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Brussels, 25 March 2026

Dear Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

Every second, two child sexual abuse images or videos are shared online. Behind every case there is a child that deserves protection, dignity and justice. Every image is a crime scene and the scale of the problem is growing dramatically. In 2025, the Cyber Tipline received 21.3 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation. That is twenty times more than in 2010. And Europe is the nexus of the problem: the European Union hosts the most child sexual abuse material of any region in the world, according to Internet Watch Foundation.

As lawmakers, we have a duty to act. So far, we have been able to rely on temporary rules to allow voluntary detection to continue until the adoption of a long-term legal framework. An extension of the temporary rules will ensure that child sexual abuse online can be effectively and lawfully combated without interruption, until the long-term regime created by the Regulation is agreed and goes into effect. The Commission has proposed a straightforward extension by another two years. The Council has supported this proposal without changes.

However, trilogues on this extension of the temporary rules did not yet yield political agreement, as the Parliament's position diverges significantly from the proposal. In particular, by proposing to narrow the scope to known content and pre-existing suspicions, the Parliament's position would leave significant gaps in detecting emerging threats and protecting children in real time. Such an approach would significantly limit the ability to identify and address illegal content at an early stage.

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With no agreement in sight ahead of the 3 April deadline, providers will be prohibited under the ePrivacy directive from detecting and reporting child sexual abuse material online. The consequences of such a gap are immediate and severe: reduced detection, fewer reports to law enforcement, and greater impunity for perpetrators. Voluntary detection has been key to protecting children for more than 15 years, without undue impact on the privacy of users. This approach strikes a balance between the protection of children's rights and the need to safeguard privacy and data protection, by maintaining proportionate and targeted measures under clear legal conditions.

As parents, lawmakers and Europeans, we cannot let this deadline slide without renewing our plea to you – the Chairs of each group of the European Parliament across the whole political spectrum – to act before it is too late. Protecting children, not perpetrators, must remain the guiding principle of EU action. The deadlock will play out on the backs of child victims. It is therefore of the essence to identify a constructive path forward.

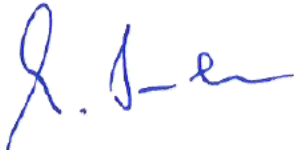
The industry has already spoken: Google, LinkedIn, Meta, Microsoft, Snapchat and TikTok have rightly said that allowing the legal basis for voluntary detection to expire is irresponsible and have urged EU lawmakers to enable the continuation of established tools to protect minors. We've been here before and we know the alternative: forcing platforms to suspend detection activities altogether will cause a sharp drop in reports and leave countless victims without visibility or protection.

We would be grateful if you could share this message with the Members of your groups and allow them each to take their individual responsibility in this matter ahead of the plenary vote tomorrow.

Yours faithfully,



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Magnus Brunner



Michael McGrath



Glenn Micallef