



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 29.7.2025
C(2025) 5252 final

COMMISSION DECISION

of 29.7.2025

**on establishing the group of experts serving as the Network for the Prevention of Child
Sexual Abuse**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Whereas:

- (1) Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children constitute serious violations of fundamental rights, in particular of the rights of children to the protection and care necessary for their well-being, as provided for by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹ and by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- (2) Child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children are serious criminal offences that require a comprehensive approach covering the prosecution of offenders, the protection of child victims and prevention.
- (3) Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council² introduced provisions to strengthen the prevention of the crimes of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline and the protection of the victims thereof. This Directive is applicable in addition to Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council³ that recognizes the special needs for support and protection of child victims. In accordance with Directive 2011/93/EU, Member States are to take appropriate measures, such as education and training, to discourage and reduce the demand that fosters all forms of sexual exploitation of children. Member States are also to take appropriate action, including through the Internet, such as information and awareness-raising campaigns, research and education programmes,

¹ Convention on the rights of the child (1989) Treaty no. 27531. United Nations Treaty Series, 1577, pp. 3-178. Available at: https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1990/09/19900902%2003-14%20AM/Ch_IV_11p.pdf (Accessed: 24 February 2025).

² Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (OJ L 335, 17.12.2011, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/93/oj>).

³ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA (OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2012/29/oj>). In July 2023, the Commission adopted a proposal for the revision of this Directive that aims to further strengthen the rights of all victims of crime, including child victims. See Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, COM/2023/424 final.

where appropriate in cooperation with relevant civil society organisations and other stakeholders, aimed at raising awareness and reducing the risk of children becoming victims of sexual abuse or exploitation. In addition, Member States are to promote regular training for officials likely to come into contact with child victims of sexual abuse or exploitation, including front-line police officers, aimed at enabling them to identify and deal with victims and potential victims of child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of children online and offline.

- (4) The monitoring of the implementation of Directive 2011/93/EU carried out by the Commission has revealed that Member States' efforts to prevent child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline often lack in coordination and are of unclear effectiveness. This includes, inter alia, the putting in place of preventive intervention programmes or measures at all stages of prevention, as well as prevention targeted at offenders and persons who fear that they might offend, and prevention aimed at children and their environment. Shortcomings in education and awareness raising also exist. There is, in addition, frequently a lack of a coordinated approach on the protection of children against any form of violence, including sexual abuse.
- (5) With a view to address these challenges, enhance efforts to prevent and counter child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline and ensure that the threats posed by these crimes in the Union are met with adequate prevention measures, in accordance with the EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse⁴ ('the EU Strategy'), the expert group serving as the Network for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse ('the Prevention Network') should be set up.
- (6) The Prevention Network should be set up as a group of experts in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline, and its tasks and structure should be defined in accordance with Commission Decision C(2016) 3301 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups⁵.
- (7) The Prevention Network's primary focus should be to enhance efforts in preventive intervention programmes or measures aimed at children and their environment to reduce the likelihood that a child becomes a victim, as well as at offenders and persons who fear that they might offend, to reduce the likelihood that such persons offend. The Prevention Network should help strengthen the capacity in the Union on prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline and should draw on all relevant expertise within and outside of the Union, responding to a child-rights based integrated approach to protection. It should bring together researchers, frontline practitioners and other stakeholders working in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It should enable feedback from practice to research to help identify further research needs which would in turn strengthen the evidence base for practitioners. It should help Member States in putting in place comprehensive, usable, scientifically tested, evaluated and effective preventive

⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse, COM(2020) 607 final, Brussels, 24.7.2020.

⁵ Published on the Register of Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups-explained?lang=en>

intervention programmes or measures to decrease the prevalence of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline in the Union. The Prevention Network should facilitate the exchange of information, for example on training materials and capacity building, as well as experience and best practices. It should enable Member States and other stakeholders to avoid blind spots and duplication of efforts. Finally, it should also support the Commission in its policy work on preventing child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline, in synergies with related frameworks, notably with the EU Network on children's rights as regards the implementation of Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/1238⁶.

- (8) For it to be able to adequately perform its tasks, the Prevention Network should be composed of highly qualified, specialised, independent members, appointed in their personal capacity acting independently and in the public interest, representatives of organisations active in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline and representatives of Member States' competent authorities and of public entities other than Member States' competent authorities.
- (9) Rules on disclosure of information by members of the Prevention Network should be laid down.
- (10) Due to the fact that their relevant experience and expertise is rather rare, and the nature of the subject, highly specialised, high-level advice and a significant added value can be expected to be provided by members of the Prevention Network and its subgroup(s) as well as by invited experts. Their services are essential for the development and implementation of usable, rigorously evaluated and effective preventive intervention programmes or measures to decrease the prevalence of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline in the Union and to the facilitation of the exchange of best practices, in line with the EU Strategy and in support of the measures defined in Directive 2011/93/EU. In light of this, and as highly qualified, specialised, independent experts selected on the basis of objective criteria, it is justified to remunerate individuals appointed in a personal capacity in certain cases for the services they provide under this Decision.
- (11) Personal data should be processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁷,

⁶ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/1238 of 23 April 2024 on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child (OJ L, 2024/1238, 14.5.2024).

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1725/oj>).

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Establishment of the group of experts

The group of experts serving as the “Network for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse” (‘Prevention Network’) is set up.

Article 2

Tasks

1. The Prevention Network’s tasks shall be:
 - (a) to assist the Commission in the preparation and implementation of policy initiatives in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (b) to establish cooperation and coordination between the Commission, Member States, relevant researchers, frontline practitioners and other stakeholders on questions relating to the implementation of Union legislation, programmes and policies in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (c) to establish cooperation and coordination between the Commission, Member States and relevant stakeholders on questions relating to putting in place comprehensive, usable, rigorously evaluated, scientifically tested and effective preventive intervention programmes or measures in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (d) to bring about, facilitate and foster an exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices in the field of prevention to decrease the prevalence of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (e) to assist the Commission in establishing and operating a repository of data, research findings, prevention guidelines and programme resources accessible in different Union official languages and thus becoming a hub for resources in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline.
2. The Prevention Network shall provide advice and expertise to the Commission in relation to all areas related to preventing child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline at all stages of prevention and all levels of the socio-ecological model, that is, the model emphasizing the interplay between biology and environment in shaping behaviour, including the individual, interpersonal, community and societal, in a multidisciplinary and integrated approach to child protection, and in particular on the following initiatives:
 - (a) initiatives aimed at offenders and persons who fear that they might offend against children to reduce the likelihood that a person (re)offends, including perpetration prevention, perpetrator treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration, and community response to reintegration;

- (b) initiatives aimed at children and their environment to reduce the likelihood that a child becomes a victim of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline.
3. The Prevention Network shall act upon request of the Commission and its activities shall include:
- (a) organising regular plenary meetings;
 - (b) providing opinions and recommendations on Union policy initiatives in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline to the Commission;
 - (c) facilitating research and data collection, including through prevalence surveys, and facilitating the dissemination of such knowledge, in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (d) assisting the Commission in developing Union guidelines and standards on prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (e) assisting the Commission in evaluating and monitoring intervention programmes or measures on the prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline provided in the Union or, where potentially relevant for the Union, in third countries and establishing best practices;
 - (f) assisting the Commission in providing expert support and guidance to Member States in developing and scaling up intervention programmes or measures on the prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline and helping ensure the transferability of best practices;
 - (g) assisting the Commission in facilitating the exchange of information on and development of, or adaptation to the national context of, multidisciplinary training materials and capacity building for professionals across Member States in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline, as well as within health systems through training of health care professionals and integration of child protection measures into care pathways;
 - (h) assisting the Commission in developing and carrying out, or assisting the Commission in supporting Member States in developing and carrying out, awareness raising and education campaigns to help inform children, parents, carers and educators about risks and preventive mechanisms in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline, as well as awareness raising and education campaigns on perpetration prevention, based on research and evidence, including through safe, inclusive, and meaningful child participation;
 - (i) responding to consultations by the Commission on any matter relating to prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline.

Article 3

Consultation

4. The Commission may consult the Prevention Network on any matter relating to prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline.

Article 4

Membership

1. The Prevention Network shall be composed of up to 50 members.
2. Members shall be:
 - (a) Member States' competent authorities with responsibility for the coordination of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (b) individuals appointed in a personal capacity active in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (c) organisations active in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline;
 - (d) public entities other than Member States' competent authorities, including third countries' authorities, Union bodies, offices or agencies and international organisations dealing with prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline.
3. Members appointed in a personal capacity as referred to in paragraph 2, point (b), shall act independently and in the public interest. They shall be specialists from the Union or third countries with outstanding knowledge and experience in the field of prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline.
4. The following organisations, including from third countries, operating at Union, international or national level in a Member State, may be appointed as members as referred to in paragraph 2, point (c):
 - (a) associations;
 - (b) Non-Governmental Organisations ('NGOs');
 - (c) universities;
 - (d) research institutes.
5. To be appointed as members, organisations referred to in paragraph 2, point (c), must have proven and relevant knowledge and experience at national, Union or international level, in areas relevant to prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline in the Union, including with providing preventive intervention programmes or measures at all stages of prevention, as well as with victim support, and on the child-rights based and integrated approach to child protection.
6. Members referred to in paragraph 2, point (c), shall nominate a representative and two alternate representatives to perform the tasks in the Prevention Network. Those members shall be responsible for ensuring that their representatives provide a high

level of expertise. The Commission may refuse the nomination by the organisation concerned of a representative if it considers this nomination inappropriate in the light of the requirements specified in the call for applications referred to in Article 5(1). In such case, the Commission will ask the organisation concerned to appoint another representative. Each organisation shall be represented in each meeting of the Prevention Network only by one representative.

7. Members referred to in paragraph 2, points (a) and (d), shall nominate a representative in the Prevention Network serving as the main contact point, and two alternate representatives. Those members shall be responsible for ensuring that their representatives provide a high level of expertise relevant to the tasks of the group or sub-group(s), namely on prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children online and offline. They shall be represented in each meeting only by one representative. They shall only be represented by civil servants or public employees.
8. Members who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the Prevention Network's deliberations, who, in the opinion of the Commission department concerned do not comply with the conditions set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union or who resign, shall no longer be invited to participate in any meetings of the Prevention Network or its sub-groups and may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.

Article 5

Selection process

1. The selection of members referred to in Article 4(2), points (b) and (c), shall be carried out via a public call for applications, to be published on the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities⁸ ('the Register of expert groups'). In addition, the call for applications may be published through other means, including on dedicated websites. The call for applications shall clearly outline the selection criteria, including the required expertise and the interests to be represented in relation to the work to be performed. The minimum deadline for applications shall be four weeks.
2. The selection process of members referred to in Article 4(2), point (b), shall be carried out in such a manner as to ensure a high level of expertise and balance in terms of knowledge, geographical origin and gender, taking into account the specific tasks of the Prevention Network and the type of expertise required.
3. Individuals applying to be appointed as members in a personal capacity referred to in Article 4(2), point (b), shall disclose any circumstances that could give rise to a conflict of interest. In particular, the Commission shall require those individuals to submit a declaration of interests ('DOI') form on the basis of the standard DOI form for expert groups referred to in Annex 4 to Decision C(2016) 3301, together with an updated *curriculum vitae*, as part of their application. Submission of a duly

⁸ Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/home?lang=en>

completed DOI form shall be necessary in order to be eligible to be appointed as a member in a personal capacity. The conflict of interest assessment shall be performed in compliance with Article 11 of Decision C(2016) 3301.

4. In order for organisations to be appointed members referred to in Article 4(2), point (c), such organisations must be registered in the Transparency Register.
5. Members referred to in Article 4(2), points (b) and (c), shall be appointed by the Director-General of the Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs ('DG HOME') from applicants with competence in the areas referred to in Article 2, and who have responded to the call for applications. As regards members acting in a personal capacity referred to in Article 4(2), point (b), if a conflict of interest arises after their appointment, DG HOME shall take appropriate measures pursuant to Article 11 of Decision C(2016) 3301.
6. Members shall be appointed for a mandate of 4 years. They shall remain in office until replaced or until the end of their term of office. Their term of office may be renewed.
7. In relation to members referred to in Article 4(2), point (b), DG HOME shall appoint alternate members, with the same conditions as defined in Articles 4 and 5 and in the call for applications as referred to in paragraph 1, who shall automatically replace any members who are absent or indisposed.
8. DG HOME shall establish a reserve list of suitable candidates that may be used to appoint members' replacements. DG HOME shall ask applicants for their consent before including their names on the reserve list.

Article 6

Chair

The Prevention Network shall be chaired by a representative of DG HOME. In light of the agenda, DG HOME may ask a representative of the Commission's Directorate-General Joint Research Centre ('DG JRC') to chair the meeting or part of it.

Article 7

Operation

1. The Prevention Network shall act at the request of DG HOME, in accordance with Decision C(2016) 3301.
2. Meetings of the Prevention Network shall, in principle, be held on Commission premises or virtually, depending on the circumstances, and shall be held at least twice a year.
3. DG HOME shall provide secretarial services. Commission officials from other departments with an interest in the proceedings may attend meetings of the Prevention Network and its sub-groups.
4. In agreement with DG HOME, the Prevention Network may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations shall be public.

5. Minutes on the discussion on each point on the agenda and on the opinions delivered by the Prevention Network shall be meaningful and complete. Minutes shall be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the Chair.
6. As far as possible, the Prevention Network shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by simple majority of the members. Members who have voted against or abstained shall have the right to have a document summarising the reasons for their position annexed to the opinions, recommendations or reports.

Article 8

Sub-groups

1. DG HOME may set up sub-groups to assist with specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by DG HOME. Sub-groups shall operate in accordance with Decision C(2016) 3301 and shall report to the Prevention Network. Sub-groups shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.
2. Sub-groups may be composed of members that are not members of the Prevention Network. The members of sub-groups that are not members of the Prevention Network shall be selected via a public call for applications, in accordance with Article 5 of this Decision and with Decision C(2016) 3301.

Article 9

Invited experts

DG HOME may invite experts, including from third countries, with specific and relevant expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda, to take part in the work of the Prevention Network or its sub-groups on an *ad hoc* basis. Such expertise may include public health and mental health professionals involved in child protection.

Article 10

Observers

1. Individuals, organisations and public entities other than Member States' competent authorities, including from third countries, may be granted an observer status, in accordance with Decision C(2016) 3301, by direct invitation.
2. Organisations and public entities appointed as observers shall nominate their representatives.
3. The Chair may allow observers and observers' representatives to take part in the discussions of the Prevention Network and its sub-groups and provide expertise. However, observers and observers' representatives shall not have voting rights and shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations, reports or opinions of the Prevention Network and its sub-groups.

Article 11

Rules of procedure

On a proposal by and in agreement with DG HOME the Prevention Network shall adopt its rules of procedure by simple majority of its members, on the basis of the standard template for rules of procedure for expert groups, in accordance with Article 17 of Decision C(2016) 3301. Sub-groups shall comply with the Prevention Network's rules of procedure.

Article 12

Professional secrecy and handling of classified information

The members of the Prevention Network and its sub-groups and their representatives, as well as invited experts and observers, are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443⁹ and 2015/444¹⁰. Should they fail to comply with these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

Article 13

Transparency

1. The Prevention Network and its sub-groups shall be registered in the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups').
2. As concerns the Prevention Network and its sub-groups' composition, the following data shall be published on the Register of expert groups:
 - (a) the name of Member States' competent authorities;
 - (b) the name of individuals appointed in a personal capacity;
 - (c) the name of member organisations; the interest represented shall be disclosed by publishing it in the Transparency Register of expert groups;
 - (d) the name of public entities other than Member States' competent authorities, including third countries' authorities, Union bodies, offices or agencies and international organisations;
 - (e) the name of observers.

⁹ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2015/443/oj>).

¹⁰ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2015/444/oj>).

3. All relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, shall be made available either on the Register of expert groups or via a link from the Register of expert groups to a dedicated website, where this information can be found. Access to dedicated websites shall not be submitted to user registration or any other restriction. In particular, the agenda and other relevant background documents shall be published in due time ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall only be possible where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹¹.

Article 14

Special allowance

1. Participants in the activities of the Prevention Network and its sub-groups shall, in principle, not be remunerated for the services they offer, without affecting paragraphs 2 and 3.
2. The members of the Prevention Network and its sub-groups that are individuals appointed in a personal capacity shall be entitled to a special allowance compensating for their preparatory work and participation in activities referred to in Article 2(3), points (b) to (i), organised by the Commission, and for serving as rapporteur on a specific question.
3. The special allowance shall consist of up to EUR 450 for each full working day spent assisting the Commission. It shall be paid in accordance with Article 21 of Decision C(2016) 3301 and within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the relevant Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

Article 15

Meeting expenses

1. The Commission shall reimburse travel, accommodation and where appropriate, subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the Prevention Network and its sub-groups.
2. All reimbursements shall be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission and shall be paid within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the relevant Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

¹¹ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2001/1049/oj>).

Done at Brussels, 29.7.2025

For the Commission
Magnus BRUNNER
Member of the Commission