

Child sexual abuse: Council paves the way for prolonging protection measure

EU member state ambassadors agreed on the Council's negotiating mandate for a regulation prolonging an interim measure to combat online child sexual abuse.



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We owe it to our children to do everything we can to fight child sexual abuse. The agreement today on a member state position is a small but important step in this ongoing struggle.

Fernando Grande-Marlaska Gómez, Spanish Minister for the Interior

In 2021, the EU adopted a law which allows providers of certain online services to derogate from data protection rules in the electronic communications sector. Providers of so-called number-independent interpersonal communications services (e.g. messaging services) were permitted to use specific technologies for the processing of personal and other data to detect online child sexual abuse on their services, to report and to remove it.

This derogation was limited in time and would expire on 3 August 2024. It was meant to bridge the gap until a new EU law, currently on the table of the Council and the European Parliament, would provide for a permanent legal framework for the detection of online child sexual abuse material. The regulation on which EU member state ambassadors reached their common position today will extend the interim measure until 3 August 2027.

Next steps

Today's agreement on a common position allows the Council to start negotiations with the European Parliament on a final legal text.

Background

The proposal for a regulation to prolong the interim measure was published by the European Commission on 30 November 2023. It proposed to extend the period of application by two years (rather than three years as in the Council position).

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