



European
Commission

Global Alliance
against
Child Sexual Abuse Online

Report – December 2013

Foreword

The threat to young people posed by online sex predators is on the rise. The opportunities for human interaction offered by online forums, peer-to-peer exchanges, social media, and anonymous networks are too often exploited by people who want to harm our children. Clearly, the global community needs to take decisive action. Child victims need to be identified. Perpetrators need to be brought to justice. People need to know the threats their children face and how to counter them. And we need to do our utmost to remove images and videos of child sexual abuse from the internet.

Last December, the Justice and Interior Ministers of 48 countries around the world agreed to form a Global Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Online. Since then, additional countries have joined forces with us, increasing the number to 52, and we believe that the Alliance will continue to attract new members as states realise what an impact we can have when we work together.

As participants in the Global Alliance, we will work both individually and together to put in place concrete steps to address child sexual abuse online. This report describes the many commitments that countries in the Alliance have made to tackle these threats. This Report represents a collective promise for action.

When the Global Alliance meets next year in the United States, we will have taken great strides towards improving the safety of our children. But challenges in this area are constantly evolving, so we will assess how we can continue to work together to fight these threats.

We are committed to working together to make a difference. This report, with so many promised strong actions for the future, shows the dedication of the Ministers and countries involved. This is a good start. We now look forward to seeing the commitments made in this report become reality.



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Introduction

Modern communication technology has facilitated political and social inclusion worldwide. It serves as a motor for trade and has broken down barriers between countries, communities and citizens, allowing free circulation of information and ideas across the globe, and providing a forum for the exercise of fundamental rights.

However, technological advances have also provided new opportunities to criminals. In particular, new tools and software have been exploited by those involved in child sexual abuse. The adoption of modern communication technologies has brought about a step change in child sexual abuse in many ways, a selection of which is outlined in the following paragraphs.

The online sphere provides perceived **anonymity**, which emboldens offenders. Persons interested in child sexual abuse feel that their online behaviour is less risky than offline behavior because they believe there is less of a chance that law enforcement will identify them.. It can encourage them to offend more, looking for more graphic and violent content than they would offline.

A worldwide **community** of like-minded individuals can form online to exchange materials and reinforce the justifications that offenders use to legitimise their behaviour.

It also makes it easier for members to engage in **production** of child abuse material (and the sexual abuse itself). Easier video streaming makes it possible for offenders to direct live child abuse taking place at distance and witness it via webcams. As material can also increase their access levels or social status in online networks or be used as a currency for accessing other child sexual abuse images, this can drive “non-contact offenders”, who may initially only be interested in viewing child sexual abuse images, to become "contact offenders" and actively abuse children.

Victims of online child sexual abuse suffer additional **victimisation** from the awareness that offenders unknown to them will use images of their abuse.

The **channels** used for distribution of child sexual abuse materials online are varied, including open channels (webpages, photo sharing platforms), Peer to Peer (P2P) networks, social media, bulletin boards, newsgroups and Internet Relay Chat protocols.

Offenders tend more and more towards **more secure and anonymous** channels of distribution, leaving fewer traces and making **identification** more difficult. They also frequently take a number of other measures specifically aimed at hiding their actions, such as using encrypted drives or storing images on remote servers in jurisdictions that do not criminalise the possession of child sexual abuse images. This, together with the widespread adoption of cloud computing and associated services, creates new technical and legal challenges for law enforcement bodies.

P2P child pornography users are more likely to have images that depicted children younger than three, sexual penetration, and violence. They were also more likely to possess large collections of images and, in addition, videos of child sexual abuse.

Compared to groups of offenders across different technologies, a significantly higher proportion of P2P offenders is aged 25 years or younger. It has been suggested that that younger offenders tend to be more familiar with P2P technology and thus that they are more likely to use it.

The online sphere also facilitates “**grooming**”, the solicitation of children for the purposes of sexual abuse and exploitation involving getting close to them and gaining their trust. This now often takes place online, where it is easy for offenders to find children and conceal their own identity, for example via chat forums focused on young people’s interests or online games allowing for interaction between perpetrators and potential child victims. Perpetrators form relationships with children, for example by pretending to be children themselves and by seeking to become friends with their victims. In that process offenders may also resort to threats and blackmail (“**sextortion**”) in order to pressure children into submission. Modern means of coercion include the threat of elimination or manipulation of social media profiles of the victim. Young females appear to be at higher risk of becoming the target of sexual solicitation than young males. Offending behaviour against girls tends to aim at domination and uses more aggressive tactics such as blackmail and threatening. In contrast, offenders tend to seek to establish mutual trust with male victims.

As a result, countless children around the world are sexually abused and exploited.

No country can tackle these crimes on its own. International cooperation is essential if we are to stand a chance of finding and prosecuting offenders, rescuing victims, and removing graphic content depicting child sexual abuse.

In response to this challenge, 52 countries from around the world have gathered in a Global Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Online. The Global Alliance was launched on 5 December 2012 and unites Ministers of the Interior and of Justice behind four shared political targets:

- enhancing efforts to identify victims and ensuring that they receive the necessary assistance, support and protection;
- enhancing efforts to investigate cases of child sexual abuse online and to identify and prosecute offenders;
- increasing awareness among children, parents, educators and the community at large about the risks;
- reducing the availability of child pornography online and the re-victimization of children.

This report summarises the commitments that participating countries have undertaken in order to reach the four political targets.

The 52 participants of the Global Alliance

Albania	Ghana	Philippines
Armenia	Greece	Poland
Australia	Hungary	Portugal
Austria	Ireland	Republic of Korea
Belgium	Israel	Romania
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Italy	Serbia
Bulgaria	Japan	Slovakia
Cambodia	Kosovo	Slovenia
Canada	Latvia	Spain
Croatia	Lithuania	Sweden
Cyprus	Luxemburg	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Malta	Thailand
Denmark	Moldova	Turkey
Estonia	Montenegro	UK
Finland	Netherlands	Ukraine
France	New Zealand	United States of America
Georgia	Nigeria	
Germany	Norway	

Commitments

This section provides a summary of the commitments that countries participating in the Global Alliance have made. For this purpose, participants in the Global Alliance have submitted reports of actions they already undertake and actions they commit to undertake in the immediate future to reach the four key policy targets. The choice of actions for reaching the overarching goals is left to each country. The commitments reflect the choice and views of the individual country.

These commitments are sorted by political target and operational goal. They are also grouped by the types of concrete action proposed by the various participants. Many actions proposed not only have a positive impact in the context of the concrete political target that they are listed under, but also could be used to achieve one of the other three political targets. In these cases actions are categorized according to the categorization by the participating state.

It is important to note that a number of the participants have already made significant steps in fighting child sexual abuse online by implementing measures addressing the four policy targets. The present report does not cover these existing measures, but rather focuses on commitments for the future. However, the status quo in these countries is published in the form of country reports on the website of the Global Alliance at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/global-alliance-against-child-abuse/index_en.htm.

This overview of actions planned takes account of all reports on commitments received from participants until 13 December 2013, 43 in total, from Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, Ukraine, and the United States of America.

The overview can provide a summary only; please refer to the website listed above for details on the commitments of participants, as well as for reports by participants received after 13 December 2013.

Policy Target 1: Enhancing efforts to identify victims and ensuring that they receive the necessary assistance, support and protection

Operational Goal: Increase the number of identified victims in the International Child Sexual Exploitation images database (ICSE database) managed by INTERPOL by at least 10% yearly

Action #1: Mainstreaming victim identification into investigations and prosecutions

To increase the number of victims that are identified, several states have decided to mainstream victim identification into their investigations and prosecutions, by integrating specific victim identification procedures. For example, Albania, Hungary, Montenegro and Romania have all decided to develop standardized victim identification procedures. Albania and Montenegro furthermore intend to make systematic use of channels for international cooperation in order to enhance victim identification and to improve coordination between states. Sweden has also committed to dedicating additional resources to victim identification. Portugal will set up a database of investigations with the aim of improving identification and assistance to victims.

Action #2: Improving use and content of the ICSE database

Managed by INTERPOL, the International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database is a tool which allows specialized investigators to share data, intelligence and leads with colleagues across the world. It uses image comparison software to make connections between victims, abusers and places. As the operational goal sets a target of increasing the number of identified children in the ICSE database, a number of participating states have committed to undertake actions directly related to ICSE.

For instance, Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Kosovo, Malta, Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Switzerland plan to request access to the ICSE database or to expand their access and to contribute (additional) material. Several states, such as Cambodia, Ireland, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the United States, plan to provide additional or

improved training on identification techniques and on how to use the database, or to promote the use of the database across law enforcement authorities.

INTERPOL has already noticed that, in line with their commitments, Croatia, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States have maintained a high level of contribution or even increased their contribution to the ICSE database. Furthermore, Turkey is well advanced in the process of connecting to the database.

Three states have decided to further streamline their victim identification process, appointing a central contact person to manage access and contributions to the ICSE database and/or to serve as a central national victim identification point (Estonia, Lithuania and Slovenia). Albania, Hungary and the United States will increase the number of images and associated pieces of information they contribute to the ICSE. For the United States, the increase in contributions will also include images channelled through a specially vetted NGO, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). Finland has chosen a similar path and appointed an NGO that is a member of the International Association of Internet Hotlines (INHOPE) to do the same.

A number of states, including Australia, Belgium, Germany, Moldova, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Slovenia and the UK, plan to develop tools to facilitate the analysis and exchange of information with the ICSE database, including software to allow for the analysis of videos in ICSE. Plans also include the development of a national database of abused children and a platform to coordinate and create links between various databases at the national level. Tools to be developed will include information useful in locating and identifying victims, such as a database of school uniforms.

Action # 3: Improving forensic capabilities

A number of countries have decided to dedicate additional resources to expanding their forensic capabilities. For example, the UK has decided to invest in developing tools for detecting new child sexual abuse images which, unlike known images, cannot be detected by cross-referencing the data with databases of known images. Georgia, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro and Switzerland will enhance their national forensic capacities for victim identification, e.g. through the development of a national protocol and guidance to improve the victim identification procedure (Hungary, Kosovo and Montenegro).

Action #4: Improving victim assistance, support and protection

For EU Member States, an important baseline for victim protection, assistance and support is provided by two new EU directives:

- Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and
- Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

A number of European Union Member States have reiterated their commitment to implement the directives.

Many states intend to create a better network of services to assist and protect child victims, and to ensure that the police investigation and judicial procedure are conducted in a manner so as to limit negative impact on the victim. For example, Denmark intends to establish centres to gather social services, police, and health and therapeutic services in one and the same, child-friendly environment (Children's House). Such children's houses can help to limit the number of times that a victim has to report the details of and thus re-confront the crime. They can also ensure that appropriate assistance is available throughout the process and that therapy to start the ensuing recovery process is made available. The creation or expansion of similar centres is planned in the Republic of Korea, the Ukraine, and the UK. They have already been established in a number of countries – for example, the Republic of Korea provides victim support through the Sunflower Children Centres, a “One-Stop Support Centre” integrating health care, counselling, investigation and legal aid. Child-friendly hearing rooms are currently being created in Hungary.

Other states, such as Montenegro, will develop dedicated policies and procedures on providing support to victims, and will provide training on child victims and witnesses of crime in judicial proceedings. The Republic of Korea will introduce a public defender exclusively in charge of supporting victims and “specialized statement intermediaries” to assist child victims throughout the investigation and court proceeding. Germany will expand the use of video links to interview witnesses, ensuring that victims do not have to face the offenders or be exposed to the atmosphere of the courtroom, which can be intimidating to children, thus limiting the secondary trauma inflicted on child victims. Canada is working with non-governmental organisations with an aim to giving victims a more effective voice in the criminal justice system.

The need to ensure a coordinated response is highlighted by a number of participants. For example, New Zealand, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Ukraine and the UK intend to improve coordination between the relevant actors across communities and institutions,

including non-governmental organisations active in providing support to child victims and their families. Several participants will introduce specialized legal representatives for child victims.

In order to improve victim protection, New Zealand furthermore intends to introduce Child Abuse Prevention Orders, civil orders designed to protect children from high-risk abusive adults. Turkey will expand its network of child monitoring centres, and Romania plans to create integrated procedures to prevent, report and intervene against violence against children.

Policy target 2: Enhancing efforts to investigate cases of child sexual abuse online and to identify and prosecute offenders

Operational Goal: Establish the necessary framework for the criminalization of child sexual abuse online and the effective prosecution of offenders, with the objective of enhancing efforts to investigate and prosecute offenders

Action #1: Comprehensive substantive criminal law

A number of states intend to identify shortcomings in their national substantive laws on child sexual abuse and to adopt the necessary legislative amendments. This will include criminalization of all forms of online child sexual abuse offences in line with international standards. For EU Member States, again the baseline is provided by Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography. This requires, for example, the criminalization of viewing child pornography without downloading it, watching child sexual abuse through live streaming, acquiring or possessing of child pornography, grooming as well as soliciting children to provide sexual images of themselves. Denmark also intends to adopt new legislation to strengthen the protection of children against abuse.

More comprehensive legislation is also planned independently of the Directive. For example, Greece intends to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, joining 34 participants of the Global Alliance in becoming a party to the Convention. The Republic of Korea will increase the levels of penalties that apply to the possession of child sexual abuse images. New Zealand similarly intends to reform its substantive criminal law, significantly increasing the maximum penalties for possession, creating or distributing child abuse images and criminalizing grooming (“indecent communication with a child”). Switzerland is currently revising its criminal code and will introduce provisions on the consumption of child pornography and on expanding the definition of “child” for these purposes to all persons under 18, from the current upper age limit of 16. Switzerland furthermore is committed to enhancing the protection of children by

promoting the adoption of resolutions protecting children at UN level and ensuring their follow-up.

Action #2: Removing procedural hurdles

A number of states intend to improve their procedural legislative framework. Slovenia is evaluating the need for additional investigative capabilities. Georgia and Germany plan to adopt legislation to facilitate international law enforcement cooperation, and Moldova also intends to establish mechanisms for direct cooperation among law enforcement authorities. The United States intend to work on streamlining mutual legal assistance requests. In New Zealand until now special permission to prosecute certain child abuse offenses has been required. Legislation is planned to lessen this burden.

Action #3: Disqualification, treatment and prevention of repeat offending

In implementing the EU directive 2011/93/EU, the EU Member States will introduce new possibilities to conduct background checks when recruiting a person for professional or organised voluntary activities involving direct and regular contacts with children. Ireland plans to strengthen its legislation on the vetting of persons applying to work with children, and New Zealand will introduce a mandatory screening procedure for the same purpose. New Zealand is also currently developing a Sex Offender Register and Management System, which is to be adopted into law in early 2014, and Kosovo is similarly planning to implement a special registry for child sexual abuse offenders. The Republic of Korea also plans to implement a comprehensive disqualification system for offenders.

Operational Goal: Improve the joint efforts of law enforcement authorities across Global Alliance countries to investigate and prosecute child sexual abuse online

Action #1: Improving capacity and coordination of law enforcement authorities

Training is an essential requirement for law enforcement authorities involved in the fight against child sexual abuse online, and a number of participants intend to invest in and expand the training available to investigators, prosecutors and the judiciary (Albania, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden). Cambodia, Georgia, Lithuania and the Netherlands also plan to provide more training and intend to administer it in a joint manner together with other countries and/or with international organisations.

Investigators need to have access to the right tools to perform their job. Albania, Canada, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Kosovo, Slovenia and Spain have indicated that they are prepared to invest in improving the tools available for police investigations into these crimes, such as improved software for automatic image analysis to speed up the forensic process and to prevent law enforcement officers from manually combing through thousands of images of child sexual abuse. Hungary, Italy, Spain and Switzerland intend to improve investigation techniques applied. Albania also plans to set up a specialized investigation team.

The need for better coordination between law enforcement agencies is also highlighted by a number of countries, both within their own jurisdiction and beyond. For example, New Zealand is now planning to hold quarterly meetings of the three agencies involved in combating child sexual abuse to ensure better coordination and to participate in shared training focusing on victim identification and other issues relevant to investigations. Canada is currently evaluating its National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet with a view to assessing its relevance and performance.

Action #2: Increasing international operational and strategic cooperation

Many participating states already dedicate significant resources to cooperation. A number of them plan to expand their efforts further. For example, the United States is planning to create a global platform, together with INTERPOL, to enable and facilitate international joint investigations. Switzerland also intends to reinforce international cooperation, in particular with INTERPOL, Europol (EC3, European Cybercrime Centre) and the FBI's Innocent Images International Task Force, and plans to apply to join the Virtual Global Task Force (VGT), which seeks to build a partnership of law enforcement agencies, non-government organisations and industry to help protect children from online child abuse. Germany, Georgia and the Republic of Korea similarly intend to cooperate more closely with or join the VGT.

Australia, Hungary, Moldova and New Zealand intend to increase their participation in joint investigations, and Italy will expand its participation in Europol's Focal Point TWINS, which focuses on child sexual abuse. Austria similarly intends to conduct joint operations with other states, supported by Europol, against travelling sex offenders producing child sexual abuse images. Switzerland has decided to expand its monitoring of peer-to-peer networks. Hungary will cooperate with international partners to develop a professional network for helping abused and exploited children.

As part of improving international cooperation, states also propose exchanging best practice and providing training. Lithuania and Switzerland intend to promote such exchanges, and Poland and Switzerland will provide training to law enforcement authorities from other countries. New Zealand is working on identifying and addressing issues with accessing evidential material in other jurisdictions.

Action #3: Improving cooperation with other public authorities and the private sector

Albania intends to work on improving the cooperation between law enforcement and judicial services, prosecutors in particular, and to promote a Memorandum of Understanding with ISPs in Albania through the Electronic and Postal Communications Agency. Romania and Turkey similarly plan to promote cooperation. Romania has adopted a multidisciplinary team approach to violence against children in an attempt to unite all relevant actors in investigation and treatment from the beginning. Turkey has created a Coordination Strategy on Child Protection Services to strengthen cooperation among all institutions and organizations active in child protection and treatment.

Please also refer to *Action #4: Improving victim assistance, support and protection* under Policy Target 1 for more information on initiatives to improve coordination across sectors.

Policy target 3: Enhancing efforts to increase public awareness of the risks posed by children's activities online, including grooming and self-production of images that results in the production of new child pornography that may be distributed online

Operational Goal: Develop, improve, or support appropriate public awareness campaigns or other measures which educate parents, children, and others responsible for children regarding the risks that children's online conduct poses and the steps they can take to minimize those risks

Operational Goal: Share best practices among Global Alliance countries for effective strategies to inform the public about the risks posed by online, self-exploitative conduct in order to reduce the production of new child pornography

Action #1: Creating awareness-raising materials, channels and campaigns

Almost all participants intend to increase their efforts on developing and updating awareness-raising materials in order to take into account new threats and trends among offenders and the new and different usage of online media and devices. Australia, Belgium, Hungary, Malta, Romania and Turkey plan to develop and expand channels (including internet tools, and social media in particular, but also professional training programs) to make resources available for children, parents and teachers. Hungary intends to promote the inclusion of safer internet usage training into the national curriculum. Serbia will set up its Safer Internet Centre to provide awareness-raising, hotline and helpline functions.

A large majority of participants are planning targeted information campaigns, to raise awareness through training sessions, videos and materials made available in schools, television, the internet, radio and also through personal training sessions run by specialised police units. Awareness-raising on these issues is also scheduled for inclusion in the Safer Internet Day, which many participating countries mark in February of each year and which focuses on creating a better and safer internet environment, in particular for children.¹

Campaigns that participants plan to undertake are targeted at children themselves, in order to teach them how to avoid falling victim to online grooming, but also at parents, teachers and the public at large. The campaigns will also promote specific tools for the protection of children online. For example, the Romanian Safer Internet Hotline plans to launch three video tutorials aimed at educators, parents and children, dealing with preventing, recognizing and reacting to dangerous situations online. Australia and the United Kingdom have similarly created a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness across stakeholder communities. Canada operates a website for awareness raising and reporting of suspected cases of online sexual exploitation of children.

Action #2: Research on trends and threats

Some participants are planning to dedicate resources to research into trends and threats in child sexual abuse online posed by children's activity online. For example, Australia plans to conduct research into the use of online social media by young people. Romania similarly intends to perform a specific risk analysis, and the United Kingdom will run a number of research projects on specific issues, including an EU-funded project on self-generated material in which Germany and Sweden also participate. The project – ‘Self-Produced Images and Risk Taking Online’ (SPIRTO) – aims to build an evidence base of the risks associated with self-produced sexual images and is looking to better understand the different contexts behind the creation of these sexual images, the motivations and the consequences for the young people involved.

A number of states also intend to integrate such new trends and threats into their awareness-raising campaigns; for example, Germany is reflecting on a joint strategy to address more comprehensively the period prior to sexual abuse (“grooming” and “posing”, which refers to getting child victims to show themselves in sexual poses and be photographed/videotaped) in the fight against child sexual abuse online.

¹ See <http://www.saferinternetday.org/web/guest/sid-2014> for information about next year's activities on Safer Internet Day, which will be held on Tuesday, 11 February 2014.

Action #3: Training

Besides awareness-raising campaigns targeting large numbers of persons, a number of states are also planning to integrate specific training on risks posed by children's online behaviour into professional development and other educational programs. For example, Australia, Spain and Turkey intend to include a module on awareness of potential risks associated with online activities into educational programs on cyber safety for teachers and/or students, and Estonia will develop specific training materials for the same purpose.

Policy target 4: Reducing as much as possible the availability of child pornography online and reducing as much as possible the re-victimization of children whose sexual abuse is depicted

Operational Goal: Encourage participation by the private sector in identifying and removing known child pornography material located in the relevant State, including increasing as much as possible the volume of system data examined for child pornography images.

Action #1: Improving cooperation with the private sector

Cooperation between law enforcement and the private sector in the fight against child sexual abuse online requires an appropriate legal framework. Albania, Australia, Bulgaria and Hungary intend to create Memoranda of Understanding between law enforcement authorities and internet service providers. Luxembourg also plans to adopt legislation that will enable public-private cooperation particularly by speeding up procedures.

Participants also highlight that the appropriate legal framework is a necessary prerequisite for public-private cooperation, but not sufficient in and of itself. A number of countries plan to undertake further measures to improve cooperation. For example, Germany will issue specific recommendations to improve public-private cooperation, while Romania will seek to establish and strengthen the dialogue among public and private stakeholders by means of workshops and a conference. Sweden intends to step up efforts of the national Financial Coalition, which seeks to trace and dry up payment streams related to child sexual abuse images.

The United Kingdom and the United States are launching a Task Force to Counter Online Child Exploitation, whose aim is to find new technological solutions to combat child sexual exploitation crimes on the Internet and to reduce the volume of child sexual exploitation images online, drawing on expertise provided by academia and the private sector.

Action #2: Development and use of technologies and training to identify and remove child pornography images

As automated recognition of images already known to law enforcement can reduce the impact on law enforcement resources – in terms of time, but more importantly also in terms of the emotional impact on the officers involved – a number of participants have already invested in software to identify known images. Georgia and Italy plan to introduce such software that will furthermore automatically remove known images, and Hungary intends to facilitate sharing of software tools available for automatic comparison of images on the basis of “hashes”, identifiers reflecting the information contained in an image, which allow for matching images even where they have been altered (resized, cropped, etc.). The use of hashes provides the added advantage that possession is legal – they are just numerical values – unlike that of the child sexual abuse images themselves, and nonetheless they allow for identification and removal of similar images. The United States are planning to make additional sets of hashes available to the private sector to enable removal and prevention of uploads of child sexual abuse images.

The United Kingdom intends to participate by offering capacity-building measures in this area.

Operational Goal: Increase the speed of notice and takedown procedures as much as possible without jeopardizing criminal investigations

Action #1: Improving cooperation with the private sector on notice and takedown

Notice and takedown procedures refer to a process in which a host, after having been informed of child sexual abuse images hosted on its system (“notice”), removes such content (“takedown”). Albania, Latvia, New Zealand and Poland plan to promote these procedures by means of setting up and promoting specific Memoranda of Understanding between law enforcement authorities and internet service providers and/or hotlines for the reporting of child sexual abuse images. Lithuania and Moldova will promote a Code of Ethics/Conduct for ISPs that requires a notice and takedown procedure. Moldova furthermore intends to set up a mechanism for more general exchanges of information between law enforcement agencies and internet service providers.

Action #2: Facilitating reporting and establishing or supporting hotlines

A number of participating countries have already established hotlines for the reporting of child sexual abuse images. Albania plans to set up such a hotline; Croatia, Cyprus, Germany and Slovakia intend to develop specific platforms or systems that enable reporting of abusive material, sometimes in conjunction with or in addition to a hotline service. Moldova and Slovenia plan to reinforce cooperation between law enforcement and hotlines, for example through the establishment of secure communication channels for the exchange of information.

Action #3: Providing for the appropriate legal framework for notice and takedown procedures

A number of countries, including Cyprus, Germany, Luxembourg and Poland, intend to improve further their legal frameworks governing notice and takedown procedures. Romania plans to expand its legislation to include harmful content on the Internet, and the Republic of Korea seeks to strengthen the accountability of internet and P2P service

providers, including the introduction of an obligation to filter known child sexual abuse images.

Action #4: Removing and disabling access to child sexual abuse images

Australia and Croatia intend to promote the use of the Interpol “Worst of” list for the purposes of disabling access by internet service providers. This is a list of websites containing images or videos of real children, younger than 13 years, depicting sexual contact or focusing on the genital or anal region of the child; online within last three months, and reviewed and found to fulfil these criteria by two or more independent countries/agencies or more. Finland and Ireland will strengthen and/or expand their filtering system on this basis, and Moldova, Latvia and the Republic of Korea have also decided to implement schemes for blocking access to child sexual abuse material disseminated through websites where appropriate.

Concluding remarks

The diverse set of actions that countries have committed to undertake, in addition to the measures that many have already put in place, shows that Global Alliance participants are taking engagement seriously and are committed to reaching the four political targets that they have set for themselves. These proposed actions place a strong emphasis on cooperation, within countries, between them, and across the various communities involved in preventing, investigating and prosecuting child sexual abuse online; supporting and protecting child victims; and tackling the problem of child sexual abuse images. They also show a dedication to capacity building and training, and to making sure that the right tools are available to both law enforcement and the private sector. With most infrastructure and services in private hands, the fight against child sexual abuse images in particular cannot advance unless we work cooperatively with leaders in the private sector to ensure that images are removed from systems under its control.

This impressive set of commitments demonstrates the willingness of participants to make a change for the better, and proves that the Global Alliance has taken effect as intended: by creating and fostering support for the fight against child sexual abuse at the highest political levels.

Of course, we can expect new challenges to arise on a continuous basis. The modus operandi of offenders changes often, with more and more sophisticated techniques being employed to ensure offenders' anonymity. Challenges are also created by the evolving ways in which children use technologies and live their lives online. The awareness-raising and training actions planned by many of Global Alliance participants, both for the public at large and for law enforcement authorities, will address these issues. But continued efforts will be required to ensure that we are able to find appropriate responses to new obstacles as they arise.

These and other questions will be explored further to prepare the ground for the next meeting of Global Alliance participants in 2014. At this conference, to be hosted in the United States, participants will come together to evaluate their progress and to decide on the next steps to take in the fight against child sexual abuse online. The Global Alliance has made a good start; the enduring commitments of its participants will ensure that it can truly make a difference.



<http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs>