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## **Minors: protecting children against abuse, the EU's initiatives. "Covid restrictions have exacerbated the situation"**

On the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the European Commission "reconfirms its determination to fight child sexual abuse and exploitation". This is according to a statement released today that describes the initiatives that the European Commission has put in place to counter this scourge: at the beginning of 2021, provisional rules relating to voluntary detection measures by online service providers came into force. This will help "identify and rescue victims, identify abusers, and curb the spread of child pornography". Furthermore, a "prevention network for practitioners and researchers" is being set up for EU countries willing to share their prevention measures. The Commission will soon propose comprehensive new legislation with detailed safeguards to combat child sexual abuse online and offline and is also considering the possibility of establishing a "European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse". Also, there will soon be a call for proposals for projects aimed at improving prevention; support measures for victims; and technological solutions to fight child sexual abuse. The 2021 edition of the European Day is dedicated to raising awareness of the children's "circle of trust". "The restrictions imposed to contain the spread of the pandemic have exacerbated the situation by confining children at home with their abusers", the EU statement reads.

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