



ECLAG Reaction to End of Trialogue on Interim Derogation March 2026

ECLAG* strongly condemns EU policymakers' conscious failure to extend the interim derogation that enables online service providers to detect child sexual abuse content. At a time when Europe is facing an escalating Child Sexual Abuse Crisis, this political blockage represents a **deeply alarming and irresponsible step backwards for child protection.**

The consequences are immediate and severe. Without this legal basis, platforms may no longer be able to carry out lawful detection of abuse, undermining efforts to identify victims and disrupting law enforcement work across the European Union and beyond. **This gap in protection was entirely avoidable and policymakers were fully aware of the consequences.**

It is unacceptable that children's safety has been compromised at a moment when a permanent framework is within reach. This failure also raises serious concerns about the policymaking process: the lead policymaker responsible for this file as well as countless other decision makers did not engage with a single child protection organisation

The risks are not theoretical - we have seen them before. During the previous lapse in the legal framework in 2021, [reports of child sexual abuse material dropped by 58%](#), not because abuse decreased, but because detection efforts could no longer function effectively. Policymakers were aware of this precedent, yet they have let this gap become a permanent reality.

The situation has dramatically worsened in just five years. Abuse has become more violent and more sadistic, while new technologies are expanding its reach. With the rise of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is spreading at an unprecedented scale.

At the same time, [public opinion has consistently supported detection measures](#). Ignoring this reality is out of touch with both citizens' expectations and the mandate of Members of the European Parliament.

"It is unacceptable that children are once again paying the price of political deadlock, while the scale and severity of abuse continue to grow. Policymakers will argue over who is to blame, but the outcome is unchanged: the EU is failing to protect children. Every day without detection means more harm, more victims, and more abuse images spreading online." says ECLAG spokesperson.

To tackle the millions of child sexual abuse images online, detection at scale is indispensable. Over the past years, [99% of the millions of images and videos reported](#) were

submitted by platforms using detection technology - a volume of identification that public reporting and law enforcement investigation could simply never achieve. Platforms have successfully used these tools for over a decade, with no evidence of widespread false positives or wrongful prosecutions.

We call on policymakers to act with urgency and **agree without delay an ambitious and permanent legal framework** through the ongoing negotiations on the Child Sexual Abuse Regulation. **We cannot let politics get in the way of protecting children again.**

*The [European Child sexual abuse Legislation Advocacy Group \(ECLAG\)](#) is a coalition of over 80 child rights NGOs joining forces to fight to protect children from sexual violence and abuse. ECLAG Steering Group is formed by [ECPAT International](#), [Eurochild](#), [Missing Children Europe](#), [Internet Watch Foundation](#), [Terre des Hommes Netherlands](#) and [Thorn](#).