



6 August 2026,

Dear President von der Leyen, President Metsola, President Costa,

Open letter on blocking access to known child sexual abuse material

Across Europe, images and videos of children being sexually abused are still traded online at industrial scale.

The numbers are horrifying. Every year, NCMEC's CyberTipline receives tens of millions of reports, including more than 100 million files in a single year. Girls are disproportionately targeted, and most victims are between seven and ten years old.

Most child sexual abuse material ('CSAM') discovery, sharing and reporting is linked to online platforms and services, and we welcome the EU's continued efforts to finalise its long-term targeted framework to address this.

Nonetheless, confirmed CSAM continues to exist on the open web. Europe hosts a significant portion of this material. In 2024, 62% of confirmed CSAM web pages identified by the Internet Watch Foundation were hosted in EU countries, with the Netherlands alone accounting for almost a third. In a recent academic study circa 65% of CSAM users first saw the material when they were children themselves, and half of the respondents first saw the material accidentally.

This is a systemic failure of protection. It is simply unacceptable that known illegal content remains accessible while removal at source is pending or delayed. Removing CSAM at source must remain the priority. It is the only way to eliminate the material itself.

But until that happens, telecom operators and internet access providers can play an important protective role by preventing access to confirmed CSAM on the open web.

As CEOs of European operators, we already act where the law allows but the position is varied and uncertain in practice. Instead, across Europe, regulatory barriers still prevent internet access providers from blocking access to domains and URLs ('website blocking') that trusted hotlines have already confirmed as child sexual abuse material. These barriers must be removed, urgently.

In respect of website blocking, we would welcome legal clarity to take basic action against confirmed illegal content on the open web, as a necessary safeguard until removal at source is achieved. We urge you to lock in three essential steps:

- First, establish a new EU organisation with legal authority to validate and maintain a single EU wide list of confirmed CSAM indicators, drawing on national hotlines, law enforcement and recognised expert bodies. A common, highly dynamic list with

strong safeguards against false positives is the only way to ensure fast, consistent and effective blocking across all Member States.

- Second, create a clear legal basis (beyond an administrative order) for internet access providers to block access to sites on that list where removal at source has not yet been achieved. This would mean strong safeguards, independent oversight, requirements on user notification, transparency reporting, and meaningful and accessible appeal or correction mechanisms for any erroneously blocked content.
- Third, before the EU Centre is fully operational, establish legal mechanisms for national authorities to authorise CSAM blocking based on trusted hotline/expert third party lists.

Children need protection now, not in several years' time.

This authority should be strictly limited to confirmed child sexual abuse material identified through trusted and independently overseen processes. It must not be capable of extension to any other category of content by national governments or administrative authorities without a fresh, explicit legislative mandate.

European governments outside the EU who have not yet done so, must be encouraged to introduce clear legal requirements ensuring blocking of confirmed child sexual abuse material identified by trusted hotlines/expert third parties is lawful, so that protection is consistent across all European networks.

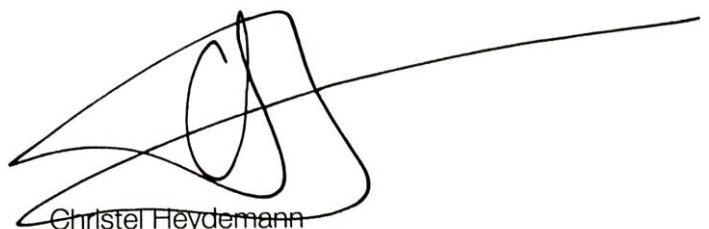
The scale of abuse demands decisive action, so Europe must show global leadership. Regulatory roadblocks must be removed without delay, and internet access providers enabled to better play their part. The measures we are calling for would allow internet access providers across Europe to block access to confirmed CSAM web pages consistently and lawfully, with appropriate safeguards for privacy and fundamental rights.

Protecting children online is a shared responsibility, and we stand ready to further support authorities across Europe in delivering the strongest possible response.

Yours sincerely,



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Christel Heydemann
CEO, Orange Group



Benedicte Schilbred Fasmer
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Allison Kirkby
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