

Motion for a resolution on the fight against child sexual abuse on the internet



Honorable Members of the European Parliament,

I am writing to you on behalf of EuroISPA, the European Association of Internet Services Providers, in relation to the Resolution on the fight against child sexual abuse material online that will be adopted in plenary session on March 11th.

I would like to start by emphasising our support for this initiative. EuroISPA's members are at the forefront of the fight against such abhorrent content at national and international level. Our members, Internet Services Providers (ISPs), comply with the Directive on Fighting Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and swiftly remove illegal content in cooperation with police and Hotlines. Indeed, EuroISPA members in France, Ireland, Austria and Germany run the national hotlines for their countries.

Hotlines are essential to the process of "notice and takedown" as they provide the means for members of the public to alert ISPs to the presence of suspected CSAM on the Internet. In the globalised Internet, Hotlines act as a crucial filter ensuring that police and ISPs in the appropriate jurisdiction are provided with notifications of illegal CSAM that have been confirmed by trained analysts. The activity of Hotlines in this regard is coordinated by the International Association of Internet Hotlines (INHOPE). Representing the world's 51 Hotlines across 45 countries, INHOPE has been funded by the European Commission since 1999.

EuroISPA believes that the role of hotlines in collecting anonymous reports from the public and in assessing illegal content needs to be clearly acknowledged in the text of the Resolution.

Furthermore, we are extremely concerned that the text does not address the funding of such Hotlines. During the discussions on the Connecting Europe Facility, where the European budget allocated to hotlines was discussed, the European Parliament supported a reduction of the European funds allocated to Hotlines. This has reduced the amount of funds now available to the European national Hotlines, and many Hotlines are already facing economic difficulty. We understand from the European Commission that these funds will only last until the end of June 2016. After this date there will be no budget left to support Hotlines. The consequence will be that most Hotlines in Europe, which are supported mainly by EU money, will not be able to cover their operational costs and will simply disappear.

EuroISPA believes that it is your direct responsibility, as Member of the European Parliament, to prevent this from happening. It would be contradictory to have the European Parliament supporting the fight against child sexual abuse material online while undermining the existence of those very Hotlines that play such a key role in the process of fighting against this content.

EuroISPA considers necessary to refer to the problem of the EU funding of Hotlines in the text of the Resolution and underline the need to start a discussion with the European Commission and Member States on possible solutions to prevent the collapse of the European system of Hotlines.

We count on the sensitivity of your political group with regard to the issues mentioned and trust that you will seek to include these points in the Resolution ahead of the plenary vote.

I would like you to know that EuroISPA remains a supporter of current and future initiatives to fight such abhorrent content and we look forward to closely cooperating with you and your political group in establishing a clear roadmap for improving the current system.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "O. Sueme".

Oliver J. Sueme
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Durrant".

Paul Durrant
Co-Chair of the Safer Internet Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carole Gay".

Carole Gay
Co-Chair of the Safer Internet Committee