

## EuroCOP's response to the European Commission on its Proposal for a Directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (recast)

EuroCOP shares the view expressed in the Impact Assessment of the proposed directive that child sexual abuse affects public security. It therefore directly impacts the work of police officers and can be emotionally challenging to manage.

Therefore, EuroCOP supports the measures proposed to update and improve the approach to tackle CSA:

1. Ensure criminalisation of all forms of CSA including those facilitated by technological developments like paedophile handbooks and the dark web. However, **investigation into CSA materials should not be criminalised to avoid adding difficulties to the work of investigators.**
2. Ensure that national rules on **investigation and prosecution take into account recent technological developments** including causing a child to engage in sexual activities without coercion
3. Improve prevention & assistance to victims to ensure that easily accessible and **child-friendly reporting channels** are available
4. Promote **better coordination** across Member States and, at the national level, among all parties involved.
5. Make it possible, for an extended period of time to take into account the lasting fear and **trauma** that often hinders reporting, for survivors to file complaints and to claim compensation for damages

### EuroCOP wants to draw a particular attention to the following provisions:

- **Article 28** requires Member States to promote regular **training not only for front-line police officers** likely to come into contact with CSA but also for judges and other relevant professionals, to ensure child-friendly justice.
- **New Article 31** obliges Member States to :
  1. Collect periodically **statistics on the offences** included in the Directive following a common methodology developed in cooperation with the EU Centre to prevent CSA.
    - The EU Centre would support Member States in the data gathering for offences including by establishing common standards on counting units, counting rules, common disaggregations, reporting formats, and on the classification of criminal offences
  2. **Share those statistics with the EU Centre and the Commission**
  3. The EU Centre in turn should compile all statistics received and make the compilation publicly available.
  4. Member States are required to **support research on root causes, effects**, incidences, effective prevention measures, effective victim assistance measures, and conviction rates for the forms of offences covered by the proposal.
  5. Lastly, on the basis of the above, the Commission will provide **implementation reports** every 5 years, which will be accompanied by **proposals for amendment** as needed (article 32).

### EuroCOP strongly supports the above measures:

- They should have an impact on the understanding of the causes of CSA and will help address them;
- EuroCOP and its members keep requesting **adequate training**: A police officer responsible for road traffic has other needs than a police officer in charge of CSA. The latter also has specific cooperation needs with the judiciary.
- Last but not least, the methodology related to data collection and use may also inspire similar approach to **collecting data on violence against the police.**

Finally, EuroCOP would like to stress that the Commission's efforts to improve international co-operation and co-ordination between Member States are in vain if the **central governments** themselves do not make a commitment to incorporate the same willingness to co-operate internally. There are still gaps in this sense and we have to bear in mind that a failure to cooperate in one place (weakest link) can have fatal consequences for the rest of the European territory.