

New legislation could put EU on the world map by holding big tech accountable for the dissemination of child sexual abuse materials

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Brussels, 22nd February 2023 - On the European Day for Victims of Crime, Terre des Hommes is proud to launch the Right In Front of Us (#ChildSafetyOn) campaign in partnership with 13 organisations dedicated to protecting children's safety and rights online. We want children to feel safe at school, but who is ensuring that they are also safe online? Research shows that an average school classroom of 20 children may have as many as 13 children who have experienced a form of online sexual harm.¹

But a solution to online sexual abuse is right in front of us. A new law is being considered by the EU that would help stop online child sexual abuse. This law would require the EU to create a legal obligation for companies like Meta, Tik Tok and Google, to identify, remove, and report any child sexual abuse material on their platforms. Crucially, those companies will also be held accountable for failing to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse. We are working with teachers and educators across Europe to help mobilise their voices in making children safe away from the classroom.

“We cannot turn a blind eye to what is happening online, where the number of child abuse and exploitation cases is skyrocketing. Children deserve and urgently need protection online and offline. Therefore, we are calling on the EU to immediately act and pass the necessary legislation to ensure the safety of children online.” – Valérie Ceccherini, Secretary General at Terre des Hommes International Federation.

The legislation would be the first of its kind, providing a template for a global response to an issue that is growing at an alarming rate. Children are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and violence than at any other time, and the EU has become a hub for this kind of activity.

With the #ChildSafetyOn campaign, Terre des Hommes International Federation, Center for Missing & Exploited Children, ECPAT International, Brave Movement, Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Internet Watch Foundation, NSPCC, End Violence Against Children, Thorn, 5 Rights Foundation, Missing Children Europe, WeProtect Global Alliance, Child Helpline International and Eurochild aim to raise awareness of the pressing need to protect children online and support the European Commission proposal to both prevent and combat child sexual abuse online. Children are spending more and more time online through all manner of devices and platforms; the proposal looks to protect children

¹ These findings come from a global study surveying more than 5,000 18-20 year olds in 54 countries worldwide, to understand more about their experiences of online sexual harms. [WeProtect Global Alliance & Economist Impact](#). The survey refers to the average number of students per primary level class in selected European countries in 2019. [Statista](#).

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wherever they are so they can live, learn, and thrive in their digital worlds without the threat of online child sexual abuse. The campaign includes a petition launched by the Justice Initiative, a survivor focused NGO, a hero video, website, and social media content. The website and social media content is available in EN, FR, IT, ES, DE & NL.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

Terre des Hommes International Federation is a non-governmental organisation working for the rights of children and equitable development with 730 projects across 67 countries. Terre des Hommes advocates for rights-based policies in all areas of children's lives.

As a member of Child Safety in Europe, Terre des Hommes has contributed to and endorsed this campaign to tackle the threat of online child sexual abuse. Learn more at www.childsafetyineurope.com.

Join us and turn #ChildSafetyOn.