

Open Letter to President of the Republic of France, Emmanuel Macron, on the Regulation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse

April 2024

Dear Mr. President of the Republic of France,

We, French and European organizations defending children's rights, urge you through this Open Letter to firmly support the proposed European regulation aimed at preventing and combating sexual violence against children. This crucial initiative requires **leadership and unreserved commitment from France to adopt a strong text protecting children against all forms of violence, everywhere online**. Last December, you expressed your support for this legislation to one of our coalition members and we are counting on you today to make public this unequivocal support.

For months now, by remaining silent, the French government has been sending a message to children and to victims and survivors of sexual violence that their protection is not a priority. Every day, more children are victims of sexual violence facilitated by the Internet. [Every second, at least 3 images or videos of sexual violence committed against children are shared online](#) and this phenomenon is exploding with the development of AI-generated content. We cannot allow our children to remain unprotected any longer.

In 2023, [more than 100 million of child sexual abuse materials](#) have been reported to be circulating online. [60% of these materials are hosted on servers in the EU](#), 98% of which concerns children under the age of 13. France has not been spared, as it ranks 4th in the world for hosting the most child sexual abuse content, with a [36.5% increase in reports concerning France](#) between 2022 and 2023. And yet, over the last few months, we have noticed that our exchanges with the various stakeholders have been reduced to technological considerations on the protection of privacy and difficulties to impose rules to platforms. **France seems to have lost sight of the interests of children. As President, you have a legal responsibility and a moral duty to protect children in all environments, including the Internet.** [74% of French](#) people are in favor of laws that would force platforms to detect and delete child sexual abuse material online, including in private messaging. We can't simply turn a blind eye to what is happening on the Internet and in private messaging systems, which are used on a massive scale by offenders to share child sexual abuse materials and to groom children.

Mr. President, as Head of State and representative of the French people, you have the power to push forward this essential proposal to ensure the safety of children online. We are currently at a crucial moment when French and European citizens look at France for strong leadership. **Your citizens are waiting for a strong stance in favor of the European Commission's proposal which would allow to protect children against all forms of sexual abuse in all online spaces, and don't understand why this decision, offering better protection for children online, is so long overdue.** By supporting this initiative at European level, France can

play an essential role in protecting children not only on our territory, but throughout the European Union and the world.

We therefore call on you to make your voice heard and use your influence to ensure that this proposed regulation is adopted and implemented without delay. Together, we can and must work for a future where every child in Europe grows up safe, protected from the horror of sexual violence. Victims and survivors are counting on you to support the proposed EU legislation.

We'll be happy to answer any questions you may have and schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

French organisations:

ECPAT France

BE Brave France

Caméléon

AETEOS

Les ami.es de Romy

Elien Rebirth

WORLD VISION FRANCE

Grandir Dignement

ACPE

Les Amis des Enfants du Monde

Association Home

La Fondation pour l'enfance

La Clef - Coordination française pour le lobby européen des femmes

Association Mémoire traumatique et victimologie

Point de contact

International organisations:

ECLAG Steering Group (*ECPAT International, Brave Movement, Eurochild, Missing Children Europe, Internet Watch Foundation, Terre des Hommes et Thorn*)

Thorn

Brave Movement

Eurochild

COFACE Families Europe

Internet Watch Foundation

Missing Children Europe

National organisations:

Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Network for Children's Rights (Greece)

Save the Children Finland

Protect Children (Finland)
CRCA/ECPAT Albania
Hintalovon Foundation - ECPAT Hungary
The Smile of the Child (Greece)
IJM Deutschland e.V.
Justice Initiative
ChildX (Sweden)
Lasten perusoikeudet-Children's Fundamental Rights ry, Finland
Marie Collins Foundation
Child Focus (Belgium)