
- Refrain from any form of physical punishment or abusive behaviour.
- Report any concerns or allegations of abuse promptly and appropriately.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- Staff and Volunteers: adhering to the Code of Conduct, ensuring a safe environment for children and minors.
- Partners and Collaborators: expected to comply with COPEAM's safeguarding standards and cooperate in the protection of children and minors.

7. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

COPEAM has established procedures for reporting and addressing safeguarding concerns:

- Immediate Action: Any suspicion or disclosure of abuse must be reported without delay.

- Investigation: Allegations will be taken seriously and investigated in accordance with legal and organizational procedures.

Conclusion

COPEAM is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for children and minors involved in its activities. By adhering to this policy, the organization aims to uphold the highest standards of child protection and contribute positively to the communities it serves.

*For further information or to report a concern, please contact the General Secretariat of COPEAM:
sgcopeam@copeam.org.*