

2024 INHOPE Call for Action

Warsaw, 19 April 2024

INHOPE is a global network of hotlines combatting online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) with 54 hotlines in 50 countries (as of spring 2024). Hotlines provide the public with a way to anonymously report illegal online content with a focus on CSAM. INHOPE member hotlines work together to rapidly identify and remove CSAM and other illegal online content.

In 2023, INHOPE member hotlines handled [785.322 content URLs](#) of suspected CSAM, which is a 25% increase over 2022. 69% of reported content was classified as illegal, and 83% of victims depicted were between the age of 3-13. This massive increase in reports indicates the increasing risk posed to children through online sexual abuse and exploitation. Much of this facilitated through grooming, sextortion, and intimate image abuse.

Through INHOPE's ICCAM platform, member hotlines are able to instantly exchange data globally and issue Notice and Takedown (NTD). By issuing NTD, illegal content aims to be promptly removed to prevent revictimisation, and relevant reports are forwarded to national law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to support victim identification. Content URLs reported to INHOPE member hotlines were removed within 2.5 days. As for content hosted in countries where no INHOPE member hotline operates, the removal times can take up to 28+ days, highlighting the enormous importance of every country having a national hotline and being part of a global network.

ICCAM data input by INHOPE member hotlines also contributes to the INTERPOL International Child Sexual Exploitation database (ICSE). This data consists of material assessed by hotline analysts as either nationally illegal or [baseline](#). As of 2023, the ICSE holds more than [4.9 million images and videos](#), collectively recording the abuse of more than 37,900 victims worldwide.

Nonetheless, INHOPE continues to see many challenges faced by hotlines in certain countries due to the lack of legal national mandates allowing them to process CSAM reports. This can result in delayed NTD, delayed exchange of data with other hotlines, and ultimately allowing CSAM to persist on the internet for extended periods, exacerbating the harm inflicted on child victims.

Further, given the increasingly high number of incoming CSAM reports, LEAs have been grappling with the challenges of prioritising and investigating CSAM. In the absence of hotlines acting as a triage function and forwarding only relevant reports to LEAs, LEAs are forced to spend more time assessing legal content, potentially slowing down victim identification.

In February 2024, the European Commission adopted a proposal to recast the criminal law rules around child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation. In light of the [recast of the EU CSAM Directive](#), INHOPE therefore calls upon national governments around the world to:

1. Grant formal legal recognition and mandate to national hotlines in the INHOPE network to receive and analyse suspected CSAM reports and notify law enforcement and service providers about illegal contents.
2. Authorise hotlines in the INHOPE network to carry out searches on publicly accessible material based on reports received.
3. Provide support and funding for national hotlines in the INHOPE network to ensure that they are adequately resourced so that they can operate effectively.

4. Promote national hotlines in the INHOPE network to the public to increase public awareness in reporting CSAM and other illegal online content.

We also call upon the private sector and technology industry to:

1. Actively collaborate with hotlines to ensure rapid removal of CSAM and other illegal online content.
2. Support the sustainability of national hotlines by providing financial, technical or in-kind assistance.