

EU countries must step up fight against sexual abuse of children, say MEPs

- Remove illegal content from the internet fast, or block access
- Take measures against new forms of online crime, such as revenge porn and sexual extortion
- Strengthen police and judicial cooperation to protect migrant children

EU member states must work more closely with each other and with Europol and the IT industry to fight sexual abuse and exploitation of children, said Parliament on Thursday.

MEPs approved a non-legislative resolution assessing the implementation of the 2011 EU directive on combating sexual abuse of children. The text, drafted by [Anna Maria Corazza Bildt \(EPP, SE\)](#), was passed by 597 votes to 6, with 20 abstentions.

Remove illegal content fast

Web pages containing child sexual abuse material must be quickly removed and, when this is not possible, member states should block access to those pages for users within their territory, MEPs say.

National authorities should enhance cooperation with the IT industry, as well as with third countries and Interpol, to speed up notifying and take-down procedures, in the cases where illegal content is made available from abroad, the text adds. It suggests drawing up blacklists of web sites containing child sexual material, to be shared among member states and with Europol and Interpol, and communicated to internet providers.

Adequate financial and human resources, reinforced cross-border information exchange and updated digital investigative techniques are key to protecting children against sexual abuse and exploitation, they insist.

Combat threats and online risks to children

MEPs worry about the threats and risks to which children are exposed online, particularly recruitment. They also demand specific measures to combat new forms of crime online, such as revenge porn and sexual extortion. Member states that have yet to do so, should criminalise online grooming, cyber stalking and luring children online, they add.

Protect migrant children

MEPs highlight the special vulnerability of migrant children to abuse, trafficking and sexual exploitation and call for stronger police and judicial cooperation, and rapid exchange of information, to trace missing children

Exchange information on sex offenders

The resolution urges member states to introduce mandatory criminal background checks for persons applying or volunteering for activities or jobs with access to children, and to “systematically exchange information on individuals posing a risk to children”. MEPs want to prevent sex offenders moving unnoticed from one member state to another to work with minors.

Support victims

Parliament notes that most cases of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children are not reported and calls on member states to develop or reinforce child helplines, which should be free, confidential and available round the clock, to provide help and support for victims and ensure their fundamental right to be heard.

Finally, MEPs urge member states to ensure that victims receive legal aid, psychological support and assistance.

Quote

[Anna Maria Corazza Bildt \(EPP, SE\)](#), rapporteur, said: "Member states must do more, better and faster to ensure zero tolerance against child sexual abuse online and offline. The focus should be on removing illegal material at source and blocking when this is not possible, with faster procedures and safeguards. We also urge the internet industry to take their share of responsibility for working out innovative solutions to protect children".

Further information

[Adopted text will be published here \(click on 14.12.2017\)](#)

[Video of the plenary debate \(13.12.2017\)](#)

[Video of the press conference with Anna Maria Corazza Bildt \(13.12.2017\)](#)

[EP Research Service: Combating sexual abuse of children, Directive 2011/93/EU, European Implementation Assessment \(April 2017\)](#)


[EP resolution on the fight against child sexual abuse on the Internet \(11.03.2015\)](#)


[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

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