



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

20 November 2014

### **Despite national effort, the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Belgium persists**

Brussels, Belgium—ECPAT Belgium, the Belgian member of ECPAT International network<sup>1</sup>, published a country monitoring report today, which analyses measures taken in Belgium to fight against all manifestations of CSEC within the country, including child prostitution, child sexual abuse materials (child pornography) and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. In Belgium, the sexual exploitation of children still exists and both foreign-born and Belgian minors are exploited through prostitution, pornography and trafficking.

Despite a robust legal framework and the commitment of the Belgian authorities to end sexual exploitation against children, more can be done to better protect children from these heinous crimes. ECPAT's report suggests priority actions urgently needed to proactively advance the national fight against CSEC. These actions include: the adoption of a national plan of action against CSEC; improving the training of front line workers coming into contact with potential CSEC victims; increasing support for victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking; and increasing child and youth participation in the fight against CSEC.

"CSEC remains in industrialised countries and Belgium is no exception. Economic crises and new technologies represent new challenges in the fight against child prostitution, child pornography and trafficking of children for sexual purposes" says Acting Chair of ECPAT International, Katlijn Declercq. "Laws do exist but obstacles block their enforcement and often the best interests of the child are not taken into consideration. Beside a summary of the situation in Belgium, our report lists priority actions that we hope will serve as guidance for Belgian authorities to better protect children from sexual exploitation."

The full report on the status of action against commercial sexual exploitation of children in Belgium is available at:

[http://ecpat.be/files/2014/09/A4A\\_V2\\_EU\\_BELGIUM\\_ENG\\_FINAL.pdf](http://ecpat.be/files/2014/09/A4A_V2_EU_BELGIUM_ENG_FINAL.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> ECPAT International (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for sexual purposes) est le seul réseau mondial entièrement dédié à la lutte contre l'exploitation sexuelle commerciale des enfants et compte à ce jour 86 groupes dans 78 pays.

**About ECPAT Belgium:** ECPAT Belgium began in 1993 at the initiative of a number of NGOs working in development or dealing with human rights and the rights of the child. It is now a non-profit organisation which works towards the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography/child sexual abuse materials and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes through legal, educational and political actions. A particular emphasis is put on influencing the tourism sector, young people themselves, the judiciary and the authorities. For more information, please visit [www.ecpat.be](http://www.ecpat.be)

**About ECPAT International:** ECPAT International is a global network of organisations dedicated to ending the commercial sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT focuses on the four key manifestations of CSEC: child prostitution, child pornography/child sexual abuse materials, sexual exploitation of children through travel and tourism, and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. Today, the ECPAT network is comprised of an International Secretariat based in Thailand, together with 82 member organisations in 75 countries. For more information, please visit [www.ecpat.net](http://www.ecpat.net)

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