

## Input for the study on Gender-based violence and illegal content

The Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES) has been mandated by the European Commission (DG CNECT) to conduct a study on “**Gender-based violence and illegal content on pornographic platforms**”. The Commission has launched this one-year study focusing on three pornographic platforms, namely Pornhub, XVideos, and XNXX, designated as **Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs)** under the EU **Digital Services Act (DSA)**. The purpose of the study is to support the Commission in developing a timely, evidence-based understanding of how the Three Designated Entities implement and operationalise their obligations under the Digital Services Act, with a view to assessing compliance and informing effective enforcement. As part of the study, the team is mapping:

- What type of content is illegal in each of the EU-27 (e.g., child sexual abuse material, AI manipulated material, etc.)
- Potential additional legal obligations (other than the DSA) placed on the three entities in scope (Pornhub, XVideos, and XNXX) at the national level across the EU-27.
- National and international stakeholders representing content creators, performers as well as victim-survivors of illegal content disseminated on these pornographic platforms to gather their feedback on the issue.

To validate our research and ensure we capture the national specificities, we are conducting a short online survey with equality bodies across the EU. Your organisation has been identified as a relevant entity – we would very much appreciate your participation and input.

**Survey timeframe:** Please complete it before the 28th February 2026. The survey is available in English and takes about 15 minutes - 30 minutes to complete.

Should you wish to consider your responses in advance of completing the online survey, you can access a PDF version of the questionnaire [here](#).

**Important:** Please note that you can 'pause' your response and return at a later date by clicking the 'pause' button at the bottom of each page and taking note of the link provided. However, you may lose your previous responses if you exit the survey without 'pausing'. Please do not delete your internet cache if you wish to return to the survey at a separate sitting.

**Data protection:** All data will be collected, processed, and retained for the study's duration in accordance with the rules pertaining to the collection and processing of personal data by the European Commission. **All survey data will be analysed anonymously and kept confidential.** Data will be reported only in aggregate and will not identify specific respondents. The data will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. Should you have any queries regarding data protection and privacy matters, please contact James Eager (jeager@cses.eu). A privacy statement outlining the consultation exercise can be accessed via the PDF link [here](#).

Should you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to get in touch by contacting the team leader, James Eager ([jeager@cses.eu](mailto:jeager@cses.eu)).

**Many thanks in advance for your valuable input!**

**\* 1. What country are you based in?**

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Austria            | <input type="radio"/> Belgium     |
| <input type="radio"/> Bulgaria           | <input type="radio"/> Croatia     |
| <input type="radio"/> Republic of Cyprus | <input type="radio"/> Czechia     |
| <input type="radio"/> Denmark            | <input type="radio"/> Estonia     |
| <input type="radio"/> Finland            | <input type="radio"/> France      |
| <input type="radio"/> Germany            | <input type="radio"/> Greece      |
| <input type="radio"/> Hungary            | <input type="radio"/> Ireland     |
| <input type="radio"/> Italy              | <input type="radio"/> Latvia      |
| <input type="radio"/> Lithuania          | <input type="radio"/> Luxembourg  |
| <input type="radio"/> Malta              | <input type="radio"/> Netherlands |
| <input type="radio"/> Poland             | <input type="radio"/> Portugal    |
| <input type="radio"/> Romania            | <input type="radio"/> Slovakia    |
| <input type="radio"/> Slovenia           | <input type="radio"/> Spain       |
| <input type="radio"/> Sweden             |                                   |

## Section 1 – Illegal content online and access to pornographic material

**\* 2. To what extent are the following forms of content criminalised in your country? Please indicate whether each content type is**

specifically criminalised in national legislation, partially criminalised through non-specific legal provisions/ precedents/ is a legal grey area, or if the content is yet to be criminalised in national legislation.

For consistency in the use of terminology across countries, we have included the definition/ reference to the relevant EU directive and, where no EU/ international level definition is available, the working definition used for the purpose of this study. You can find this [here](#).

	Fully criminalised	Partially criminalised	Yet to be criminalised	Please also indicate the relevant national legal provisions that apply.	Don't know / N/A
a. Child sexual abuse material (as covered by the <a href="#">2011/93/EU Child Sexual Abuse Directive</a> ).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Creation/ production and/ or dissemination of non-consensual intimate or manipulated material (including images, videos and audios) ( <a href="#">Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence</a> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Cyber stalking ( <a href="#">Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence</a> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Non-authorized use of copyright protected material ( <a href="#">Directive 2019/790 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market</a> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Trafficking in Human beings for sexual exploitation ( <a href="#">Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims</a> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Cyber incitement to violence or hatred on the grounds of gender – ( <a href="#">Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence</a> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Financial sextortion (see PDF linked above for working definition)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Cyber grooming/ solicitation of children for sexual purposes ( <a href="#">Directive 2011/93 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA</a> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Other - please indicate or click n/a <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Section 2 – Additional national obligations on online platforms / VLOPs

The Digital Service Act places obligations on very large online platforms (VLOPs) concerning the notice and action mechanisms (Art. 16), and risk assessment and mitigation (Art. 34 and 35).

- Art. 16(1) requires VLOPs to put in place mechanisms allowing any individual or entity to notify them of specific items of information considered illegal content. These mechanisms must be easy to access, user-friendly, and exclusively electronic.
- Art. 16(6) governs the quality and fairness of the responses, requiring that VLOPs process notices received under these mechanisms in a manner that is timely, diligent, non-arbitrary, and objective.
- Art. 34 requires VLOPs to diligently identify, analyse, and assess systemic risks stemming from the design or functioning of their service, their algorithmic systems and the use of their service by users. Systemic risks include, among others, the dissemination of illegal content.
- Art. 35 requires VLOPs to adopt effective, reasonable, and proportionate measures to mitigate the systemic risks identified, including the dissemination of illegal content.

- Beyond the obligations stemming from the Digital Service Act outlined above, are there any additional obligations placed on the VLOPs at the national level? These could be, for example, mandatory age-verification or record keeping obligations for proof of consent of performers.

Please describe the obligation and the relevant regulation, if possible, including any remedies/consequences and aggravating factors.

### Section 3 – Legal age for access to pornographic material

\* 4. Is there a minimum legal age to watch/access pornographic material online in your country?

Yes

No

5. Please kindly indicate the legal age to watch/access pornographic material in your country, the relevant legislation and any legal sanctions.

### Section 4 – Additional information

6. Are you aware of any national stakeholders that could be relevant to talk to in the context of this study? These could be for example associations, academics, civil society organisations and other forms of organisations representing content creators, performers and/or victim-survivors of illegal content disseminated on the three pornographic platforms in scope and based or active in your country. Please indicate their names or website details below.

7. Have any studies been conducted at national level covering the experience of users engaging with pornographic platforms and illegal content online after the DSA came into force in 2022 that you are aware of? If so, please indicate the name of the study and the link to the publication (if available online).

8. Please include here any additional information and insights you would like to share with the study team.

\* 9. The team is producing a short overview for each EU country covering the various aspects addressed above (illegal content, additional obligations for VLOPs and legal age to access pornographic content). Would you be willing to review and validate the one for your country either in writing or in the form of a short online meeting/ call? This would be extremely valuable for the team and the quality of the study. If so, please indicate so below.

Yes

No

10. Kindly share your name and email address. Thank you!

Name:

Email:

11. If you wish to be contacted to share additional information with the study team, please provide your contact details below.

Name:

Email or phone number:

12. Alternatively, please feel free to upload any additional information you wish to share with the study team. You can upload up to 3 separate files:

File 1 Upload file...

File 2 Upload file...

File 3 Upload file...

## Your responses have been registered!

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey, your input is valuable to us.

To download a PDF of your response, please click [here](#).