

ECLAG Statement on Trilogue Agreement on the recast Directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material, 22 June 2026

Council Press Release: [Combatting child sexual abuse: EU agrees stronger criminal law rules and enhanced support to victims - Consilium](#)

EP Press Release: [Combatting child sexual abuse: agreement on updated rules](#)

Brussels, 22 June 2026 - Today, EU co-legislators have reached a landmark agreement on the recast Directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material. The ECLAG Coalition Steering Group commends this agreement and the strong message it sends to children, victims and survivors: at a time when the EU is facing a growing Child Sexual Abuse Crisis fuelled by new forms of abuse facilitated by technology, protecting children and supporting victims and survivors must remain at the heart of the European agenda.

While we await the final text, this agreement already represents a major step forward. It strengthens the EU's response to evolving technology-facilitated harms and ensures that Member States' criminal laws keep pace with the realities children face online, including AI-generated child sexual abuse material, the livestreaming of abuse, and the extortion of children for sexual purposes. The text also includes new protection for teenagers from grooming in situations of threat, coercion and when the offender pretends to be a peer.

The revision also enhances protection, support and access to justice for victims and survivors. Most notably, it establishes, for the first time, minimum limitation periods for child sexual abuse offences, recognising the time needed for healing and acknowledging that most survivors require years before they are able to come forward and seek justice. This marks a significant advance and will substantially extend the time available for victims to report abuse across the EU. The revision also introduces strong safeguards around consent and mandates criminal record checks for professionals and volunteers in direct and regular contact with children.

The revision also indicates a large number of prevention measures, such as training for professionals or comprehensive sexuality education. Unfortunately, Member States have shown limited willingness to commit to these measures. Besides, the Directive falls short in imposing a one-roof model to support children victim of sexual abuse and exploitation ensuring they can be access medical care, psychological support and child centric judicial proceedings in a safe and coordinated setting.

“This agreement marks an important step in strengthening the protection of children from harm, both online and offline. We applaud EU policymakers for raising the bar on victims’ and survivors’ access to justice. At a time when EU citizens have repeatedly called for stronger protection of children, it is encouraging to see European standards being set on limitation periods, consent, and the criminalisation of technology-facilitated abuse.

We regret, however, that the EU missed an opportunity to be more ambitious notably on mandatory prevention measures, and on ensuring that child victims can access medical, psychological and judicial support under one roof” says Julie Fuchs, ECLAG spokesperson, EU Policy and Advocacy Officer at ECPAT International.

Technical work on the final text will continue in the coming months. Once adopted and implemented, the revised Directive will establish a strong minimum standard across the EU for preventing child sexual abuse, holding offenders accountable, and ensuring access to justice and support for victims and survivors. We encourage Member States to go further and adopt even more ambitious measures to strengthen protections for children and improve support for victims and survivors at national level.