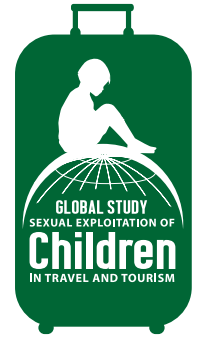


THEMATIC PAPER

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM & TERMINOLOGY



“In the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, terminology is not just a matter of semantics: it determines the efficacy of responses” - UN Special Rapporteur on Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

TERMINOLOGY GUIDELINES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

‘The Luxembourg Guidelines’ is an initiative of 18 international partners to harmonise terminology and definitions related to child protection. Developed by the Interagency Working Group over 18 months of negotiations, analysis and research, the Guidelines have been adopted in three languages: English, Spanish and French. It will be soon available in other languages.

The Guidelines set out and define the key terms relating to child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse that professionals and agencies in child protection work are faced with and provide guidance for the understanding and use of the different terms. These terms are intended to be universal and applicable across sectors and international settings.

WHY?

Words matter. Communication affects how we conceptualise problems, prioritise issues, and formulate responses. The sexual exploitation of children is a complex problem and demands consensus and agreement in order to end it. There are three key issues that the Luxembourg Guidelines address:

1. Lack of agreement and consensus regarding definition

Despite the existence of legal definitions for a number of sexual crimes against children, there is still considerable confusion surrounding the use of different terminology related to the sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children. This has created significant challenges for policy development and programming, development of legislation, and data collection, leading to flawed responses and limited and ineffective methods of measuring impact or setting targets.

2. Undermines, normalises and trivialises the sexual exploitation of children

Using incorrect terminology can paint the wrong picture of child sexual exploitation in a way that trivialises the impact on the child, or that normalises such crimes. For example, “child sex tourism” paints a picture that the sexual exploitation of children is another form of tourism and that it is therefore legal. This encourages child sex offenders thinking they can get away with these crimes, and can even convince victims, communities and law enforcement to not see them as offenders at all.

3. Directly harms or stigmatises the child

The language and terminology that we use can directly influence outcomes for children. For example, some terms such as “child prostitute” might suggest that the child has consented to being abused or exploited. This in part shifts the blame and responsibility of this crime onto the child and shames the child into feeling that it is “their fault”, which greatly reduces the likelihood of reporting.

SECTT & TERMINOLOGY

The sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) does not happen in isolation. The tourism industry plays a key role in preventing SECTT as offenders try to utilise their infrastructure. With many different key actors working to prevent this crime, it also requires a coordinated approach.

SECTT has been referred to as ‘child sex tourism’, however this term does not convey its criminal nature. SECTT is not another form of tourism, it is a crime and should be treated as such. Offenders who abuse and exploit children, are not another type of traveler or “sex tourist” – they are criminals. The Luxembourg Guidelines indicate the term “sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism” as the most adequate manner of referring to this practice. This term emphasises the fact that first, the child is being sexually exploited, and that such exploitation occurs within a specific context. It covers the concept of “travel”, which implies the action of moving from one place to another for any purpose (but which does not always include tourism) and the concept of “tourism”, which refers to the organisation and operation of holidays and visits to places of interest (which can include different forms of travel).

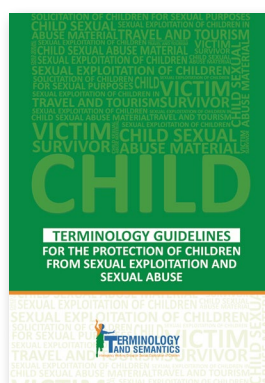
In line with the Luxemburg Guidelines, the terminology used in the English text of UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics has changed in respect to the terminology used in the article 4.6 of UNWTO Global Code of Ethics. The transformation of the Global Code of Ethics into Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics was approved at the UNWTO General Assembly in September 2017. The current wording uses “sexual exploitation in tourism” instead of previously used “sex tourism” terminology, and states that:

The press, and particularly the specialized travel press and the other media, including modern means of electronic communication, should issue honest and balanced information on events and situations that could influence the flow of tourists; they should also provide accurate and reliable information to the consumers of tourism services; the new communication and electronic commerce technologies should also be developed and used for this purpose; as is the case for the media, they should not in any way promote sexual exploitation in tourism.

While UNWTO Global Code is a voluntary instrument, the Convention on Tourism Ethics would constitute a binding instrument of a great significance at the time when children are more and more vulnerable to sexual exploitation in the context of travel and tourism. The ballot vote on the adoption of the Convention is scheduled to take place at the next session of the UNWTO General Assembly in September 2019.

[VISIT THE CHILD PROTECTION IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEBSITE](#)

[READ THE FULL TERMINOLOGY GUIDELINES](#)



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CONTACT

Email: info@ecpat.org
Website: www.protectingchildrenintourism.org
Terminology Guidelines: www.luxembourgguidelines.org