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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction	9
1.1. Overview	9
1.2. Relation to other deliverables	9
1.3. Structure of the deliverable	10
2. Methodology	11
2.1. Information and literature search	11
2.2. Concept and partners' contributions	11
2.3. Limitations	12
3. Terminology	13
3.1. Who is a child?	13
3.2. Child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA)	13
3.2.1 Sexual grooming online	13
3.2.2 Sexual coercion and extortion	14
3.2.3 Live distant child abuse	14
3.3. Child sexual exploitation material (CSEM), child sexual abuse material (CSAM)	15
3.4. What is wrong with the term "child pornography"?	16
3.5. Is this combination of words "child sex tourism" also wrong?	16
3.6. Child sex offenders – resident and transnational	16
3.7. Internet and CSEA	18
3.8. Crossovers between CSEA and trafficking in human beings?	18
3.9. Other terminology	19
4. The background of CSEM/CSAM trends	20
4.1. Anna and George – Their stories the day after	20
4.2. Current statistical indicators and facts	21
4.2.1 Internet penetration and usage	21
4.2.2 Young people, mobile phones and social media	24
4.2.3 Electronic service providers (ESP) and public reporting	25
4.2.4 Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA) 2020 about CSE online	26
4.2.5 Other facts and indicators to consider	26
5. From facts to legal grounds	28
5.1. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Fundamental Principles	28

5.1.2 Business and Children's Rights	30
5.2. Europe: International treaties focused on the fight against CSEA	31
5.3. Europe and the main strategies to protect children from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation	33
5.3.1 United Nations	33
5.3.2 Council of Europe.....	34
5.3.3 European Union	35
6. Policy Recommendations.....	36
6.1 Holistic approach in the fight against CSEA.....	38
7. Conclusion	52
8. Sources	53
ANNEX I – GLOSSARY, ACRONYMS AND COUNTRY ABBREVIATIONS	58

Annexes

- Annex I: Glossary, acronyms and country abbreviations

Figures

- Figure 1: Connections between different concepts regarding child sexual exploitation (Frangež et al., 2015)
- Figure 2: Europol's "Say NO! Online sexual coercion and extortion of children" prevention and awareness campaign
- Figure 3: Anna's story (left) about sexual gain and George's story (right) about financial gain, extracts taken from the Europol's "Say NO! Campaign" comics
- Figure 4: Graphic view of the data related to internet penetration and its usage per million of inhabitants (Designed according to data from Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2020)
- Figure 5: The internet usage growth in charts (Designed according to data from Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2020)
- Figure 6: Relations (of users – network – e-device) with structured entities

Tables

- Table 1 – Relation to other deliverables – receives inputs from
- Table 2 – Relation to other deliverables – provides outputs to
- Table 3 – Glossary and Acronyms
- Table 4 – Abbreviation of countries

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is presented by the GRACE project and it aims to identify, analyse, and report on policy recommendations for the use of technology by law enforcement authorities and stakeholders operating in the CSEM arena to combat CSEM. It also provides an overview of policy recommendations that are in close connection with technology. Therefore, it encompasses the whole range of policy recommendations on different interconnected topics.

We have personalized the approach to these topics through the story of two young victims, now survivors Anna and George, the main characters of Europol's successful "#Say No!" campaign against sexual coercion and extortion. Based on their experience and the narrative of sexual abuse, we present statistical indicators on the use of the Internet and electronic devices among young people and also in general. This is followed by an insight into the criminological and victimological aspects of the use of the Internet, social networks, applications and the ways in which perpetrators of sexual abuse operate. We also touch on the definitions and relevance of appropriate terminology in this area, advocating for the use of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) instead of "child pornography" offering greater dignity to victims as well as international legal standards on child protection and protection. The dedicated chapter on policy recommendations includes topics such as legislation, technology, investigation, work organization and cooperation, training and knowledge, prevention and raising awareness. Policy recommendations are divided per EU/European level and per national level under each topic and are explained in details.

The policy recommendations (quotes) are:

Policy Recommendations (chapter 6)	
EU/European level	National level
Holistic approach in the fight against CSEA (subchapter 6.1)	
1. Implementation of currently existing EU legislation	
- The competent body within the EU is encouraged to continue relevant activities that all EU MS would implement the a/m Directive as soon as possible.	- The MS EU are encouraged to fully implement and transpose the existing EU legislation that serves to protect the most vulnerable population – children, especially the Directive 2011/93/EU aiming to protect them from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
2. National strategies encompassing crucial statistical and trend comparisons	
a) Strategies should address all aspects of children's life with special emphasis on empowering, protecting and supporting them in the digital (online) and real (offline) environment, while action plans should reflect and implement this vision. b) EU bodies are encouraged to gather and publish significant statistical data in a coordinated way in order to understand the trends and frequency of these type of crimes, and to be able to compare them with other countries without delays or specific differences among them.	a) Strategies should address all aspects of children's life with special emphasis on empowering, protecting and supporting them in the digital (online) and real (offline) environment, while action plans should reflect and implement this vision. b) National authorities are encouraged to publish significant statistical data in order to understand the trends and frequency of these type of crimes, and to be able to compare them with other countries without delays or specific differences among them.

3. Invention, innovation and solution focused technology to assist LE in performing their tasks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Policy-makers are encouraged to promote technological development in tools, techniques and instruments in order to increase capacities and capabilities of stakeholders in CSE arena to prevent online harms and protect children from further harms. b) Relevant EU institutions are invited to organize the events that aims to promote tools, techniques and instruments that could be of use for national law enforcement and judicial authorities to improve their tasks to protect children from CSE online and offline. c) Analyse the available solutions that were already provided through different funding mechanisms at EU and at national level regardless of the scope or aim of the project in order to highlight the existing solutions that can be upgraded, or supplemented for the protection of children against CSE. At EU level, the relevant funding bodies (e.g. EC DG's) should dive into their project repositories and provide a full list of available solutions. d) An acceptable compromise must be achieved between the motivation for involvement in research and development projects by private parties, research and academic institutes and the exploitation of the results of such projects by government and public bodies. Appropriate licensing models and continued support and development of products must be adequately addressed in such compromises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) National authorities are also encouraged to promote technological development in tools, techniques and instruments in order to increase capacities and capabilities of stakeholders in CSE arena to prevent online harms and protect children from further harms. b) National authorities are invited to promote, share and exchange tools, techniques and instruments that could be useful for other national law enforcement and judicial authorities in their tasks to protect children from CSE online and offline. c) Analyse the available solutions that were already provided through different funding mechanisms at EU and at national level regardless of the scope or aim of the project in order to highlight the existing solutions that can be upgraded, or supplemented for the protection of children against CSE. At national level, the relevant project funded by public or private entities, or both, each trustee, administrator should provide the same information (communicate with all universities, institutes, innovation labs etc.).
4. Awareness of different trends, threats and harms against children's safety	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU institutions in close cooperation with European nations should open a discourse for development of taxonomy of online harms in order to protect children's rights in every aspect and circumstances. This could be seen as initiating the safety-by-design concept to protect children as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU MS are encouraged to open similar discussions on taxonomy about online harms, affecting children at least. Those discussions should be encouraged within their societies and their outcome provided to the common, European taxonomy catalogue.
5. Victim and offender centric approaches	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting the victim and offender centric approaches and ensuring that relevant stakeholders accept these as important to removing obstacles for efficient protection of children, quality evidence gathering and increased detection and prosecution of child sexual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National LE authorities are encouraged to properly assess and integrate both approaches, with increased and intensified sharing of intelligence of sexual abuse and exploitation of children nationally and internationally.

offenders.	
6. Provide support and allocate relevant resources to law enforcement	
- The European institutions should promote and provide necessary funds for the increased capabilities and capacities of law enforcement and other relevant authorities, aimed at the protection of children from sexual exploitation and abuse.	- The national authorities are encouraged to provide or allocate sufficient human resources and funds to dedicated CSE units and to provide regular training courses and meet the educational needs of CSE investigators in order to improve their ability to protect children from these harms.
7. Prevention and awareness raising	
<p>a) It is crucial that preventive activities be supported and strengthened by all policy makers so that messages reach all groups of the population, experts, the business sector and individuals. This is particularly necessary for the most vulnerable groups of people like children, who must be an integral part of these activities.</p> <p>b) EU and European institutions are encouraged to use and promote better terminology that focuses on child protection and child victims of sexual exploitation, such as child sexual exploitation material and child sexual abuse material instead of child pornography.</p> <p>c) The EU and its institutions should become a role model in strong coordination of prevention activities aiming at protecting children from harmful online trends. This coordination should be supported with academic research, best practices and with children's participation.</p>	<p>a) National authorities have positive obligation to promote and encourage different and effective preventive activities that are organized by themselves, or by other entities or with them in close cooperation. In doing so, it is important to pursue the highest quality standards for these activities, especially in accordance with the fundamental principles of the UN CRC and the inclusion of children in the topics that concern them.</p> <p>b) Member States and their national authorities are encouraged to use and promote better terminology that focuses on child protection and child victims of sexual exploitation, such as child sexual exploitation material and child sexual abuse material instead of child pornography. Member states are encouraged to amend legislation that utilises incorrect or dated terminology.</p> <p>c) National authorities are encouraged to interact with EU institutions to establish or improve coordination of their prevention activities at national and European level through the participation of academia, practitioners and children.</p>
8. Childrens' participation in matters affecting them	
<p>a) All policy makers should accept the active participation of children in developing legislative, policy, strategy, action plans and other official documents that are of great importance.</p> <p>b) Therefore, EU institutions and other European or international bodies should have a positive obligation to promote consultation with children, providing them feedback, especially how their proposals were taken into account and if not, providing them with proper and solid arguments for that.</p>	<p>a) All policy makers should accept the active participation of children in developing legislative, policy, strategy, action plans and other official documents that are of great importance.</p> <p>b) Therefore, each of the country or national authorities should have a positive obligation to promote consultation with children, providing them feedback, especially how their proposals were taken into account and if not, providing them with proper and solid arguments for that.</p> <p>c) All official documents or position papers</p>

c) All official documents or position papers concerning children should be provided centrally and in child-friendly versions.	concerning children should be provided centrally and in child-friendly versions.
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The idea behind this document is to continue to update it throughout the lifetime of the project according to new trends, statistical indicators and responses by policy-makers. The crucial point from here onwards is for children and adults to safely and intelligently navigate the present and future digital environments. Together.

1. Introduction

Here we present the overview of this deliverable, its relation to other deliverables in the GRACE project, and a brief explanation of the structure and content of it.

1.1. Overview

The description of action describes this deliverable as:

D10.6 - Stakeholder and policy recommendations for addressing online CSEM. [February 2021]

This task will develop a series of stakeholder and policy recommendations for the use of technology to combat CSEM and by offenders to create, disseminate and consume CSEM content. It will also promote the adoption of EU wide standards based on the standardisations designed (T2.3) and implemented in GRACE. This task will receive inputs from T6.6 which analyses short- and long-term trends alongside desk-based research from policy briefs and statistics well as input from referral providers.

The main objective of this document is to identify, analyse, and report on policy recommendations for the use of technology by LEAs and stakeholders operating in the CSEM arena to combat CSEM.

1.2. Relation to other deliverables

This deliverable is related to the following other GRACE deliverables:

- Receives inputs from:

Deliv. #	Deliverable title	How the two deliverables are related
D2.3	<i>Standardized Taxonomy and Information Exchange Formats</i>	With promoting the adoption of EU wide standards based on the standardizations designed and implemented in GRACE, under T2.3
D6.6	<i>Module(s) for predictive analysis of short and long-term trends in CSEM</i>	With outcomes from analyses of short- and long-term trends (alongside desk-based research from policy briefs, statistics and input from referral providers), under T6.6 in connection with T2.3
D9.1	<i>Ethical Report</i>	Country contributions (LT, PT)

Table 1 – Relation to other deliverables – receives inputs from

- Provides outputs to:

Deliv. #	Deliverable title	How the two deliverables are related
D10.6	<i>Best Practices on Victim support for LEA first responders</i>	The Best Practices can be considered a natural continuation of the D10.5
D1.3	<i>Ethical and legal guidelines for the project and data management and protection plan</i>	The outcomes and benefits were considered for future implementation to be aligned with the policy recommendations

Table 2 – Relation to other deliverables – provides outputs to

1.3. Structure of the deliverable

This document includes the following sections:

- Section 1: This introduction provides an explanation of the deliverable content, its structure and its relations to other deliverables within the same project.
- Section 2: Methodology is explained in order to present the approach taken to achieve the results in this deliverable.
- Section 3: It provides a brief overview of relevant terminology in CSE crime area.
- Section 4: This section provides an overview of the trends through different studies, theories, and projects, the outcomes of successful prevention campaigns and through different statistical indicators, encompassing the complexity of CSE/CSA crime area.
- Section 5: Provides the basic legal background, from relevant International and European law that focuses on various activities that the children can benefit.
- Section 6: This is the core part of the deliverable, the overview of policy recommendations synthesised from the topics previously explored in sections 2, 3 and 4.
- Section 7: This concludes the deliverable with a view to the near future and challenges ahead.
- Section 8: Providing an overview of sources and literature used in this document.

2. Methodology

The deliverable was prepared through different research methods. One was literature review, including the online search for relevant information, the attendance at different public discourse events (e.g. webinars, online conferences, consultations) and by gathering contributions from partner organizations in the GRACE project.

2.1. Information and literature search

In searching for relevant literature and available information online, the search engine google was used between September 1 to December 15, 2020. The online search was performed through various search terms, such as:

- The name of organization or institution (Council of Europe, Europol, European Commission, UNICEF, CISCO, etc.);
- The names of events (conferences, webinars, etc.);
- The public press releases, and the news,
- The keywords (child, protection, sexual, abuse, exploitation, cybercrime, victims, crime, internet, online, digital, report, penetration, population, privacy, human rights, law, legislation, convention etc.);
- The period of published or released sources (in the last year, i.e. 2019/2020, the last decade);
- The sources published by reliable organizations, institutions, and private sector (that was determined according to the role they play in the societies, their ethical approach and positive contribution to children's safety and respect their rights).

The results from the publicly available events are indicated in the chapters that follows. These findings were gathered from the events that were organized by Council of Europe, United Nations, European Parliament and others during the year 2020 mainly.

2.2. Concept and partners' contributions

In addition, the concept of this deliverable (document) is to encompass three main insights that can lead also the non-experienced reader into the depths of complex and sensitive topics such as the sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children. The mentioned insights are:

- a) Actual realistic story of two victims (young boy and young girl), who became youth advocates and amplifying their stories to others (peers, parents, officials, policy-makers and other stakeholders),
- b) Statistical indicators from the general view to more specific and detailed approach, from sociocultural impact (e.g. use of Internet, electronic devices, tools) down to criminogenic or victimological factors, and
- c) The legislative nature that circles the presented two points.

The very first drafted document (ver. 0.1) was communicated with the GRACE partners (those, who are actually involved in this activity) for their comments, remarks and additional contributions. Also, the workshop was organized in order to highlight the idea behind the deliverable. The partners were asked to contribute their suggestions and potential solutions in a holistic view. The request for partners' contributions were addressing different topics in order to improve stakeholders' work against sexual crimes against children, such as:

- Challenges or even problems confronted or observed that needs consideration;
- Foreseeing any future challenges that have to be highlighted;
- Activities that European countries should incorporate into their work processes;
- Any specific topic that have to be addressed at the EU/European level;

- Any current legal updates (improvements) made in national legislation that could be of importance for other countries, including relevant national case-laws;
- Improvements of national work procedures (good practices) recently that can be shared as know-how to others;
- How countries could contribute, exchange, improve, inform, share, provide etc. information in order to increase capability to respond;
- Implementation of specific software or tools to improve investigations, victim identification processes forensics, managing cases;
- New trends that could have impact on the work in this crime area (e.g. deep fakes (nude fakes), AI, child obscene dolls/robots, cloud computing, new apps etc.).

Their contributions were included in this deliverable.

The policy recommendations were presented at two levels, the EU/European level and the national level. The reasoning behind this is to distinguish the EU/European measures from the national ones. Some of the recommendations would better reflect at the wider perspective (EU/Europe), some would better reflect at the national, and others need sort of back-up in the wider context and then can be synchronised at the national level. In this regard, the sovereignty of the countries involved is respected, and on the other hand, it provides the relevant wider approach that needs to be put in place in all countries. In addition, the EU/European level is meant to cover all European countries, not just those in the European Union or perhaps those only, who have operational agreement with Europol. It is about contributing the outcomes of the GRACE project through the policy recommendations to each and every European country in order to improve their implementation. The latter can assist also to countries outside of Europe (other regions, even continents) to recognize the needs of a synchronized and harmonized approach at wider, if not at global scale.

The more countries and stakeholders are aligned in their work to protect children from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation to minimize it, if not abolish it; the better that is for the children.

2.3. Limitations

A limitation in this deliverable was observed. It is a lack of physical and direct discussions, exchange of views or other kinds of consultations in person. This makes this document slightly less concrete or perhaps without a wider breadth of vision.

This shortcoming can be remedied by two currently perceived solutions. The first is when the restrictions from COVID-19 measures will be deescalated. The other is to emphasize that this deliverable is a 'live' document that will be supplemented according to new trends that occur during the lifecycle of the project.

3. Terminology

Presenting and understanding the terminology related to child sexual exploitation is of significant importance (Frangež, Klančnik, Žagar Karer, Ludvigsen, Kończyk, Ruiz Perez, Veijalainen, and Lewin, 2015). Same authors, who looked into terminology highlighted that many different expressions can be found in the area of child sexual exploitation and much consideration must be devoted to this topic to avoid any misunderstandings. In further reading, the presented terminology should serve as a basis for proper understanding the sexual exploitation and abuse of children in order to avoid misinterpretation and that the common ‘standards’ are respected, such as Luxembourg Guidelines.

3.1. Who is a child?

A child is a human being under the age of 18 years; a definition derived from many international treaties.¹

This definition can incorporate terms such as baby, infant, toddler, minor, underage person, (pre)pubescent girl or boy, adolescent and teenagers under 18 years of age.

Youth, young people, youngsters, young adults in most cases do not reflect children according to definition.

Children are also defined, in cases involving sexual exploitation, as individuals who have not yet attained the age of consent in a specific jurisdiction.

3.2. Child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA)

It is any act of a person who, takes advantage of the situation or circumstances in which the child found himself or herself with that person (exploitation), or with abuse of their privileged position, status, relationship, power and/or influence over a child, forces, coerces, seduces, induces, or persuades a child into sexual activity or into acts with sexual connotation, in order to satisfy its own needs for control and power, or their sexual needs.

Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child can take several forms, e.g. rape, sexual assaults, sexual grooming online, sexual coercion and extortion, live distant child abuse, depiction of sexual activity with children (i.e. child sexual abuse material, CSAM) and distribution of the CSAM online.

3.2.1 Sexual grooming online

It is the behaviour of the perpetrator, the purpose of which is to approach a child online and gain his trust (also making a contact for sexual purposes using technology) (Mihelič, 2017). European legislation² defines this act as a solicitation of children for sexual purposes. It is defined as follows:

“The proposal, by means of information and communication technology, by an adult to meet a child who has not reached the age of sexual consent, for the purpose of committing any of the offences referred to in Article 3(4) (i.e. engaging in sexual activities with a child who has not reached the age

¹ See legal chapter 5

² See indicated provisions in Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA, OJ L 335, 17.12.2011. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32011L0093> (accessed: 03/12/2020).

of sexual consent) and Article 5(6) (i.e. Production of CSAM/CSEM), where that proposal was followed by material acts leading to such a meeting (Article 6 of said Directive).“

The perpetrator tries, on the one hand, to reduce the child's resistance to sexual activity through the process of getting to know each other, and on the other hand, to increase her curiosity about sexuality (Mihelič, 2017). The most common goal of online grooming is to meet a child live, followed by sexual activity, or the goal may also be to make sexual images that involve the child (ibid.).

Sexual grooming can take place also offline.

3.2.2 Sexual coercion and extortion

Sexual extortion is a phenomenon of sexual exploitation that usually takes place online and uses mainly non-physical forms of extortion (Mihelič, 2017). She presented that extortion with intimate images can happen to either adults or minors. It is possible to discuss about sexual extortion of minors with intimate imagery when someone threatens a child to disseminate his or her intimate images, if he or she is not provided with images that are more intimate, money, or sexual favours (ibid.).

Europol (2017) highlighted the key elements of online sexual coercion and extortion of children that are indicated as:

- Material — any material (information, photo or video) the victim seeks to keep private,
- Threat — what a victim would like to prevent from happening, in most cases the release of material that victim seeks to keep private,
- Value — what the perpetrator demands from a victim (Europol, 2017).

The perpetrator may also threaten to use information obtained from the child or to hack into child's e-devices, harm child's friends or relatives if a child is failing to comply with perpetrators demands. Extortion with intimate footage can also be a continuation of sexting.³

The term is often referred to as 'sextortion', but experts warned that unqualified use of this expression — an amalgam of 'sexual' and 'extortion' — in public discourse can be problematic. It can promote reductionist thinking around the problem of online sexual coercion and extortion of children, suggesting an overly simplistic image of what is in effect a damaging and complex phenomenon (Europol, 2017; IWG, 2016).

3.2.3 Live distant child abuse

With the term, Live Distant Child Abuse (LDCA) Europol encompasses all kinds of live-streamed sexual abuse of children. These include the commercial sexual exploitation of children via live-stream technologies by remote buyers, rebroadcasting of offenders' collections of previously recorded sexual activities upon requests or demands, and also the situations, when a child is using a streaming application and unaware of the danger of his or her own behaviour, shows intimate body parts to viewers for status purposes or for payments.

European legislation⁴ defines this act as a pornographic performance. It is defined as follows:

³ Sexting is explained by NSPCC, when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexual messages. Available at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/online-abuse/> (accessed: 04/12/2020).

⁴ See indicated provision in same directive under footnote 2. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32011L0093> (accessed: 03/12/2020).

“‘Pornographic performance’ means a live exhibition aimed at an audience, including by means of information and communication technology, of: (i) a child engaged in real or simulated sexually explicit conduct; or (ii) the sexual organs of a child for primarily sexual purposes (Article 2(a) of said Directive).”

LDCA has the most obvious links with commercial distribution of CSEM. As new and/or unseen CSEM is valuable currency within the offending community, live distant abuse is therefore a way not only to acquire more CSEM, but to simultaneously generate material with a high ‘value’.

This activity takes place in real-time, and occurs when a child is forced to appear in front of a webcam, mobile phone or camera to engage in sexual behaviour or to be subjected to sexual abuse. The sexual abuse of child is broadcasted to a buyer, who requests or demands the particular kind of abuse to be performed in front of e-devices, which provide real time transmitting of visual depictions (sexual abuse).

3.3. Child sexual exploitation material (CSEM), child sexual abuse material (CSAM)

The term child sexual exploitation material [CSEM] should be used instead of child pornography (Frangež et al. (2015). They explained that there is also another relevant term that can be used as a subtype of child sexual exploitation material [CSEM]; i.e. child sexual abuse material [CSAM]. Both terms indicate that a criminal offence against a child was committed. The child sexual exploitation material encompasses pictures, films, videos, movies, photographs, sketches, images, self-generated images of naked persons (“naked selfies”), texts, voice and audio recordings with sexually explicit content that include children. The term child sexual abuse image is used to describe the format on which the evidence of actual child sexual abuse is shown (e.g. photographs, pictures, video recordings) (ibid.). The CSAM is also referred to as child abuse material [CAM].

In United Kingdom, the official legal term indecent images of children⁵ is used instead of CSAM or CSEM. It appears to be broader than the other two; however, UK’s law enforcement agencies, judiciary, policy makers and legislators are using it to define the CSAM or CSEM.

The visual presentation in the figure 1 provides a clearer view.

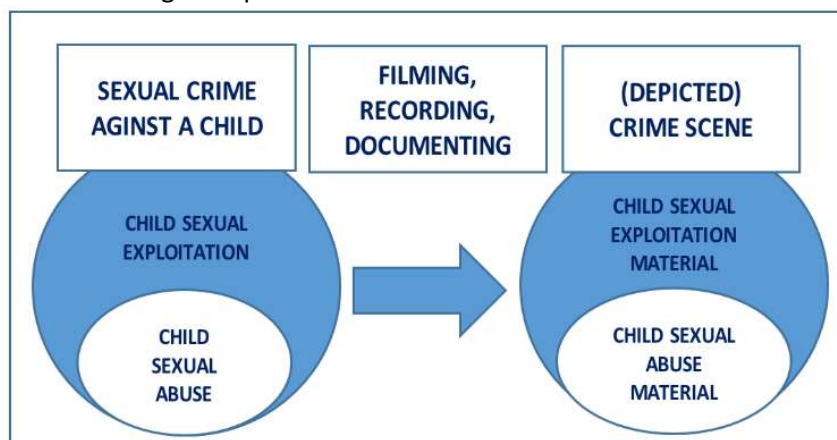


Figure 1: Connections between different concepts regarding child sexual exploitation (Frangež et al., 2015)

⁵ UK Crown Prosecution Service, Indecent and Prohibited Images of Children, <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/indecent-and-prohibited-images-children> (accessed: 02/12/2020).

In short, CSEM and CSAM are the criminal consequences (results) of filmed, recorded, depicted or documented sexual exploitation and abuse of children. CSEM and CSAM have to be understood as evidence of sexual crime against a child, and therefore represent the crime scenes.

3.4. What is wrong with the term “child pornography”?

Experts in this field encourage you to use the term ‘child (sexual) abuse material’ and not ‘child pornography’ in every discussions or reports. The term child pornography is therefore slowly being abandoned in professional circles, as it minimises the seriousness of the criminal offence and contributes to the stigmatisation and re-victimisation of victims (Frangež et al, 2015).

The use of the term ‘child pornography’ helps child sex abusers as it indicates legitimacy and compliance on the part of the victim, and therefore legality on the part of the sex abuser. By using the phrase ‘child pornography’, it conjures up images of children posing in ‘provocative’ positions, rather than suffering horrific abuse. Every photograph or video captures an actual situation where a child has been abused. This is not pornography.

3.5. Is this combination of words “child sex tourism” also wrong?

European law does not provide direct definition of “child sex tourism”, while the term can be found several times in the mentioned directive against sexual abuse of children. Through the lens of Article 21 of the said directive, it can be understood as (1) advertisements of the opportunities to commit any of the sexual offences against a child and as (2) organizing travel arrangements with purpose of committing any of the mentioned offenses.

The ECPAT International⁶ promotes the use of ‘sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism’, instead of ‘child sex tourism’. The NGO also explained that the connection between travel and tourism and the sexual exploitation of children might not be obvious. However, as the travel and tourism industry expands with cheaper tickets and better connections, the opportunities for child sex offenders to exploit children also increases. No country or child is immune. They also highlighted that the travel and tourism industry is in a key position to protect children from this crime by making sure their services and venues are not misused by child sex offenders. ‘Voluntourism’, orphanage tourism and mega-events are examples where offenders easily can access and exploit children (ibid.).

3.6. Child sex offenders – resident and transnational

Plenty of expressions and terms describing a person, committing a sexual crime against a child have at first glance similar meaning. In the context of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, the following are the words (e.g. abuser, accused, child molester, child pornographer, child trafficker, convict, defendant, offender [transnational offender], paedophile, person of interest, predator, rapist, suspect etc.), but each has its own shortcoming and peculiarities. None of the mentioned are precise enough, others have too broad meaning and would encompass other crimes (abuser, accused, child molester, child pornographer, child trafficker, convict, defendant, offender [transnational offender], person of interest, rapist, suspect), in addition some are offensive or at least not ethical (child molester, child pornographer, predator) and one is taken from the psychiatric area (paedophile).

⁶ More info: <https://www.ecpat.org/what-we-do/sexual-exploitation-of-children-travel-tourism/> (accessed: 04/12/2020).

In order to prevent any misconceptions, it is important to clarify that not all child sexual offenders are paedophiles, although these two terms (Nellis, 2009) are often used interchangeably. Richards (2011) highlighted the importance to understand, however, that the two terms have different meanings; not all child sex offenders are paedophiles and conversely, not all paedophiles are child sex offenders.

Kelly Richards in her article *Misperceptions about child sex offenders* (2011) addresses five different misconceptions, about the perpetrators of sexual offences against children. Specifically, the issues addressed include whether all child sex offenders are 'paedophiles', who sexually abuse children ... rates of recidivism among child sex offenders and the number of children sex offenders typically abuse before they are detected by police (ibid.).

For this occasion, we are using (and kept) her relevant and precise explanation as is (quote):

"The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV (APA 1994: 572) uses the following criteria to diagnose paedophilia:

- *Over a period of at least 6 months, [the person has had] recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviours involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally aged 13 years or younger);*
- *The person has acted on these sexual urges, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause marked distress or interpersonal difficulty; and*
- *The person is at least 16 years and at least 5 years older than the child or children in Criterion A.*

Revisions to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV now recognise that experiencing distress about sexual urges, fantasies or behaviours should no longer be a required element of the diagnosis of a paedophile (Moulden et al. 2009). As Moulden et al. (2009: 681) argue, 'given the egosyntonic nature of Pedophilia, [this criterion] is simply nonsensical'. That is, it is somewhat tautological to suggest that paedophilia can only be diagnosed if sexual interest in children causes the individual to become distressed, as a lack of distress about being sexually interested in children can characterise paedophilia.

Although the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV has been criticised on a number of grounds (Moulden et al. 2009), the diagnostic criteria for paedophilia provide a helpful framework for understanding that not all child sex offenders are paedophiles and not all paedophiles are child sex offenders. As this suggests, paedophiles are those individuals who are sexually attracted to young children; these individuals may or may not act on this attraction. Conversely, while some child sex offenders are attracted to children, others may have sexual interest in and/or offend against both children and adults, and/or may act out of opportunity rather than an exclusive sexual interest in children.

It should also be noted that the term 'paedophile' refers specifically to those attracted to prepubescent children. Those attracted to pubescent children are described in the literature as 'hebephiles' (see e.g. Blanchard & Barbaree 2005). As Bahroo (2003: 498) argues, however, it may be more accurate to consider these classifications 'in terms of body type and build rather than in terms of age'. That is, child sex offenders who have a preference for a particular 'age group' are likely to be attracted to the typical body type of that age group rather than the age of the children per se (ibid.)."

In the context of the GRACE project and of the expert work against sexual exploitation and abuse of children, the terms in general perspective that are used as appropriate and commonly accepted by many experts in the CSEA arena are:

- a) Child sex offender (CSO) – any person, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, sexual preferences or other personal circumstances that commits any kind of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation

of a child.

- b) Transnational child sex offender (TCSO) – any child sex offender that travels or resides away from his home country or place of origin to other location, usually to other less or underdeveloped country to abuse his position or power in order to commit a sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a (real) child. Occasionally a reader could come across with the term “travelling child sex offender” or “child sex tourist” that are practically abandoned by experts.

3.7. Internet and CSEA

The advent of the Internet has amplified the crime of child sexual exploitation and abuse, as the nature and extent of available connections among offenders and victims have rapidly developed. Through the Internet, offenders are increasingly able to reach children all over the world, subject them to sexual grooming, coercion, sexual extortion and LDCA (see above). With the use of technology, offenders can live stream or record and distribute the sexual abuse of children via the Internet to other like-minded offenders. Live streaming, also known as live distant child abuse (LDCA) is strongly motivated by financial gain.

Europol has identified⁷ those technological components playing a significant role in the perpetration of this type of crime, namely Peer2Peer networks, social media, messaging applications and the darknet. All these have an aggravating effect on victims, as they allow a wider distribution of CSAM⁸ among millions of offenders. In an international survey of survivors of child sexual exploitation 70% of victims referred to their persistent concern⁹ that they will be recognised in public because of their involuntary participation in the CSAM in circulation.

On the other hand, by using the Internet, suspects can victimise more children and take advantage of their vulnerability. Online grooming is particularly concerning; as a lot of information on potentially vulnerable children is accessible on the Internet allowing offenders to socially engineer their approaches. Offenders use technology to communicate with each other. Communities of child offenders have been found on the clearnet as well as on the darknet. These criminals take advantage of encrypted environments, where they feel anonymous and unaccountable for what they do.

3.8. Crossovers between CSEA and trafficking in human beings?

It was already clarified that proper understanding of the terminology related to sexual exploitation of children is of significant importance (Frangéž et al., 2015), and this is increasingly evident when it comes to borderline examples, such as trafficking in human beings. Perhaps, to be more precise: child trafficking.

The crime of child sexual abuse (CSA) refers to the sexual abuse or exploitation¹⁰ of a child, a person below the age of 18, including the production and online sharing of images of such abuse. Offenders taking advantage of their power and/or influence over the child abuse their privileged position, status, and/or relationship, in order to coerce and exploit them to fulfil the offender’s own sexual and less frequently

⁷ See Europol threat assessments, e.g. IOCTA 2018, IOCTA 2019.

⁸ Phoenix 11 Advocacy Statement, at https://protectchildren.ca/static/images/download-buttons/C3P_Phoenix11_AdvocacyStatement_en.34cc8ca70611.jpg (accessed: 17/12/2020).

⁹ Canadian Centre for Child Protection, International Survivor’s Survey, at <https://protectchildren.ca/en/resources-research/survivors-survey-results/> (accessed: 17/12/2020).

¹⁰ Production of child sexual abuse material involves the actual sexual abuse of a child (CSAM) while distribution of CSAM is usually considered as child sexual exploitation (taken from Terminology guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse).

financial needs. This crime has severe consequences for the victims and their ability to overcome the traumatic experience/s, and often have adverse effects throughout their life as adults¹¹. Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child can take several forms; some were explained above.

Crossovers between CSEA and trafficking in human beings (THB) for sexual exploitation are seen mostly in the abusive acts committed against victims. Perpetrators or traffickers lure, trick, force or induce victims into sexual activity against their consent (e.g. prostitution, escorting, and adverts). In many occasions victims are not even aware that they have already been exploited (trafficked), e.g. when they respond to a job offer abroad with promising income, or when they believe they are in an honestly established romantic relationship (with 'lover boys'). While THB usually entails the transport or relocation of victims from one location to another for financial gain from their exploitation, the main goal of offenders in CSEA is usually to satisfy their sexual desires, and to a lesser extent for financial gain. Furthermore, conventional organised criminal groups frequently commit so-called "child trafficking", while CSEA is often committed by lone offenders or online organised criminal groups.

The difficulty in understanding both concepts is most often attributed to the geographical use of a certain term – 'child trafficking' is often used in US and Asia in relation to CSEA, while in Europe CSEA is more firmly used in connection with the technological aspects of the crime. In recent times this has been even more emphasised in connection with the live streaming of child sexual abuse and exploitation. It has been called "digital or virtual trafficking" since the victim is being abused by those who are paying for it and are at a distance from the victim. However, the GRACE project asserts that this interpretation of what is essentially a sexual crime against a child that is enabled through the internet, without that child being moved anywhere, stretches the definition of human trafficking as it is understood in Europe. It also potentially diverts attention and resources that would otherwise be deployed in harnessing the existing knowledge and expertise to counter CSEA.

However, it is very clear that both CSEA and THB represent a significant violation of ethical, moral, social norms and legal provisions, and the human rights of every victim.

3.9. Other terminology

Additional help in understanding the relevant terminology and semiotics in this crime area is the Terminology guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (also known as Luxembourg Guidelines), released in 2016.

These guidelines can be used as a tool to enhance the protection of children against sexual violence.

¹¹ Canadian Centre for Child Protection, *ibid.* no. 9.

4. The background of CSEM/CSAM trends

Chapter presents trends through the lens of real (child sexual abuse) stories, which were campaigned in major prevention and awareness activity, and through statistical indicators and facts from various sources.

4.1. Anna and George¹² – Their stories the day after

In 2017, Anna, who was 13 and George, who was 17 at that time, had undergone a serious attack on their intimacy and privacy. They never met, but they have one thing in common – they were victims of a sexual crime. This is based on real cases, and Europol delivered the prevention and awareness raising campaign Say NO! against sexual coercion and extortion of children online (see Figure 2).

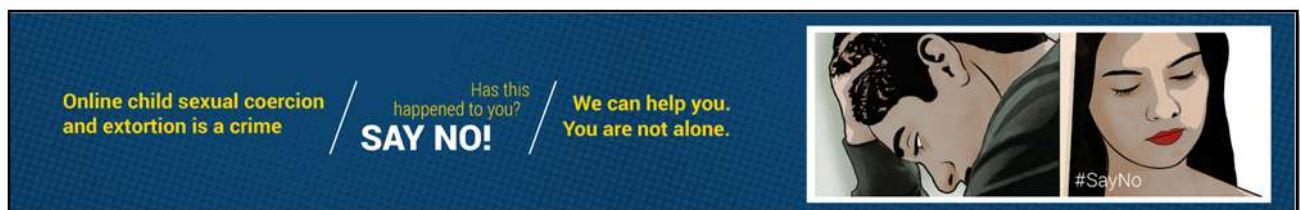


Figure 2: Europol's "Say NO! Online sexual coercion and extortion of children" prevention and awareness campaign

Anna (see Figure 3, left) was sexually coerced and extorted by someone who lied about his personality (about age, hobbies etc.) and just before the violence occurred he tricked her with grooming tactics to send him her intimate, and quite explicit pictures. Yes, she became a victim of this crime and after she sent her pictures out via mobile phone, she had no control over them anymore. Anna's nightmare began with demands for more and more of her self-generated explicit pictures. She was trapped, forced to send pictures, lost control of her life, fell into depression and she was unable to speak with anyone about her misery for quite a long time. Later, after her mum realized her abruptly altered behaviour, and discussed it with her, Anna confided in her slowly and in tears about her insurmountable problem, how she got an online friendship invitation and everything that followed. Her mother was fortunately aware of what to do and both have found the necessary help.

George's story (see Figure 3, right) is slightly different. During the online gaming, he was a saviour of another player from a sudden death. The player thanked and contacted George by offering new friendship, or even more, if he was willing to show his, and the player, presenting herself as a young woman, would have shown hers – intimate body parts. He was tricked and could not believe this was really happening. He believed that the girl was right for him and showed her via video chat his young body – naked. He was lured into this act, and the young woman was not who she claimed to be. "She" demanded money in return for not posting his pictures. George's nightmare began at this point; he had been scared to death and paid the ransom. The extortionist did not want to stop, he paid more and more and more ... His friends got worried since he was no longer that pleasant and happy friend who was always ready to help others. George became a tired, irritable person, and sometimes he missed classes. At one occasion, two friends visited him and insisted to

¹² Anna and George are the main characters in the Europol's very successful and on-going prevention and awareness raising campaign "Say No! Online sexual coercion and extortion of children", launched on 19 June 2017. Anna's and George's stories are presented in first three paragraphs. The complete video is available here: <https://youtu.be/5ttHYODhenY>; and about campaign here: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/public-awareness-and-prevention-guides/online-sexual-coercion-and-extortion-crime> (accessed: 28/09/2020).

talk with him. He finally relented and told them about the gaming and the girl, who was anything but a real girl. Together, shoulder to shoulder, they reported the act to investigators.



Figure 3: Anna's story (left) about sexual gain and George's story (right) about financial gain, extracts taken from the Europol's "Say NO! Campaign" comics

Both Anna and George were afraid that their pictures would come to light, spread wildly on the Internet and perhaps seen by their peers, family or strangers. Even when they would grow up and look for a good job, becoming parents with children on their own. Unfortunately, they both know today that they will have to live with this until the end of their days.

Anna and George are not victims anymore. They are survivors. They became stronger as they have the support of their families and friends. Nowadays, they share¹³ their stories and experiences among younger generations and their parents, teachers, councillors and other professionals, when presenting the internet safety. They say that many children are keen on technical novelties and unknowingly testing the boundaries, but they do not have enough skills and knowledge on internet safety. They also speak about other online safety issues, such as protecting own privacy, personal data, about assistance and needs of victims of different ages and individual characteristics, about dissemination of child sexual abuse materials online and their removals from Internet, trends and threats. They bring to the table the questions what could Internet industry, information and technology companies, innovations contribute for the protection of children online, about hotlines and helplines, about possibilities of law enforcement and criminal justice, policy-makers, health and social-welfare centres, child advocacy offices and others.

4.2. Current statistical indicators and facts

Some of the current statistical indicators and facts are presented in this section. In principle, they are presented from the general to specific, from wider to narrower view in order to highlight the scale of contemporary Internet-related technology (e.g. internet penetration, use of mobile devices). Indicators and facts are shown in terms of the technology usage, and in the light of victimization and criminogenic circumstances with slight focus for the occurrence of deviant behaviour of offenders (ESP reporting, criminal trends). This will provide to stakeholders the basis in understanding the scope of the problem, and present them the significant importance of the technological solutions in addressing online CSEM.

4.2.1 Internet penetration and usage

In 2015, CISCO has published a white paper,¹⁴ in which it is estimated that in 10 years the use of "smart

¹³ The rest of the text is a continuation of their story in 2020/2021 as a sort of personalized reflection for stakeholders in order to have better picture on the emerging online trends and as a trigger for future developments in the area of sexual exploitation of children.

¹⁴ CISCO (2015). The Zettabyte Era: Trends and Analysis, white paper. Released: May 2015. Available at: https://files.ifi.uzh.ch/hilthy/Literature_by_RQs/RQ%20102/2015_Cisco_Zettabyte_Era.pdf (accessed: 14/10/2020).

objects”¹⁵ will increase quickly leading to a number of 25 “smart objects” per person in 2020. Later, CISCO released another report,¹⁶ which confirmed these numbers and, actually, it is possible to state that the inferred data of the 2014 report were at least underestimated. These numbers, in the current year of the pandemic raised furthermore thinner line between the physical and digital world. Internet penetration¹⁷ in the world currently stands at 62 % with almost 4.8 billion internet users (est. population: slightly less than eight billion inhabitants). In other world’s regions such as (see also Figure 4):

- **Europe**, it currently stands at **87.2 %** with almost 723 million Europeans as internet users (est. population: almost 835 million inhabitants),
- **Africa**, it currently stands at **42.2 %** with approx. 566 million Africans as internet users (est. population: almost 1.341 million inhabitants),
- **Asia**, it currently stands at **58.8 %** with approx. 2.525 million Asians as internet users (est. population: almost 4.295 million inhabitants),
- **Latin America and Caribbean**, it currently stands at **71.5 %** with almost 468 million internet users (est. population: almost 654 million inhabitants),
- **Middle East**, it currently stands at **70.8 %** with approx. 185 million internet users (est. population: almost 261 million inhabitants),
- **North America**, it currently stands at **90.3 %** with approx. 333 million internet users (est. population: almost 369 million inhabitants) and
- **Oceania and Australia**, internet penetration currently stands at **67.7 %** with almost 29 million internet users (est. population: almost 43 million inhabitants).¹⁸

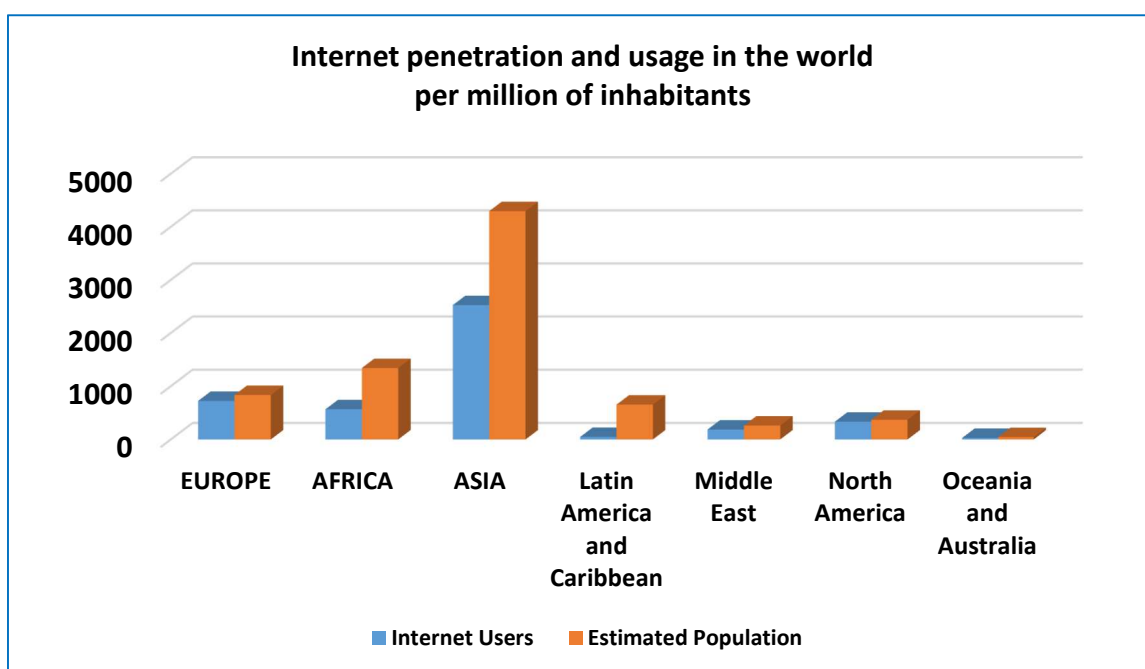


Figure 4: Graphic view of the data related to internet penetration and its usage per million of inhabitants (Designed according to data from Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2020)

¹⁵ Internet also falls into this group of smart objects.

¹⁶ CISCO, (2019). Cisco Annual Internet Report (2018–2023) White Paper, released 9 March 2020. Available at: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/executive-perspectives/annual-internet-report/white-paper-c11-741490.html> (accessed: 14/10/2020).

¹⁷ Penetration rates are based on estimated figures of population and internet users. Source for figures: Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2020. Data collected and indicated as of 30 June 2020. Available at: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm> (accessed: 3/10/2020).

¹⁸ Ibid., footnote no. 6.

With the above presented figures, the world's regions are ranked as following:

1. **North America:** Internet use ranges from 78.9 to 98.4 % among its countries, while in the period of 2000-2020 the internet usage growth increased by 208 %.
2. **Europe:** Internet use ranges from 60.1 to 99 % among its countries, while in the period of 2000-2020 the internet usage growth increased by 592 %.
3. **Latin America and Caribbean:** Internet use ranges from 17.8 to 99.2 % among its countries, while in the period of 2000-2020 the internet usage growth increased by 2.489 %.
4. **Middle East:** Internet use ranges from 26.5 – 99.6 % among its countries, while in the period of 2000-2020 the internet usage growth increased by 5.527 %.
5. **Oceania and Australia:** Internet use ranges from 11.2 to 91.2 % among its countries, while in the period of 2000-2020 the internet usage growth increased by 279 %.
6. **Asia:** Internet use ranges from 18.8 to 96 % among its countries, while in the period of 2000-2020 the internet usage growth increased by 2.109 %.
7. **Africa:** Internet use ranges from 4.7 to 87.2 % among its countries, while in the period of 2000-2020 the internet usage growth increased by 12.441 %.¹⁹

The whole world would rank just before Asia according to the figures above, while the internet usage growth increased by 1.239 % in the period of 2000-2020.²⁰

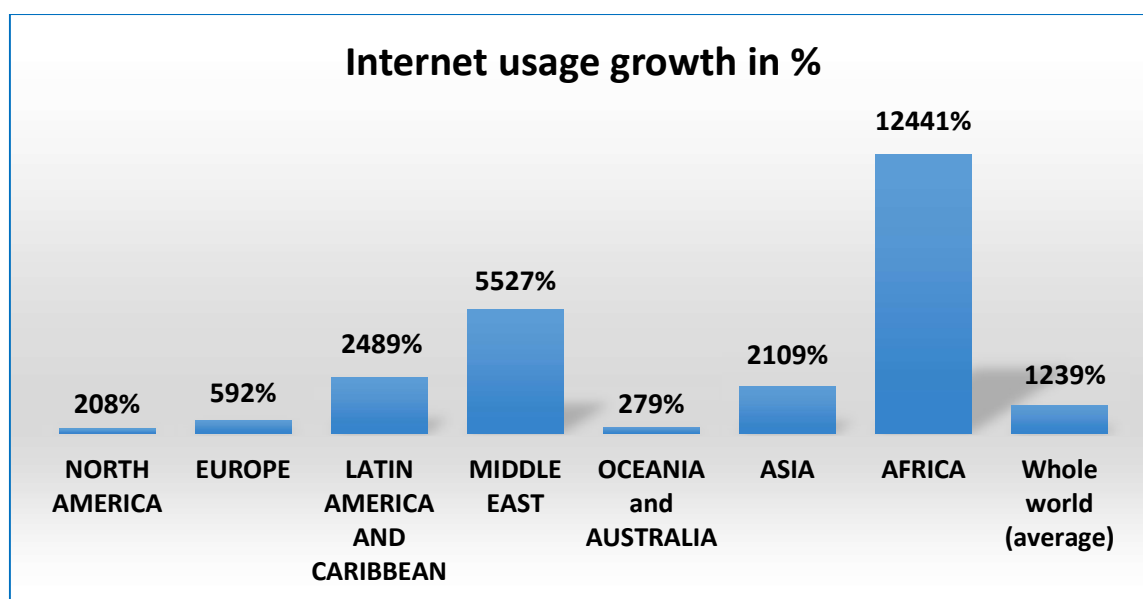


Figure 5: The internet usage growth in charts
(Designed according to data from Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2020)

Figure 5 shows that Internet use has increased rapidly over the last 20 years, especially in geographical areas where the Internet has gradually emerged since 2000. This is particularly noticeable in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean, which show the highest growth rates.

On the other hand, data on the growth of Internet use, especially for Europe and North America, should not be ignored. In fact, there is still growth, which is significantly lower than in the aforementioned areas. This trend can be attributed to the already existing stage of development of the Internet usage in the daily lives of people, living in these environments, while e.g. Africa, the Middle East, etc. they still have to reach this

¹⁹ Ibid., footnote no. 6.

²⁰ Ibid., footnote no. 6.

level. At the same time, it should be emphasized that this growth will not stop at this point, regardless of the geographical region. Humanity will always want more, more efficient and not only better, but the best possible and achievable, according to its nature.

It is also worth mentioning that although Internet technology was at the beginning of its development in the 90s (for general use, of course), in the last 10 years, technological development has been quite sharp and plentiful of novelties. Many technological solutions and innovations have entered people's daily lives more quickly due to user-friendly features, often through smart object applications.

4.2.2 Young people, mobile phones and social media

The number of smartphone users worldwide today surpasses three billion and is forecast to further grow by several hundred million in the next few years.²¹

According to Livingstone (2020),²² in 2000, there were 100 million online users in developing world, while in 2015 there were two billion online users in developing world. In addition, nowadays one in 3 internet users is under 18 years of age (children) (ibid.).

Worldwide, there are 3.8 billion social media users in January 2020, with this number increasing by more than 9 percent (321 million new users) since this time last year. Globally, more than 5.19 billion people now use mobile phones, with user numbers up by 124 million (2.4 percent) over the past year.²³

In 2019, 94 % of young people (aged 16-29) in the EU-27 made daily use of the internet, compared with 77 % for the whole population. In the same year, 92 % of young people used mobile phones to access the internet away from home or work, compared with 52 % who used a portable computer in this way.²⁴

In the context of education under social rights, 2.5 million children in EU went online for e-learning in 2020.²⁵ This figure is likely to have increased considerably during the Covid-19 pandemic. Considering due to *inequality some were not able [to] afford*²⁶ this commodity, the numbers could potentially be higher.

Considerations and reflections on the use of digital means and the behaviour of young people should lead to the point of, among other things, ability to imagine the serious challenges of law enforcement agencies²⁷ in preventing and investigating the digital crime and ensuring the general safety of people, property, critical infrastructure and privacy in the widest aspect. It means also to be aware of urgency to find a way to face and overcome the “Era of Zettabytes”, as expressed by the CISCO in its reports.

²¹ O'Dea, S. (2020), Smartphone users worldwide 2016-2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/330695/number-of-smartphone-users-worldwide/> (accessed: 09/10/2020).

²² Dr Sonia Livingston spoken at the UN75 Dialogue - Children's Rights in the Digital Age, on 25/11/2020.

²³ Kemp, S. (2020). Digital 2020: Global Digital Overview, released 30/01/2020, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-global-digital-overview> (accessed: 09/10/2020).

²⁴ Eurostat (2020). Being young in Europe today - digital world, released: July 2020. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being_young_in_Europe_today_-_digital_world (accessed: 09/10/2020).

²⁵ Mr. Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights has spoken about figures, education, social rights, and inequality to afford e-learning commodity on 01/10/2020, at 13th European Forum on the rights of the child (EU Child Forum 2020), under topic The Child Guarantee - breaking the cycle of disadvantage. More available here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/13th-european-forum-rights-child-towards-eu-strategy-rights-child-2020-sep-29_en (accessed: 09/10/2020).

²⁶ Text in italic spoken by Mr. Schmit. See previous.

²⁷ We highlight only Law enforcement agencies since the focus of the project is on them. In any case, each individual can contribute to personal and general security in society, or a high level of sense of security.

One point already visible at this stage is that policy-makers, industry and public authorities need to rethink and embark on their path to improved working processes. By doing so, they will be able to help themselves finding new rules of cyber hygiene, which they will be able to pass onto all users with special regard to young people. Innovations, used by ‘big players’ or public authorities, which have relevant or significant impact to respecting human rights and society’s behaviour, should also follow a wider social consensus.

4.2.3 Electronic service providers (ESP) and public reporting

The U.S.-based non-profit the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) said it had recorded a 106% increase in CyberTipline reports of suspected child sexual exploitation—rising from 983,734 reports in March 2019 to 2,027,520 in the same month this year.²⁸ NCMEC has received 4.2 million reports in April at the height of the first European COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. That is up 2 million from March 2020 and nearly 3 million from April 2019.²⁹

In 2018, NCMEC received over 18.4 million reports through their CyberTipline and 84 million files of suspected child sexual abuse imagery for review.³⁰ In 2019, the CyberTipline received 16.9 million reports, which included 69.1 million of suspected CSAM files (27.788.328 images, 41.280.816 videos and 89,053 other files related to child sexual exploitation).³¹

In 2019 CyberTipline reports related to European countries³² were 1.247.737 reports varying between seven and 222.881 reports, on average 25.994 reports per country.³³ Narrowing down to EU countries only, figures for 2018 show 757,162 CyberTipline reports with 2.3 million suspected CSAM files. The 2019 figures show 725,232 CyberTipline reports (approx. - 4 %), but with an increase of almost 35% to 3.1 million suspicious files for CSAM.³⁴

These reports were sent to law enforcement authorities across Europe in order to conduct the investigations, including the victim identification procedures.

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection’s Project Arachnid has scanned 2 billion web pages globally for CSAM since 2016 and have processed more than 13.3 million suspicious images, resulting in 4.6 million takedown notices sent to providers. As many as 85 % of these CSAM relate to victims who are not known to have been identified by law enforcement.³⁵

²⁸ Brewster, T. (2020a). Child Exploitation Complaints Rise 106% To Hit 2 Million In Just One Month: Is COVID-19 To Blame? Forbes, released 24 April 2020, Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2020/04/24/child-exploitation-complaints-rise-106-to-hit-2-million-in-just-one-month-is-covid-19-to-blame/#f054324c9cc1> (accessed: 05/10/2020).

²⁹ Brewster, T (2020b). Online Child Abuse Complaints Surpass 4 Million In April. This Is How Cops Are Coping Despite COVID-19. Forbes, released: 9 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2020/05/09/online-child-abuse-complaints-surpass-4-million-in-april-this-is-how-cops-are-coping-despite-covid-19/> (accessed: 05/10/2020).

³⁰ US NCMEC, available at: <https://www.missingkids.org/footer/about/annual-report> (accessed: 02/12/2020).

³¹ US NCMEC, available at: <https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline> (accessed: 05/10/2020).

³² All together are 48 countries and territories: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark (with Greenland), Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom. The territories included were also Greenland (figures summed with Denmark) and Kosovo (this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence).

³³ See no. 18.

³⁴ Intergroup expert meeting “EU legislation on the fight against child sex abuse online”, 15 October 2020, US NCMEC presentation. Available at: https://youtu.be/adY_uWfs90E (accessed: 15/10/2020)

³⁵ WeProtect Global Alliance (WPGA) Threat Assessment 2019, <https://www.weprotect.org/s/FINAL-Global-Threat-Assessment.pdf> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

On the other hand, INHOPE³⁶ hotlines receive reports from the public regarding alleged child sexual abuse material (CSAM). Each report can contain multiple images and videos. The number of CSAM related images and videos processed by INHOPE hotlines from 2017 to 2019 has almost doubled.³⁷

In 2019, they received 183.788 reports (increased by 18 % in comparison to previous year with 155.240 reports), 456.055 images & videos assessed (increased by 35 % in comparison to previous year with 337.588 imagery), and identified 320.672 illegal images and videos (increased by 43 % in comparison to previous year with 223.999 illegal materials). In 2017, the INHOPE hotlines received “only” 87.390 reports and in total identified 259.016 images and videos as illegal, which means that reports received since then increased by 110 %, and illegal material identified by then increased by 24 %.³⁸

4.2.4 Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA) 2020 about CSE online

Introduction to IOCTA 2020 CSE online chapter:³⁹

“The main threats related to online CSE have remained relatively stable over recent years and throughout 2019. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has somewhat shifted this assessment. Detection of online CSAM was already increasing on a year-to-year basis, but saw a sharp spike during the peak of the crisis. A surge in the exchange of online CSAM occurred during the contact and travel restrictions and the consequences of this may have a long-term impact on CSE in general.”

Other significant findings are:

- The amount of online CSAM detected continues to increase, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, which has serious consequences for the capacity of law enforcement authorities.
- The use of encrypted chat apps and industry proposals to expand this market pose a substantial risk for abuse and make it more difficult for law enforcement to detect and investigate online CSE activities.
- Online offender communities exhibit considerable resilience and are continuously evolving.
- Livestreaming of child sexual abuse continues to increase and became even more prevalent during the COVID-19 crisis (livestreaming is becoming mainstream).
- The commercialization of online CSE is becoming a more widespread issue, with individuals uploading material to hosting sites and subsequently acquiring.

4.2.5 Other facts and indicators to consider

It is extremely complex to capture and present a number of statistical indicators and facts about sexual exploitation and abuse of children online and related offline crimes. Still, they are crucial to understand the magnitude and issues related to this crime area. That is why those listed below should assist to round out the presentation of these indicators and facts. Each of these have been extracted without amendment from the various reports quoted:

- INTERPOL’s Child Sexual Exploitation database holds more than 2.7 million images and videos, and it

³⁶ INHOPE is the global network combatting online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). The network consists of 47 hotlines in 43 countries that provide the public with a way to anonymously report illegal content online with a focus on CSAM. Reports are available at: <https://www.inhope.org/EN/articles/annual-reports> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

³⁷ From INHOPE Annual Report 2019.

³⁸ From INHOPE Annual Reports of 2017, 2018 and 2019.

³⁹ Europol’s IOCTA 2020 was released on 6 October 2020, available at: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/internet-organised-crime-threat-assessment-iocta-2020> (accessed: 05/10/2020).

helped identify 23.100 victims worldwide.⁴⁰

- EUROPOL's Images and Video Analysis System (IVAS) repository holds over 49.5 million unique images and over 2.2 million unique videos sourced from more than 111 million media files in CSE cases contributed by Europol's operational partners.⁴¹
- The UK's Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) holds slightly more than 2.1 million unique indecent images of children, entered into database between January 2015 and March 2019. Penetrative sexual activity represents 191.963 (9%) images, non-penetrative 204.049 (10%) images, and 1.709.612 (81 %) of other type of indecent images with sexual content.⁴²
- In 2018, 2.88 million accounts were registered globally across the ten most harmful CSEA Dark Web sites, detected by UK's National Crime Agency.⁴³
- More than 65% of the total 18.4 million referrals to NCMEC originated in messaging services are at risk of disappearing if end-to-end encryption is implemented.⁴⁴
- 94% of CSAM material found online by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) contains images of children aged 13 or under, and 39 % of CSAM found online contains images of children aged 10 or under.⁴⁵
- It is estimated that 750,000 individuals are looking to connect with children across the globe for sexual purposes online at any one time.⁴⁶
- Sexual abuse and exploitation of children is ubiquitous, regardless of country's economic success. Data to measure and understand the scale of the problem are lacking. Girls are the primary victims, and boys are overlooked. Social norms and attitudes toward sex, sexuality and gender matter. Country action has been most pronounced on the legal framework, while performance varies greatly on government commitment and capacity.⁴⁷
- "The safety and well-being of the world's children must remain a global priority. With approximately 200 million of the world's children experiencing sexual violence each year, the need to document and benchmark the global effort to prevent child sexual violence has never been more important."⁴⁸
- One in three internet users worldwide is a child and 800 million of them use social media. Any child can become a victim of online violence.⁴⁹
- 1 in 10 children is sexually abused before the age of 18.⁵⁰
- The expansion of the internet lies parallel to the explosion of the child sexual abuse material market. The most shared child abuse file is currently being seen on over 2.5 million unique IP addresses. Predators typically have between 50 and 150 victims over the course of their lifetimes. Since inception, the Child Rescue Coalition identified 71 million unique IP addresses worldwide sharing and downloading sexually explicit images and videos of children. Children are most vulnerable to child sexual abuse between the ages of 7 and 13. As many as 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before

⁴⁰ Interpol (July 2020). International Child Sexual Exploitation database. Available at: <https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Crimes-against-children/International-Child-Sexual-Exploitation-database> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

⁴¹ Information retrieved from Europol's IVAS repository, accessed on 12/10/2020.

⁴² Office for National Statistics, Child sexual abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2019. Released: 14 January 2020, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/childsexualabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2019> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

⁴³ WeProtect Global Alliance (WPGA) Threat Assessment 2019, <https://www.weprotect.org/s/FINAL-Global-Threat-Assessment.pdf> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ The Economist Intelligence Unit (2020). Out of the shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation, report. Available at: <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com> (accessed: 13/10/2020).

⁴⁸ Statement of Her Royal Highness Princess Madeleine of Sweden in press release Groundbreaking Economist Intelligence Unit Benchmarking Tool Highlights the Responses of 40 Countries to Sexual Violence against Children, 16 January 2019. Available at: <https://www.childhood-usa.org/press-release> (accessed: 12/10/2020)

⁴⁹ Fore, H. H. (2019). An open letter to the world's children: 8 reasons why I'm worried, and hopeful, about the next generation. UNICEF. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/open-letter-to-worlds-children> (accessed: 13/10/2020).

⁵⁰ United Nations, SDG 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/> (accessed: 13/10/2020).

- age 18. And 90% of children who suffered sexual abuse were violated by someone known to the family.⁵¹
- Worldwide, around 15 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forced sexual acts in their lifetime, and 9 million of these girls were victimized within the past year. Only 1 % of adolescent girls who had experienced sexual violence said they reached out for professional help. In the 28 countries with data, 90 % of adolescent girls who had experienced forced sex, on average, said they knew the perpetrator of the first incident. Data from six countries reveals friends, classmates and partners were among the most frequently cited perpetrators of sexual violence against adolescent boys.⁵²
 - Estimating the magnitude of sexual exploitation of boys is also difficult, global prevalence rates have yet to be determined. Among school-based probability samples in Canada, Sweden and the United States, the prevalence of sexual exploitation among boys ranges from 1.7 to 4.8 %, but the figures are likely to underestimate the magnitude of the problem that is not assessed properly. The sexual exploitation of boys is a grave human rights violation that is all too often unrecognized or unseen.⁵³

It is believed that in addition to other figures (other subchapters), they may reinforce with stakeholders the need to adopt straightforward policy recommendations through action plans and when introducing additions to existing working methods or processes.

5. From facts to legal grounds

Anna and George by highlighting the above trends are also asking a question to everyone in every society: what can each of you do to protect us, children, online? And is there anything else we children can do besides educating ourselves and raising awareness?

The Internet seems to have no boundaries, which also necessitates its efficient, appropriate and ethical governance for the benefit of all users, ICT and related industries, and critical infrastructure. Internet penetration and usage will still increase in all of the world's regions, which will have the huge impact to the ICT development in general and on behaviour of individuals, organizations, societies and countries. Unfortunately, this will also enable a great impact on society through the internet by criminals and organized criminal networks or groups, and their criminal activities.

Very simply one child victim is one too many. Although the figures already presented are compelling, they also make clear that there are many more unknown or hidden children, the victims of sexual exploitation and abuse that have been and remain most vulnerable.

Therefore, this chapter presents the main legal bases in relation to child protection against sexual abuse and exploitation and provides the general insights in their mechanisms.

5.1. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Fundamental Principles

⁵¹ Child Rescue Coalition (no date), The Issue. Available at: <https://childrescuecoalition.org/the-issue/> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

⁵² United Nations Children's Fund (2017). A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents, UNICEF, New York.

⁵³ United Nations Children's Fund (2020). Research on the Sexual Exploitation of Boys: Findings, ethical considerations and methodological challenges, UNICEF, New York.

All stakeholders, decision-makers, policy-makers and anyone, who can make big or small changes for the well-being of children should follow the fundamental principles,⁵⁴ defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). It should be noted that a child is a person below the 18 years of age, according to Article 1 of the said convention.⁵⁵

The rights described in UNCRC are defined and focused on children as follows:

- Non-discrimination (Article 2): All children have all the Convention rights, no matter their personal circumstances or situation, and should be treated with respect and dignity.⁵⁶
- Best interest of the child (Article 3): How will the decisions by others affect children and their childhood, and best approach must be taken into consideration.⁵⁷
- Life, survival and development (Article 6): Every child has the right to live, making possibilities for their survival and development of their growth.⁵⁸
- Respect for opinions (Article 12): Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them, receive the feedback, and should be taken seriously.⁵⁹

In practical terms, in relation to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse of children, these fundamental principles can be understood, that everyone:

- acknowledge “no child should be left behind,” which correspond to Article 2, by meaning that all solutions, decisions or approaches we take, must affect all children without any discrimination;
- focus its activities “the right way, efficient, professional, ethical, and without causing any harm,” which correspond to Article 3, by meaning that all solutions, decisions or approach we take must affect children with the best and positive intention;
- should “safeguard children at every developmental stage during its growing up, including nurture their childhood, play, learning, wisdom, and skills,” which correspond to Article 6, by meaning that we must protect them from any negative distractions, harms, abuse or other violent behaviour;
- has a mandate to “hear the voices of children,” which correspond to Article 12, by meaning that we have to provide them with the access to correct information, reply to them and engage in active participation in matters concerning them (child participation) without any undue delay.

⁵⁴ The subchapter 5.1 is based on contribution from The Magic of UN CRC Fundamental Principles in Decision-Making Processes (draft article TBP soon) on the meaning of these principles and of the necessity of applying all of them simultaneously.

⁵⁵ Official text Article 1 of UN CRC: “For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.”

⁵⁶ Official text Article 2 of UN CRC: “(1) States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. (2) States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.”

⁵⁷ Official text Article 3 of UN CRC: “(1) In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. (2) States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures. (3) States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.”

⁵⁸ Official text Article 6 of UN CRC: “(1) States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life. (2) States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.”

⁵⁹ Official text Article 12 of UN CRC: “(1) States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (2) For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.”

Fundamental principles should be applied all at once, and in no case should any be omitted.

Additional obligations for every State party to the UN CRC in regard of the aim of GRACE project are concretely defined in the following provisions:

- Article 19 (protecting measures against any violence and harm, including sexual abuse),⁶⁰
- Article 34 (protection measures against all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse),⁶¹
- Article 39 (recovery and reintegration of child victim),⁶²
- And in Article 16 (protection of child's privacy).⁶³

In brief, these four provisions has to be fundamentally understood to make the best efforts possible to protect children against any violence, especially to pay special attention to protection against sexual exploitation and abuse so that no child is victimized. In cases that a child is (was) victimised in any form of sexual attack on his or her sexual integrity, then all necessary measures (identifying, safeguarding, put in place mechanisms, support, information, health care, therapy and social reintegration) must take place efficiently, effectively and appropriately for each child, with respect for the individual child's personal situation in order to discover and foster the child's psychological balance. In addition, it is important that the child's privacy is highlighted on both sides of the coin: one is related to the right to privacy protecting against anything that could endanger the proper protection of child's personal data and information and the other is to safeguard the child's privacy against further dissemination, sharing or distribution of CSAM. These are closely intertwined and linked interdependently, one to the other.

5.1.2 Business and Children's Rights

At this point, since the technology issues are discussed, the solutions are searched and policy recommendations presented, it is important to highlight the role of business (private) sector – Internet industry and related branches. Does the business sector has anything to do with children's rights, or it is just a domain of the governmental bodies (public sector)?

The answer to this question has been provided by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its General comment No. 16 (2013)⁶⁴ on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights. Among other explanations, the paragraph no. 8 clarifies once for all, and it says:

⁶⁰ Official text Article 19 of UN CRC: "(1) States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. (2) Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement."

⁶¹ Official text Article 34 of UN CRC: "States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent: (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials."

⁶² Official text Article 39 of UN CRC: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child."

⁶³ Official text Article 16 of UN CRC: "(1) No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation. (2) The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."

⁶⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights, adopted by the Committee at its 62nd session, on 14 January – 1 February 2013. Document no. CRC/C/GC/16, dated on 17 April 2013, Available at: https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/GC/CRC-C-GC-16_en.doc (accessed: 08/10/2020).

“The present general comment principally addresses States’ obligations under the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto. At this juncture, there is no international legally binding instrument on the business sector’s responsibilities vis-à-vis human rights. However, the Committee recognizes that duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of children extend in practice beyond the State and State-controlled services and institutions and apply to private actors and business enterprises. Therefore, all businesses must meet their responsibilities regarding children’s rights and States must ensure they do so. In addition, business enterprises should not undermine the States’ ability to meet their obligations towards children under the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto.”

The above general comment can be understood as a strong reminder to the business sector. The answer to the main question is positive. The business sector has responsibilities and obligations towards children and their rights. Since the children’s rights are part of human rights, businesses are an important element in their protection against the sexual abuse and exploitation.

It can be emphasized without any problems that in order to guarantee the rights of children, the business sector, companies in Internet industry and related branches are also obliged to contribute responsibly in the safety and well-being of the children.

5.2. Europe: International treaties focused on the fight against CSEA

In the pool of numerous international treaties, legal acts, strategic documents and the like, which are or may be legally binding, we limit ourselves to only the five central documents. These are:

1. **The Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography** (United Nations),⁶⁵ which extends the measures that States Parties should undertake in order to guarantee the protection of children from any form of sexual abuse and exploitation. It provides minimum legal standards, investigative assistance and international cooperation, adopt measures to protect the rights and interests of child victims, adopting relevant policies and programmes, and establishes monitoring mechanisms (providing comprehensive information on implementation).
2. **The Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, No. 182**⁶⁶ (UN Specialized agency, International Labour Organization): which recognizes the worst forms of child labour include⁶⁷ the use, procuring or offering of a child for forced prostitution, for the production of sexual explicit material (pornography) or for sexual (pornographic) performances. It provides possibilities to eliminate these forms of child labour and mechanisms for monitoring.
3. **Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, No. 201 (Council of Europe)**:⁶⁸ as the first instrument to establish the various forms of sexual abuse of children

⁶⁵ Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000, entered into force on 18 January 2002. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/opscrc.aspx> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

⁶⁶ Adopted by General Conference of the International Labour Organization, on its 87th session on 17 June 1999, entered into force on 19 November 2000. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C182 (accessed: 12/10/2020).

⁶⁷ We limited to the scope that is related to the GRACE project only.

⁶⁸ Known as Lanzarote Convention, Treaty was opened for signature on 25 October 2007, entered into force on 1 July 2010. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680084822> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

as criminal offences, outlines preventive measures, monitoring measures for offenders, establishes programmes to support victims and encourages reporting mechanisms, international cooperation etc. It highlights also the importance of education about information and communication technologies, encouraging participating private sector to establish policies to prevent CSA/CSE, criminalizes certain acts when ICT is used to commit CSA/CSE, encourages state authorities to take relevant measures to efficiently use ICT for investigation purposes to identify offenders and safeguard children, and establishes monitoring mechanisms.

4. **Convention on Cybercrime, No. 185 (Council of Europe):**⁶⁹ as the first international treaty on crimes committed via the Internet and other computer networks, dealing besides with infringements of copyright, computer-related fraud, and violations of network security, also with online CSAM/CSEM. Its main objective is to pursue a common criminal policy aimed at the protection of society against cybercrime, especially by adopting appropriate legislation and fostering international co-operation.
5. **Directive 2011/93/EU**⁷⁰ **of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (European Union).** It aims at improving the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation, while EU MS have to adopt prevention measures, protect child victims, and investigate and prosecute offenders. Among others, it introduces extraterritorial jurisdiction for offenders who are nationals, so that they can also be prosecuted in their country for sexual crimes against children they commit abroad; ensures that effective investigative tools must be available to the police, such as those used against organised and serious crime, and special units must be set up to identify victims on CSEM/CSAM. It also provides the legal basis to ensure the prompt removal of web pages containing or disseminating CSAM/CSEM, or to make decisions to block access to users in their territory to such web pages.

All of the above documents provide a legal basis for the fight against sexual abuse and exploitation of children, on condition that the countries (State Parties, Member States) have either ratified them implemented them into national legislation and then enforce those laws. On the other hand, there is also a need to highlight possible gaps. In general it is worth to mention that neither Lanzarote Convention nor Budapest Convention have been updated to address some of the more recent technical developments and close existing gaps.

On one hand the technological development, improvements and innovations go in a positive direction, on the other are the individuals or organised criminal networks or groups that exploit the humankind's progress not just negatively, but also in the worst possible manner against the vulnerable communities such as children and children with disabilities. The technology is exploited to cause severe violation of children's rights, when their privacy, intimacy and well-being is attacked through sexual crimes against them. In addition to this, the technological progress also continues with the emergence of new technologies, techniques and solutions (e.g. Artificial Intelligence).

The intentions of technology developers, for example of TOR, PhotoDNA and encryption are far from what the current reality of their use is in the CSE arena. Current discussions about dark net brings many thoughts about criminal underground activities, use of PhotoDNA in some circles is understood as a breach of the rights to privacy and applying end-to-end encryption to user communications across social networking

⁶⁹ Known as Budapest Convention. Treaty was open for signature on 23 November 2001, entered into force on 1 July 2004. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680081561> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

⁷⁰ EU MS had to implement this directive into national legislation by 18 December 2013. Published in Official Journal of the EU, no. L 335, dated 17 December 2011. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32011L0093> (accessed: 12/10/2020).

platforms by default is heralded as an achievement for privacy protection while providing a “safe haven” for sexual offenders and other criminal groups. In regard to artificial intelligence, strong ethical and legal questions also arise. Whether AI will become a new solution in the fight against sexual abuse and exploitation of children, how effective can it be, are challenging questions.

The examples presented above are strong indicators that efficient policy recommendations must be addressed to properly tackle CSE online.

5.3. Europe and the main strategies to protect children from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

The central documents that have a significant value in European continent and that comprehensively address the protection of children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse are introduced in the subchapters below.

5.3.1 United Nations

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs has introduced the core point for sustainable development across the world (quote):

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.”⁷¹

The SDGs that the GRACE project focuses on fulfilling by aiming at improving responses against sexual exploitation and abuse of children, are:

a) SDG no. 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, with at least these targets:

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere;
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
- 5.B Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women;
- 5.C Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

The targets under SDG no. 5 in its connectivity to the GRACE project has to be understood in wider context. Gender inequality, discrimination and any kind of violence against women and girls are leading into other forms of degrading and harmful behaviour including the objectivization. The devolving of that behaviour into grave sexual exploitation and abuse, is part of a cycle of violence. The dynamic of that cycle is an increasing intensity if it is not interrupted. In some cases, it can lead to life-threatening humiliations, attacks on human

⁷¹ The text of this paragraph was taken from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> (accessed: 16/12/2020).

life, including suicides, so-called honour killings and other murders.

For an example – forced child marriages might have nothing to do with sexual violence at first glance. But many organizations, such as CIOS Safeguarding Children Partnership (CIOS-SCP) are warning they show that children forced into these marriages are likely to suffer significant harm through physical, sexual or emotional abuse, have a negative impact on a child's health and development, can result in sexual violence including rape. The CIOS-SCP also stated, if a child is forced to marry, the child may be taken abroad for an extended period of time, which could amount to child abduction, and would be absent from school. The later would result in the loss of educational and possibly future employment opportunities. Even if the child is not taken abroad, they are likely to be taken out of school to ensure that they do not talk about their situation with their peers (ibid.).⁷² Similar interrelated forms of violence can also be detected in cases of FGM, domestic violence, cyber-violence and many others.

b) SDG no. 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, with at least these targets:

- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere;
- 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children;
- 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

The targets under SDG no. 16 in regard to the GRACE project have to be understood in the proper context. Target 16.1 is specifically meant to address violence including sexual violence, target 16.2 is fully focused on this aspect while target 16.3 is more focused on the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms.

It is well understood that all other SDGs relating to eliminating poverty and hunger, improving health and well-being, delivering clean water are also of great importance and indirectly apply to the aim of the GRACE project in the broader humanitarian context.

5.3.2 Council of Europe

The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), identifies five priority areas for all its 47 member states⁷³ to guarantee the rights of the child. These priorities are:

- a) Equal opportunities for all children to have the right to an adequate standard of living and to appropriate social and economic protection;
- b) Participation of all children, as they have the right to be heard and participate in decisions affecting them (views should be given due respect in the development, implementation and evaluation of child-related laws, policies and actions);
- c) A life free from violence for all children, which means that member states must guarantee that children are protected against all forms of violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation;
- d) Child-friendly justice for all children, since many children come into contact with the justice system in different ways, and justice systems in Europe have to adapt their work to the specific needs of children and

⁷² Forced Marriage, Cornwall & Isle of Scilly Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures, at https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/cornwall_scilly/p_force_marriage.html (accessed: 16/12/2020). See some of other sources: What is the impact of child marriage?, A global partnership: Girls Not Brides, at <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/what-is-the-impact/> (accessed 16/12/2020); Child, early and forced marriage, including in humanitarian settings, UN Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/ChildMarriage.aspx> (accessed: 16/12/2020).

⁷³ All 47 Council of Europe member states are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom.

primarily their best interest;

- e) Rights of the child in the digital environment are crucial since the Internet has become an integral part to children's lives. They have the right to learn, play and communicate safely online and be provided with practical knowledge of how stay safe online.

The Council of Europe has started the preparation for its next Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027).

5.3.3 European Union

One thing is certain, one child sexually abused, exploited or exposed to online harm is one too many. Subchapter 4.2 encompasses many different angles of gathered statistical indicators on sexual abuse and exploitation of children, including overall usage of contemporary electronic devices and internet related applications. Children are vulnerable because they are children and child sexual abuse is a serious crime with long-lasting consequences for a victim. Fighting against this crime is a priority for the European Union⁷⁴ and other partners, therefore further efforts are needed to ensure that all children are free from abuse and exploitation.

In two separate documents, the Justice and Home Affairs Council and the European Parliament called for more concrete action:

- Council of the EU, GSC conclusions, doc. 12862/19 of 8 October 2019 on combating the sexual abuse of children,⁷⁵
- European Parliament resolution, TA(2019)0066 of 26 November 2019 on children's rights on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2019/2876(RSP)).⁷⁶

To complement and improve existing EU activities in protecting children from sexual abuse, and to address new challenges such as unforeseen risks of end-to-end encryption, the European Commission put forward a new strategy:

- EU strategy, doc. COM(2020) 607 final of 24 July 2020 for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse.⁷⁷

The strategy set out eight initiatives for 2020-2025 that focus on implementing and developing the right legal framework, strengthening law enforcement's response and galvanising a coordinated multi-stakeholder response on prevention, investigation and assistance to victims. The key initiatives are:

1. Ensure complete implementation of current legislation, i.e. Directive 2011/93/EU against sexual abuse of children,⁷⁸
2. Ensure that EU legislation enables an effective response,
3. Identify legislative gaps, best practices and priority action,
4. Strengthen law enforcement efforts at national and EU level,
5. Enable EU MS to better protect children through prevention,

⁷⁴ It means the EU member states (EU27): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. From 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is no longer an EU/EEA member state.

⁷⁵ Full text available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12326-2019-COR-1/en/pdf> (accessed: 16/12/2020).

⁷⁶ Full text available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0066_EN.html (accessed: 16/12/2020).

⁷⁷ Full text available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security/20200724_com-2020-607-commission-communication_en.pdf (accessed: 16/12/2020).

⁷⁸ For more details see subchapter 5.2 International legal documents, relevant in Europe focused to the fight sexual exploitation of children.

6. Establish a European Centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse,
7. Galvanise industry efforts to ensure protection of children in their services,
8. Improve protection of children globally through multi-stakeholder cooperation.

An additional strategic document that covers all other aspects of children's rights in European Union is in preparation. The document is titled "EU strategy on the rights of the child (2021-2024)", and will provide the framework for EU action to better promote and protect children's rights. It will contain a set of measures for the EU to implement, addressing among others:

- The rights of the most vulnerable children,
- Children's rights in the digital age,
- The prevention of and fight against violence,
- The promotion of child-friendly justice.

It will also include recommendations for action by other EU institutions, EU countries and stakeholders. The adoption of the strategy by EC is planned for the first quarter of 2021.

6. Policy Recommendations

The fundamental principles, relevant international legal basis, the real stories of Anna and George, statistical and scientific facts, introduced challenges and crucial documents (strategies) are being taken into account to present the policy recommendations in the scope of the GRACE project.

In addition, we take into consideration the demand⁷⁹ by the European Police Chiefs (EPCs) in 2020 who endorsed the following asks of industry, which if implemented will make a significant difference in preventing child sexual exploitation and abuse online:

1. CSAM should be blocked as soon as companies detect it being uploaded;
2. Companies must stop online grooming taking place on their platforms;
3. Companies must work with governments and LE partners to stop the live-streaming of child abuse on their platforms;
4. Companies should be demonstrably more forward leaning in helping LEA to deal with CSE;
5. Companies should show improved openness and transparency, and a willingness to share best practice and technology between companies;

EPCs insist child safety must be built-in by design, and that the right balance can be struck between protecting users' privacy, and protecting people, particularly children, from criminal harm.

The representation of facts and figures from the previous chapters need one more component. The visual overview (see Figure 6) where the user and bad actors are positioned, the online environment and how all these are affected by structured or institutionalized entities devices. And how are all affected by the policy-makers at different levels.

⁷⁹ More information: UK NCA (2020), European police chiefs back NCA demands for tech companies to do more to prevent child sex abuse, PR released 14/02/2020, <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/european-police-chiefs-back-nca-demands-for-tech-companies-to-do-more-to-prevent-child-sex-abuse> (accessed: 16/12/2020).

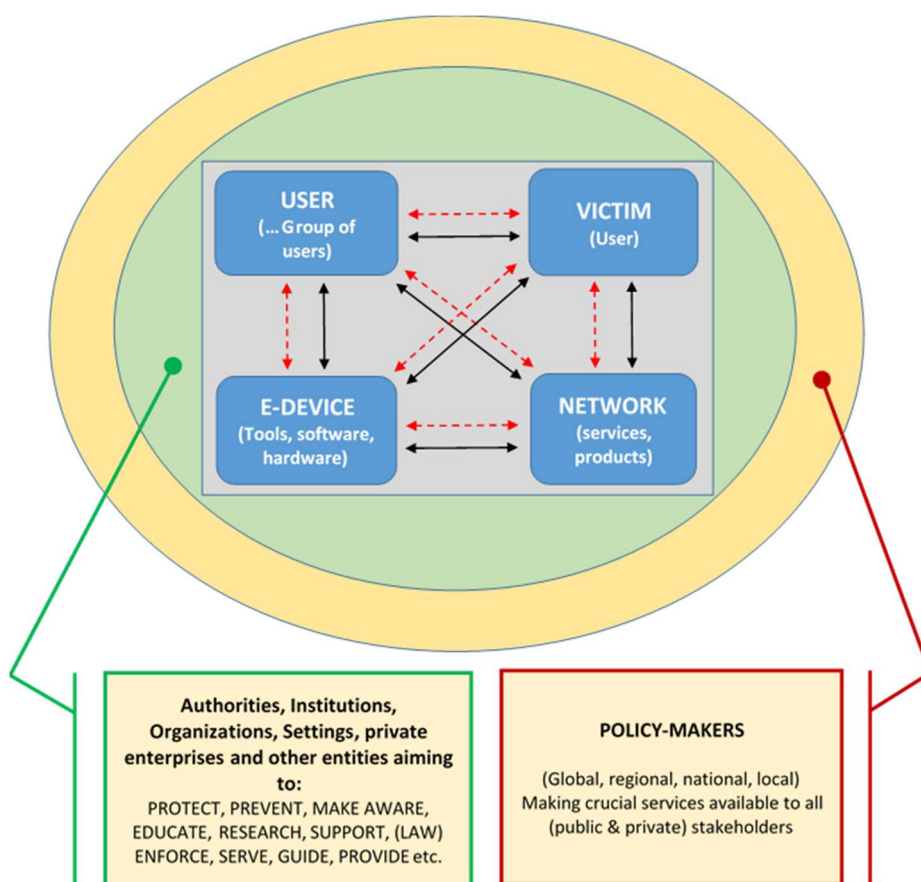


Figure 6: Relations (of users – network – e-device) with structured entities

Explaining figure 6 in simplified terms, the user group is connected with each other through electronic devices like computers and mobile phones. They use different software, services or products through a network of connected computers. Everything seems to work well, appropriately and all actors behave responsibly as illustrated by the black arrows.

In order to be safe, secure, legal, correct and efficient the structured or institutionalized entities have either an obligation, mandate or willingness to work closely with the users. Those entities differ among themselves according to their tasks, protecting and enforcing the law would reflect law enforcement authorities, educating and researching through educational facilities, and prevent would concern NGOs, social services, child advocacy institutions and others. Of course, many of the activities can be reflected by more than one entity, prevention by law enforcement authorities, together with NGO, educational sector, social services, private sector, or private sector providing technological solutions together with law enforcement and academia. Many combinations are possible.

In cases, when one or more of the users start to behave badly , abuse their skills and exploit the existing infrastructure, including their electronic devices, available networks, information systems to cause harm⁸⁰ to another by infringing or attacking their privacy, dignity and sexual integrity, then balanced relations cannot exist anymore as illustrated by the red arrows.

So, new technological solutions provide good options for users but those with bad intentions can exploit these

⁸⁰ We limited “harms” to sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and not presenting other threats (e.g. cyber-attacks, cyber-frauds etc.) as it would be out of the scope.

new solutions in their sexual crimes against children. Society places an obligation on law enforcement authorities to protect children in such cases and to discover the identity of offenders. In order to do so they must have proper, efficient, legal tools and mechanisms to investigate and prosecute criminals, identify and safeguard children, collect and provide evidence to judicial authorities so they can make proper balanced decisions in court proceedings.

There is also an obligation on society to ensure that the victims can get help, assistance, support, and even compensation. In addition, society should be protected from sexual offenders through provision of treatment, registration with and monitoring by relevant authorities in order to prevent future crimes.

Policy makers and legislators must be able to take the necessary steps to achieve these possibilities. Below are the policy recommendations which are intended to act as tools enabling them to do so. Each is defined and further explained.

6.1 Holistic approach in the fight against CSEA

Preventing, detecting and investigating crimes against the sexual integrity of children poses many different challenges and problems. As already stated, no one can tackle this complex area alone, but a holistic and comprehensive approach is needed. Important segments that are extremely intertwined in this work can be the following:

- Implementation of currently existing EU legislation;
- A need for national strategies that would encompass crucial statistical and trend comparisons between MS and promoting the reach out for solutions;
- Invention, innovation and solution focused technology to assist law enforcement in performing their tasks;
- Being aware of different trends, threats and harms against children's safety, including those in cyberspace and to properly respond against these events;
- Having in mind distinction between victims' and offenders' centric approach;
- Provide support and allocate relevant resources to law enforcement, such as staff, equipment, IT technology, knowledge, skills, interoperability, removal of legal obstacles, upgrading the work processes etc.;
- Prevention activities go hand in hand with LE operational work, especially when raising awareness about new trends and explain how not to become victim.

In order to achieve the above, the children's opinions matters. All the work has to be aligned with UN CRC fundamental principles, especially in the best interest of a child, which have to become integral part in all matters affecting children. They know their childhood and adolescence better than adults do.

1. Implementation of currently existing EU legislation

On the 17/11/2011, the Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA was officially published in Official Journal of the European Union no. L 335. This directive aims is at improving the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation. To achieve this, it obliges EU countries to adopt prevention measures, protect child victims and investigate and prosecute offenders. According to its Article 27, the deadline for transposition was set on 18/12/2013. Not all EU MS have fully implemented this Directive to this date.⁸¹

⁸¹ See conclusions: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52016DC0871> (accessed: 05/01/2021).

2. Policy recommendation at the EU/European level: The competent body within the EU is encouraged to continue relevant activities that all EU MS would implement the a/m Directive as soon as possible.
3. Policy recommendation at the national level: The MS EU are encouraged to fully implement and transpose the existing EU legislation that serves to protect the most vulnerable population – children, especially the Directive 2011/93/EU aiming to protect them from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

2. National strategies encompassing crucial statistical and trend comparisons

Any country and any organization that wants to contribute to the safety of children from all kinds of violence, and especially from CSEA, will be effective if it has clearly set goals and a strategy for achieving its vision of child safety. This strategy, must be informed by an understanding of the challenges and at the same time to be progressive, proactive and daring. The delivery of the strategy should be through action plans that are pragmatic, comprehensive and understandable to a wider population.

In order to create effective strategies and action plans, it is necessary to take into account the scientific and professional findings of domestic and foreign experts and organizations, as well as the results of different projects financed from public budgets or implemented through other instruments. However, their development must also take into account internationally recognized standards, in particular the fundamental principles of the UN CRC and those set for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse (see documents in Chapter 5).

Establishing common standards for gathering statistical data through relevant indicators at national level across the EU would be beneficial for comparison and reporting purposes. It could show certain criminal offences as they are indicated in legislative documents making it easier to establish relevant common offences across jurisdictions (see chapter 5). In addition, such standards would allow the presentation of common demographic data. That includes distinguishing between victims and offenders by age groups, gender, consequences, social status and environment where crimes' were committed. Those would include online in clearnet or darknet, LDCA, social media networks, in closed groups or offline in home, school, playground, at another family place, locations where victims were identified and safeguarded and similar.

The current UK response falls broadly into two categories: (1) the Online Harms White Paper and the proposed Bill that focuses on independent regulation of the technology sector concerning all Online Harms including CSE; and (2) Police responses to Online CSE. The most recent HMIC (now HMICFRS) inspection of how forces deal with the online sexual exploitation of children took place in 2015⁸² and it is unclear the extent to which that report has been followed up and whether the recommendations have been implemented. These recommendations included developing national guidance on the management of digital forensic analysis to support better prioritisation of cases, support for officers in their working environment, better use of evidence-based methods and research to inform decisions, and numerous recommendations to better support and protect the children who are the victims of these crimes.⁸³ In addition, many components that

⁸² HMIC (2015) Online and on the edge: Real risks in a virtual world. An inspection into how forces deal with the online sexual exploitation of child. HMIC, released July 2015. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/online-and-on-the-edge.pdf> (accessed: 02/11/2020).

⁸³ This paragraph contributed Centric, UK.

apply to CSE also fall under the broader legislation of the UK's safeguarding guidance,⁸⁴ which is specifically aimed at interagency working.⁸⁵

In Cyprus, a National Strategy⁸⁶ for a better Internet for children has been developed, which clarifies the role of each involved party and it aims to create a dedicated educational and research centre to provide training for children and parents.

The following initiatives, documents, ideas or projects should serve as additional practical examples of what to consider in framing a national strategy:

- EU strategy to better fight against CSE and other strategies;⁸⁷
- WeProtect Global Alliance Model National Response - Preventing and Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;⁸⁸
- Results from EU Policy Cycles, such as EU MS driven initiative EMPACT, in crime priority Cybercrime CSE/CSA;⁸⁹
- Standards, statistical indicators knowledge and trends contributed by many experts from various stakeholders' groups (partners), e.g. Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT), European Financial Coalition against Commercial Sexual exploitation of children online (EFC), European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online (eNASCO), INHOPE network, Lanzarote Committee/Council of Europe etc.

What can be addressed or expected within national strategies:

- Encompassing all aspects of children's life, online and offline,
- Highlighting all the harms, threats and trends to which children are or could be exposed to,
- Providing and/or allocating resources, including human resources, funds, equipment, material assets, logistics, organization and working processes etc.,
- Emphasizing the approach to be taken – 5P approach, i.e. prevention, protection, prosecution, promotion and participation,
- Addressing the multidisciplinary models and interoperability at national and international levels, including cooperation and collaboration,
- Exchanging, sharing and contributing knowledge, best practices, skills, achievements, innovations, and expertise, skills, inventions, and developments to improve the protection of children,
- Participation of children in forming these documents and making these documents in child-friendly language versions.

In addition, activities and topics⁹⁰ highlighted under the GRACE project.

- Policy recommendations at the EU/European level:
 - a) Strategies should address all aspects of children's life with special emphasis on empowering, protecting and supporting them in the digital (online) and real (offline) environment, while action

⁸⁴ Department for Education (2019) Statutory Guidance: Working together to safeguard children. UK Government. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> (accessed: 02/11/2020).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ The Ministry of Education is in charge to coordinate the strategy. More info: <https://www.esafecyprus.ac.cy/udata/contents/files/Eggrafa/eggrafa-ethinikis-stratigikis-asfaleia-diadiktio.pdf>. (accessed: 19/01/2021).

⁸⁷ In particular, see subchapter 5.3.

⁸⁸ Presented at WePROTECT Global Alliance website, available at: <https://www.weprotect.org/the-model-national-response> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

⁸⁹ Further information available at national representatives (active members) of: AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LV, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SI, ES, SE, UK, CH, NO, EUROPOL, EUROJUST, CEPOL, INTERPOL, and EU COM. EMPACT stands for European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats. More info: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/empact>.

⁹⁰ See the Chapter 6 for topics, while all other chapters are dedicated to provide at least solid basis for all policy-makers. See also deliverable D10.6 on best practices for victims.

plans should reflect and implement this vision.

- b) EU bodies are encouraged to gather and publish significant statistical data in a coordinated way in order to understand the trends and frequency of these type of crimes, and to be able to compare them with other countries without delays or specific differences among them.

- Policy recommendations at the national level:

- a) Strategies should address all aspects of children's life with special emphasis on empowering, protecting and supporting them in the digital (online) and real (offline) environment, while action plans should reflect and implement this vision.
- b) National authorities are encouraged to publish significant statistical data in order to understand the trends and frequency of these type of crimes, and to be able to compare them with other countries without delays or specific differences among them.

3. Invention, innovation and solution focused technology to assist LE in performing their tasks

Technology developments and solutions brought positive and negative impact to law enforcement responding against criminal threats. Negative means a sudden change to new trends (threats) and focusing on the finding the ways to reduce the negative risks, while positive brings challenges and opportunities to be exploited or accepted in the working processes, methods, techniques and in tactical improvements. In narrower view, the CSEA crimes need special attention, because of the unrepresented vulnerability of children.

This should be reflected even through technological developments and solutions that can enable efficient responses for all stakeholders aiming at prevent and protect children from potential, existing and future harms.⁹¹

Therefore, technology should have its position in law enforcement investigations and responses, at least in the following:

- Detecting and preventing potential harms to which children might be exposed, or to assist them to stop being exposed to them, in cases of victimization;
- Detecting relevant information to identify and safeguard victims, depicted in CSEM/CSAM;
- Implementing pre-screening and/or pre-filtering processes before any content is uploaded to prevent any further spread by technology companies;⁹²
- Coping with virtual reality images, i.e. making a quick and accurate distinction between real and virtual;
- Effectively indicating and spotting the fake imagery (so called: deep fakes and nude fake);
- Making facial recognition tools that can handle the changes that children undergo while growing up (e.g. not just for missing children, but also to recognize a child in adult's body and facial constitution);
- Newly created tools should be able to serve as plugins for existing ones, and the existing ones should have the ability to be interoperable with them;
- Making feedback tools and techniques available to enable follow-up on each case from local to national level;
- Setting up national databases or repositories to store CSEM/CSAM with relevant software and tools for analysing and other management of these materials and ensuring collaboration at an international level through Europol and INTERPOL;
- Handling, prioritizing, processing and managing big data efficiently and in a timely manner;
- In countering CSE prioritisation may be necessary where national legislation places more severe penalties on abuse of victims under a certain age. In such situations, the detection of age could play an important

⁹¹ About harms and their definitions see chapter 3.

⁹² House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee (2018) Policing for the Future. 10th Report of Session 2017-2019, released 25/10/2019. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/515/515.pdf> (accessed: 02/11/2020).

role in the investigation, therefore an efficient and precise tool is needed;⁹³

- Detecting and securing evidence of intended or on-going live streaming sessions of child sexual abuse (LDCA);
- Availability of interoperability tools or systems is one of the needs in CSE/CSA investigations which will be more efficient where it is possible to quickly and properly cross-check different systems (e.g. SIS II, PNR, ECRIS, EIS, ETIAS, FIU etc.);
- Using trustworthy artificial intelligence on every aspect of combatting CSEA, based on key requirements including human agency and oversight, technical robustness and safety, privacy and data governance, transparency, diversity, non-discrimination and fairness, environmental and societal well-being and accountability;⁹⁴
- Foreseeing possible threats in offenders' ability to weaponize IoT devices⁹⁵ to conduct online CSE crimes, e.g. at least storage and dissemination of CSAM/CSEM;
- Develop and encourage the integration of the Safety and Security by and its implementation in e-Devices, IoT devices, software and applications including video games;⁹⁶
- Improved ability to filter, block, or remove the existing or known CSAM/CSEM, not just on clear net, but also in dark web, VPN and other different kinds of online environments;
- Continue with developing tools and solutions to detect CSA/CSE in any form or situation, similar to the PhotoDNA and Anti-grooming techniques developed in the past by Microsoft.

Having a good overview of the past and current projects, means having an overview on the outcomes of their implementation within particular environments. Across Europe, the European Union, through different funding instruments plenty of interesting projects were funded aimed at providing different products or services that could better protect children. The coordination at the national and at EU/European level on development of technologies to counter and deal with this crime type needs closer examination. The evaluation of project outcomes and sharing of the technology, knowledge and research gathered through them should be achieved through mechanisms such as the European Innovation Hub and Lab.⁹⁷ This would avoid reinventing the wheel and better enable allocating relevant funds for changes and updates, instead of funding innovations that have already been developed. They may contain solutions, not obvious to others, that could be used in countering CSE with minor changes and updates.

In this journey of many technological developments and solutions, is very useful to avoid reinventing the tools that are already widely used, but rather to improve their efficiency.

- Policy recommendations at the EU/European level:
 - a) Policy-makers are encouraged to promote technological development in tools, techniques and instruments in order to increase capacities and capabilities of stakeholders in CSE arena to prevent

⁹³ See more: Chaves, D., Fidalgo, E., Alegre, E., Jáñez-Martino, F. & Biswas, R. (2020). Improving Age Estimation in Minors and Young Adults with Occluded Faces to Fight Against Child Sexual Exploitation. 15th International Conference on Computer Vision Theory and Applications, project Machine Learning applied to Cybersecurity. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340057627_Improving_Age_Estimation_in_Minors_and_Young_Adults_with_Occluded_Faces_to_Fight_Against_Child_Sexual_Exploitation (accessed: 12/11/2020).

⁹⁴ See European Commission (2020). Assessment List for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (ALTAI) for self-assessment, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/assessment-list-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence-altai-self-assessment> (accessed: 22/10/2020).

⁹⁵ See UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2018). Code of Practice for consumer IoT security, released 14/10/2018. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-consumer-iot-security/code-of-practice-for-consumer-iot-security> (accessed: 02/11/2020).

⁹⁶ Video games are available on every corner. Criminals are making virtual connections with children through gaming and social media platforms. One popular site warns visitors, "Please be careful." See: Bowles N. & Keller M. H. (2019). Video Games and Online Chats Are 'Hunting Grounds' for Sexual Predators, New York Times (online), published 07/12/2019, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/12/07/us/video-games-child-sex-abuse.html> (accessed: 09/11/2020).

⁹⁷ Document Council EU, no. WK 11032/2019 INIT, date 08/10/2019.

online harms and protect children from further harms.

- b) Relevant EU institutions are invited to organize the events that aims to promote tools, techniques and instruments that could be of use for national law enforcement and judicial authorities to improve their tasks to protect children from CSE online and offline.
- c) Analyse the available solutions that were already provided through different funding mechanisms at EU and at national level regardless of the scope or aim of the project in order to highlight the existing solutions that can be upgraded, or supplemented for the protection of children against CSE. At EU level, the relevant funding bodies (e.g. EC DG's) should dive into their project repositories and provide a full list of available solutions.
- d) An acceptable compromise must be achieved between the motivation for involvement in research and development projects by private parties, research and academic institutes and the exploitation of the results of such projects by government and public bodies. Appropriate licensing models and continued support and development of products must be adequately addressed in such compromises.

- Policy recommendations at the national level:

- a) National authorities are also encouraged to promote technological development in tools, techniques and instruments in order to increase capacities and capabilities of stakeholders in CSE arena to prevent online harms and protect children from further harms.
- b) National authorities are invited to promote, share and exchange tools, techniques and instruments that could be useful for other national law enforcement and judicial authorities in their tasks to protect children from CSE online and offline.
- c) Analyse the available solutions that were already provided through different funding mechanisms at EU and at national level regardless of the scope or aim of the project in order to highlight the existing solutions that can be upgraded, or supplemented for the protection of children against CSE. At national level, the relevant project funded by public or private entities, or both, each trustee, administrator should provide the same information (communicate with all universities, institutes, innovation labs etc.).

4. Awareness of different trends, threats and harms against children's safety

Internet and contemporary digital developments and solutions are making human's life better in many aspects. On the other hand, law enforcement authorities and the societies are challenged with many harms, threats and negative trends that affects the "better" life. There are plenty of so-called online harms, affecting people, children, societies, businesses, governments that a comprehensive and exhaustive taxonomy should be put in place to emphasise and enable holistic approaches at a policy level.

For instance, the UK government released its full response⁹⁸ to the Online Harms White Paper, signalling that the Online Harms Bill will establish a statutory duty of care for online companies to their users, which will be legally obliged to identify, remove and limit the spread of illegal content such as child sexual abuse, terrorism and suicide material. The companies will also have a much greater responsibility to protect children from harmful content or activity such as grooming, bullying and pornography.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ See UK Government, Safer technology, safer users: The UK as a world-leader in Safety Tech, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safer-technology-safer-users-the-uk-as-a-world-leader-in-safety-tech> (accessed: 18/01/2021).

⁹⁹ This paragraph was taken from: Klovig Skelton, S. (2020). UK government unveils details of upcoming online harms rules, Computer Weekly (online), released 15/12/2020. Available at: <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252493664/UK-government-unveils-details-of-upcoming-online-harms-bill> (accessed: 20/01/2021).

From the perspective of prevention and protection of children, it would be of great importance to make a list/catalogue of the all available online harms in a coordinated way and provide it centrally for wider use. This would assist many stakeholders in decision-making including how to improve protection of children against particular online harms in the context of the broader range of such harms. Additionally, it could assist them in considering whether to impose stricter measures for people who would like to work with children; not just as professional, but also voluntary, temporary worker, or person¹⁰⁰ invited to present their knowledge, skills, arts, sports and books. The taxonomy catalogue of online harms would also assist lawmakers in changing legislation and assist other stakeholders such as, school counsellors, social workers, child advocacy officers and judicial authorities. With this they could take the measures to better protect the vulnerable members of societies, family members, children, pupils and students.

- Policy recommendation at the EU/European level: EU institutions in close cooperation with European nations should open a discourse for development of taxonomy of online harms in order to protect children's rights in every aspect and circumstances. This could be seen as initiating the safety-by-design concept to protect children as well.
- Policy recommendation at the national level: EU MS are encouraged to open similar discussions on taxonomy about online harms, affecting children at least. Those discussions should be encouraged within their societies and their outcome provided to the common, European taxonomy catalogue.

5. Victim and offender centric approaches

It is crucial to understand which approach to take into consideration in cases of CSEA. In traditional policing models, management expects results in the numbers of offenders arrested and charged. However, this expectation needs to be at least equalled in this crime area with a focus on the numbers of child-victims identified, located and safeguarded. In addition to both these focuses there needs to be emphasis on the amount intelligence shared with other competent authorities nationally and internationally, which later led to successful protection of victims, collected evidence and consequently prosecutions of sexual offenders (perpetrators).

The victim centric approach is mainly seen as the best approach to identify, locate and safeguard asexually abused child, especially from examining images of the depicted crime scene of his/her abuse, in CSAM/CSEM. This is known, at least in the first phase, as the victim identification (VID) process and from the moment when a child is protected from further harm the action is known as victim assistance. The latter refers to taking care of the victim through direct support, medical care, social re-integration, education, therapy and other means under the Victim's Directive.¹⁰¹

However, the offender centric approach is often seen as a way to identify offenders and bring them to justice, from gathering intelligence and evidence against them, through arrest, prosecution, conviction and sentencing. This approach is also known as criminal investigation in first phase that arises from reports of criminal behaviour, detection of online activity, undercover activities, discovery of live distant child abuse or commission of sexual crime abroad and then is commonly known as judicial procedure.

Both approaches need relevant attention and explanation nationally. The reality that victim identification has become mainstream in the investigation of CSEM/CSAM offences should be reflected in the resources

¹⁰⁰ Instructor, coach, trainer, mentor, tutor, project partner etc.

¹⁰¹ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32012L0029> (accessed: 18/02/2021).

allocated to it at national and international level.¹⁰² Tightly connected to both approaches is also the centralising and sharing of intelligence between to competent authorities, such as through Europol, in order to be able to act and respond appropriately.¹⁰³

- Policy recommendation at the EU/European level: Promoting the victim and offender centric approaches and ensuring that relevant stakeholders accept these as important to removing obstacles for efficient protection of children, quality evidence gathering and increased detection and prosecution of child sexual offenders.
- Policy recommendation at the national level: National LE authorities are encouraged to properly assess and integrate both approaches, with increased and intensified sharing of intelligence of sexual abuse and exploitation of children nationally and internationally.

6. Provide support and allocate relevant resources to law enforcement

Investment in investigators' skills, capacity and access to technological tools and resources have all been highlighted as deficient with respect to the investigation of online CSE offences.¹⁰⁴ The CSE crime area has to become a national priority in every EU country and with increased human capabilities in dedicated units.¹⁰⁵ The lack of staff due to the pandemic situation means also the necessity to fulfil other tasks not related to CSE or CSAM or even deployment to work on other police tasks.¹⁰⁶

Since the work on CSE crimes is complex, officers working in this field must be assigned only to these tasks, unless there are unavoidable situations where public safety cannot otherwise be ensured. Before considering any diversion of CSE officers to other tasks, the standards from UN CRC on the need to ensure child protection in the best interests of children needs to be assessed.¹⁰⁷

Each country needs to dedicate a sufficient or relevant number of staff to be able to efficiently and professionally protect children from harm, especially sexual exploitation and abuse, and have the ability to train and educate them appropriately. This would include on topics such as prevention, detection and investigation of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, on the needs and rights of the victims, children's rights generally, on the prevention of secondary victimization, recognizing trends, on the use of different tools provided by Europol, INTERPOL and other institutions, on Internet and social media and many more.

This activity requires continuously providing multidisciplinary training courses and facilitating the exchange of best practices among experts in law enforcement, social services, health institutions, educational settings, judiciary, academia and NGOs, nationally and internationally.

- Policy recommendation at the EU/European level: The European institutions should promote and provide necessary funds for the increased capabilities and capacities of law enforcement and other relevant authorities, aimed at the protection of children from sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Policy recommendation at the national level: The national authorities are encouraged to provide or

¹⁰² See Article 30, para. 5 of Lanzarote Convention.

¹⁰³ See chapter II/4 Strengthen law enforcement efforts at national and EU level in the current EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse.

¹⁰⁴ House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee (2018). Policing for the Future. 10th Report of Session 2017-2019, 25 October 2019. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/515/515.pdf> (accessed: 02/11/2020).

¹⁰⁵ Contribution by DCJP, France.

¹⁰⁶ Contribution by KGP, Poland.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. best interests of the child principle: "States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being [...], and [...] shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures," Article 3, para. 2).

allocate sufficient human resources and funds to dedicated CSE units and to provide regular training courses and meet the educational needs of CSE investigators in order to improve their ability to protect children from these harms.

7. Prevention and awareness raising

Prevention is the first imperative of justice.¹⁰⁸ There should be no dispute about the importance of prevention and how crucial it is in everyday life. The ECOSOC provided guidelines,¹⁰⁹ in which it is stated: *“There is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to sustainable development of countries. Effective, responsible crime prevention enhances the quality of life of all citizens. It has long-term benefits in terms of reducing the costs associated with the formal criminal justice system, as well as other social costs that result from crime.”* The statements above are even more important, when the prevention and awareness raising are focused on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse. The prevention of victimisation and re-victimisation can be achieved through the creation and sharing of prevention strategies widely using different circles, networks, groups and environments.¹¹⁰

Each of us needs to follow simple rules for the success of prevention activities. Success means that the new information, knowledge or skill reach as many of the targeted groups as possible through positive approaches. The simple rules¹¹¹ could be:

- The approach includes all relevant stakeholders. It is multidisciplinary and proportionate, respects human rights and rule of law, provides protective information on particular topic, respects everyone involved, has the highest ethical and moral standards, does not cause any harm and it has an appropriate and expected effect in the intended environment, the focused group of the participants and provides protection.
- All the various targeted groups of participants must be protected through different approaches for children and adults and for children of different age groups, special needs and ranges of abilities.
- Share and exchange new approaches and ideas,
- Trying not to reinvent an existing prevention activity but rather upgrade it, or simplify it if needed and seek new partnerships for collaboration and cooperation.
- Invent or innovate, when the approach or topic is not yet available, or when the existing prevention activity is outdated, or is not aligned with these rules and needs refreshment.
- In relation to topics such as “sexual exploitation of children”, prevention activities should cover all topics and all different focused groups, as it would be an investment in children and society.

Besides the process of conducting the prevention activity, the topics that need to be addressed are:

- Investments in children and their online safety, meaning awareness, education, curricula, multidisciplinary approach throughout of education at primary and secondary level.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ UN Security Council (2004). The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies. Report of the Secretary-General. Released 23/08/2004, available at: <http://archive.ipu.org/splz-e/unga07/law.pdf> (accessed: 16/01/2021).

¹⁰⁹ Economic and Social Council (2002). Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, ECOSOC resolution 2002/13, annex, released 24/07/2002. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/resolution_2002-13.pdf (accessed: 16/01/2021).

¹¹⁰ See chapter II/5 Enable Member States to better protect children through prevention in the current EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse.

¹¹¹ Same source about UN CRC fundamental principles as in subchapter 5.1.

¹¹² Example of investment: In Ireland, an education programme “Be in Ctrl”, launched in 2018 was developed by An Garda Síochána, using the Europol’s Say No campaign materials (see chapter 4). Irish programme contains three lessons in the context of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme to support schools addressing the online sexual coercion and extortion of children in collaboration with students’ parents. More: <https://www.webwise.ie/beinctrl/>. Following the launch, they engaged in an awareness-

- Campaigning about children with children:
 - a) Using experts to inform children on how to be ambassadors on this topic, including digital literacy with their peers;¹¹³
 - b) Developing specific standards that should be considered when developing information society services for children;¹¹⁴
 - c) Creating the prevention activities for children in close cooperation with them as they know their challenges better than adults;¹¹⁵
 - d) Opening fora for children to speak about their views on digital rights.¹¹⁶
- Improvements in reporting mechanisms:
 - a) Improving reporting mechanisms¹¹⁷ and providing information efficiently to the victims and their supporters, especially in critical situations such as pandemic or other emergencies.¹¹⁸ More effective measures need to be adopted by learning from the impact the current coronavirus pandemic has had on reporting measures in every European country, in particular for offline reporting to remain consistent.¹¹⁹
 - b) Availability of public online reporting mechanisms allowing reporting of websites or other online platforms that distribute CSAM/CSEM, such as those provided by INHOPE.¹²⁰
- Promoting terminology that respects dignity of the victims and survivors of sexual exploitation as children. Moreover, to protect their individual rights to dignity and personal integrity. Acknowledging that terminology often has a legal basis in many treaties and documents, see chapter 3, strong consideration must be given to changing and supplementing it where it is outdated. Children are not victims of “child pornography”, “child prostitution” or “child sex tourism”. They are victims of long lasting exposure to harm through rapes, sexual assaults, attacks on their sexual integrity and their abusers recording and distribution of these heinous acts. The terminology quoted above should be avoided, as offenders and perpetrators use them to justify and normalise their abuse of children.
- Embedding the innovative prevention and awareness methods and features:
 - a) **App:** A microsite and mobile application ‘Own It’¹²¹ that supports young people taking their first steps online and having access to their first smartphone. The website uses examples, stories and videos from young people and influential role models such as media personalities and online influencers to

raising campaign targeting teens to highlight the same issue. The campaign film can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/289090948>. More info on the campaign: <https://www.webwise.ie/news/be-in-ctrl/>. This was contributed by AGS, Ireland.

¹¹³ In Cyprus, The Ministry of Education and the Pedagogical Institute implemented a project “Little Trainers” within the elementary schools. A number of children within the elementary schools are trained in order to be able to train their classmates.

¹¹⁴ In UK, for instance, the consultation on this subject is taking place. See more: ICO (2019) Age appropriate design: a code of practice for online services. Consultation document. Information Commissioner’s Office. <https://ico.org.uk/media/about-the-ico/consultations/2614762/age-appropriate-design-code-for-public-consultation.pdf> (accessed: 02/11/2020).

¹¹⁵ Europol’s Say No campaign is an example of such a prevention activity. See chapter 4 with links to resources.

¹¹⁶ Europol’s European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) organised a European Youth Day for the first time in 2008, where under the slogan “Digital Rights of Youth against Violence,” approx. 100 youths between 12 and 15 years of age gathered to discuss online and offline safety issues. As a result, a Youth Call for Action was drafted, calling on stakeholders to create a safer Internet for them. More: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/making-voices-of-youth-advocates-heard-europol%E2%80%99s-1st-european-youth-day> (accessed: 18/01/2021).

¹¹⁷ In Cyprus, besides the dedicated website and reporting platform, the particular mobile application was developed to report CSE cases. In France, a character in the video game Fortnite has been created before the COVID-19 lockdown, in order to allow children to report violence (physical or sexual) in the family circle.

¹¹⁸ Typical example is the on-going creation of dedicated platform for victims to find relevant information for assistance, according to victim’s situation and needs.

¹¹⁹ Contributed by CENTRIC, UK.

¹²⁰ Example in Europe would be the InHope network fighting CSAM. See more: <https://www.inhope.org/EN> (accessed: 18/01/2021).

¹²¹ More info: <https://www.bbc.com/ownit> (accessed: 02/11/2020).

provide children with a safe space to learn about how to manage many of the issues that young people face with a specific focus on online spaces.

- b) **Police2Peer:** Targeting file sharing of child sexual abuse material. The aim is to establish that the perceived safety in numbers experience many have on peer-to-peer networks is false. Users that share abuse material are neither safe, invisible nor untraceable. The Police2Peer initiative is doing just what the name implies. Police create files that appear to be child abuse material and coming from another person with a similar sexual interest in children, available to those that seek it. Once someone starts downloading what appears to be an abuse file or make their illegal files available on the network, police share their files with them. These files are not child sexual abuse material, although they appear to be - they are files without any content or files featuring police officers from some of our partner countries, informing the downloader of the risks they are taking.¹²²
- c) **Helplinks:** This site has been set up, with links to assistance and support resources in a number of European countries and offers a starting point for those that realise that they have a problematic sexual interest in children. Law enforcement, as part of the Police2Peer project, collects statistical information from this site but this is not a part of the operation. The various services listed have no affiliation with the police.¹²³
- d) **Stop Child Abuse – Trace An Object:** Europol's crowdsourcing campaign, launched in 2017 and awarded in 2019.¹²⁴ Extracts from the background of CSAM/CSEM, often difficult to identify, are published online to ask the general public for their help in identifying and localising the objects shown. Useful leads have since been exploited and forwarded to the relevant countries and law enforcement authorities and have helped advance national investigations.¹²⁵
- e) **Film screening and workshops:** Experts in child protection against sexual harassment and violence connected with each other and with filmmakers in pre-production of the youth film Gaja's World. They agreed to produce additional video material on the topic which has been promoted in schools in Slovenia. The film script was also subject to expert review. The film's purpose was to entertain but also to open relevant topics such as family and online abuses. It also enabled identification with the main characters and discussion on the topics in detail through workshops for children, parents, teachers and other school workers. The film and related events reached many participants across the country. The film was presented at Europol and followed by workshops of a similar concept.¹²⁶
- f) **Innovation embedded to various preventative, awareness and educational activities:**
 - *Summer cyber security schools* and workshops for children and teenagers: from learning of online space up to hackathons.¹²⁷
 - *European Cyber Security Month:* advocacy campaign that aims to raise awareness of cybersecurity threats, promote cybersecurity among citizens, and provide up to date security information through education and the sharing of good practices.¹²⁸
 - *Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition pledges:* The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition brings together Member States, companies, social partners, non-profit organisations, and education providers who take action to tackle the lack of digital skills in Europe. The Coalition addresses the need for

¹²² More info: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/partners-agreements/police2peer> (accessed: 18/01/2021).

¹²³ More info: <http://helplinks.eu/> (accessed: 18/01/2021).

¹²⁴ Awarded by European Ombudsman Award for Good Administration 2019 in category "Excellence in innovation/transformation" by using the crowd-intelligence to rescue sexually exploited children. More info: <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/event-document/en/115700> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

¹²⁵ More info: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/stopchildabuse> (accessed: 18/01/2021).

¹²⁶ The Gaja's World film was awarded several times. It reached more than 80.000 viewers, while workshops attended almost 20.000 children and approx. 1.300 teachers/school workers. More info: <https://safe.si/video/gajin-svet> (video clips), https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7489754/?ref=ttpl_pl_tt (workshops) and https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7489754/?ref=ttpl_pl_tt (about the film), (accessed all sources: 18/01/2021).

¹²⁷ More info: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/joint-international-operation-targets-young-users-of-ddos-cyber-attack-tools>

¹²⁸ More info: <https://cybersecuritymonth.eu/>

digital skills at all levels, including ensuring better digital skills training for youngsters.¹²⁹ The initiative encourages all organizations, businesses and government bodies to make a concrete commitment to carry out actions to reduce the digital skills gap in Europe. These commitments, or pledges, range from teacher training, reskilling jobseekers and actions targeting ICT professionals to resources for tech-savvy young people.¹³⁰

The above are just a few examples of the prevention and awareness activities with innovative approaches and following simple rules.

- Policy recommendation at the EU/European level:
 - a) It is crucial that preventive activities be supported and strengthened by all policy makers¹³¹ so that messages reach all groups of the population, experts, the business sector and individuals. This is particularly necessary for the most vulnerable groups of people like children, who must be an integral part of these activities.
 - b) EU and European institutions are encouraged to use and promote better terminology that focuses on child protection and child victims of sexual exploitation, such as child sexual exploitation material and child sexual abuse material instead of child pornography.
 - c) The EU and its institutions should become a role model in strong coordination of prevention activities aiming at protecting children from harmful online trends. This coordination should be supported with academic research, best practices and with children's participation.
- Policy recommendation at the national level:
 - a) National authorities have positive obligation to promote and encourage different and effective preventive activities that are organized by themselves, or by other entities or with them in close cooperation. In doing so, it is important to pursue the highest quality standards for these activities, especially in accordance with the fundamental principles of the UN CRC and the inclusion of children in the topics that concern them.
 - b) Member States and their national authorities are encouraged to use and promote better terminology that focuses on child protection and child victims of sexual exploitation, such as child sexual exploitation material and child sexual abuse material instead of child pornography. Member states are encouraged to amend legislation that utilises incorrect or dated terminology.
 - c) National authorities are encouraged to interact with EU institutions to establish or improve coordination of their prevention activities at national and European level through the participation of academia, practitioners and children.

8. Childrens' participation in matters affecting them

"Policies about children are often made about them, not with them. It is important that children can participate and are included."¹³² Children have the right to be heard and have a say in all decisions affecting them, be that at home, in the community, at school or in individual legal and administrative matters.¹³³

As indicated in chapter 5, child participation is one of the integral parts of the UN CRC fundamental principles, under Article 12. Some examples are given here:

¹²⁹ More info: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-skills-and-jobs-coalition>

¹³⁰ More info: <http://pledgeviewer.eu/pledges/>

¹³¹ See chapter II/5 Enable Member States to better protect children through prevention in the current EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse.

¹³² KidsRights Foundation, available at: <https://kidsrights.org/childrens-rights/child-participation/> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

¹³³ Council of Europe, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/participation> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

- Children were consulted in preparation of EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child,¹³⁴
- Cyprus implemented the Cyprus Children's Parliament to facilitate children to discuss what affects them directly with lawmakers and this institution is a part of the Cyprus Parliament.¹³⁵ Children's Parliaments are also organized similarly on a regional and national level in Slovenia.¹³⁶
- In Belgium, young people run a press agency that expresses the views of young people on the latest news in the world.¹³⁷
- In Croatia, Children's councils of Opatija aim to establish mutual respect, listening and communication between children and the City of Opatija.¹³⁸
- The law obliges cities, towns and villages in Germany to let children participate in construction decisions.¹³⁹
- In UK, the Truth Project¹⁴⁰ was set up as part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse¹⁴¹ to enable 'victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to have the chance to share their experiences and be heard with respect'. The goal is to obtain experiences and suggestions from victims and survivors. It will enable the independent inquiry to recommend future changes to protect children from abuse both now and in the future.

Other avenues in which the child participation principle can be followed are, providing child-friendly information in court proceedings, websites and documents, direct consultation with children through consultative events on particular topics, collaboration with children in shared planning or decision making with adults and child-led participation.

- Policy recommendations at the EU/European level:
 - a) All policy makers should accept the active participation of children in developing legislative, policy, strategy, action plans and other official documents that are of great importance.
 - b) Therefore, EU institutions and other European or international bodies should have a positive obligation to promote consultation with children, providing them feedback, especially how their proposals were taken into account and if not, providing them with proper and solid arguments for that.
 - c) All official documents or position papers concerning children should be provided centrally and in child-friendly versions.
- Policy recommendations at the national level:
 - a) All policy makers should accept the active participation of children in developing legislative, policy, strategy, action plans and other official documents that are of great importance.
 - b) Therefore, each of the country or national authorities should have a positive obligation to promote consultation with children, providing them feedback, especially how their proposals were taken into account and if not, providing them with proper and solid arguments for that.
 - c) All official documents or position papers concerning children should be provided centrally and in

¹³⁴ This happened during 13th European Forum on the rights of the child (EU Child Forum 2020), more info: <https://www.euchildforum2020.eu/page-1081> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

¹³⁵ Contribution by Cyprus.

¹³⁶ More info: Slovenia, available at: <https://childhub.org/en/promising-child-protection-practices/good-practice-child-participation-eu-member-states#Slovenia> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

¹³⁷ More info: Belgium, available at: <https://childhub.org/en/promising-child-protection-practices/good-practice-child-participation-eu-member-states#Belgium> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

¹³⁸ More info: Croatia, available at: <https://childhub.org/en/promising-child-protection-practices/good-practice-child-participation-eu-member-states#Croatia> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

¹³⁹ More info: Germany, available at: <https://childhub.org/en/promising-child-protection-practices/good-practice-child-participation-eu-member-states#Germany> (accessed: 19/01/2021).

¹⁴⁰ The Truth Project runs until 2021. More: <https://www.truthproject.org.uk/> (accessed: 02/11/2020).

¹⁴¹ More: <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/> (accessed: 02/11/2020).



child-friendly versions.

7. Conclusion

The global response against child sexual exploitation and abuse is a highly complex matter and affects everyone, especially children. Nobody is able to respond on its own, the cooperation and collaboration are the key in this fight.

The policy recommendations in this deliverable are the starting point for current and future changes. These changes should be reflected in policy-making, decision-making, reorganizing of working processes and building partnerships across the globe. The main stakeholders in this journey are children. They should benefit the most.

In addition, the results of accepted and implemented policy recommendations will also have a huge impact on achieving the goals set in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

- 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children and
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

This deliverable will be updated according to new research, trends, threats and society's collective responses against the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. Suggestions are more than welcome.

We have to effectively and safely navigate the present and future digital arena. Together.

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ANNEX I – GLOSSARY, ACRONYMS AND COUNTRY ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Definition / Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AP	Analytical Point (Twins)
APA	American Psychological Association
CAID	Child Abuse Images Database
COE	Council of Europe
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CSAM	Child Sexual Abuse Material
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSEA	Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
CSEM	Child Sexual Exploitation Material
DG	Directorate General (at EC)
EC	European Commission
EC3	European Cybercrime Centre (Europol)
ECRIS	European Criminal Records Information System
EFC	European Financial Coalition against Commercial Sexual exploitation of children online
EIS	Europol Information System
EIU	The Economist Intelligence Unit
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
eNASCO	European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online
EPC	European Police Chief
ESP	Electronic Service Providers
ETIAS	European Travel Information and Authorization System
EU	European Union
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
GSC	General Secretariat of the Council
ICSE	International Child Sexual Exploitation images database
ICT	Information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
INHOPE	International Association of Internet Hotlines
IOCTA	Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment
IoT/IOT	Internet Of Things
IP	Internet Protocol
IWF	Internet Watch Foundation
IWG	Interagency Working Group
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
LDCA	Live Distant Child Abuse
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency (also Authority)
MS	Member State
NCA	National Crime Agency
NCECC	National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (Canada)
NCMEC	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (US)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (UK)

OJ	Official Journal
PNR	Passenger Number
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIS	Schengen Information System
TCSO (CSO)	Transnational Child Sex Offender (Child Sex Offender)
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
TOR	The Onion Router
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nation's Children Fund
VGT	Virtual Global Taskforce
WPGA	We Protect Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online

Table 3 - Glossary and Acronyms

Belgium	(BE)	Greece	(EL)	Lithuania	(LT)	Portugal	(PT)
Bulgaria	(BG)	Spain	(ES)	Luxembourg	(LU)	Romania	(RO)
Czechia	(CZ)	France	(FR)	Hungary	(HU)	Slovenia	(SI)
Denmark	(DK)	Croatia	(HR)	Malta	(MT)	Slovakia	(SK)
Germany	(DE)	Italy	(IT)	Netherlands	(NL)	Finland	(FI)
Estonia	(EE)	Cyprus	(CY)	Austria	(AT)	Sweden	(SE)
Ireland	(IE)	Latvia	(LV)	Poland	(PL)	United Kingdom	(UK)
United States	(US)						

Table 4 – Abbreviation of countries