



Digital Shield – EU measures to combat digital sexualised violence against children and youth

**Expertise of the Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments
in Europe**

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Abstract

Digital sexualised violence against children and youth has never been as present and as threatening as today. The use of AI is accelerating the development and spread of this phenomenon. Protecting young people from digital sexualised violence has therefore become an urgent challenge of our time, requiring decisive and coordinated action at all levels.

The European Union has made combatting sexualised violence against children and youth a priority. This expertise presents existing as well as planned EU measures.

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Summary

Sexualised violence, whether online or offline, is any sexual act that occurs against a person's will and uses sexuality as a means of exerting power. As children are unable to give informed consent due to their physical, mental, and emotional development, any sexual act against or in front of them is considered violence. This type of violence is an attack on the entire person and personality and has long-term negative consequences.

Sexualised violence against young people must always be considered from an intersectional perspective. For instance, girls and young women are potentially exposed to a higher risk of violence than boys and young men. In addition, the impacts of sexualised violence are often more severe for children and youth who experience intersectional discrimination.

Sexualised violence has never been as prevalent and threatening in the digital space as it is today, and the use of AI is leading to an even more rapid development and spread. While there are already alarmingly high statistics, the number of unreported cases of digital sexualised violence against children and youth is significantly higher than the official figures. The real magnitude remains difficult to grasp.

Combating these forms of violence is made extremely difficult by the technological superiority of the perpetrators, their anonymity, cross-border prosecution, and the rapid and ongoing spread of child sexual abuse material in the form of images and videos. In addition, the severe psychological impact on affected persons, insufficient digital literacy and a lack of resources among authorities hamper the effective identification and prosecution of perpetrators as well as the protection of affected persons.

Sexualised violence has serious consequences for young people. Sexual harassment, coercion, and abuse can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety and depression, and can ultimately result in severe psychological trauma that stays with the affected individuals for life. Against this backdrop, it is important to not only criminalise all forms of sexualised violence that young people experience online and offline, but to also focus on education and violence prevention.

Combating sexualised violence against children and youth, both offline and online, is a priority on the EU agenda under the von der Leyen I and II Commissions and an integral part of the EU's internal security policy. The EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse 2020–2025 (COM(2020) 607 final) is a comprehensive framework that aims to provide a strong European response to the growing phenomenon of sexualised violence against children and youth, both offline and online. Accordingly, the existing Directive 2011/93/EU, which created a comprehensive and modern legal framework for combatting sexualised violence in the EU, is to be revised and expanded. Therefore, the Commission has already put forward a proposal since 2024 to close the identified gaps and shortcomings that have arisen, particularly with regard to technical innovations and challenges. The proposal is currently still in the EU legislative process between the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission. Trilogue negotiations started in June 2025.

Moreover, in May 2022 the Commission has proposed a Regulation (COM(2022) 209 final) that would introduce an obligation to detect, report and remove abusive content, establish a “European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse”, improve cooperation between law enforcement agencies and strengthen prevention as well as protection for affected persons. The appropriateness of the planned measures for detecting, reporting and removing child sexual abuse material and whether the associated interference with fundamental rights relating to privacy and data protection is justified by the desired protection of children has sparked controversy, particularly among EU Member States. Therefore, it has for months not been possible to reach a common position on the various specific proposals in this Regulation. The measure thus remains in the EU legislative process between Parliament, Council and Commission.

Since combatting sexualised violence against young people online and offline requires more than just criminal law provisions, the EU has introduced a series of additional measures that focus on education and violence prevention. Additionally, the EU plans to implement further initiatives during the current legislative period, geared for instance towards improving databases in order to develop evidence-based solutions. Access to social media by children and youth is another current subject of intense debate. In this context, it is important that all measures taken are implemented and evaluated in a sustainable manner across the EU Member States.

More effective protection of young people from sexualised violence, both online and offline, requires a holistic approach. Such an approach must coordinate and combine prevention, legislative and political measures, detection, technological solutions, obligations on online service providers, law enforcement and support for young people affected by violence. Considering this holistic approach, comprehensive digital education, comprehensive sexuality education and the inclusion of the perspectives of (violence-affected) children and youth as well as violence-affected adults in policymaking, taking into account the principle of intersectionality, are fundamental to preventing and combatting sexualised violence against children and youth. Since many measures only come into play once violence has already been committed, it is all the more important to change existing structures and unequal power relations in our society that enable violence in the first place. It should always be the declared goal of policy to prevent further violence and to adopt all measures leading to a non-violent society.

Preface

This present expertise focuses on digital sexualised violence against children and youth, with emphasis on the measures taken by the European Union. The EU has made combatting sexualised violence against children and youth a priority.

The [⇒ introductory chapter](#) of this expertise deals with the complex phenomenon of digital sexualised violence against children and youth. First, sexualised violence (in the digital space) is defined and, in particular, the serious and sometimes long-term consequences of this phenomenon of violence for affected children and youth are outlined. Building on this, various forms of digital sexualised violence – from grooming to sexual extortion – are explained and illustrated with examples. Following this, statistics on digital sexualised violence are presented, drawing particular attention to the problem of the high number of unreported cases which make the actual extent of this phenomenon of violence difficult to grasp. The introductory chapter concludes with a description of various challenges in combatting digital sexualised violence, most of which arise from rapid technological developments.

The core part of the expertise is the [⇒ chapter on the EU](#). Since 2003, the European Union (EU) has been actively working to combat sexualised violence against children and youth. Since 2019, the issue has been a priority for the European Commission and an integral part of the EU's internal security policy. The chapter presents in detail the various measures already initiated by the EU to combat and prevent digital sexualised violence against children and youth, as well as those planned for the current legislative period from 2024 to 2029. In particular, two comprehensive legislative projects have been initiated to address the new challenges, particularly in the digital space: First, the existing Directive 2011/93/EU is currently being revised. Second, a proposal for a Regulation has been put forward. Both measures are presented in detail.

Finally, four further recommendations are presented in an [⇒ outlook section](#), which answer the question of how young people – against the backdrop of the proposed measures – can be protected more effectively against violence.

This expertise is based on the analysis of existing research and data (status: October 2025).

This expertise was published online in a series of publications by the Observatory, together with a comprehensive overview of criminal and family law regulations for the protection of children and young people from sexualised violence online and offline in five EU Member States (Germany, France, Ireland, Sweden and Spain) (Sprang / Westerholt 2025) and an accompanying dossier that briefly and concisely explains all aspects of the Europe-wide fight against and prevention of (digital) sexualised violence (Lange 2025).

Introduction

What is (digital) sexualised violence?

Young people live in the digital world. They use the internet and digital technologies for communication, education, entertainment and social interaction. The digital world offers them a wide range of opportunities, but also harbours risks, particularly from the growing threat of sexualised violence online, which is spreading even more rapidly through the use of artificial intelligence (AI).

Sexualised violence, whether online or offline, is any sexual act that occurs against a person's will and uses sexuality as a means of exerting power (Spies 2023). This includes physical assaults as well as unwanted sexual communication by means of language, gestures or looks, and sexualised violence in the digital space, for instance in the form of unsolicited sending of pornographic images.¹ In cases of sexualised violence against children and youth², perpetrators³ deliberately and consciously exercise power and control in order to satisfy their own needs at the expense of the affected person. They make a conscious decision to use violence and usually prepare their actions strategically. They manipulate both the affected person⁴ and, in some cases, their protective environment in order to conceal their actions and reduce the likelihood of being detected. As children are unable to give informed consent due to their physical, mental, and emotional development, any sexual act against or in front of them is considered violence.⁵

In the discourse, the terms “sexualised violence against children and youth”; “sexual violence against children and youth” and “sexual abuse of children and youth” are being used. They generally mean the same thing and can be used synonymously. In this expertise, the term “sexualised” is preferred because, in contrast to “sexual”, it emphasises “[...] that perpetrators are not (solely) motivated by sexuality when they commit assaults and transgressions, but that it is primarily a form of violence and exercise of power that is expressed through sexual acts”

¹ <https://frauenrechte.de/unsere-arbeit/haeusliche-und-sexualisierte-gewalt/hintergrundinformationen/sexualisierte-gewalt>

² The age up to which people are classified as children, adolescents or young people/youth varies across EU Member States. The EU bases its classification of children mainly on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines a child as a person who has not reached the age of 18 years. The terms “adolescents”, “youth” and “young people” are often used synonymously to describe the age group from 15 to 29 years. In the current EU Youth Strategy, the age range is broader: there, “young people” are defined as persons between 13 and 30 years of age. In Germany, persons under the age of 14 are referred to as children; persons between the ages of 14 and 18 as adolescents or youth.

³ In 75 to 90 per cent of cases, sexualised violence against children and youth is perpetrated by men or male adolescents. See also: <https://beauftragte-missbrauch.de/en/themen/definition/who-are-the-perpetrators>

⁴ Many people affected by sexualised violence reject the term “victim” as it is associated with helplessness, weakness, incompetence and powerlessness and therefore perceived as derogatory and stigmatising. Instead, the terms “affected person” or “person affected” are used. <https://www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/de/ueber-uns/presse/informationen-fuer-die-presse/hinweise-fuer-die-berichterstattung-ueber-gewalt-gegen-frauen-und-kinder.html> When using the term “affected person”, being affected is not the central characteristic of the person and thus sometimes preferred: <https://www.vcp.de/pfadfinden/aus-dem-verband/achtsamundaktiv/begriffe-rund-um-aufarbeitung-sexualisierter-gewalt/>.

⁵ <https://beauftragte-missbrauch.de/en/themen/definition/definition-of-child-sexual-abuse>

In this context, the “age below which, in accordance with national law, it is prohibited to engage in sexual activities with a child” (Article 2, Directive 2011/93/EU) plays an important role. This is sometimes also referred to as the “age of consent”. Persons below this age are generally not able of consenting to sexual acts. This age varies depending on national regulations. In Germany, the age of sexual consent is 14 years.

(Spies 2023: 125). The term “sexual abuse of children and youth”, in contrast, is criticised as it could imply that there is such a thing as legitimate “sexual use” of young people. On the other hand, the term “sexual abuse” better expresses the fact that sexual acts are not solely about physical violence.⁵ In English-speaking countries, the terms “child abuse” and “child exploitation” are often used together and abbreviated. For example, the term “Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation” is often shortened to “OCSEA”.

Sexualised violence has serious consequences for young people. “This is regardless of how serious the acts are, whether they take place offline or online and are chargeable or not: Sexual abuse is an attack on a complete person involving their basic trust and their psychological and physical integrities. Sexual abuse results in the survivors experiencing a huge loss of trust and control, disgust, humiliation, powerlessness and shame.”⁶ Sexualised violence can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety and depression in affected children and adolescents, and may ultimately result in severe psychological trauma that stays with the affected individuals for life. In the case of digital sexualised violence, for instance, the privacy of those affected is violated again and again every time the perpetrators share images of their abuse online. This can often happen repeatedly and over the course of many years. Those affected are forced to live with the awareness that content depicting the worst moments of their lives is being circulated and can potentially be seen by anyone, including their friends and relatives.⁷

Young people who experience sexualised violence not only suffer immediate harm but can also be permanently impaired in their identity development. Children and youth affected by sexualised violence are treated by the perpetrators as objects whose needs, feelings and personality are irrelevant. They are sexualised as objects. This means that the perpetrators attribute characteristics or behaviours to them that only have sexual significance in adulthood. Furthermore, the affected persons are reduced to their supposed sexual availability – a process that can take place both in real life and in the digital space (BMBF 2019).⁸

Children and youth affected by violence are also at increased risk of experiencing violence again (Lino et al 2025; Assink et al. 2019). Experiencing violence in childhood not only leads to immediate physical and psychological harm but also increases the long-term risk of a variety of problems in adulthood. The extent of these impacts often depends on the severity and duration of the experienced violence. Ultimately, violence does not only have individual consequences, but also affects society as a whole. Against this background, it is important to not only criminalise all forms of sexualised violence to which young people may be exposed online and offline, but also to focus on education and violence prevention. **Preventing and combatting violence is therefore a task for the entire society** (Carr et al. 2020) (see also ⇒ Outlook).

⁶ <https://beauftragte-missbrauch.de/en/themen/definition/definition-of-child-sexual-abuse>

⁷ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/protecting-children-sexual-abuse_en

⁸ <https://www.bundeskoordination.de/de/article/493.was-entgegnet-man-einigen-verbreiteten-mythen-zu-sexualisierter-gewalt.html>

Infobox: Intersectionality and sexualised violence

Sexualised violence against children and youth should always be reflected from an intersectional perspective. The **concept of intersectionality** considers social categories such as background, gender, class, physical impairments, sexual or gender identity as well as other characteristics and attributions not isolated from one another. Rather, it highlights the interweaving and intersection of several categories with social, political and economic structures that can further exacerbate social inequalities and discrimination, particularly against vulnerable social groups, as various dimensions of identity and social belonging can significantly influence vulnerability to violence as well as the impacts of this violence (Crenshaw 1991).

All young people are in fact discriminated against: there is a perceived superiority of adults and young people are thus regarded as inferior (see also the term “minor”). **Adulthood** is thus a form of intersectional discrimination that every person experiences in the course of their life, but which they can outgrow (Bostancı / Hornung 2023: 133f.). Adultist structures in politics and legislation are characterised, for instance, by the fact that many measures and laws directly or indirectly affect children and youth, whereas their perspectives or opinions are not taken into account.

Regarding the risk of experiencing violence, intersectional discrimination plays a decisive role: girls and young women are exposed to a significantly higher risk of experiencing sexualised violence online and offline than boys and young men. This risk is exacerbated if, for instance, a girl has a disability and/or grows up in poverty, compared to a girl without a disability and from a high-income household. This is partly due to the fact that intersectional discrimination is also linked to increased isolation, reduced social visibility and more complex vulnerabilities. Perpetrators deliberately exploit these vulnerabilities. For instance, they may use racist or ableist stereotypes to manipulate, isolate or humiliate children and adolescents online. The internet also enables perpetrators to target vulnerable groups who are perceived as easier to manipulate or control due to their respective identity characteristics.

The impacts of sexualised violence are often more severe for young people who experience intersectional discrimination: They may have difficulty finding help as they encounter barriers to accessing support systems, such as language barriers or a lack of accessible services. Also, their experiences may be taken less seriously or be dismissed as isolated cases because established systems are not sufficiently prepared for intersectional dynamics (Auer et al. 2023). Effective prevention and intervention therefore always requires an intersectional approach that takes into account the diverse realities of children's and adolescents' lives, developing tailored protective measures that address the specific risks and needs of all young people. This goes hand in hand with recognising the diversity within this group – and not assuming a homogeneous group (EIGE 2025).

Forms of sexualised violence in the digital space

The digital space has brought a new dimension to violence against children and youth. Existing forms of violence are changing and finding their digital equivalent. In addition, the anonymity and reach of the internet, new opportunities for contact and interaction through social media, and technological advances such as AI, augmented reality and virtual reality⁹ are giving rise to new forms of violence.

Sexualised violence against young people in the digital space is a frighteningly complex phenomenon. It encompasses many forms that can sometimes overlap. For example, the internet is used to illegally acquire, consume, and redistribute ⇒ [child sexual abuse material](#) (CSAM) in the form of pictures and videos. AI is increasingly being used to create abusive images.¹⁰ However, young people can also be sexually harassed or pressured directly online, for instance in the form of unwanted sexual messages, images or videos. In so-called ⇒ [sexual extortion](#), perpetrators gain the trust of children and youth by, for instance, masquerading as young people themselves. The aim is to manipulate the affected young people into sending revealing photos, which are then used for blackmailing. Digital sexualised violence can also lead to direct physical violence. For instance, many perpetrators use ⇒ [grooming](#) with the goal of meeting children and adolescent “offline” to sexually abuse them.

Grooming

Grooming describes the targeted initiation of sexual contact with children and youth online by individuals. This is considered a criminal offence. Establishing contact often takes place in chat rooms or on gaming platforms, where false identities are often used and a relationship of trust is established. Actions that fall under this category include showing children pornographic material or manipulating them into performing sexual acts. The primary goal is to push the affected person in a situation where sexualised violence, whether online or offline, becomes possible. This process may extend over weeks or months. Grooming refers to any contact intended to encourage a child to engage in sexual activity. It does not require an actual meeting or a response to the message.¹¹

Example: A 13-year-old boy is approached in an online forum for video games by a perpetrator who uses a fake profile picture to pretend to be of the same age. The perpetrator spends weeks building a relationship of trust with the boy, for instance by pretending to share the same interests. Over time, the perpetrator changes the subject of the conversations. He asks for personal details, persuades the boy to send him private photos and finally to meet him in person.

⁹ Augmented reality enhances the real world: Users continue to see the real world, but it is augmented or enriched with digital elements. In contrast, virtual reality completely replaces the real world.

¹⁰ Conversely, AI could also be used to effectively detect CSAM. Its use is increasingly being requested at the EU level and is, for instance, part of current proposals (⇒ [chapter on the EU](#)).

¹¹ https://www.bka.de/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Aufgabenbereiche/Zentralstellen/Kinderpornografie/Cybergrooming/Cybergrooming_node.html

Deep fakes and deep nudes

Deep fakes are fake images, videos or recordings that are created using deep learning – a type of machine learning – and can appear deceptively real. Depending on the “quality” of the deep fake, it can give the impression that the person depicted is actually naked or engaged in sexual acts. Deep fakes involve inserting an image of a person into content in which they do/did not actually appear.

One form of deep fakes are **deep nudes**, meaning AI-generated nude images or videos. Deep nudes are created using AI programmes that convert non-sexualised photos or videos of people into realistic-looking nude images and videos. The programme captures the body of the affected person and creates a new nude image or video of them. Both phenomena are forms of image-based sexualised violence.¹²

Production, distribution, purchase, acquisition and possession of child sexual abuse material (CSAM)

CSAM are photographs or video material depicting sexual acts on or in front of children and adolescents. This also includes “images of completely or partially unclothed children in unnatural and sexually-accentuated postures or those of children's genitals”.¹³ Depending on the definition, this may include not only visual material but also audio recordings, live streaming, written material or physical objects such as sculptures. CSAM can also be created using AI. This includes both depictions that are completely artificially generated and depictions based on real images of children. As AI is trained using images of real children and youth, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between the two, which poses a challenge for identifying affected persons.¹⁴

The production and distribution of CSAM ranges from the creation of new content to mass distribution online via encrypted networks, darknets and social media. Offenders use technological developments such as IP address anonymisation or cryptocurrencies for payment to share content quickly and cover their tracks.

Alternatively, the term “depictions of sexualised violence” can be used. This term emphasises the seriousness of the acts and also shows that the acts involve violence perpetrated with sexual means (ECPAT 2025: 2; ECPAT International 2025: 55ff.). The terms “child and youth pornography” or “child and youth pornographic content”, which are still used in German criminal law, in turn, are not recommended, as they do not indicate that these depictions are a form of sexualised violence (ibid.). At EU level, ⇒ Directive 2011/93/EU currently uses the term “child pornography”; this term is to be replaced by “child sexual abuse material” in the revision of the Directive.

¹² <https://www.klicksafe.eu/en/sexualisierte-gewalt-durch-bilder/erstellung-sexualisierter-aufnahmen>;
<https://www.hoganlovells.com/en/publications/france-prohibits-non-consensual-deep-fakes>

¹³ <https://beauftragte-missbrauch.de/en/themen/recht/criminal-law>

Example: User A offers a new collection of CSAM on a darknet forum, stating their value in Bitcoin. An interested user B contacts him via encrypted message, and they agree on a price. After paying in cryptocurrency, user B receives an encrypted link to download the content.

Live streaming of sexualised violence

Live streaming involves the live transmission of sexualised violence against children and youth via information and communication technology. This material is viewed by people who tune in online. These viewers may have requested and/or ordered the sexual acts they are watching and may also have paid for them (ECPAT International 2025: 86f.).

There are generally two types of live streaming of sexualised violence: in a two-person relationship, the perpetrator instructs children or adolescents to perform sexual acts on themselves in the live stream. In a three-person relationship, the perpetrator instructs a third person to perform sexual acts on young people. Live streaming often takes place across borders.¹⁴

Example: A person from Germany pays another person in the Philippines to sexually abuse a child and then watches the offence live on the internet.¹⁵

Sexual Extortion

Sexual extortion involves threatening to publish nude photos or videos of a person online. For instance, affected persons are persuaded by unknown individuals online, often after a brief initial contact, to send them intimate photos or videos of themselves, which are then used to demand further sexual acts or money. The unknown individuals sometimes pretend to be someone else, for instance stating a different gender and/or age. This form of violence has increased significantly in recent years, particularly among young people. Boys are increasingly the main target group of financial sexual extortion (WeProtect Global Alliance 2024).

In contrast to ⇒ [grooming](#), which aims at sexual abuse, sexual extortion is primarily focused on sexual or financial blackmail. Sometimes, both forms of violence can overlap.

In media discourse, the term “sextortion” is frequently being used. However, this should be avoided as it does not make sufficiently clear that it refers to sexual extortion of children and youth. Moreover, it can have a trivialising effect (ECPAT International 2025: 98).

Example: A 14-year-old girl is manipulated online by a perpetrator into sending intimate photos. Once the perpetrator has obtained the images, he threatens to publish them if the girl does not pay a ransom.

¹⁴ <https://www.weprotect.org/thematic/livestreaming/>

¹⁵ <https://www.weprotect.org/resources/case-study/scale-of-harm-prevalence-measurement-multi-sector-partnerships-and-survivor-engagement/>

Statistics on digital sexualised violence and the problem of unreported cases

Digital sexualised violence has never been as prevalent and threatening as it is today, particularly due to the use of AI. It is estimated that in 2023, 300 million children under the age of 18 were affected by digital sexualised violence across the globe (Childlight 2024). The number of reported cases of online abuse, grooming and the distribution of CSAM has exploded in recent years – in 2024, over 20.5 million suspected cases of digital sexualised violence against children and youth were recorded worldwide.¹⁶ More than half of the identified websites are hosted on European servers, primarily in the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania and Poland.¹⁷

In 2023, there were 1.3 million reports of sexualised violence against young people in the EU, including more than 3.4 million depictions of abuse in the form of images and videos.¹⁸ Each report, for instance a website, may contain a multitude of images or videos. It is estimated that one in five children in Europe is or has been affected by sexualised violence. Between 70 and 85 percent of those affected know the perpetrator (UNICEF 2020).¹⁹

Young people are increasingly the target of digital sexualised violence. Research suggests that most of these cases of violence take place on major online social media platforms, especially those owned by Meta, such as Facebook, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp.¹⁶ The volume of CSAM is constantly growing, particularly with the use of AI (Europol 2024). The severity of sexualised violence against children depicted in AI-generated images is also increasing. Recently, there has been an increase in the circulation of AI-generated videos depicting sexualised violence against children and youth.²⁰ Technological advances now make it possible, for instance, to add children's faces to adult pornographic videos using AI tools (IWF 2024).

Some of the figures presented are historical highs – and the recorded cases represent only the tip of the iceberg. The number of unreported cases of digital sexualised violence against children and youth is significantly higher than the official figures. The real magnitude remains difficult to grasp: This may be because many affected persons do not recognise the violence against them as such. Also, they may not talk about their experiences out of shame and fear that they will not be believed.

¹⁶ Suspicious material from around the world is collected by, among others, the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in the US. After examination, the organisation forwards the material to the relevant authorities for criminal prosecution. <https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline/cybertiplinedata#overview> (see also EU Parliament 2024)

¹⁷ The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) works to curb the spread of child sexual abuse material online. Thanks to its work, more than one million websites (as of August 2025: 1,228,090) have been removed from the internet over the past five years. <https://www.iwf.org.uk/annual-data-insights-report-2024/>

¹⁸ See also: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/protecting-children-sexual-abuse_en

¹⁹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/757611/EPRS_BRI\(2024\)757611_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/757611/EPRS_BRI(2024)757611_EN.pdf); <https://human-rights-channel.coe.int/stop-child-sexual-abuse-in-sport-en.html>

²⁰ <https://www.iwf.org.uk/news-media/news/full-feature-length-ai-films-of-child-sexual-abuse-will-be-inevitable-as-synthetic-videos-make-huge-leaps-in-sophistication-in-a-year/>

According to a recent nationwide study on unreported cases in Germany, 12.7 percent of respondents had been affected by sexualised violence at least once in their lives. Based on the total population of 18- to 59-year-olds in Germany, this corresponds to 5.7 million people who have experienced sexualised violence in their lives. Digital channels such as social media, messenger services and chats play an important role in this regard: 61.9 per cent of affected persons who have experienced sexualised violence in the real world have also experienced sexualised violence on social media (Dreßing et al. 2025).²¹ International studies by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF also confirm the findings that the number of unreported cases of sexualised violence against young people is high and that digital media are playing an ever-growing role in this. Overall, systematic recording is methodologically challenging, as studies of unreported cases rely on anonymous surveys and indirect methods (ECPAT et al. 2023; WHO 2020).

Challenges in combatting digital sexualised violence

Combatting digital sexualised violence against young people poses immense challenges: first, the transnational nature of the internet complicates cross-border prosecution of perpetrators; second, anonymity and the use of encryption significantly hinder identification of perpetrators as well as evidence gathering. Added to this is the increasingly rapid and persistent dissemination of digital content, which can reappear even after deletion, leading to a re-victimisation of those affected by sexualised violence (IWF 2023).

Another major problem is the technological superiority of perpetrators, who use new technologies such as AI to commit crimes, often outsmarting legislators and law enforcement agencies. AI-generated images and videos are so easy to create that they can be produced by individuals with criminal intent even without in-depth technical knowledge. This contributes to the growing spread of CSAM. With ever-growing volumes and improved use of AI, it is becoming increasingly difficult for investigators to identify both offenders and persons affected by violence (Europol 2024). The latter are sometimes completely unaware that abusive images of/involving them are being distributed online. AI-generated images and videos are now so realistic that they are almost indistinguishable from real photos and videos.

Further hurdles include the serious impact of digital sexualised violence on those affected, which often leads to a high number of unreported cases. Moreover, there is often a lack of digital literacy among young people and carers when it comes to recognising online risks. Last but not least, there is a tension between protecting affected persons and the right to privacy, particularly in the debate on encryption. The lack of resources available to law enforcement and protection agencies also makes it difficult to deal effectively with the steadily increasing number of cases (EIGE 2024; UNICEF 2024; World Vision Deutschland 2023).

²¹ In collaboration with the polling institute infratest dimap, 10,000 people aged between 18 and 59 across Germany were contacted in writing. Just over 3,000 people took part in the survey. According to the researchers, this response rate is high and therefore allows for reliable conclusions to be drawn.

What is the EU doing to combat digital sexualised violence?

The protection and promotion of children's rights is a key objective of the European Union (EU), enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.²² Since 2003, the EU has been actively tackling sexualised violence against children and youth in Europe, continuously developing measures to prevent and combat it. Since 2019, combatting sexualised violence against children and youth has been a priority on the EU agenda and an integral part of the EU's internal security policy.²⁴

What are the EU key measures?

Table 1: EU key measures to combat (digital) sexualised violence against children and youth

When?	What?
22 December 2003	Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA on combatting the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography
13 December 2011	Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on combatting the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (⇒ CSA ²³ Directive)
24 July 2020	EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse (2020–2025) (COM(2020) 607 final)
11 May 2022	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse (COM(2022) 209 final) (⇒ CSA Regulation) (in negotiation)
6 February 2024	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combatting the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (recast) (COM(2024) 60 final) (⇒ CSA Directive) (in negotiation)

Author's illustration

²² <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/de/be-heard/coordinator-on-children-rights/children-rights>

²³ The acronym CSA stands for child sexual abuse.

EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse (2020–2025)

The [EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse \(2020-2025\)](#) (COM(2020) 607 final), adopted as an integral part of the Strategy for a European Security Union²⁴, is a comprehensive framework that aims to provide a coherent European response to the growing phenomenon of sexualised violence against children and youth, both offline and online.²⁵

It comprises eight specific initiatives. Selected ones are presented in more detail in the following chapters:

1. **Ensuring full implementation of existing legislation:** This primarily refers to warranting that Member States fully and correctly transpose and apply [⇒ Directive 2011/93/EU](#) into national law.
2. **Ensuring an effective response through EU legislation:** This initiative focuses on continuously reviewing and adapting EU laws to respond effectively to new forms of sexualised violence, particularly in the digital sphere. This includes the [⇒ proposal for a revision of the CSA Directive](#) and the [⇒ proposal for a CSA Regulation](#).
3. **Identifying legislative gaps, best practices and prioritised measures:** The European Commission systematically identifies gaps in the existing legal framework, collects examples of best practice models from Member States and highlights areas where urgent action is needed at EU level.
4. **Strengthening law enforcement efforts at national and EU level:** This initiative aims to improve the capabilities of national law enforcement agencies as well as EU agencies such as [⇒ Europol and Eurojust](#). This includes promoting information exchange, providing technical support and improving investigation methods.
5. **Supporting EU Member States in better protecting children and youth by means of prevention:** This involves supporting Member States in developing and implementing effective prevention programmes, raising awareness among young people, parents and professionals, and promoting safe online behaviour.
6. **Establishing a [⇒ European Centre prevent and counter child sexual abuse](#):** This central body is to promote knowledge transfer, coordination, research and the development of best practice models, and bring together all relevant actors, stakeholders and institutions.
7. **Measures by the industry to ensure the protection of children and young people in their services:** Online service providers are both voluntarily encouraged and legally

²⁴ The [Strategy for a European Security Union](#) was a comprehensive framework for responding to the constantly evolving security landscape in Europe in the years 2020-2025. Since 1 April 2025, the [ProtectEU Strategy](#) has been in force, replacing the previous strategy. The fight against sexualised violence against children remains an integral part of the new security strategy, building on the Child Sexual Abuse Directive which is still in force.

²⁵ An EU Strategy is a comprehensive plan or policy framework developed by the EU institutions to define long-term objectives in a specific area and to coordinate joint action. It sets out the priorities, goals or objectives and often the instruments with which the EU and its Member States intend to achieve these objectives.

obliged by existing legislation such as the ⇒ [Digital Services Act](#) to take proactive measures to prevent sexualised violence on their platforms and to detect and report ⇒ [CSAM](#).

8. **Multilateral cooperation:** The EU recognises that combatting sexualised violence against young people is a global phenomenon and thus promotes cooperation with international partners, organisations and third countries to combat criminal networks and perpetrators across borders.

Infobox: Europol and Eurojust

Europol is the European Union's law enforcement agency, basically the EU's police institution. It coordinates cooperation between national police authorities in the fight against major and organised crime and terrorism.

Eurojust is the European Union's agency for judicial cooperation in criminal matters, coordinating cross-border investigations and prosecutions.

Both EU agencies play a crucial role in the cross-border detection and prosecution of sexualised violence against children and youth as well as in dismantling criminal networks.

The EU is actively working to implement the proposed strategy and has taken a number of legislative and operational measures to this end. In particular, two comprehensive legislative projects have been initiated to address the new challenges, especially in the digital space: First, the existing ⇒ [Directive 2011/93/EU](#) is currently being revised. Second, a ⇒ [proposal for a CSA-Regulation](#) has been put forward. Both measures are presented below.

Proposal for a revision of Directive 2011/93/EU on combatting the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children (CSA Directive, in negotiation)

On 6 February 2024, the Commission presented a → [proposal](#) to revise and extend two existing measures, Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA and → [Directive 2011/93/EU](#).

Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA

The [Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA](#), adopted on 22 December 2003, was an early and groundbreaking EU legal instrument on “combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography”.²⁶

Its main objective is to harmonise the national legislation of EU Member States by establishing common minimum rules for the definition of criminal offences and the application of sanctions. This is to ensure that the most serious forms of sexualised violence against children and young people are punishable in all Member States.

In addition, national judicial powers have been extended to enable more effective prosecution of cross-border crime. A minimum level of support for affected young people was also provided for.

Directive 2011/93/EU

[Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on combatting the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography](#)²⁷ was adopted to establish a more comprehensive and effective legal framework that takes into account the rapidly evolving methods used by perpetrators, particularly in the digital space.²⁸

The Directive has the following objectives:

- **Harmonisation of definitions of criminal offences and penalties:** The Directive establishes uniform definitions across the EU for a range of sexualised violence offences. It obliges Member States to provide for effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties for such offences.
- **Focus on online crime:** For the first time, the Directive covers offences committed online and/or using new digital technologies. Furthermore, it requires Member States to take appropriate measures to detect and report → [CSAM](#)²⁹.

²⁶ A framework decision used to be an EU legal act in the field of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, which was binding on Member States in terms of its objective, but left them free to choose the means of implementation. With the Treaty of Lisbon, it was replaced by regular EU legal acts such as Directives.

²⁷ Corrigendum to rename the Directive to 2011/93/EU: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011L0093R\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011L0093R(01))

²⁸ A Directive is a legal act of the European Union that obliges Member States to achieve a specific objective but allows them to choose the form and means of implementation in national law. A Directive must be transposed into law by national parliaments, thus making it more flexible than a Regulation, but still contributing to the harmonisation of laws across the EU.

²⁹ The Regulation does not use the term “child sexual abuse material” but speaks of “child pornography”. Regarding a critique on this term, see → [Forms of digital sexualised violence](#).

- **Prevention:** The Directive requires Member States to take preventive measures to deter sexualised violence. This includes awareness-raising campaigns, sensibilisation programmes and the introduction of codes of conduct for persons working with children and youth, including criminal record checks.
- **Protection and support for affected persons:** Protecting affected persons is a central concern of the Directive. It requires Member States to ensure that children and young people who are/were affected of violence have access to specialised support services tailored to their individual needs. In addition, measures are provided for to protect affected persons from further trauma during court proceedings, such as the possibility of video recording their witness statements.
- **Cross-border cooperation and jurisdiction:** In order to address the transnational nature of this crime, the Directive strengthens the jurisdiction of Member States and promotes cross-border cooperation between law enforcement agencies and authorities.
- **Specialised units:** Member States are encouraged to set up or strengthen specialised investigation units that have the necessary knowledge and resources to combat sexualised violence.

Directive 2011/93/EU has created a comprehensive legal framework for combatting sexualised violence in the EU and serves as a foundation for subsequent measures.

Nevertheless, the EU still needs to ensure that the existing Directive is implemented in all EU Member States. In June 2025, for instance, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Hungary were asked by the Commission to properly incorporate the Directive into national law. Otherwise, the Commission may decide to refer the cases to the Court of Justice of the European Union (AGF 2025).³⁰

The Directive was evaluated in 2017 (EU Parl 2017). The evaluation criticises the inadequate collection of data and calls for better prevention as well as implementation of measures for children and young people affected by violence. Challenges also exist in the monitoring of perpetrators, the scanning, reporting and removal of CSAM, the issue of responsibility and obligations of internet service providers in this context, and the efficiency of online investigations.

Proposal for a revision of Directive 2011/93/EU

The [proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combatting the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA \(COM\(2024\) 60 final, CSA Directive\)](#)³¹ to revise the two existing legal instruments, which the Commission presented on 6 February 2024, is primarily

³⁰ For the current status of all EU Member States, see the respective [EU website: Decisions on infringement cases](#).

³¹ The proposal was published together with an [annex](#).

intended to close gaps and shortcomings that have arisen in particular as a result of technological advances. The proposal focuses on criminal law aspects, on requirements for the protection of children and young people affected by violence as well as on prevention:

Criminal law requirements:

- Ensuring that all forms of sexualised violence against children and youth, including those enabled or facilitated by technological developments, are criminalised,
Explicitly: Creating new criminal offences or expanding and specifying existing ones, in particular the urgently needed expansion and clarification of the definition of ⇒ CSAM to include AI-generated content (Article 2 paragraph 3d) ⇒ grooming (Article 6) and ⇒ live streaming of sexualised violence (Article 7),³²
- Improvement of national regulation for investigation and prosecution, taking into account new technologies,
- Removal of reporting and limitation periods to facilitate access to juridical institutions as well as the possibility of redress for children and youth affected by violence,
- Strengthening of criminalisation as well as harmonisation of EU Regulations.

Guidelines for the prevention and support of children and adolescents affected by violence:

- Strengthening prevention and protection measures,
- Guidelines for employers in child-sensitive areas with regards to the vocational training and further education of all persons who come into contact with young people affected by violence in their professional capacity, as well as reporting obligations for professionals,
- Creation of a national authority in the field of child protection (Article 24), which, among other things, is to coordinate and evaluate preventive measures.

The proposal is currently (October 2025) still in the EU legislative process between the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission.³³

In June 2025, the **European Parliament** agreed on its position regarding the proposal and adopted it with 599 votes in favour, two against and 62 abstentions.³⁴ The Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) had already adopted a draft

³² For clarification of terms, see ⇒ [Forms of digital sexualised violence](#). The proposed Directive consistently uses the term "child sexual abuse material", which replaces the term "child pornography" from Directive 2011/93/EU. In addition, the term "solicitation of children" is widely used instead of "grooming".

³³ Overview: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-new-era-for-european-defence-and-security/file-revision-of-the-combatting-child-sexual-abuse-directive>

³⁴ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20250613IPR28905/fight-against-child-sexual-abuse-updated-rules-to-address-new-technologies>; https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0116_EN.pdf

report on the proposal in April 2024³⁵. In addition, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), amongst others, examined the proposal and called for a stronger focus on the gender dimension: after all, the vast majority of young people affected by sexualised violence are girls.³⁶ In principle, the European Parliament supports the Commission's draft, but its demands are more specific and often stricter, particularly with regard to the level of penalties and punishment, limitation periods, explicit consideration of new technologies such as AI, and the detailed design of protection and the definition of "consent".

The points mentioned are:

- **Updating of definitions:** The Parliament calls for the definitions to be updated to explicitly cover and criminalise new phenomena such as ⇒ [deep fakes](#) and AI-generated content ⇒ [CSAM](#). This is a concretisation of the Commission's general objective of taking technological developments into account.
- **Increasing maximum penalties:** The Parliament proposes increasing the maximum penalties for certain offences, such as the distribution of abusive images. The Commission had generally sought "higher penalties"; the Parliament has specified this further.
- **Abolition of limitation periods:** The Parliament calls for the complete abolition of limitation periods for offences covered by the Directive and the right of affected persons to claim compensation without limitation. The Commission proposed a potential removal of reporting and limitation periods, but the Parliament goes further and calls for their complete abolition.
- **Handling of AI systems:** The Parliament emphasises the need to explicitly criminalise the use of AI systems in creating CSAM as well as in the context of ⇒ [live streaming of sexualised violence](#). This is a further specification of the Commission's general objective to take technological developments into account.
- **Definition of "consent" for young people:** The Parliament has introduced a new definition of "consent" for children and young people. This definition is geared towards avoiding a criminalisation of consensual acts between peers without a dependency relationship or abuse of trust. This is a specific point that was not explicitly highlighted in this form in the Commission's original proposal.
- **Free support for persons affected by violence:** The Parliament calls for comprehensive and free support for persons affected by violence, including medical and forensic examinations, evidence documentation and access to sexual and reproductive health services, based on the ⇒ [Barnahus model](#). The Commission identified improving support for affected persons as an objective; the Parliament has made this much more specific.

³⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/LIBE-PR-746811_EN.pdf

³⁶ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/FEMM-AD-766976_EN.pdf

On 13 December 2024, the **Council of the EU** adopted its position on the CSA Directive.³⁷ It proposes specific adjustments to criminal offences, penalties and data collection. This is to provide a solid basis for national implementation. In particular, the Council calls for broader definitions of criminal offences for the following forms of violence:

- Criminalisation of live streaming of sexualised violence against children and youth,
- Inclusion of realistic depictions of sexualised violence in order to better cover ⇒ **deep fakes** and AI-generated CSAM,
- Introduction of the criminal offence of giving instructions for sexualised abuse or for solicitation of children for sexual purposes (⇒ **grooming**), for instance by creating or distributing instruction manuals.

Negotiations between the Commission, Parliament and Council on the final form of the revised Directive started on 23 June 2025.

Infobox: The Barnahus model

The Barnahus (Icelandic for “children’s house”) model is a multidisciplinary and cross-agency approach based on the principle of child-friendly justice. It aims to prevent the re-victimisation of children and youth who have been affected by (sexualised) violence or who may have witnessed it. The focus is on processes and support for young people within the justice and child protection systems. Instead of, for instance, a child being interviewed multiple times by different authorities such as the police, the judiciary, social services and medical professionals, all necessary services are brought together under one roof in a child-friendly and safe environment. This significantly reduces stress and trauma for the child. It is essential that professionals are made aware of the affected child’s specific needs.

The EU considers the Barnahus model to be a key instrument for implementing children’s rights and protecting children and youth from violence. The Commission has formally enshrined it as a best practice in its ⇒ EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and promotes its implementation in Member States, for instance in the Republic of Ireland, Slovenia and Spain.

As part of initiatives to combat sexualised violence against children and youth, the Barnahus model is seen as an effective approach to securing evidence and supporting affected persons. It enables a coordinated response that focuses on both criminal prosecution as well as protection and recovery of the child. In addition, efforts are underway to develop common quality standards for Barnahus facilities in Europe (CoE 2023; Johansson/Stefansen 2020).³⁸

³⁷ Secured link – please copy into browser: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16674-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

³⁸ <https://cbss.org/cbss-bodies/other-bodies/promise-barnahus/>

Proposal for a Regulation (CSA Regulation, in negotiation)

In May 2022, the Commission proposed a [Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse](#) (COM(2022) 209 final, CSA Regulation)^{39, 40}. This Regulation aims to introduce an obligation to detect, report and remove depictions of child sexual abuse material, establish a “European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse”, improve cooperation between law enforcement agencies and strengthen prevention and protection for affected persons.

The objectives are:

1. **Obligation to detect, report and remove child sexual abuse material:** Online services such as messenger apps, email providers and hosting services will be obliged to proactively detect ⇒ [CSAM](#) and ⇒ [grooming](#)⁴¹, report it to the authorities and remove it. This provision will also apply to encrypted communications, such as private text messages.
2. **Establishment of an EU centre:** A new “European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse” is to be established. This centre will provide technology for detecting child sexual abuse material, investigate suspected cases and forward them to national law enforcement authorities, secure evidence, carry out prevention work and assist affected persons.⁴²
3. **Improving the responses of law enforcement agencies:** Cooperation between national authorities and with the new EU centre is to be intensified or established in order to track down and prosecute perpetrators more effectively.
4. **Prevention and protection of affected persons:** In addition to detection and prosecution, preventive measures and support for affected persons are to be strengthened as well.

The proposal is currently (October 2025) still in the EU’s interinstitutional legislative process and subject of intense negotiations in the Council of the EU⁴³. Moreover, the proposal has sparked heated debate between data protection and children’s rights organisations.

The biggest **controversy** revolves around the proportionality of the planned measures and the question of whether the associated infringements of fundamental rights relating to privacy and

³⁹ The proposal was published together with an [annex](#) containing sample templates, for instance for a disclosure order.

⁴⁰ A Regulation is a legal act by the EU that is directly and fully applicable in all Member States as soon as it enters into force. It does not require further national implementation but applies directly like a national law.

⁴¹ For clarification of terms, see ⇒ [Forms of digital sexualised violence](#). As in the proposal to revise the CSA Directive, the proposed regulation consistently uses the term “child sexual abuse material” instead of “abuse depictions”. In addition, the term “solicitation of children” is widely used instead of “grooming”.

⁴² See also further remarks in the chapter on the ⇒ [establishment of a European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse](#).

⁴³ Overview: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-new-era-for-european-defence-and-security/file-combating-child-sexual-abuse-online>

data protection can be justified with the desired protection of children. Measures to detect and remove ⇒ **CSAM** are particularly controversial, as there are fears that this may infringe on the privacy of all individuals. In the event of an official order, it would be possible, for instance, to oblige WhatsApp to search all user chats for a specific image depicting sexualised violence against a child using scanning technology, and to report the search results to the EU centre. In this context, there is also criticism that such a scan would be technically difficult to implement and could undermine the principle of encryption. Furthermore, the use of automated detection tools could lead to false alarms, which could place innocent users under suspicion.⁴⁴ Due to the proposed obligation to scan content on private communication services, the proposal has also become known as “chat control”.⁴⁵ On the other side, children’s rights organisations criticise “that the perspective of data protection organisations is disproportionately represented in the public debate and that the term “chat control” has been introduced into the debate by actors who describe the concern for child protection as conflicting with privacy and data protection and who are conducting the debate with the objective of calling the regulatory project into question” (ECPAT 2023; own translation). Narrowing the controversy to “chat control” accordingly means that fundamental legal provisions for the protection of children and young people from sexualised violence are pushed out of sight and the actual intention of the proposal to the background, these organisations argue (ibid., see also AGF 2024).

In the past years, EU Member States have discussed several compromise solutions in the **Council of the EU** for Justice and Home Affairs, but have so far been unable to reach an agreement.⁴⁶ Most recently, the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU submitted a proposal⁴⁷ in July 2025. This proposal provides for the categorisation of online services according to risk. Services with a high risk would be required to detect CSAM as well as forms of ⇒ **grooming**. Providers with end-to-end encryption like Signal, Threema or WhatsApp would also fall under this Regulation. However, the proposal explicitly emphasises that end-to-end encryption in itself should not be adversely affected. In the event of a detection order, users of encrypted services would have two options: either they agree to the scanning of data on their device (client-side scanning), or they are only allowed to use the service to a limited extent. In practice, this could for instance mean that they are no longer allowed to send images. The proposal also stipulates that the interim Regulation will remain in force for a further six years after the new CSA Regulation comes into force.⁴⁸ The Danish proposal has reignited the

⁴⁴ <https://csa-scientist-open-letter.org/Jul2023>

⁴⁵ <https://fightchatcontrol.eu/>

⁴⁶ Secured links: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13726-2024-REV-1/en/pdf>;
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/jha/2024/10/10/>; <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5352-2025-INIT/en/pdf>

In 2023, the Council's Legal Service classified the proposal for the CSA Regulation as contrary to fundamental rights, citing the issue of “chat control”: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8787-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

⁴⁷ Secured link: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10131-2025-INIT/en/pdf>

⁴⁸ A specific reason for the proposal is the end of the temporary exemption from the ePrivacy Directive, which currently allows platforms to voluntarily scan unencrypted interpersonal communications. There is a legitimate concern that without a permanent solution to replace the exemption, a large number of CSAM and thus potentially also leads to perpetrators and networks will remain undetected. The duration of this interim Regulation is to end in August 2026.

above-described controversy between child protection and data protection.⁴⁹ The vote on the Council position in the Justice and Home Affairs Council was originally scheduled for 14 October 2025. However, due to the continued lack of a qualified majority within the Council, the vote was removed from the agenda once again. The vote in the Council of the EU is now scheduled for 6 and 7 December 2025. In the meantime, the Danish Presidency has announced that it will abandon mandatory monitoring of chat messages, instead making it a voluntary measure.

In the **European Parliament**, in contrast, agreement has already been reached. The Parliament's respective Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) adopted a draft report on the proposal already in November 2023, which was confirmed shortly afterwards in the plenary session.⁵⁰ It extends the scope of the regulation to search engines and AI systems, while limiting the scanning of encrypted communications to metadata and therefore only be possible as a last resort in cases of concrete suspicion. The option of voluntarily detecting CSAM is to be retained in addition to the mandatory regulations. To strengthen prevention, providers are to integrate preventive measures such as "security by design" for children and youth, age verification and improved parental control tools into their services. In addition, an EU council for affected persons is to be set up at the future EU centre to represent the perspectives of affected persons and support decision-making processes at EU level.

Following agreement in the Council of the EU, agreement in trilogue talks with the Commission and Parliament will be required.

⁴⁹ See in addition: <https://childsafetyineurope.com/take-action/eclagpassthe-law-child-sexual-abuse/>; <https://www.iwf.org.uk/policy-work/preventing-the-upload-of-child-sexual-abuse-material-in-end-to-end-encrypted-e2ee-environments/>; <https://csa-scientist-open-letter.org/Sep2025>

⁵⁰ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/LIBE-PR-746811_EN.pdf

Comparative overview of the two EU proposals (CSA Legislation and CSA Directive)

Table 2: Comparative overview of the two EU proposals (CSA Legislation and CSA Directive)

CSA Legislation	CSA Directive
Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse (COM(2022) 209 final)	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combatting the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (recast) (COM(2024) 60 final)
Status:: In negotiation COM proposal: 11 May 2022 Adoption in the European Parliament: report and position (November 2023) Adoption in the Council of the EU: still open Adoption in trilogue: still open	Status: In negotiation COM proposal: 6 February 2024 Adoption in the European Parliament: report (April 2024) / position (June 2025) Adoption in the Council of the EU: December 2024 Adoption in trilogue: still open, start of negotiation (June 2025)
Legal basis: Article 114 TFEU: Measures for the approximation of laws and regulations of Member States relating to the establishment and functioning of the internal market	Legal basis: Article 82 (2), Article 83 (1) TFEU: Facilitation of judicial cooperation between Member States, minimum rules for defining criminal offences by means of Directives
Focus: Combatting the distribution of CSAM	Focus: Combatting sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, as well as CSAM Revision of Directive 2011/93/EU and adaptation to technological innovations and challenges
Introduction of obligations for online service providers Responsibilities and powers of an independent EU centre affiliated with Europol	Criminal law aspects, such as the creation of new criminal offences or provisions on the statute of limitations as well as claims for damages; Strengthened prevention and protection measures for affected persons

Which additional EU measures exist?

EU Digital Services Act (DSA)

The [Digital Services Act](#) (DSA) has been in force as an EU Regulation since February 2024. Among other things, it places greater responsibility on online platforms to prevent illegal or harmful online activities and content, including ⇒ [CSAM](#) (Article 28). National Digital Service Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that online platforms based in their country implement Article 28 of the DSA (Article 49; for details see Sprang / Westerholt 2025). The Commission, on the other hand, is responsible for implementing the DSA about very large online platforms (VLOPs) with more than 45 million monthly users in the EU, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X, and YouTube. They must introduce effective reporting and remedial mechanisms, carry out risk assessments and publish transparency reports. This is also intended to improve the protection of young people by prohibiting, for instance, targeting and manipulative designs (EU COM 2023). The first reports were published in November 2024. According to the European Children's rights organisation Eurochild, all reports they examined showed fundamental shortcomings regarding children's rights.⁵¹ The Commission can impose heavy fines for non-compliance (see Articles 33 to 43). Formal proceedings against Facebook and Instagram have been underway since April 2024.⁵²

In July 2025, the Commission adopted [guidelines on the protection of minors under the DSA](#) and presented a blueprint for an age verification solution. The guidelines specify the obligation to protect children and youth in media in accordance with Article 28 of the DSA. They cover a wide range of measures, including, for instance, setting children's accounts to private by default, best practices for moderating child-safe content as well as child-friendly reporting channels.⁵³ In October 2025 the Commission initiated the first investigative actions following the guidelines by requesting Snapchat, YouTube, Apple and Google to provide information on their youth protection measures.⁵⁴

The [age verification blueprint](#) is based on the aforementioned guidelines that also recommend age verification for platforms with adult content or high security risks. Users should be able to verify their age in a privacy-preserving and secure manner to gain access to age-restricted online content. The blueprint ensures privacy of the user and does not reveal any info to the issuer of the proof of age, so that users' online behaviour cannot be tracked. The EU is now testing the blueprint in collaboration with five Member States – Denmark, Greece, Spain,

⁵¹ <https://eurochild.org/news/online-platforms-risk-assessment-reports-under-the-dsa-fall-short-on-childrens-protection/>

⁵² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_2373;
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2503

⁵³ Prior to this, the Commission had conducted a public consultation. Call: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/commission-seeks-feedback-guidelines-protection-minors-online-under-digital-services-act>; see also the joint statement by COFACE, Eurochild, Save the Children, and 21 other NGOs, along with five Members of the European Parliament, for instance; <https://coface-eu.org/joint-statement-not-just-users-but-rights-holders-realising-the-dsas-promise-for-children-with-the-guidelines-on-article-28/>

⁵⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_25_2353

France, and Italy.⁵⁵ The aim is to integrate this technical solution into national solutions or use it as a standalone application.

Further EU Directives

Directive on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings (2011/36/EU, updated 2024/1712)

This [Directive](#) focuses on those affected by human trafficking, explicitly addressing the needs of children and youth. One of the most common forms of human trafficking in practice is the sexual exploitation of young people. According to the directive, coercion or violence does not have to be proven; solicitation, transport or reception of a child for the purpose of exploitation is considered a criminal offence.

The directive was adopted in 2011, revised in 2024, and must be transposed into national law by 2026. The revised Directive explicitly strengthens the obligation of Member States to invest in identification, prevention, prosecution as well as support of persons affected by trafficking and (sexual) exploitation and to implement structural measures (action plan, referral mechanism, coordination centre, etc.). The revised Directive explicitly refers to the digital space and the special requirements and interests of young people.

Member States are also obliged to protect children and adolescents as persons affected by violence. It must be ensured that affected young persons have rapid access to safe accommodation, legal aid and child-friendly care to avoid further traumatising during the proceedings. In addition, stricter penalties for perpetrators are being introduced, and measures to combat the demand as well as prevention initiatives are being strengthened.⁵⁶

Sexual exploitation and sexualised violence are often closely linked; in the digital space in particular, the boundaries are blurred. Sexual exploitation describes forced participation in sexual acts in exchange for payment or the promise of payment. The main difference to sexualised violence is constituted in this exchange or bartering. The term is often used in connection with [⇒ CSAM](#) that are sold for money, even if the abuse shown in the depictions was not committed for financial gain. The (virtual/digital) sharing of such depictions adds sexualised violence to sexual exploitation (ECPAT International 2025: 45ff.).

Directive on combatting violence against women and domestic violence (2024/1385)

This [Directive](#), which also covers gender-based cybercrime, aims to harmonise criminal law across the EU and to strengthen the protection of affected persons. It includes provisions to combat cyberbullying, the non-consensual sharing of intimate content as well as cyberstalking.

⁵⁵ Sprang / Westerholt (2025) also offer an insight into the national perspectives on this topic in France and Spain.

⁵⁶ <https://eucrim.eu/news/new-directive-to-strengthen-anti-human-trafficking/>

In this sense, young persons affected by digital sexualised violence are also covered. The Directive was adopted in 2024 and must be transposed into national law by 2027.

In addition, the EU has ratified the [Istanbul Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence](#) and calls on its Member States to do the same.⁵⁷

Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims (2012/29/EU)

This [Directive](#) is the most important instrument at EU level for all people affected by crime, including sexualised violence.⁵⁸ It was adopted in 2012 and entered into force in the Member States in 2015. An evaluation was scheduled after five years of application of the Directive. A [proposal for a revision](#) has been pending by the Commission since 2023 and has been negotiated in trilogue with Parliament and the Council since December 2024.

The focus is on the well-being of people affected by violence as well as on their right to information, support and protection in a situation where they are particularly vulnerable and in need of protection. The Directive therefore establishes a number of rights for persons affected by crime and corresponding obligations for the Member States.

Children and adolescent who have experienced sexualised violence should be explicitly assured that they will receive comprehensive information, support and protection throughout the criminal proceedings. Child-friendly procedures and interviews should be geared towards protecting them from further trauma (⇒ [Barnahus model](#)). In addition, they should be guaranteed access to specialised, age-appropriate support services.

Further EU measures

EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child und Better Internet for Kids Strategy

In 2021, the Commission adopted the first [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#), creating a comprehensive EU policy framework to ensure the protection of children's rights. The strategy contains six thematic areas with respective measures. Thematic areas 3 and 5 focus on “the right of children to grow free from violence” and the right “that children can safely navigate and benefit from the digital environment”.

The [EU Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids \(BIK+\)](#) is the digital section of the Children's Rights Strategy. It was developed in 2022 and evaluated for the first time in 2025.⁵⁹ The aim is to promote a safe, positive and responsible online environment for young people. It supports initiatives for digital education, the development of child-friendly online services and the fight against harmful content. It also strengthens support as well as reporting channels for affected

⁵⁷ For more information, see in particular further work by the Observatory: <https://sociopolitical-observatory.eu/keytopics/violence/>

⁵⁸ This is also the first EU Directive to mention gender identity and gender expression.

⁵⁹ <https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/news/first-evaluation-bik-strategy-released-childrens-voices-and-expert-insights-shaping-europes>

persons and promotes cooperation with the technology industry. In this way, BIK+ aims to contribute both preventively and reactively to better protecting children and youth in the digital space. With its [Better Internet for Kids](#) portal, the EU provides a comprehensive education and information website.

Recommendation on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child (COM(2024)188)

This [Recommendation](#) was presented by the Commission in April 2024.⁶⁰ It suggests strengthening measures to protect children and youth from all forms of violence, including digital (sexualised) violence. It is a broader strategic document by the Commission, aiming to promote and protect the rights of children in general and calling on Member States to improve their national child protection systems.

In the run-up to the Recommendation, the Commission conducted a comprehensive consultation in which over 1,000 young people from 21 EU countries shared their views on their protection needs via the [EU Children's Participation Platform](#). Their ideas and perspectives were incorporated into the drafting of the Recommendation.

⁶⁰ A Recommendation is a legally non-binding instrument by the Commission, with which it calls on the EU Member States to take action in a specific area.

Which other EU measures are being planned?

The EU is in a constant process of adapting its strategies and laws, particularly regarding the rapid advances of digitalisation and the use of AI. While important steps have already been taken, challenges to protect young people across Europe from sexualised violence, as well as with regards to adequate resources, ongoing cooperation and technological innovation remain. Addressing these will require respective political will. A safe digital environment for young people can only be created through comprehensive interaction between prevention, law enforcement and protection for affected persons.

Extending the list of EU crimes

In December 2021, the Commission presented the [proposal](#) for a Council decision to include hate speech and hate crime in the list of EU crimes. The objective is to create a common legal basis for EU-wide minimum rules to combat these phenomena more effectively. Extending the scope of criminal offences would help to close legal loopholes regarding new forms of digital sexualised violence against children and youth (for instance via AI) and facilitate the cross-border prosecution of perpetrators. This would be an adequate adaptation to the prevailing digital reality and provide for stronger deterrent effects. However, according to Article 83(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), such a Council decision requires the unanimous consent of all EU Member States in the Council. Poland and Hungary have long blocked the adoption of this decision. Their opposition is based on concerns about national sovereignty in criminal law matters as well as ideological differences regarding the definition and scope of hate speech.

In addition, the European Parliament is calling for the EU list of criminal offences to be extended to include gender-based violence.⁶¹ This would also expand the existing framework of protection for children and youth affected by violence, as many forms of sexualised violence affect girls more severely.

Establishing a European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse:

The [⇒ CSA Regulation](#) is to establish a new “European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse” (EU centre). This EU centre would provide technology for detecting [⇒ CSAM](#), investigate suspected cases and forward them to national law enforcement agencies, secure evidence, carry out prevention work and assist affected persons.

In August 2025, the Commission established a “Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Network” (CSAPN) to bring together researchers and practitioners and to support Member States in introducing effective prevention measures. The work of the network serves as a starting point for the potential tasks the planned EU centre would have to perform in the area of prevention.

⁶¹ European Parliament Resolution of 22 November 2023 on proposals of the European Parliament for the amendment of the treaties (2022/2051(INL)): https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0427_EN.pdf

Further work on establishing the EU centre will only be possible once the interinstitutional negotiations on the proposed CSA Regulation have been completed.⁶²

EU-wide study on the broader impact of social media on well-being

The EU is planning a comprehensive EU-wide study on the impact of social media on well-being, particularly among young people. This study is part of a broader initiative addressing concerns about the mental health of young people in the digital space (von der Leyen 2024). Several EU countries – among them Denmark, France, Greece and Spain – are calling for stricter measures and a uniform minimum age for social media use (AGF 2025).⁶³ They consider social media to be a risk factor for the mental health of children and youth.

This study is to be seen in the wider context of existing and new EU laws and initiatives, such as the ⇒ [Digital Services Act](#). The study aims to show how young people can access and use the digital world without negative consequences. It is also intended to help examine the role of algorithms and the design of platforms that may be addictive or spread harmful content. The objective of the study is to improve the available data so that evidence-based policy measures can be taken.

Commission President von der Leyen also addressed the issue in her State of the European Union speech in September 2025 and announced the convening of a group of experts on children and youth's access to and use of social media.⁶⁴

Measures against unethical practices by online platforms and addictive design features of online services

The EU is increasingly targeting unethical and addictive practices by online platforms, such as doomscrolling and push notifications. Since 2023, the European Parliament has been calling for new laws to ban addictive designs and protect users.⁶⁵ In 2025, the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) of the Parliament adopted a report on “Protecting Minors Online”, calling for a minimum digital age of 16 across the EU and stricter rules against online practices that promote addiction and manipulation.⁶⁶

The DSA and the AI Regulation already provide basic instruments, but these are not sufficient to cover all aspects of addictive designs. The EU is therefore planning a [Digital Fairness Act](#). This is to create a safer digital environment from 2026 onwards and protect users, especially young people, from manipulation and excessive use of, for example, social media.

⁶² Press release and call for action: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/network-prevention-child-sexual-abuse_en

⁶³ See also: <https://cadeproject.org/updates/france-spain-and-greece-push-for-eu-wide-restrictions-on-childrens-social-media-access/>, <https://europeanconservative.com/articles/news/eu-countries-plan-ban-social-media-for-minors-restriction-control-protection/>

⁶⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_25_2053

⁶⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0340_EN.html

⁶⁶ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/de/press-room/20251013IPR30892/new-eu-measures-needed-to-make-online-services-safer-for-minors>; https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/IMCO-PR-772053_EN.pdf

In early October 2025, the EU Member States' digital ministers adopted the [Jutland Declaration: Shaping a Safe Online World for Minors](#), at a meeting of the Council of the EU. The declaration commits the states to establishing a European legal framework for effective and privacy-friendly age verification on social media.

Action plan against cyberbullying and online abuse

The EU Commissioner for Intergenerational Justice, Youth, Culture and Sport, Glenn Micallef, has been tasked with developing an action plan against cyberbullying and online abuse.⁶⁷ This plan aims to establish a common definition of cyberbullying, gather best practices, collaborate with civil society organisations and promote a culture of reporting and seeking support.

⁶⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/about/organisation/college-commissioners/glenn-micallef_en

Conclusion

It is important for the EU to combat (digital) sexualised violence against children and youth for several reasons: The EU has committed itself to fundamentally protecting children's rights. This includes the right to protection from violence, abuse, and exploitation. Digital sexualised violence in the form of the production and distribution of CSAM, sexual extortion, or grooming poses a direct threat to these rights.

Digital sexualised violence knows no national borders. Perpetrators can operate from one EU country and harm children and youth in another. A national approach alone is therefore not sufficient. The EU can use its resources to combat this cross-border crime more effectively. For instance, the CSA Directive ensures that all Member States prosecute and punish the same offenses in this area. This creates a uniform legal basis that prevents perpetrators from evading prosecution by using different national laws. It also ensures improved cooperation between the law enforcement authorities of the Member States and the EU, such as Europol, and Eurojust.

A coordinated Europe-wide approach is also necessary to curb the growing extent of sexualised violence in the digital space. The EU is adapting to this specific dynamic and, with the revision of the CSA Directive and the new CSA Regulation, has proposed further measures tailored to the digital world.

The EU-wide commitment to protecting and supporting children and youth affected by violence ensures that they have access to support services and assistance regardless of their place of residence. The EU also promotes the joint development of prevention strategies to better inform young people and their parents about the risks of the digital world.

In addition, the EU is planning further measures in the current legislative period, for example, to improve the data situation and develop evidence-based solutions. A minimum age for children and youth to access social media is also currently being intensively discussed.

In this context, it is important that all measures taken by the EU are also sustainably implemented and evaluated in the EU Member States (for details see Sprang / Westerholt 2025).

Outlook: What more can be done to protect young people from violence?

A holistic approach is required to provide young people with more effective protection from (sexualised) violence, both online and offline. This approach must coordinate and integrate prevention measures, legislation and policies, detection methods, technological solutions, the obligations of online platform providers, law enforcement, and support services for those affected by violence.

In addition to the proposals discussed in the dossier, four further recommendations are presented below. These recommendations take the holistic approach into account and provide further starting points for the even more effective protection of children and youth from violence.

Non-violent society

As many of the described measures only come into effect once violence has already been perpetrated, it is all the more important to change the existing societal structures and unequal power relations that enable violence in the first place.

Violence is a complex social phenomenon that cannot be attributed solely to individual perpetrators. It is embedded in institutions such as the legal and healthcare systems, which actively contribute to its reproduction. For instance, in the criminal justice system, the credibility of those affected by violence is often called into question. Beliefs, values, and behavioural patterns that tacitly tolerate or even legitimise violence are also deeply rooted in our society. These violent norms must be actively questioned and changed. Additionally, the underlying power relations, such as patriarchal and adultist structures, must be transformed.

A key aspect of this is decoupling masculinity from violence. Traditional ideas that glorify aggression, toughness, and dominance as male ideals must be deconstructed. The media plays a significant role in normalising violence. Excessive depictions or romanticisations of violence in films, video games, or news reports can contribute to desensitisation. Therefore, it is essential to question media portrayals of violence and create alternative content.

An open and honest social debate about the causes and consequences of violence is also necessary. Taboo topics such as violence against women or domestic violence must be discussed to achieve widespread social condemnation of violence. Violence prevention programmes should focus more on the perpetrators of violence. This is the only way to change behavioural patterns and break the cycle of violence. **The declared goal of politics should always be to prevent further violence and take all measures that lead to a violence-free society** (Abramowski et al. 2025; Baumanns 2024; Hunnicutt 2009; Lindemann 2025).

Inclusion of the perspectives of children and youth (affected by violence) as well as of adults affected by violence

Incorporating the **perspectives of children and youth (affected by violence)** into policymaking is not only a matter of their rights, but also necessary to ensure the measures are relevant, effective, and sustainable (Westerholt et al. 2024).

Incorporating their voices and perspectives empowers young people, makes them feel heard and taken seriously, and boosts their self-esteem and resilience. This is particularly important for those affected by violence, as their experiences are often associated with powerlessness and a loss of control. Through inclusion, they can regain some control (ECPAT et al. 2024).

Effective policymaking also requires an intersectional approach that considers the diverse realities of young people's lives, developing tailored protection measures that address the specific risks and needs of all young people. Children and youth who have experienced sexualised violence, in particular, often have unique and complex needs that adults may not fully recognise or understand. Their direct experience is essential for developing targeted protection, prevention, and support programmes. Conversely, they can also highlight weaknesses in the system that are invisible from an adult perspective (ECPAT 2025).

In policymaking, it is equally important to incorporate the **perspectives of adults affected by violence**. Their experiences complement those of children and youth, offering a more comprehensive view of the long-term consequences of violence and gaps in support systems. Their accounts of the challenges of accessing help, the associated stigma, and the lack of support services offer valuable insights to policymakers. Their perspective is essential in minimising the risk of re-victimisation, i.e. repeated injury through bureaucratic or institutional processes.

Bringing together the experiences of people of all ages affected by violence creates a holistic understanding of the problem and enables the development of comprehensive protection and support measures.⁶⁸

Comprehensive digital education

Comprehensive digital education can significantly protect young people from digital sexualised violence by strengthening their skills and resilience when dealing with digital media, and by empowering them to become critical thinkers rather than passive users. Comprehensive digital education for parents, teachers, and all those who work with young people equips children and youth with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to navigate the complex digital world more safely, recognise potential dangers, and actively seek help when needed.

Children and youth must be educated about online risks in an age-appropriate manner from an early age. Digital education teaches them to recognise these risks early on and respond accordingly. For instance, they learn to identify manipulative tactics, such as sexual extortion.

⁶⁸ <https://www.weprotect.org/resources/child-and-survivor-participation/>

They also learn how to use privacy settings correctly, what information they should and should not disclose, and why certain information should never be shared online. Young people must also learn to talk openly about their online experiences and seek help if they feel uncomfortable or harassed.

Digital education for adults who live and work with children and youth is equally essential. Parents, guardians, and teachers must be informed of the same risks and dangers in the digital space as young people. They need to know how to recognise the signs of digital violence early on, how to respond appropriately to their children's concerns, and how to be a trusted point of contact for them. They should receive training, for example through training modules designed for teachers or comprehensive online sessions for parents, on how to encourage open conversations with children about their online experiences, and how to act in suspected cases or acute situations (UBSKM 2025).⁶⁹

Comprehensive sexuality education

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is crucial in protecting children and youth from sexualised violence. By imparting basic knowledge and skills, as well as fostering a healthy self-image, it strengthens young people's self-esteem and resilience. Young people learn about their bodies, and that nobody has the right to touch them or take pictures or videos of them without their consent. They also learn that requests for intimate acts or the sending of intimate images are unacceptable and cross boundaries. They learn to say "no". These skills are vital for establishing boundaries, including in the digital realm.

Furthermore, CSE can contribute directly to raising awareness of and preventing sexualised violence by explaining the tactics used by perpetrators in cyber-grooming, for example. It can also help children and youth affected by violence to overcome their shame. This is because education reinforces the fact that they are never to blame, only the perpetrators. Additionally, information can be provided about counselling and support services available to those affected of sexualised violence, whether online or offline.

⁶⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/digital-transformation>; <https://www.unicef.org/documents/child-protection-digital-education>, <https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/best-interests-child-relation-digital-environment>

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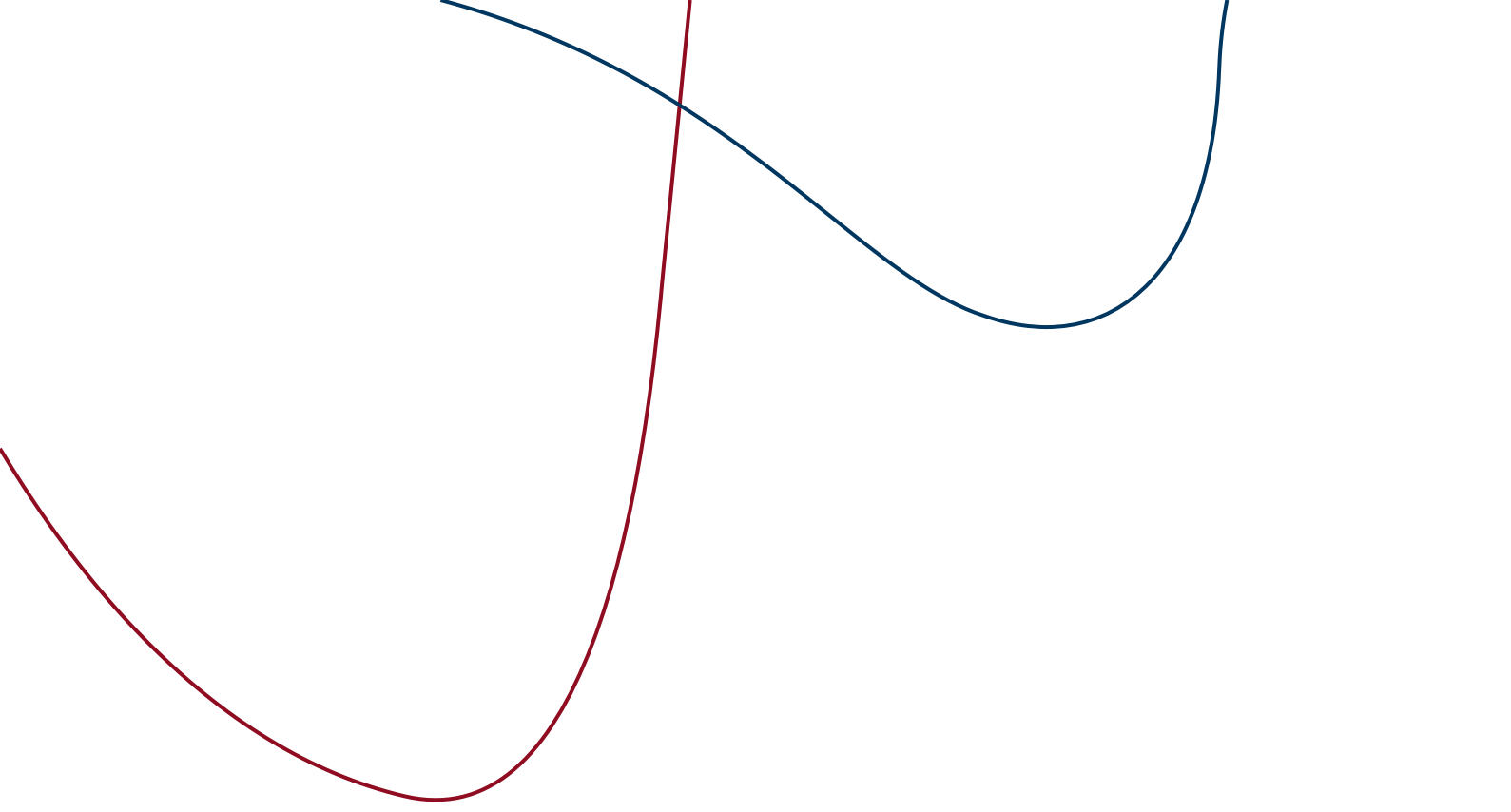


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