



Comparison of European low-threshold reporting mechanisms to gather good practices and needs

This comparative research is part of the “ALERT ACTORS REPORT: A protective environment for children to live free from sexual exploitation in the travel/tourism/hospitality sector” European project.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAR

ALERT ACTORS REPORT

ITB Berlin

International Tourism Bourse (in Berlin)

OCSE

Online Child Sexual Exploitation

SECTT

Sexual Exploitation of Children in the context of Travel and Tourism

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

“Reporting an incident of Sexual Exploitation of Children in the context of Travel and Tourism is the first step in activating the judicial process and access to justice for victims; when incidents are not reported, no process can take place.”¹

States have taken important steps to build child-friendly hotlines and reporting mechanisms, but these methods remain underused by victims of sexual exploitation. According to a recent study, children exploited in prostitution or pornography are particularly unlikely to report abuse: many do not perceive themselves as victims, distrust the justice system, risk retaliation and stigma and fear long-term placement in government facilities². Since children’s silence about sexual exploitation appears to be the number one barrier to their ability to access justice and one of the most difficult to overcome, reporting by bystanders and professionals is crucial.

This comparative research is part of the ALERT ACTORS REPORT project (A). It will gather information and analyze data from five low-threshold reporting websites: the international reporting platform (B) and national reporting mechanisms in four European countries (C).

The low-threshold reporting websites are, in the context of this research, the ECPAT reporting websites.

A. The ALERT ACTORS REPORT project

The Alert Actors Report project (AAR project - grant agreement No 810389/REC-AG-2017/REC-RDAP-GBV-AG-2017), coordinated by DCI-ECPAT Netherlands, involves five ECPAT groups from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands and is supported by Ministries, law enforcement authorities, travel/tourism/hospitality associations and companies, national low-threshold reporting mechanisms, INHOPE, Leiden University and ECPAT Luxembourg.

The project’s duration is from September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2020.

The AAR project has three main objectives: **(1)** to build a strong and protective environment in the travel/tourism sector for children, against sexual exploitation, in five European countries, by increasing awareness among travelers, through training of professionals and future professionals, and through increasing private sector commitment; **(2)** to strengthen cooperation among the different stakeholders in five European countries and the sharing of

¹ ECPAT International, *Global Study on sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism: Offenders on the move*, 2016, p.69.

² ECPAT International, *Through the Eyes of the Child: Barriers to Access to Justice and Remedies for Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation*, 2017, p.19.

good practices through national multi-stakeholders meetings, joint actions and sharing events at European level; and (3) to improve reporting mechanisms in five European countries by improving understanding of methods and requirements for reporting child sexual exploitation, notably by developing quality standards and the training of professionals.

B. The international reporting platform: www.reportchildsextourism.eu

In 2010, the trilateral campaign “Don’t Look Away” was launched by national ECPAT groups, authorities and tourism associations from Austria, Germany and Switzerland. A few years later, in May 2014, the international reporting platform www.reportchildsextourism.eu was officially launched and became one of the main results of the EU project “Don’t look away – be aware & report the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism!” that ran from October 2012 to October 2015. Today, the international platform provides opportunities to report from 20 countries (17 countries from EU, Mauritius, Ukraine and the United States) and is accessible in five languages: English, French, German, Spanish and Russian.

In January 2019, a new URL has been launched to align the name of the platform with the Luxembourg terminology guidelines: www.dontlookaway.report

C. The national reporting platforms

The comparative research will analyze four national reporting mechanisms – those of Austria, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands - concerning the sexual exploitation of children. These four reporting mechanisms are all indexed within the international reporting platform. The French reporting portal is not effective yet and should be finalized during the AAR project. To date, a simple email address exists to send a report to the competent authority (the OCRVP – French Police). The current system does not allow us to make a deep analysis or a comparison with the other national mechanisms in place in the other European countries. However, this research will gather information about the challenges and opportunities for improvements in national reporting mechanisms.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the comparative research is to collect and compare information regarding the international reporting platform as well as the four national reporting portals in order to formulate quality standards for reporting mechanisms.

The international reporting platform will be analyzed through:

1. Website visitors (number of visits, search words, search engines, time spent, pages visited);
2. Visibility of the reporting portal in search engines;
3. Current sub-portals at country levels (do the links work? Any possibility to report in English?);
4. Terminology on the reporting portal related to Luxembourg Terminology Guidelines.

The national reporting platforms in Austria, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands will be analyzed through:

1. Number of reports per year and, if possible, effects of campaigns;
2. Type of reports (violence, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, online abuse, anonymous);
3. Countries where suspected exploitation of children took place;
4. Number of reports that led to police investigations/convictions;
5. Type of information crucial to launch police investigations;
6. Questions in the reporting format;
7. Handling of reports (response, follow-up, documentation, case management and data protection);
8. Terminology of reporting mechanisms related to Luxembourg Terminology Guidelines;
9. Challenges and opportunities for improvements.

3. METHODOLOGY

This comparison research has been conducted by ECPAT France in collaboration with the project partners and supports. Three templates were used to gather information and data:

- A desk research template necessary to provide an overview of the country situation and documentation.
- A questionnaire template to gather information and data from the reporting platforms (international or national).
- An interview template requiring each ECPAT partner to conduct at least one interview with a professional in capacity to receive reports in the ECPAT country. This part was particularly important, as it allowed us to collect the impressions of professionals as well as their opinions regarding challenges and opportunities for improvements in national reporting mechanisms.

Four out of the five countries have conducted interviews with ECPAT employees who receive reports at a low-threshold level (Austria, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands). In France, two interviews have been conducted with the French Police (OCRVP, who receive reports from the international reporting portal) and Point de Contact (the French hotline member of the INHOPE network). All these interviews are integrated within the following analysis, either directly in the discussion below or in the recommendations.

The comparison and analysis are based upon partners' responses to these templates. They will all be available upon request.

4. LIMITATIONS

International Reporting Platform

Data from the international reporting portal were available from 2016, rather than from 2014, as Google Analytics data was not available before 2014. The comparison period is thus limited: for example, it does not include communication campaigns from the “Don’t Look Away!” Project, which promoted the reporting platform.



National Reporting Platforms

This comparison research addresses only four of the 20 countries present on the international reporting platform. The analysis, comparison and recommendations will be elaborated based on this limited comparison but may be applied to other national reporting platforms with possible necessary adaptations for each national context and procedure.

Moreover, there is no consensus/standard yet on how each country should handle incoming reports and how they should be categorized. It is also not possible, in this evaluation, to determine how many reports of child sexual exploitation finally led to police prosecution.

5. TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

The comparative research pays specific attention to the terminology used in reporting child sexual exploitation and avoids formulations that are short and easy to understand but that do not reflect the enormous harm that has been done to the child and the offence that has been committed such as “child prostitution”; “child sex tourism” or “child pornography”. The Luxembourg Terminology Guidelines have been used as a reference for the elaboration of this comparative research.

SECTION 2. THE INTERNATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORM

This section will focus on the international reporting platform that hosts 20 countries in January 2019 (17 European countries, Mauritius, Ukraine and the United States). The analysis of the information and data will help outline options for consideration in the development of future recommendations.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The “Don’t Look Away!” portal was launched in October 2014. The link to the portal is: <http://www.reportchildsextourism.eu/>. The domain ending in “.eu” was initially chosen, as the platform was launched as a European one. Now, however, the platform includes non-European countries and plans to host Latin American and Asian countries. Therefore, the name of the portal and the .eu should be changed to recognize the portal’s evolution.

NB: the changes occurred during the elaboration of this report. The reporting portal is now accessible via this link: <http://dontlookaway.report>

This research covers the period from 2016 through November 30th 2018. As noted above, calendar years 2014 and 2015 are not included because data collected at that time were unsuitable (Google analytics was not available).

ECPAT Luxembourg is in charge of the reporting portal.

There is no application designed to access the platform on mobile phones or tablet, contrary to what is indicated on the website. This should be corrected, whether by creating an app as indicated or by removing the sentence from the website.

2. WEBSITE VISITORS

A. Number of visits, time spent and pages visited

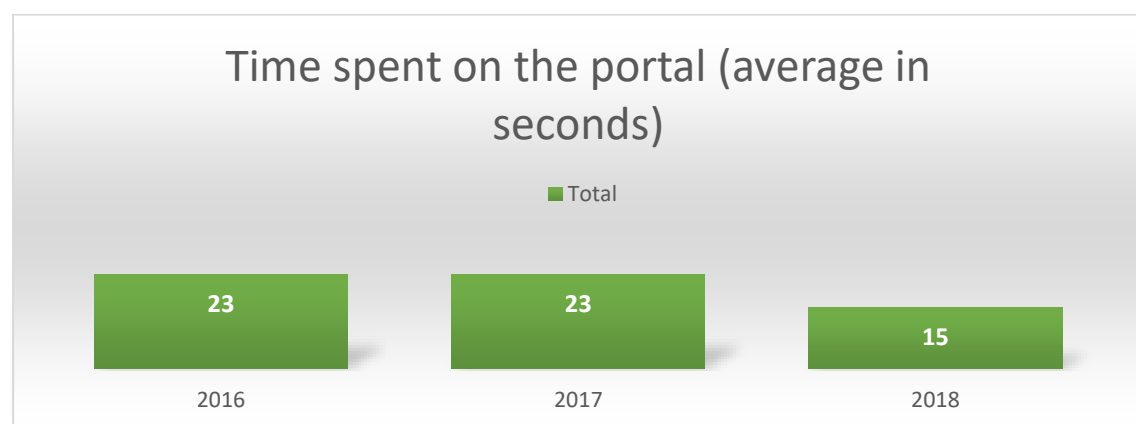
Number of visits



The number of visits per year has increased by a factor of almost nine in three years. The huge growth between 2017 and 2018 cannot be easily explained by any campaign or communication actions. Data from 2019 will show if the number of visits is maintained, increased or decreased.

Data from the international reporting portal indicate that the summer holidays period, especially July, is the most likely time for visitors to access the website. This is important to note, as the summer holidays period is a high tourism period during which many people travel and may be more likely to witness a child sexual exploitation/abuse situation (as could be the winter holiday season).

Time spent on average (per second)



The time spent on the international reporting portal is quite low as shown by the diagram above. This low average can be explained by three main reasons:

- People may go on the reporting portal only to find information on a specific country: they find their country's flag and information easily and do not need to remain longer on the main webpage.
- People are directed to the reporting portal without intending to visit.
- There are many automatic visits generated by computers.

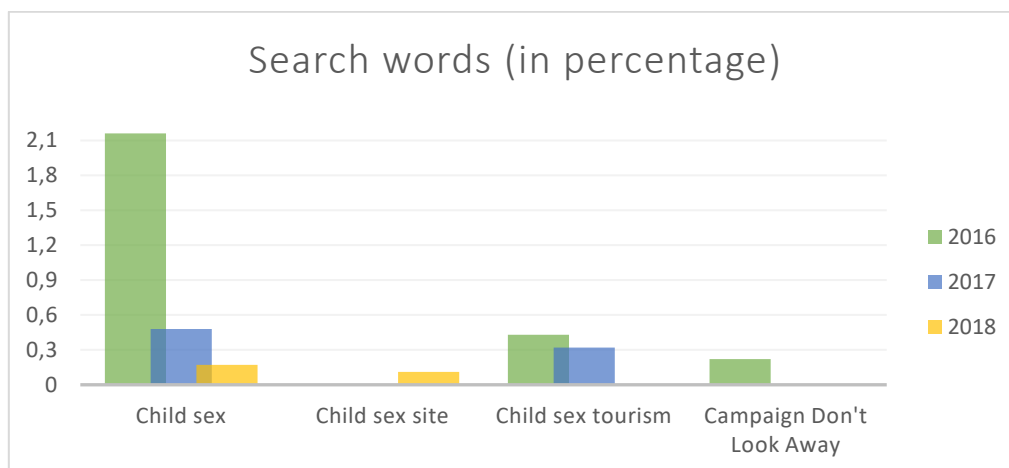
The average time spent on the site is lower in 2018 than in 2016 and 2017. This decrease should not be viewed as a concern. It can easily be explained by the fact that the number of visits is much higher in 2018 than the other years, certainly because of automatic visits generated by computers. Thus, the time spent on the portal (average) is lower.

Pages visited

Data was not available to show which of the sub-pages of the website were visited. Indeed, the "Don't Look Away!" reporting portal is divided into 6 categories (Home; Report; About us; How to react; About the problem; and Contact) that can be accessed from the homepage of the portal as it is a roll out or "landing" page. As a consequence, data shows only that visitors visited the "Homepage" of the website. By visiting this homepage, visitors have the ability to further click on one of the six categories of the website.

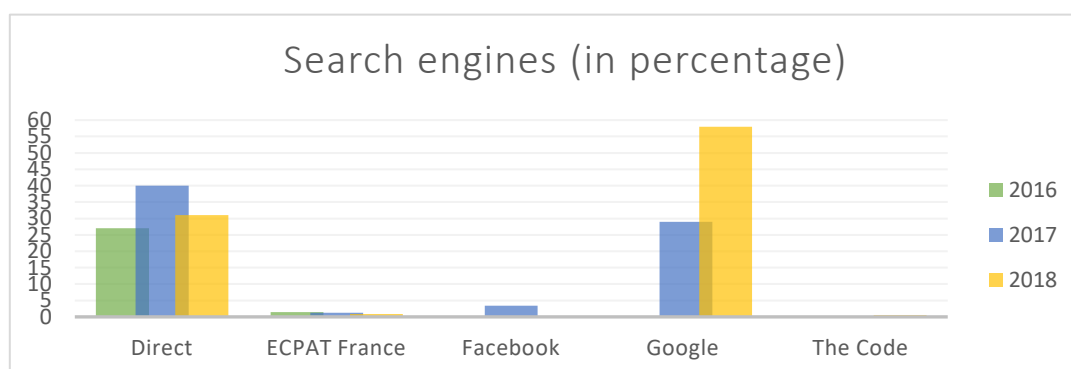
B. Search words and search engines

Search Words



“Search words” are words that people may type or enter on search engines to find the international reporting platform. The most relevant words have been selected (the majority is not provided/not set and can be automatically generated by computers); they also represent the highest percentages. 2.1% for “child sex” in 2016 is actually the highest percentage that we observe, which is obviously really low. The majority of the provided search words present a very low percentage (0.01%) and may indicate that people were actually searching for materials of child sexual exploitation: “best website for children sex”, “child sexy” or “kid sex site”. The three search words “child sex”, “child sex site” and “child sex tourism” (that have the higher percentages) are also somewhat vague, as they could have been typed by people who were looking for illegal contents. It would have been interesting to see more words such as “report child sex tourism”. The phrase “Campaign Don’t Look Away” in 2016 remained a good indicator but disappeared once the campaign was over. It should also be noted that the search words are only in English. The diversity of languages that could lead to the platform could also be one of the explanations for low percentages.

Search engines



Search engines or links/websites used to access the international reporting portal are recapped in the diagram above (the rate for The Code is 0.61% in 2018 but does not appear on the diagram). Many visits were automatically generated by computers and thus, are not indexed here.

The “direct” access rates are quite high, which means that people have identified the name of the Don’t Look Away platform. The change of the portal’s name (see within “1. General information” for more details) to a simpler one should also increase the “direct” access rate. On the other hand, the Facebook rate (and the absence of other social networks) is disappointing. Social media campaigns should be developed to increase this and make the platform better known. This is a practice already implemented by some of the project partners for their national reporting portal (for example, in Germany).

3. VISIBILITY

Visibility of the portal has also been analyzed³. It appears that its visibility could be increased. Analysis reveals the following:

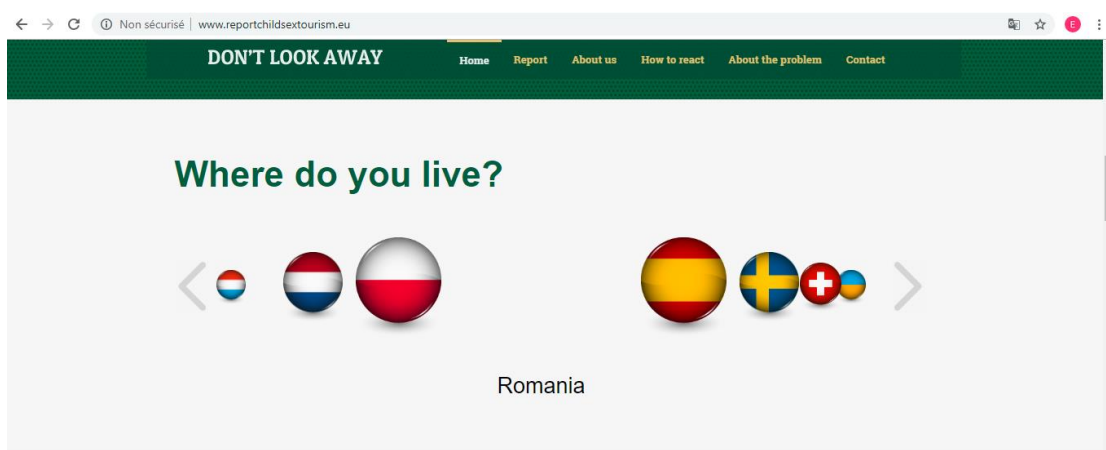
- The number of words and the repeat rate are valid and enable a good visibility of the platform.
- The meta description is missing. Although a description is not required, it often allows a better display in the pages of search engines. Thus, it would be recommended to add a metadata description to the “Don’t Look Away!” reporting portal.
- The website address includes a query string (such as “? Lang = fr”) when a visitor selects a language other than English (in the example, the French language). This setup is not ideal for search engine optimization.
- The use of headings and the headings’ consistency are considered valid.
- The style and javascript is problematic:
 - o The page uses Javascript code embedded in the page between <script></script> tags. Around 2.33 kb are transmitted each time the page is loaded, whereas this code could be cached if it were placed in a separate file.
 - o The page uses built-in styles to the page between <style></style> tags. Around 0.13 kb are transmitted each time the page is loaded, whereas this code could be cached if it were placed in a separate file.
 - o The page uses 6 CSS file(s) for 1 media(s). It is recommended not to practice as many requests for a single page.
- The page does not use HTTP Secure (HTTPS). Secure HTTPS connections should be used to strengthen the confidentiality of exchanges with your visitors, integrity of data as well as the security of authentication mechanisms.

³ The analysis of the international reporting portal has been done through the website <https://alyze.info/>

4. SUB-PORTALS AT COUNTRY LEVEL

National portals that are promoted on the “Don’t Look Away!” platform have disparities⁴. Some of them are direct links (and automatically open in a new window) whereas others are indirect (and require the visitor to click on a new link or review additional information). Nevertheless, this does not appear to present an obstacle to reporting. However, the fact that some countries present information in English and others do not could hinder reporting. Five out of the 12 countries using direct links do not allow for reporting in English or provide information on the reporting mechanism in English. The ratio is three out of the seven for the countries using indirect links. For one country (Ukraine), there is no information at all, since nothing happens when you click on the flag.

For two countries (Mauritius and Romania), the flags do not appear above the name. This is only the case on Google Chrome and the English version of the portal.



For two countries (Luxembourg and the Netherlands), specific attention should be paid to the use of terminology. Phrases such as “child prostitution” or “child sex tourism” that are discouraged by the Luxembourg Guidelines continue to be used on these national portals. In the Netherlands, the necessary terminology changes have been made within the website but “child sex tourism” remains used in the URL. This appears to be a temporary transitional

⁴ Everything is recapped within the table at the end of the part 4 « Sub-portals at country level ».

measure created to facilitate the transition between the old name (“report child sex tourism”) and the new name (“report child abuse abroad”).

For one country (Bulgaria), the form to report a situation of child sexual exploitation/abuse could not be found.

| COUNTRY | DIRECT OR INDIRECT LINK | COUNTRY FLAG | INFORMATION IN ENGLISH | COMMENTS |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--|
| Austria | Direct | Ok | No | |
| Belgium | Direct | Ok | Yes | |
| Bulgaria | Direct | Ok | Yes | Reporting form is missing |
| Czech Republic | Indirect | Ok | No | |
| Estonia | Indirect | Ok | Yes | |
| Finland | Indirect | Ok | Yes | |
| France | Indirect | Ok | No | |
| Germany | Direct | Ok | No | |
| Italy | Indirect | Ok | No | |
| Luxembourg | Direct | Ok | Yes | Attention should be paid to the terminology. Example: "child sex tourism" |
| Mauritius | Direct | Missing on Chrome | Yes | |
| Netherlands | Direct | Ok | Yes | Attention should be paid to the terminology. Example: "child sex tourism" (in the URL) |
| Poland | Direct | Ok | No | |
| Romania | Indirect | Missing on Chrome | Yes | |
| Spain | Direct | Ok | No | |
| Sweden | Direct | Ok | No | |
| Switzerland | Direct | Ok | Yes | |
| United Kingdom | Indirect | Ok | Yes | |
| Ukraine | | Ok | | Nothing happens when we click on the flag |
| USA | Direct | Ok | Yes | |

5. TERMINOLOGY

Several discouraged and outdated terms are still used in some reporting portals as shown in the table below.

| TERM NOT APPROPRIATE | YES | NO | ALTERNATIVE TERM THAT SHOULD BE USED |
|--|-----|----|--|
| Child sex tourism | ✓ | | Sexual Exploitation of Children in the context of Travel and Tourism |
| Child prostitution | ✓ | | Exploitation of children in prostitution |
| Child pornography | ✓ | | Online Child Sexual Exploitation |
| Commercial sexual exploitation of children | ✓ | | Sexual Exploitation of Children |

Child sex tourism has been used in the name of the website. Thus, the name of the reporting platform was not in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines. Specific attention should be paid to making these changes, especially on all the communication tools that have been shared already with tourism companies and the public.

NB: The new name of the international reporting portal is, since January 2019: <http://dontlookaway.report>.

Child sex tourism is used 12 times on the website to refer to the sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism (SECTT). Wherever it is used, it should be modified in accordance with the Luxembourg Guidelines.

Child prostitution is used twice on the website, within the category “About us”. It should be replaced by the recommended term “sexual exploitation of children in prostitution”.

Child pornography is used twice on the website, within the category “About us”. It should be replaced by the recommended term “online child sexual exploitation” when the reference is a general one, or by “child sexual abuse materials” when it is more specific.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is used three times on the website. It should be replaced by the recommended term “sexual exploitation of children”.

Specific attention should be paid to the terminology, especially if no hidden words or metadata are used on the national reporting portals. While the website’s visible terminology should be in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines, it is important to remember that the common language known and used by potential reporters should be taken into account as well. Therefore, to improve the search engine optimization, metadata or hidden words on the website might still refer to such terms as “child sex tourism,” which our analysis shows is more frequently used than other terms by people who are likely to visit the website).

SECTION 3. NATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORMS

This section will focus on four national child sexual exploitation reporting mechanisms in Austria, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. These four reporting mechanisms are all indexed within the international reporting platform. France still does not have an effective portal and thus is not included in the comparative research. However, two interviews have been conducted with French professionals in order to feed the recommendations: one interview with the French Police (OCRVP, who receive reports from the international reporting portal) and one with Point de Contact (the French hotline member of the INHOPE network).

The four countries have specific mechanisms to report suspected cases. It is possible to report cases either directly to the police through the reporting platform (in Austria and Germany), or by filling out an online form of the national ECPAT group or another national NGO (Austria, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands).

In Austria, Belgium and Germany, it is not possible to upload pictures when a report is done on the national portal, although such picture might help with report details: even if not about the abuse in itself, which is mostly not directly observed, then about the place where it happened, the offender or any other detail that could be important for the investigation. In Austria and Germany, the reporting form asks whether the person wants to give further information. The reporter may then indicate if any pictures or videos are in their possession that may validate the observed and reported incident. In the Netherlands, the portal offers the reporter the option of uploading pictures or documents while reporting.

| COUNTRY | REPORTING MECHANISM | APPLICATION | LINK |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| Austria | NGO and police | Under consideration | https://www.nicht-wegsehen.at/ |
| Belgium | NGO | No but wanted | https://isaystop.com |
| Germany | NGO and police | No but planned | http://nicht-wegsehen.net/ |
| Netherlands | NGO | No but wanted | https://www.meldkindersekstoerisme.nl/en/ |

To date, no app to report cases of child sexual exploitation abroad exists in any of the four countries, but officials in each country want or plan to create one. Specific attention should be paid to the details of such an app. Indeed, an app for the international reporting platform had been created as part of the “Don’t Look Away” project. Unfortunately, this app has never been accepted by Apple because it has to be more than the website under an app format. It was accepted for the Android platform but has now disappeared from the Android store. The app must be practical and adapted to the format (for example, with little text and more graphics).

To facilitate the analysis and comparison, the information and data concerning the number of reports of each country will be compared among the four countries when reports were

received by the national ECPAT group or another national NGO. No comparison will be made when reports are received by the police between Austria and Germany as only Germany provided data (indicated below for information).

GENERIC INFORMATION

Promotion of the reporting portals at national level

Two out of the four countries (Austria and Germany) promote only their national reporting platform. They consider it to be more relevant rather than promoting two portals which might be confusing for people or because the international reporting platform which used the phrase “child sex tourism” was not in correlation with the Luxembourg Guidelines.

Belgium and the Netherlands promote both portals depending on the public/channel they are communicating on.

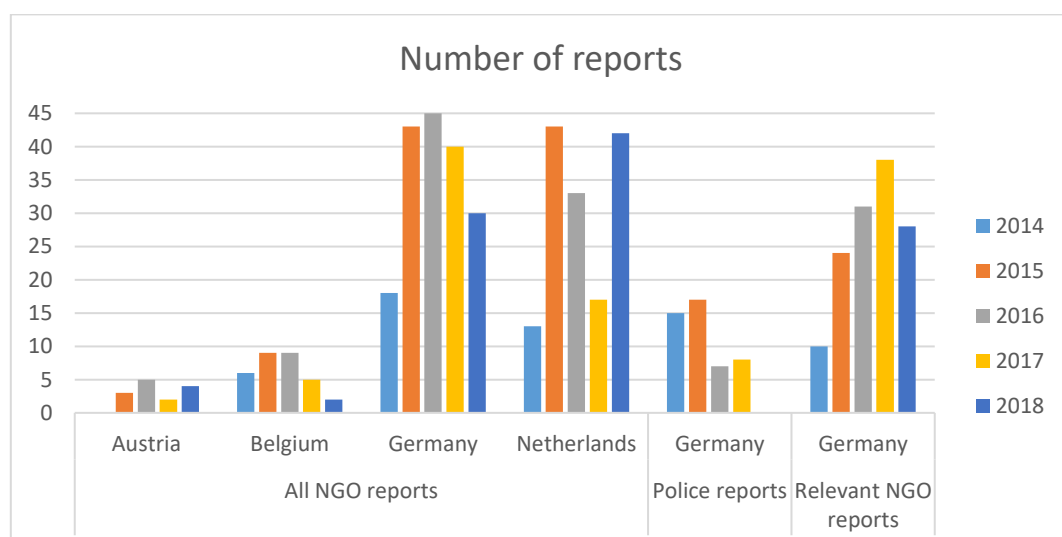
This should be taken into account in the elaboration of communication/awareness campaigns.

Number of visits

In Austria, the number of visits on the national reporting portal could not be provided. A new website is being published in order to be able to gather Google Analytics data.

In Germany, the number of visits is growing, with 2975 visits in 2016, 3035 in 2017 and 3702 in 2018; these increases may be due to social media campaigns on Facebook, and a very high peak (in 2018) which may result from a Facebook post of the ITB Berlin. This data shows the importance of social media as a means to promote the portals. The importance of social media is confirmed by data from the Netherlands showing 942 unique visitors in 2016 and 3723 unique visitors in 2017 during the social media campaign. The tendency is the reverse in Belgium, where we found 3300 visitors in 2017 and 2500 in 2018 with no apparent reason for the significant differences.

1. NUMBER OF REPORTS



NB: data for 2018 do not cover the entire year as this research was launched in November 2018.

The first conclusion is that the reporting platforms are being used and that the four countries receive reports. This fact shows the important role the website plays in fighting sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Germany is the only country that clearly distinguishes between “all” and “relevant reports.” Below, the relevant reports data will be used as a basis for comparison with the other countries. Germany considers as not relevant (1) spam and (or reports including a political statement); (2) a report sent to ECPAT Germany although it was not the right contact partners in the country; and (3) a report in which there is not enough concrete information. In Austria, a similar distinction is applied in practice. Reports containing only numbers, those lacking enough concrete information to be useful to police, and spam are considered as not relevant and are not included in the research. In Belgium and the Netherlands, only spam notices are considered as “not relevant” reports. All others are forwarded to police.

From the data that we have, we can observe that most of the reports are received on a low-threshold level when there is one for reporting. Indeed, in Germany, fewer reports have been received directly by the police. We can suppose that people feel more comfortable with the low-threshold level to report suspicion of child sexual abuse/exploitation. For instance, in the Netherlands, you have three options when reporting: report anonymously; keep your contact information secret from the police; or share your contact information with the police. In 2018, half of the reporters wanted to stay anonymous or to keep their contact information confidential from the police. Unfortunately, similar data are not available in Austria, Belgium and Germany.

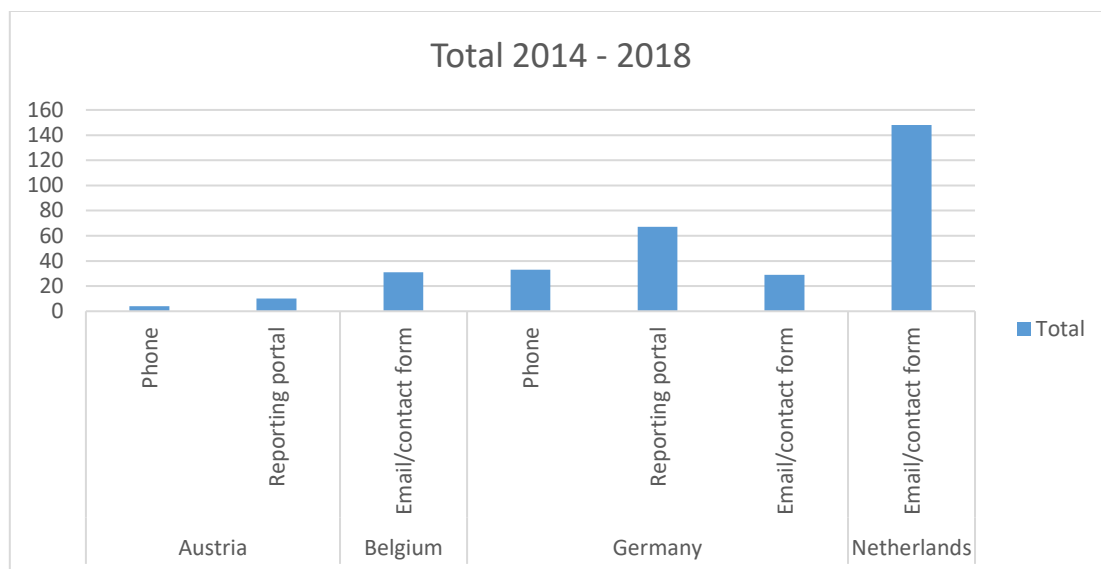
Based on this assessment, it is important to strengthen the low-threshold level in order to ensure the same procedure/level of information than the police one (see more details within the recommendation n°10 – A standardized process at all levels to document the incoming reports would be helpful).

NB: further away, only the low-threshold reports (received by the ECPAT groups) will be compared and analyzed between the four countries.

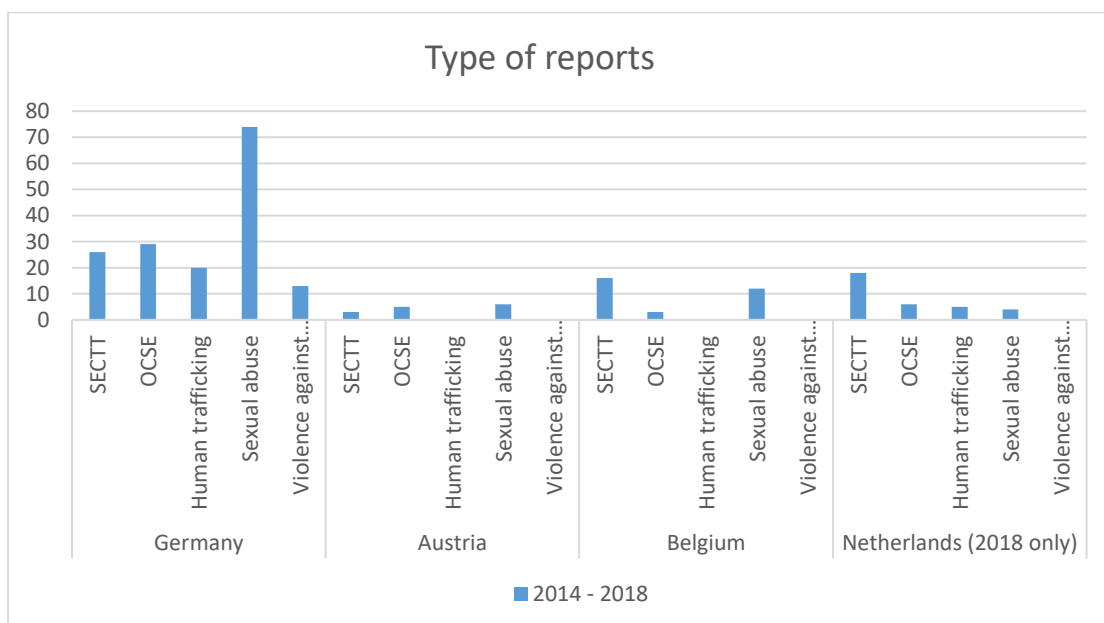
Analysis from the national reporting platforms also highlights a tendency to see more visitors on the national websites after publicity campaigns, especially during summer campaigns (except in Austria, where tools to obtain statistics on website visits have not been used in the past because fully-anonymous reporting was guaranteed; statistics will be collected in 2019). The number of visits is an important indicator of the efficiency of awareness raising campaigns or other communication actions, but this statistic should be combined with other data, such as the incoming reports, to confirm the efficiency. For example, in 2017 the Netherlands experienced an increase of 296% in website visitors during a campaign. Again in the summer of 2018 in the Netherlands, a social media campaign was conducted. Among the 42 reports received there in 2018, 22 reports were made between July 16 and August 31; however, no link can actually be drawn between the number of reports made and the efficiency of campaigns.

Finally, three out of the four countries confirmed that they received at least one report in English (in addition to their native language and few others).

The reports were received mostly via a written channel (contact form, email or reporting portal), although in Austria and Germany, numerous reports are made by phone. Considering the multiple channels for reporting, it is difficult to make a comparison and especially to deduce something from it as there are disparities (in the way ECPAT members receive reports) and countries do not always use similar tools. For instance, Germany distinguishes between a report made via email, the reporting portal; and the contact form on the former homepage. Belgium, on the other hand receives all reports via email including those made via their “I say STOP!” national portal.



2. TYPE OF REPORTS



Accurately categorizing reports is difficult because some reports may relate to more than one category of exploitation. Additionally, categorization is made based on information provided

by the reporter; therefore, at the moment of the categorization, it is almost impossible to ensure that the reports are actually categorized properly: for example, cases of sexual abuse versus SECTT. Only the investigation could enable a final categorization of the report.

The analysis is also made difficult because the Netherlands provided data in this scheme only for 2018, as they were not in charge of the reporting platform before that.

An observation can be made on the basis of the data we do have: people do not use the reporting portals only to report child sexual exploitation cases in the context of travel and tourism. Rather, the public has identified these low-threshold portals as efficient tools to report any suspicious case of abuse or exploitation of children that occurred in their country or abroad (see below for more details), notably because these individuals usually report suspicions and don't know what kind of violence it is. This observation is of the utmost importance and must be taken into account in the elaboration of communication/awareness campaigns.

Moreover, this statement raises questions: if the national portals are intended to be used for reporting child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, why do people use them to report other types of child abuse? Were they not able to find the more appropriate reporting hotline? Should national communication strategies be modified? In Germany, for instance, most of the reports are for sexual violence, raising the question of why German reporters are turning to ECPAT to report these situations? Is resorting to ECPAT to be expected? Is this the most effective way to report incidents of child abuse in Germany? Even if no academic research has been done on this issue, some of the following reasons may explain this phenomenon:

- Individuals may find it easier to report general “sexual abuse” on the form rather than SECTT, as travellers and reporters are not required to select the category of abuse or report whether or not it occurred abroad;
- Individuals may not know where else to report their observations on a low-threshold level or are more willing to report via an online form. In Germany, the portal is also promoted as a way to report on a low-threshold level if a person witnessed any suspicious situation. The focus is thus not only on tourists but also on encouraging long/short stay expats, business travellers and others to keep an open eye. The German reporting portal is also highly valued as a « filtering » mechanism so that the police receives only reports deemed relevant for their investigation.

Besides, this finding also raises the question of the collaboration between the ECPAT group that receives the reports and the re-routing of the reports when ECPAT is not the relevant stakeholder. In Belgium and the Netherlands, all reports (SECTT and other offences) are forwarded to the police for further determination of the offence (if there is any), and the police are in charge of the necessary follow-up. Additionally, in the Netherlands, when the report concerns a hotel, the ECPAT partner in the country is notified so that this hotel may be included in awareness-raising and training activities.

In Austria, when a report is not related to SECTT, the ECPAT group contacts the relevant network partners which may include the youth welfare authority, police, or another organizations depending on the situation. Whenever the reporter discloses her or his identity, the ECPAT group firstly get in touch with the reporter to clarify the next steps and explain better the process. The German process is close to the Austrian one, depending on the report and the level of help that is needed; the redirection and collaboration exist there as well.

Categorizing reports depending on the type of offense alleged is necessary so that the reports received at a low-threshold level can be redirected to the right stakeholder or hotline.

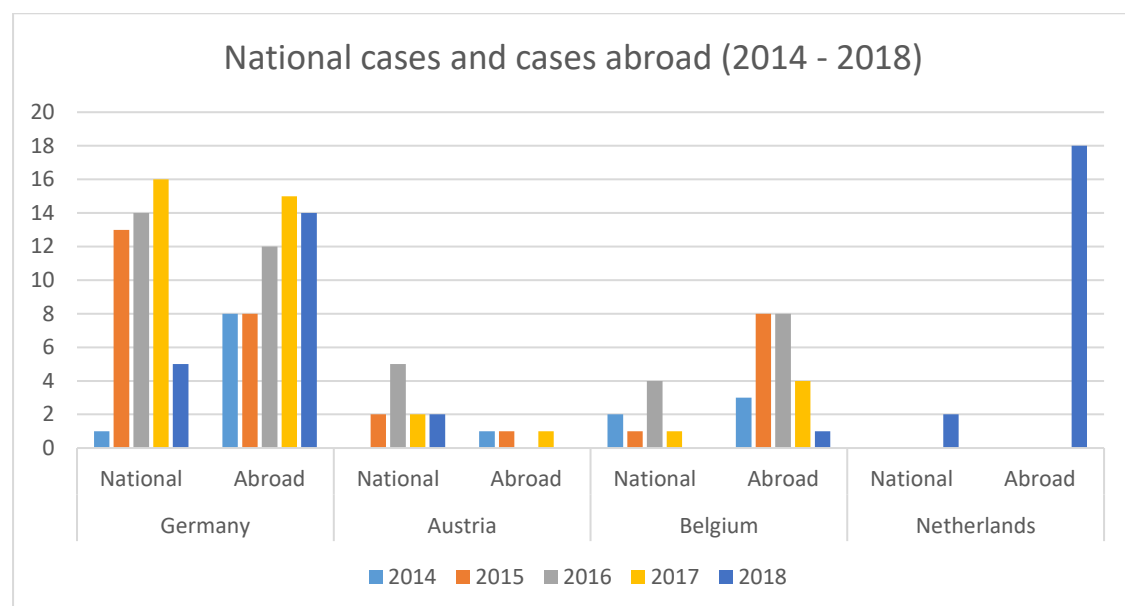
In Austria, for instance, the Federal investigation office (the department for severe crimes including crimes against children) is automatically contacted for SECTT and OCSE cases when the case is considered as relevant. For trafficking situations, another department specialized in trafficking will be contacted. Furthermore, cooperation with existing national platforms such as STOPLINE, Gegen Hassim Netz or Rat auf Draht is maintained whenever possible.

In Belgium, OCSE cases are sent both to the police and to the Belgian INHOPE member, Child Focus, with whom ECPAT has a Memorandum of Understanding in place. Child Focus does the same with SECTT cases that arrive on their hotline.

In Germany, most of the reports are forwarded to the police (Federal criminal police office) who can take further steps. National hotlines or helplines can also be contacted as well as counselling centres because they work directly with and can support people with further steps.

In the Netherlands, ECPAT sends all reports to the police agency specialized in the investigation of offenders who travel in search of children they might exploit sexually. The same office also handles cases involving images of child sexual abuse, and all other reports are transferred to other police services.

3. COUNTRIES OF EXPLOITATION



Classifying reports as either national cases or as cases abroad (which do not necessarily involve exploitation in travel and tourism here) is difficult and does not enable one to make many observations. First, we have to notice that some reports could not be categorized as either national or abroad (OCSE cases for instance). Moreover, the Netherlands provided data in this scheme only for 2018, as ECPAT was not in charge of the reporting platform before that.

In Austria and Belgium, reports are categorized based upon definition found in the extra-territorial legislation: a case is deemed “national” when the suspected crime has been committed in the country, and a case abroad occurs when a suspected crime has been committed in another country by a person who falls under the national Penal Code and is therefore subject to extra-territorial jurisdiction. This distinction, and the grounds for exercising extra-territorial jurisdiction, should be explained both on the national reporting portals and the international reporting portal so that people would better understand why their report could help the police to investigate a case.

The only observation that can be shared is that sexual exploitation of children, no matter the country we focus on or the type of exploitation, is a global phenomenon which concerns all parts of the world. This emphasizes the need for global and multidisciplinary actions such as the ones that are being implemented by the whole ECPAT network.



Countries on the map where sexual exploitation of children has been reported: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, England, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Madagascar, Moldova, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey.

4. HANDLING OF REPORTS & COLLABORATION

Within the four countries considered in this analysis, the persons in charge of receiving and handling the reports did not benefit from a dedicated training to SECTT cases.

In Austria, ECPAT employees in charge of receiving and handling the reports receive a training on managing cases of violence including sexual violence.

In Germany, ECPAT employees in charge of receiving and handling the reports receive a training on how to handle reports on the phone with psychologists from Wendepunkt. This training includes techniques to keep a personal distance as well as techniques to talk to persons that are upset. They also started Team Supervisions beginning of 2018 on these topics as well as regular team meetings to discuss and manage recent reports and cases, to review the handling of those reports, and to determine what they can learn to be better able to handle the diversity of incoming reports.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, there was no real training provided to ECPAT employees in charge of receiving and handling the reports but professionals have benefited from consultations designed to share experience and expertise.

The four countries respond to visitors who report cases whenever possible, except of course when reports are made anonymously. Austria provides a follow-up of the case if the visitor requests one, and Germany explains, in some cases and when possible, the steps that have been taken. Belgium put in place an automatic reply to all received reports (see “good practices” section for more details).

All countries forward the reports to their police. Belgium and the Netherlands do so automatically and forward all the information except when a report is made anonymously, the name of the person does not appear. In Germany, reports are not automatically forwarded to the police. Depending on the case, portal officials may contact partners in the country involved in the case or may contact counseling centres in Germany or the International Social Service. This decision is made by the ECPAT employees in charge of receiving and handling the reports following a written case management discussion and a review by two persons (the four-eyes principle).

Austria forwards the report depending on a list of criteria that includes information about the potential suspect or victim and the location, date and other details useful for the police. Thus, the decision to forward is made on a case-by-case basis, using all information which the reporter agreed to forward or which is relevant for the police to investigate.

To date, there is no written procedure and protocol between the ECPAT groups and the police to specify how to handle the reports. In Germany, ECPAT and the police have entered a brief memorandum of understanding which states that the parties will work collaboratively, that the confidentiality of information will be respected, and that outlines the types of information that police and ECPAT need. Austria is in the process of discussing a similar MOU with the police, and all ECPAT groups should follow their lead to make the process more professional and to understand what really makes a report useful for investigations and collaboration with other NGO's or reporting platforms at national level. Such written procedures and protocols could enable the ECPAT groups to discuss with reporters the information needed by police prior to the transfer of the report to the police, resulting in more complete reports. ECPAT Netherlands is currently working on a flow chart which is now at the Public Prosecution office to determine how, as an NGO, they might work more on scaling up information of reports together with Terre des Hommes (which works with forensic ICT and private detectives in the country and in some other destinations) and Free a Girl (which works with private detectives at destinations). Because these cases involve serious and difficult investigations, the NGOs, Police, and Public Prosecution Office must agree on how these matters will be handled.

In Belgium, as of 2019, reporters will have the possibility to tick a box “I would like to be kept informed about further investigation”. Consequently, an amendment has been made to the informal agreement: ECPAT Belgium will call the Police after each report for which the box has been ticked. They will ask what steps have been taken and which extra information is needed and will notify the reporter.

Furthermore, organizing structural meetings between the police and the ECPAT groups could improve cooperation among these key actors, which to date has continued to be rather informal in the four countries. Structural meetings are already held in Belgium (one to three times per year) in the framework of the STOP Group; in Germany (once a year) with the Federal criminal police to discuss reports and new developments; and in the Netherlands, where they meet twice per year to discuss processes and during which they organize the national multi-stakeholder meetings of “Don’t Look Away.”

All countries ensure the protection of personal data and are in line with the EU General data protection regulation.

5. POLICE INVESTIGATIONS AND CONVICTIONS

In two out of the four countries (Germany and the Netherlands), there is no information available regarding the investigations conducted and convictions obtained as the result of a portal report. Because of the federal structure in Germany, the Federal Criminal Police Office is only directly involved in investigations abroad and hands cases concerning sexual violence over to the State criminal Police Office. Thus, it is quite difficult to receive information on cases resulting from reports that ECPAT forwarded. For internal processes, ECPAT Germany receives information about cases resulting from reports in which someone from of ECPAT provided support. The police decide on the information ECPAT Germany receives; however, the exchange provides valuable learning experiences for both sides.

In Austria, we know that only two reports led to investigations but up to date there have been no convictions resulting from reports. In Belgium, none of the reports led to investigations or convictions for three main reasons:

- Reports are too vague
- Reports do not concern an offence
- Reports have been sent to other competent authorities in Belgium (other police sections, for instance) or abroad (in such a case, it only means that there is no follow up and information about a conviction).

We can deduce from this information that communication about which information is crucial to start police investigations would be welcomed or should be more detailed within the reporting templates. All countries agree that the more specific the information provided is, the easier the case is to investigate. Data including specific information on the involved persons (as in Austria and Germany) and a detailed description of the facts; the identify of the offender (such as name or anything enabling to identify the person precisely); where the offense occurred (hotel, address, geolocalisation), description of the facts (what kind of offence); the identify of the victim; when the incident occurred (the more recent is a report and the more chance it has to be investigated); appear crucial. A specific message reminding the public that a vague report may not be acted upon could push people to give as much information as possible.

ECPAT Germany nevertheless reminds that the report of “new” hotspots (Streets/Cities etc.), for example in Cambodia, resulted in a field visit of the Federal Criminal Police Office in Cambodia. Therefore, any information can still be important for the police work though. This

raises the question of the use that we want to make of the platforms. To date, there is no real use of the platforms' information to feed data regarding cases of child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism or to identify trends that could emerge from the field on this phenomenon, or even to do common advocacy towards governments with the ECPAT groups located in the "hotspots" countries. Unless we use this data in a useful manner, travelers might become reluctant to report because they will not understand the purpose and usefulness of their report.

6. TERMINOLOGY & VISIBILITY

In **Austria**, no inappropriate terms are used. All the terms are in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines.

In **Belgium**, no inappropriate terms are used. All the terms are in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines.

In **Germany**, no inappropriate terms are used. All the terms are in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines.

The **Netherlands** uses the phrase "child sex tourism" and "sexual exploitation of children in tourism". These terms should be replaced to be in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines.

A specific attention should be paid to the terminology, especially if no hidden words are used on the national reporting portals. It is of course necessary to be in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines, but the common language known and used by potential reporters should be taken into account as well to improve search engine optimization.

In Belgium, no hidden words are used to date, but it is something they would like to develop, and we can see that search words are not in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines ("child prostitution fight" or "countries known for prostitution" for instance). In the Netherlands, in 2017, the search word "child prostitution" was the main one.

SECTION 4. GOOD PRACTICES

Visibility of the reporting platforms

Germany is currently working with a student group on Google Ad Words in order to increase their platform visibility.

Information available on the reporting platforms

In the Netherlands, it is possible to upload pictures and documents while reporting. Another good practice from this country is that there are options to report anonymously, to keep the contact information secret from the police, and to share the contact information with the police.

Handling of reports

In Germany, there a “four eyes” principle is applied to review of incoming reports. Additionally, ECPAT employees in charge of receiving and handling the reports received a training on how to handle reports on the phone with psychologists from Wendepunkt. This training included techniques on keeping objectivity as well as techniques to talk to persons who are upset and/or other stakeholders.

They also started Team Supervisions beginning of 2018 on the reporting topic as well as regular team meetings to discuss recent reports (case management), the handling of those reports, and what they can learn from reports to improve handling the diversity of incoming reports.

In Belgium, reporter receive an automated message thanking them for the report and informing them of the next steps and actions to be taken.

Thank you for getting involved. We will pass on the information you have given us to the competent authorities. Your report will soon be added to our reporting map.

Good to know

Your report may not directly lead to someone's arrest. Investigations into sex crimes perpetrated against children can take years. Despite this, however, it is thanks to citizens' reports such as yours that national and international police forces are able to gradually match up information and ultimately stop criminals.

In Belgium, in 2019, reporters will have the option of ticking the box “I would like to be kept informed about further investigation.” This option is a good means of getting reporters more involved. The information is shared by ECPAT Belgium, whose staff discuss with the police about the case whenever it is possible. The option represents a good compromise between the reality of the field (lack of time and role of the police which is not to keep the citizens informed about all the ongoing investigations) and the necessity for the reporters to feel they were useful thanks to their report.

Cooperation with other stakeholders

In Germany, the Federal Foreign Office has included the portal “nicht-wegsehen.net” on their App for secure travel.

Tourism companies, ministries, tourism schools, and ITB also promote the national portal very actively via social media and support the campaign “Don’t Look Away”. A similar promotion exists in the Netherlands.

In Belgium, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs added the “I say STOP!” website on the Travellers Online website for safe travel. The STOP group which coordinates the campaign is a multi-stakeholder group.

In the Netherlands, there is a track for cooperation with other NGOs such as Terre des Hommes, which works with forensic ICT and private detectives in the country and in some other destinations, as well as Free a Girl, which works with private detectives on destinations.

SECTION 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based upon the analysis of the reporting portals and the interviews conducted with professionals who receive reports in the different countries involved in this research.

1. INTERNATIONAL PORTAL

1. There are currently 20 countries on the international reporting portal. **The number of countries using the portal should be increased** and countries from other regions such as Asia, Africa or Latin America should be added.
2. Each portal should include **a short sentence describing extraterritorial legislation** and the basis for a country's assertion of jurisdiction over a matter that occurred outside its own borders. This description would be helpful for people to understand why they should report incidents occurring abroad.
3. **Increase the visibility of the reporting portal** by taking into account the technical information developed within the relevant paragraph (page 11).
4. For at least all the indirect links that appear when one clicks on a country flag, **information should be available both in the national language and in English**. For now, language selection between English and the national language is not automatic.
5. Countries that are concerned by direct links but which do not **provide elementary information and translation in English** should consider the option, especially when they already receive reports in English.
6. **Resolve the technical problems** (for Mauritius, Romania and Ukraine) **that affect access to the sub-portals at national level**.
7. **Terminology used should be updated in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines**. However, specific attention should be paid to the search words that lay reporters often use. Indeed, whether we want to be in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines, it is essential that people find the website when they search for it using common key words. We should see whether it is possible to add « hidden » words on the homepage.
8. **Create a specific app** to be able to use geolocalisation and to pre-register (name and contact details), so people can do a report "on the spot".
9. **A clear communication strategy should be elaborated** so that member countries of the international reporting platform know when it is relevant to promote the international portal or the national one and how (marketing strategy, report button...).

10. **A social media campaign should be launched** in order to increase the visibility of the portal.

2. NATIONAL PORTALS

11. **The terminology used should be updated in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines**, whether it be within the name of the portal or within the descriptions within the portal. As for the international reporting portal, a specific attention should be paid to what search words reporters use. Indeed, whether we want to be in line with the Luxembourg Guidelines, it is essential that people find the website when they search for it with key words notably. We should see whether it is possible to add « hidden » words on the homepage, for instance.
12. Improve the visibility of the portals by **taking into account the Google Ad Words tool**.
13. **Social media campaigns should be launched** in order to increase the visibility of the national portals, as it has been proven that the visibility is increased thanks to it.
14. **A Memorandum of Understanding should be signed** between the national police and the low-threshold level (at least with the ECPAT groups) so that:
- The reporting procedure will be clearly defined and improved: what information is necessary to the national police to investigate? When should a report be forwarded or not? How should reports be classified among the different categories? Who are the contact persons (for SECTT situations and others).
 - Structural meetings between the police and the ECPAT members should be organized to discuss the reporting process and the follow-up of the reports, especially to discuss whether the crimes were prosecuted or whether the suspicion could be clarified.
15. **A system should be developed to unify categorization and classification of reports**. Consensus from all countries is needed regarding the terminology, the classification and the categorization of reports. Within this process must be discussed whether the existing categories are suitable and if other categories, such as sexual abuse of non-national children in the countries themselves, are needed.
16. **Improve staff training in** handling reports to make reports more efficient and to better react to incoming reports. This would also improve data collection.
17. **Create an app** (potentially based on or adapted from the EU application that should also be created – see recommendation n°8) to facilitate the access to the reporting portal for travelers and tourists.
18. **Add the option of uploading pictures** for people who report a potential situation of child sexual exploitation. The more precise and detailed the report is, the better it is to investigate a case.

19. **Clearly define the usefulness of the platforms** to know whether the objective is only to lead to investigations or to also learn from the field (new hotspots for instance) and potentially to feed the database on SECTT phenomenon (interactive map with all the countries where reports were received for instance).