



Child Safety Online must be a priority; 14 organisations launch campaign to stop the spread of child sexual abuse material online

We are proud to launch the Child Safety Online Now (#ChildSafetyOnlineNow) campaign in partnership with 14 organisations dedicated to protecting children's safety and rights online.

The campaign supports the European Commission's proposal to tackle the rampant and growing spread of child sexual abuse online. In 2021, 85 million pieces of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) were reported online.¹ This is a growth of 35% from 2020.² The European Commission's proposal aims to make it mandatory for technology platforms to detect, report, and remove CSAM. This will have a huge impact in protecting children, preserving children's privacy, and reducing the devastating harm this content has on survivors of child sexual abuse. The proposal also aims to establish an EU Centre that will be responsible for coordinating actions between online service providers and law enforcement agencies to end child sexual abuse online while also providing support to child victims of sexual abuse in the EU. A crucial element of the proposal asks online service providers to always report cases of grooming, a vital measure to prevent harm before it happens.

With the #ChildSafetyOnlineNow campaign, Missing Children Europe, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, ECPACT, Brave Movement, Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Internet Watch Foundation, NSPCC, End Violence Against Children, Thorn, 5 Rights Foundation, Terre des Hommes, WeProtect Global Alliance, Inhope, Child Helpine International aim to raise awareness of the pressing need to protect children online and support the European Commission proposal to both prevent and combat child sexual abuse online. Children are spending more and more time online through all manner of devices and platforms; the proposal looks to protect children wherever they are so they can live, learn, and thrive in their digital worlds without the threat of online child sexual abuse. The campaign includes a [hero video](#), [website](#), and social media content. The website and social media content is available in EN, FR, IT, ES, DE & NL.

THE SCALE AND SCOPE OF THE CHALLENGE

- 1 in 5 users of digital services in the EU is a child.³
- 62% of all reported CSAM in 2021 was hosted in Europe.⁴

¹[European Commission, May 2022](#)

²[Guardian, March 2022](#)

³ 5Rights, [The Digital Services Act must deliver for children](#), 2022

⁴ IWF, [Annual Report](#), 2021

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- In 2021, the Internet Watch Foundation found child sexual abuse material online every two minutes.⁵
- Public polling shows widespread public support (68%) for the use of technical tools to identify child sexual abuse material and for the European Union to introduce legislative change to help improve child safety.⁶

Iain Drennan, Executive Director, WeProtect Global Alliance, said: “Child sexual exploitation and abuse online is increasing at a rapid rate and a step change is required in the collective response to create safe online environments for children. Legislations like the one that the EU have proposed are crucial to protect children online, by focusing on preventing harm from happening in the first place and bringing offenders to justice.”

Susie Hargreaves OBE, IWF Chief Executive, said: “The IWF’s mission is to create an internet free from child sexual abuse that’s a safe place for children and adults to use around the world, but we cannot do this alone.

“We are proud to be part of this vital campaign supporting the European Commission’s necessary and timely proposal to tackle the insidious growth of child sexual abuse online.

“Technology platforms have a responsibility to safeguard their young users’ safety and privacy and the IWF has the world-class expertise and quality datasets to help companies detect, report and remove the spread of this illegal content.”

Lianna McDonald, Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Child Protection, said: “We have waited years for tech companies to do the right thing and voluntarily take action to stop child sexual abuse on their platforms – now it is time for regulation. Almost half of all CSAM removal notices issued by Project Arachnid had previously been flagged to the same providers, meaning that tech companies are allowing known CSAM to be re-uploaded on their services. It is time for governments to do what only they can. We applaud the EU for leading the world in requiring tech companies to employ proactive detection to prevent harm from occurring on their services.”

Patrick Krens, Executive Director, Child Helpline International, said: “Child Helpline International welcomes the European Commission’s proposal to combat and prevent child sexual abuse online. We support the strong safeguards, the new independent EU Centre and mandatory use of safe technologies. Child helplines are a key service in any child protection system and play a crucial role in the victim response mechanisms across Europe. We believe in this campaign since it has the potential to make an impact far beyond the European Union and will help advance the global fight against child sexual abuse in both the offline and online worlds. By joining forces, we

⁵ IWF, [Annual Report 2021](#), 2021

⁶ ECPAT, [Project Beacon: What do EU Citizens think of the balance between online privacy and child protection?](#), 2021

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are in a unique position to turn the tide and win this fight as quickly as possible.”

Guillaume Landry, Executive Director, ECPAT International, said: “The protection and empowerment of children in digital spaces must become the rule, not the exception. And ECPAT knows from an EU-wide survey conducted in late 2021 the EU public agrees. Indeed, 68 % have expressed widespread support for the use of automated tools to identify child sexual abuse materials, and for the EU to introduce long-term legislation that will keep children safe online. This regulation is important because it serves as a reference to the rest of the world, establishing concrete mechanisms for the safe use of technologies to detect child sexual exploitation and abuse, and by making online service providers responsible and accountable for protecting children. Children have a right to live a life free from exploitation. It is time that we take all necessary measures to ensure that their privacy and protection is enforced in all online and offline environment. With children, we can turn the tide.”

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, President, Missing Children Europe, said: “This legislation is crucial, not only to protect survivors of child sexual abuse from further harm but also to address the continuous increase in online grooming leading to children going missing”.

-ENDS-

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