

OPEN LETTER TO THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE G7

G7 Summit, Biarritz, France, 24-26 August 2019

Digital technologies can foster violence, insecurity and inequality, and the G7 Summit in Biarritz, France, rightly makes it a priority to combat these threats. This open letter from operational NGOs dealing with criminal content against children is a testimony and a reminder that, in order to protect humanity, one needs to combine innovation in technology, but also in staff welfare and cooperation.

Thanks to multi-stakeholder efforts and fresh impetus given by initiatives like the 2016 merger of the WePROTECT Global Alliance, we, our societies and economies, are collectively gaining momentum in the fight against online child sexual abuse and exploitation. Yet, the disturbing trends of on-demand and live-streaming, with victims as young as babies and infants, remind us daily of the evolving, commercial nature and extreme severity of the problem. Addressing the most heinous of crimes and a most dynamic threat landscape requires more targeted action and renewed commitments at the highest level.

At a time when the regulation of the internet tops the agenda, best practices and success stories in dealing with such strands of illegal and harmful content exemplify the strong partnerships in place between law enforcement, the private sector and civil society. Therefore, building on last year's [*G7 Charlevoix Commitment to End Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Abuse and Harassment in Digital Contexts*](#), we, as reporting hotlines and innovation labs from France and the United States, would like to share our expertise and highlight areas of cooperation and improvement. We believe our insights and recommendations could, under the current French Presidency of the G7 and ahead of the handover to the United States in 2020, benefit the *Building Digital Trust Together* overarching theme and discussions, particularly on:

- **Smarter technology:** sharing of hash sets, gradual integration of AI in processes, new ways of reporting illegal online content for citizens;
- **Staff welfare:** guidelines to protect analysts and frontline professionals, also by implementing automated processes to avoid unnecessary exposure to previously assessed violent content;
- **Closer cooperation:** increasing the speed of notice-and-takedown procedures without jeopardizing ongoing criminal investigations, promoting innovative solutions and cross-sector sharing of data to reduce the availability of child sexual abuse material and prevent the online revictimisation of children, supporting capacity building and training.

Our collaboration on game-changing pilot projects could not take place without the steadfast support of global tech companies and law enforcement partners, nor without us being founding and active members of INHOPE, the International Association of Internet Hotlines, which unites reporting hotlines from 40 member countries worldwide in combating child sexual abuse material, and includes the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, the UK Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), Japan’s Safer Internet Association (SIA), Germany’s eco - Association of the Internet Industry, Jugendchutz.net and Die Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Dienstanbieter (FSM), as well as Italy’s Telefono Azzurro and Save the Children Italia. Closer cooperation, combined with smarter technology and the resolve of dedicated professionals “who watch it to remove it” lead to more victims identified and rescued. Impact is real. In 2018, the INTERPOL International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database identified 15 new victims daily.



Point de Contact launched at the International Cybersecurity Forum (FIC) a White Paper entitled [Child sexual abuse material and online terrorist propaganda | Tackling illegal content and ensuring staff welfare](#). The French reporting hotline has also been adapting the reporting of suspected illegal content to new digital uses and younger generations, with “next gen” reporting add-ons, useful extensions available across browsers.



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The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) operates the [Cybertipline](#). Under US federal law, US-based Electronic Service Providers (ESPs) are required to report any instance of child sexual abuse imagery to the Cybertipline. To date, over 1,400 companies are registered to make reports to NCMEC’s Cybertipline and in 2018, it received more than 18 million reports from US-based companies.