



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

Protecting Children and Young People from Sexual Violence with a Focus on the New Media: Perspectives for Europe

Final Declaration International Conference Berlin, 30 June 2009:

Protecting Children and Young People from
Sexual Violence with a Focus on the New Media:
Perspectives for Europe



We declare,

- considering that children and young people are increasingly and intensively making use of new technologies and that an increasingly significant part of the social life of children and young people takes place online, where continuously evolving advanced technologies and communication tools are used;
- considering that the new media are being used by potential and actual sex offenders in preparation of sexual abuse, especially for the dissemination of child sexual abuse material and through grooming – the deliberate manipulation of children and young people to exert pressure on them to submit to sexualised acts;
- considering that preventing the dissemination of child pornography via the internet is one of the biggest challenges we face in the field of computer crime and that the internet currently provides uncomplicated and low-threshold access to child pornographic material;
- considering that there are indications that victims exploited for sexual purposes are getting younger and younger, and that abuse is getting more and more violent and that each time the images or films are retrieved or viewed represents further exploitation of the affected children and young people;
- considering that victims can be confronted with this abuse for the rest of their lives, thereby making it more difficult for them to develop a positive attitude to life;
- considering that those websites with child pornographic content are also made available via servers located in those countries in which the level of monitoring is low or there is no legislation in this area or relevant legislation is not being consistently enforced;
- considering that the continued consumption of child pornography prompts and promotes the actual use of sexual violence against children and young people and can contribute to people with a sexual preference for children coming into closer proximity with these acts;
- considering that there is insufficient reliable data on the use of the new media and the dissemination of illegal and harmful content in the new media;
- drawing attention to Article 34 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography of 2000, to Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which enshrines children's right to protection and care, and drawing attention to the European Union Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JI of 22 December 2003 on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse;
- drawing attention to the Rio de Janeiro Pact to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children agreed on 25 - 28 November 2008 at the III World Conference Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents;

that:

1. all forms of production, dissemination and portrayal of physical and sexual violence against children and young people or rather the initiation of sexual abuse in and through the new media must be eliminated;
2. we need to raise public awareness for the protection of children to ensure that the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and young people is prevented across all segments of society;
3. international cooperation must be stepped up on all levels with regard to punishment and criminal prosecution, as well as with regard to identifying, accompanying and supporting victims;
4. multi-lateral cooperation is of decisive importance in the fight against the dissemination of child abuse material in the new media;
5. all member states should be encouraged to be proactive in their investigation of the sexual abuse of children and young people and ensure that, where relevant and necessary, these investigations are developed beyond the borders
6. we need a global, overall strategy to combat the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and young people in and through the new media which incorporates all those concerned, including children and young people;
7. the responsibility for the protection of children must be borne by the whole of society, including the private sector and especially social networks in the new media;
8. we need to strengthen a human rights-based and victim-centred approach, ensuring the judiciary and police have the necessary resources, both at national and international level;
9. we need to create the legal basis to be able to delete child abuse material which has been posted on the internet and to close websites in all states, as well as international monitoring of compliance with and the effectiveness of existing commitments;
10. making access to websites with child pornographic content more difficult through filters based on “blacklists”, including being redirected to a “stop” page, represent supporting measures in the fight against child pornography and these measures are all the more effective the more states implement them;
11. we emphatically welcome the establishment of an international child sexual exploitation images database within the General Secretariat of Interpol;
12. especially with regard to working with the victims of child sexual exploitation, there is a great need for advanced and further training for specialists, primarily those in treatment facilities and in social work, and we see a need for action here;
13. there is a need for the provision of more opportunities for therapeutic work with young offenders, including advanced and further training as regards therapy, youth welfare and social work, and we see a need for action here;

14. there is a need for action in raising the awareness of children and young people regarding the potential for violence in and through new media, which must be accompanied by extensive training for specialists;
15. we see a considerable need to conduct technical, psychological and social surveys on a scientific basis to gather reliable data;
16. we must promote the sharing of know-how and best practices at international level as regards ongoing and future research projects in the area of combating illegal content and damaging behaviour online.

Berlin, 30 June 2009

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