

EN

P-003246/2025

Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(6.11.2025)

Communications companies are the only actors that are capable of detecting explicit videos or videos that are child sexual abuse material. Currently they are encouraged to do this voluntarily – a practice that has existed for over a decade and proved essential for child protection. Many major investigations in recent years have succeeded thanks to this approach. The Commission proposal for a Regulation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse¹ seeks to make this approach mandatory. The proposal is clearly defined, the terms are closely monitored by data protection authorities and provide guarantees. A similar approach is already being widely used to detect malware and spam.

The proposal focuses on prevention. The proposal includes provisions on detection orders, which are measures of last resort when prevention measures are insufficient. They target only high-risk services, or, where possible, specific users or groups. Such orders are issued by a judicial or independent administrative authority balancing all the rights at stake and after a thorough assessment of their necessity and proportionality.

The impact assessment² analysed and assessed the risk of false positives, which for some technologies is estimated at no more than 1 in 50 billion³. Nonetheless, the proposal includes safeguards to address such risks, including requiring providers to deploy technologies that are the least privacy-intrusive in accordance with the state of the art in the industry, and that limit the error rate to the maximum extent possible, as well as judicial redress if needed. Available data shows that detection by companies has led to the rescue of a significant number of victims and to the arrest of perpetrators⁴.

Child sexual abuse is illegal and needs to be combated in an appropriate manner in order to safeguard children's fundamental rights.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52022PC0209>.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022SC0209>.

³ <https://www.congress.gov/116/meeting/house/110075/witnesses/HHRG-116-IF16-Wstate-FaridH-20191016.pdf>.

⁴ For sample cases, see the Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal, see footnote 2, Annex 7, p. 267.