

# Emerging technologies: threats and opportunities for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse



## PROGRAMME

**Capacity-Building Event**  
**5 November 2024**  
**United Nations Office in Vienna**

Organised by the Committee of the Parties  
to the Council of Europe Convention on  
the Protection of Children against  
Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

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Building a Europe  
for and with children

Construire une Europe  
pour et avec les enfants



Emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and immersive technologies such as virtual reality are being increasingly deployed in social media, social networking and online gaming, exposing children to increased risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.<sup>i</sup>

This workshop will seek to explore the ways in which the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention regarding prevention of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, protection of victims, criminal and procedural rules, and international co-operation can be operationalised to address the challenges raised by emerging technologies.

Additional challenges include the “normalisation” of exposure to and sharing of sexualised images, and victim blaming relating to self-generated sexual material, which increase barriers to reporting and help seeking behaviours.<sup>ii</sup> In the context of immersive technologies, there is also a lack of clarity as to which actors bear responsibility, technical barriers to detecting crime, identifying victims and perpetrators, and securing electronic evidence.

At the same time, emerging technologies also present opportunities to enhance the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, for example by strengthening the automated detection and removal of illegal materials<sup>iii</sup> or the use of immersive technologies in therapeutic interventions.<sup>iv</sup>

In accordance with the Lanzarote Committee’s 2017 [interpretative opinion on the applicability of the Lanzarote Convention to sexual offences against children facilitated through ICTs](#), “the existing offences in the Lanzarote Convention remain criminalised (...) whatever the means used by sexual offenders to commit them (...) even when the text of the Lanzarote Convention does not specifically mention ICTs.”

The [Framework convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#) requires the identification, assessment, prevention and mitigation of risks, taking due account of the specific vulnerabilities of children, and applies to activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems.

The tools and procedures provided by the [Cybercrime Convention](#) and its [second additional protocol](#) on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence apply to all criminal offences committed by a computer system and the collection of evidence in electronic form.

#### **Key questions for discussion:**

- Do **legislation and policies** in State Parties to the Lanzarote Convention ensure that child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and immersive realities are **criminalised**? For example, regarding:
  - solicitation and grooming even when this does not lead to a meeting in person;
  - child sexual abuse material that is generated, simulated or altered by artificial intelligence or other computer technologies;
  - sexual exploitation and sexual abuse without physical contact between victim and perpetrator.
- Are the sanctions applicable to these offences proportionate to reflect current understanding of the **seriousness and harm caused**?
- Is it possible to **harness the opportunities** provided by emerging technologies to better prevent and detect child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse?

Programme	
09:30 - 10:00	<p><b>Opening remarks</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Agnes von Maravić</b>, Executive Secretary to the Lanzarote Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Maria José Castello-Branco</b>, Chair of the Lanzarote Committee</li> <li>- Video message by <b>Dr Alma Zadić</b>, Minister of Justice, Austria</li> <li>- <b>Ambassador Gregor Schusterschitz</b>, Director-General of the Legal Office of the Austrian Foreign Ministry</li> </ul> <p>Video “Beyond the screen: Hidden Voices of Online Abuse” (English)</p>
10:00 - 11:00	<p><b>Understanding “emerging technologies”</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Dr Victoria Baines</b>, Professor of Information Technology, Gresham College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Professor Anna Felnhofer</b>, Head of the Pediatric Virtual Reality Laboratory, Medical University of Vienna</li> <li>- <b>Chelsea Carlson</b>, Child safety Investigator, OpenAI</li> <li>- <b>Professor Pekka Santtila</b>, New York University Shanghai</li> <li>- <b>Professor Nuria Lorenzo Dus</b>, DRAGON-S Project</li> <li>- Questions and discussion</li> </ul>
11:00 - 11:30	<b>Coffee break and demonstrations</b>
11:30 - 12:30	<p><b>Scoping threats and offender behaviour</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Naomi Trewinnard</b>, Legal Advisor, Lanzarote Committee Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mike Frend</b>, Online CSEA Covert Intelligence Team</li> <li>- <b>Chief Officer Régis Vilette</b>, Head of National Centre for CSAM analysis and Deputy Head of the Offences against the Person Department, Gendarmerie Cyberspace Command Office</li> <li>- <b>Anton Toni Klančnik</b>, Strategic Specialist in Child Protection, European Cybercrime Centre, Europol</li> <li>- Questions and discussion</li> </ul>
12:30 - 14:00	<b>Lunch break</b>

14:00 - 15:00	<p><b>Exploring technical solutions</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Naomi Trewinnard</b>, Legal Advisor, Lanzarote Committee Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Emily Slifer</b>, Director of Policy, Thorn</li> <li>- <b>Dr Dorothea Czarnecki</b>, Forensik IT (INTERPOL DevOps)</li> <li>- <b>Denise Mazzolani</b>, Programme Manager, Cybercrime Programme Office</li> <li>- <b>Emerick Lovasz</b>, Fight Against Cybercrime and Child Sexual Abuse, European Commission</li> <li>- <b>Aagje Ieven</b>, Secretary General, Missing Children Europe</li> <li>- Questions and discussion</li> </ul>
15:00 - 15:30	<p><b>Coffee break and demonstrations</b></p>
15:30 - 16:45	<p><b>Identifying responses</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Philippe Olivier</b>, Vice-Chair Lanzarote Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Vineeca Kuo</b>, Project Officer, INHOPE</li> <li>- <b>Leah Buck</b>, International Lead, Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Unit, UK Home Office</li> <li>- <b>Rami Ben Salah</b>, Head of legal research service, Directorate General for Children, Ministry of Family, Women, Children and Elderly Persons, Tunisia</li> <li>- <b>Eduardo Navarro Domínguez</b>, Prosecutor, Spain</li> <li>- <b>Lika Grishikashvili</b>, Prosecutor, Georgia</li> <li>- <b>Maj Fagerlund</b>, Desk Officer, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden</li> <li>- <b>Aoife O'Malley</b>, Barnahus West Manager, Ireland</li> <li>- Questions and discussion</li> </ul>
16:45 - 17:00	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p>
19:00	<p><b>Dinner offered by Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice Waldviertlerhof</b>  <a href="https://www.waldviertlerhof.at/">https://www.waldviertlerhof.at/</a>          Schönbrunner Strasse 20, 1050 Vienna</p>

Demonstrations available during coffee breaks:

- Meta Quest 2 and 3: Paediatric Virtual Reality Laboratory (Ped-VR)
- DRAGON Shield – prevention tool for frontline professionals

## Speakers Biographies

**Victoria Baines** is Professor of Information Technology at Gresham College, and an international consultant, she has authored two editions of the Council of Europe baseline mapping on online child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. She also supports technical expertise and specialist training in the context of several Council of Europe projects. She previously served as Principal Analyst at the UK Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre, and Head of Strategy and Outreach at Europol EC3. She has also worked as government liaison at Facebook.

**Rami Ben Salah** is Head of the Department of Legislation, Reports and Studies on Children's Rights at the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and Seniors. He is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the development and implementation of integrated public policies for the prevention and protection of children, as well as projects to combat violence against children. He is the coordinator of the steering committee for the development of a national plan on children's rights and climate change, and responsible for monitoring child advisors in the courts.

**Leah Buck** is the International Lead for the Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Unit within UK Government and is responsible for leading bilateral and multilateral engagement with international partners and stakeholders on this policy area. In her previous role at the Home Office Leah was Child Sexual Exploitation Early Interventions Lead and she has also worked in tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse focused roles for the Ministry of Justice and National Crime Agency

**Chelsea Carlson** works on child safety enforcement and investigations for OpenAI, combining trust and safety knowledge from roles at Pinterest, Meta, and YouTube with experiences from her NGO background in domestic violence and refugee/immigrant resettlement.

**Dr Dorothea Czarnecki**, former Deputy Director of ECPAT International and ECPAT Germany, has nearly 20 years of experience combating human trafficking and child sexual exploitation. She has conducted research for the European Commission and UNICEF, among others, led trainings for the OSCE and has played a key role in developing Germany's first Federal Cooperation Concept for child exploitation cases. Since 2023, Dr Czarnecki has been on the advisory board of the German National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and currently leads child protection and anti THB efforts at Forensik.IT in Berlin. She is the German candidate for the upcoming 2024 Council of Europe GRETA elections.

**Anna Felnhofer** is a postdoctoral researcher, licensed clinical psychologist and the founding director of the Pediatric Virtual Reality Laboratory (PedVR-Lab) at the Department of Pediatrics at the Medical University of Vienna. Her research expertise is on Virtual Reality (VR) applications for children and adolescents.

**Mike Frend** is a career detective who has experience in a range of sensitive law enforcement tactics. He currently supervises the UK OCCIT (Online CSEA Covert Intelligence Team). The team has a responsibility for identifying emerging online threats and technologies, informing the work of Industry, Academia, Charities and Legislators.

**Lika Grishikashvili** has been a prosecutor in the Prosecutorial Activities Supervision and Strategic Development Department at the Office of the General Prosecutor of Georgia since 2018, having previously served as a prosecutor at the Old Tbilisi District Prosecutor's Office since 2013. She specializes in cases involving sexual and juvenile crimes, overseeing investigations and prosecutions nationwide, ensuring quality in court proceedings, and supervising prosecutorial activities.

Additionally, she conducts training sessions and advises on legislative matters for the Prosecutor's Office.

**Anton Toni Klančnik** joined Europol in early 2018 as a Strategic Specialist in the fight against online sexual exploitation of children and related offline crimes. Previously, he was a Senior Criminal Police Inspector and former Head of Juvenile Crime Section at the Criminal Police Directorate in Slovenia. He has over 20 years of expertise in dealing with issues of violence against children and in families, as well as online sexual abuse of children. He has been actively participated in a number of inter-sectoral initiatives (Web Eye hotline, Centre for a Safer Internet, harmonization of legislation, advocacy of national reports on the enforcement and protection of human rights, especially children, etc.). At the strategic and operational level, he cooperates with many European and international institutions. He is a mentor for PhD students, a writer and a lecturer at home and abroad. In 2017, he was the first representative of Slovenia under the Violent Crimes against Children program with the FBI in the US and became a member of the International Task Force.

**Vineeca Kuo** is a Project Officer at INHOPE and coordinates the Better Internet for Kids programme and the Stronger Together project. Her work supports the capacity building and outreach efforts within the global network of internet hotlines. Vineeca holds an LL.M. in International Children's Rights from Leiden University.

**Nuria Lorenzo Dus** is full professor of linguistics at Swansea University (UK) and a distinguished researcher at the Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain). She is the founding director of DRAGON (<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/project-dragon-s/>) - a digital innovation programme hosting a portfolio of applied research projects that counter online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

**Emerick Lovasz** works for the European Commission's Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) as Policy Officer in charge of child sexual abuse. Prior to his time at DG HOME, Emerick worked for other Commission services, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Parliament.

**Denise Mazzolani** joined the Council of Europe in 2022, as Programme Manager at the Cybercrime Programme Office. Previously, she worked for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as Deputy Head - Strategic Police Matters Unit/Transnational Threats Department and Head of the Security Co-operation Department of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. She practised criminal law in Italy and worked for the UN and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on criminal justice and police reform processes in Afghanistan, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sri-Lanka and Western Balkans.

**Eduardo Navarro Domínguez** is a Prosecutor for the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Balearic Island Superior Tribunal, Spain, since 2012. He was an elective member of the public prosecutor council in Madrid from 2020-2022. He is currently seconded to the General Secretary for innovation and quality of public service of the Ministry of Presidency, Justice, and Relations with parliament as a consultant prosecutor.

**Philippe Olivier** began as a prosecutor in the general prosecutor's office at the Court of Appeal of Colmar, courts of Colmar, Mulhouse, Strasbourg and Saverne before joining the juvenile-family section of the Strasbourg general prosecutor's office. He then worked in the general criminal policy office of the Criminal Affairs and Pardons Directorate of the French Ministry of Justice, in particular on the issue of combating domestic violence. In September 2022, he joined the European and International Criminal Negotiation Office of this Directorate, where he is notably an expert in the context of the negotiations of the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on

combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of minors and on material relating to child sexual abuse. He is also vice-president of the Lanzarote Committee.

**Aoife O'Malley** is Manager of Barnahus West, the pilot site for Barnahus in Ireland. She has primary responsibility for interagency collaboration in Barnahus West and is clinical lead of the Barnahus Therapy Team. Aoife has developed specialism in working with children who have experienced trauma and completed research in the area. Aoife sits on a number of national groups tasked at national upscaling of the Barnahus model in Ireland and also represents Tusla, Ireland's Child and Family Agency, on the European Barnahus Network Steering Committee. Aoife has co-authored a chapter on the implementation of Barnahus in Ireland with Dr Joseph Mooney in *Contemporary and Innovative Practices in Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Models* (St-Amand et al, 2023).

**Professor Pekka Santtila** is Professor of Psychology at New York University (NYU), Shanghai, and Global Network Professor at NYU. Previously, he was Professor of Applied Psychology and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Psychology and Theology at the Åbo Akademi University in Finland. His research focuses at improving the quality of investigative interviews using simulated interviews with avatars as well as exploring the possibility of using AI to support such interviews with question suggestions or by replacing human interviewers. Professor Santtila has provided investigative advice to the police, acted as an expert witness in numerous legal cases and consulted child sexual abuse investigations. He is a licensed psychologist and specialist in legal psychology (Finland).

**Emily Slifer** is the Director of Policy at [Thorn](#), a non-profit organization that builds technology to defend children from online child sexual abuse. Prior to joining Thorn she worked for the UK Home Office in the British Embassy Washington. She has also worked in the European Parliament for the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), the European Parliament Liaison Office in Washington, DC, and Centro UNESCO di Firenze. She has a MA in European Union Policy Studies.

**Ambassador Gregor Schusterschitz** is the Director-General of the Legal Office of the Austrian Foreign Ministry since October 2024. He joined the Austrian diplomatic service in 1996 and has served among other functions as Austrian Ambassador to Luxembourg, Austrian Brexit delegate and Austrian Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU. Since December 2003 he is also honorary professor of the University of Innsbruck for International and European Law

**Chief Officer Régis Villette** joined the French Gendarmerie Nationale in 2001 and started in a squadron team. As a judicial police officer since 2008, he works for the Cybercrime Central Unit and specialized in child exploitation investigation at the French National Centre for Child Exploitation Material Analysis. This centre works in cooperation with Interpol and Europol and represents French National Gendarmerie for Child Exploitation cases. Régis is the head of this unit since 2017. He was chairman for « Sex offender management » subgroup during CAC Interpol meetings from 2015 to 2018 and was chairman of « Victim Identification » subgroup from 2019 to 2024. He is a trainer for ICSE and also Europol EC3-COSEC."

**Dr Alma Zadić**, LL.M. is Federal Minister of Justice of the Republic of Austria. She was a member of the Austrian Parliament and previously worked as a lawyer in an international law firm in Vienna.

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<sup>i</sup> K. Staciwa, (2023): The Metaverse Online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children – a new challenge for today's global society, available at: [\(PDF\) The Metaverse, Online Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children – a new challenge for today's global society? \(researchgate.net\)](#), EUROPOL 2024 Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment [Report](#) T. Insoll, A.K. Ovaska, J. Nurmi, M. Aaltonen, N. Vaaranen-Valkonen (2022): Risk Factors for Child Sexual Abuse Material Users Contacting Children Online: Results of an Anonymous Multilingual Survey on the Dark Web available at: <https://tsjournal.org/index.php/jots/article/view/29/17>

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WeProtect Global Alliance (2023) Extended Reality technologies and child sexual exploitation and abuse, available at: [Final-Extended-Reality-Briefing.pdf \(weprotect.org\)](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Thorn (2022) Youth perspectives on online safety available at: [Thorn's latest research explores youth online safety trends | Thorn](#)

WeProtect Global Alliance (2023) #MyvoiceMySafety: children's perceptions of safety and risks online [Report on youth consultation survey on perceptions of online safety - WeProtect Global Alliance](#)

<sup>iii</sup> AviaTor project: [AviaTor | Home \(aviatorproject.com\)](#)

ZEPETO (2023) Safety Community Report available at: [ZEPETO Community Report](#)

<sup>iv</sup> WeProtect Global Alliance (2023) Extended Reality technologies and child sexual exploitation and abuse, available at: [Final-Extended-Reality-Briefing.pdf \(weprotect.org\)](#)



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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.