

EN

E-004256/2025

Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(5.1.2026)

The statistics referred to by the Honourable Members do not contain information on the demographic breakdown of minors involved in crime. At EU level, Europol¹ may process such personal data in respect of persons under the age of 18 only when strictly necessary and proportionate for preventing or combating specific cases of serious and organised crime that fall within Europol's mandate.

While minors can be both perpetrators and victims, their young age makes them vulnerable to be drawn into crime, including through online means. As laid down in the ProtectEU² Strategy, the Commission commits itself to reducing the vulnerability of young people to recruitment into organised crime and will present an Action Plan for the protection of children against crime and a legislative proposal for modernised rules to combat organised crime in 2026.

The risks of negative impact on the wellbeing of children must be mitigated, notably with the enforcement of the Digital Services Act³, the Victims' Rights Directive⁴ and its proposed revision⁵ and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive⁶. In addition, Member States are required⁷ to ensure that when children are suspected or accused of crimes, their specific needs are taken into account throughout the criminal proceedings, to foster social integration and prevent recidivism.

The Commission condemns all forms of online recruitment for the purpose of violence and is working closely with Member States and online service providers in the EU Internet Forum to prevent the dissemination of violent extremist content, radicalisation and recruitment online. In addition, the Terrorist Content Online Regulation⁸ provides a powerful tool for Member States to prevent the dissemination of terrorist content online.

¹ Article 30 of Regulation (EU) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), OJ L 135 24.5.2016, p. 53.

² COM/2025/148 final.

³ Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market for Digital Services, OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, pp. 1-102.

⁴ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, pp. 57–73.

⁵ COM (2023) 424 final.

⁶ Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) (Codified version) (OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2010/13/oj>).

⁷ Directive (EU) 2016/800 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings, OJ L132, 21.5.2016, pp. 1-20.

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2021/784 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online, OJ L 172, 17.5.2021.