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## **EU Commission: “fighting child sexual abuse with all tools at our disposal. Increased risks during lockdown**

On the occasion of the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the Commission reaffirms its determination to “fight child sexual abuse with all the tools at its disposal”. European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas said: “Under the Security Union Strategy, we are working to protect all those living in Europe, both online and offline. Children are particularly vulnerable, especially as the coronavirus pandemic correlates with increased sharing of child sexual abuse images online” so “we have an obligation to protect them”. According to a statement from the Commission, “over the last years, there has been a significant increase in child sexual abuse and exploitation cases and recently the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the situation. Europol found that as Member States introduced lockdown and quarantine measures, the number of self-produced materials increased, while travel restrictions and other restrictive measures means that offenders increasingly exchange materials online”. In July, the Commission adopted a comprehensive EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse. Under the strategy, legislation was proposed to ensure that providers of online communications services can continue voluntary measures to detect child sexual abuse online. In addition, Europol provides support to operations such as the recent action targeting child trafficking.

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