

EN

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Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(22.10.2026)

The EU is committed to child protection and to fighting organised crime, child sexual abuse and trafficking in human beings. In June 2026 a political agreement on the proposal to amend Directive 2011/93/EU was reached¹. Directive (EU) 2024/1712² has strengthened the legal framework against trafficking in human beings, including by broadening forms of exploitation and criminalising the knowing use of services of trafficking victims.

To further reinforce the criminal law frameworks, the Commission adopted proposals to amend mandates of the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation³ and the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)⁴ on 24 June 2026 and plans to propose modernised rules on organised crime in 2027. Europol supports Member States in investigating child sexual exploitation and abuse. It organises victim identification operations⁵ and regularly shares insights across Member States on the most threatening criminal networks, including those engaged in child sexual exploitation and abuse⁶. Europol can process personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, or religious beliefs, in the performance of its mandate, under strict conditions of necessity, proportionality and purpose limitation, and if those data supplement other personal data processed by Europol.

The Commission to date has not received any indications from the Member States pointing to perpetrator structures comparable to those covered by the United Kingdom government's National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The responsibility for investigating and prosecuting crimes lies with Member States.

¹ Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, OJ L 335, 17.12.2011, pp. 1–14: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/93/oj/eng>.

² Directive (EU) 2024/1712 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, OJ L, 2024/1712, 24.6.2024: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1712/oj/eng>.

³ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 COM (2026) 570 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52026PC0570>.

⁴ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1726 and Regulation (EU) 2024/982, and repealing Regulation (EU) 2016/794, COM (2026) 580 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52026PC0580>.

⁵ See the Europol press release of 18 September 2026: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/two-week-europol-task-force-identifies-18-sexually-abused-children-worldwide>.

⁶ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/Blueprint-of-criminal-opportunism.pdf>.