

France, where age of consent is up for debate

On April 24, 2017, a 28-year-old man met an 11-year-old girl in a park in Montmagny, after which, he took her home where he had sex with her.

The judge did ultimately order that rape charges be filed. But in the meantime, it has also provoked an unprecedented backlash that has resulted in France considering a change to a longstanding, **anomalous** feature of its laws: Up to now, there has been no legal age of consent for sex.

anomalous 异常的; 不规则的

Fixing a specific age of consent means that children and adolescents below that age cannot, regardless of circumstances, be considered consenting to sex; their very age renders them incapable.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO)'s guidelines:

"The sexual abuse of children is a unique phenomenon; the dynamics are often very different to that of adult sexual abuse and therefore abuse of this nature cannot be handled in the same way."

The WHO has found that adult **perpetrators** also rarely use physical force or violence on children, relying instead on their ability to "manipulate the child's trust and hide the abuse."

perpetrator 犯罪者

WHO's formal definition of child sexual abuse is "the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society."

Muriel Salmons, a psychiatrist and president of the **Traumatic** Memory and Victimology Association, said that a child's inability to say no to a sexual predator is exactly why the law needs to protect them.

traumatic 外伤的; 创伤的