

YOUTH CALL FOR ACTION

“Digital Rights of Youth against Violence”

We, the young people, students from the European School of The Hague and the International School of The Hague, aged between 12 and 15, from a variety of national, cultural and social backgrounds, have gathered on 20 November 2018 at Europol’s headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands, to participate in the 1st European Youth Day at Europol. We have gathered to discuss the “Digital Rights of Youth against Violence” regarding our protection against online threats and to open a dialogue between Europol, representing the EU law enforcement community and us, the young people.

We have acknowledged 18 November as the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, and the 20 November as the anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We recognise and appreciate the efforts that law enforcement throughout Europe has undertaken in order to ensure the safety of minors, including Europol’s organisation of this event. Nevertheless, on this occasion today, we wish to make our **strongest statement yet** highlighting the fact that violent forms of crime are still part of some children and young people’s lives in the world.

We declare that:

1. Internet and any other technological developments have brought and will continue to bring endless opportunities and positive improvements to our society, opening new ways of communication and interaction that we, the younger generation, can embrace from the moment we are born, in a natural and intuitive way. However, the use of this technology can also create risks, for example opening new criminal pathways that can and do directly affect us;
2. Online crimes against minors (among which we are particularly concerned about sexual coercion and extortion, bullying, the production and use of child sexual exploitation materials, sexting, grooming, ID theft, sexual harassment and self-harm social media challenges) are a breach of our fundamental human rights, in relation to our personal dignity, safety, privacy, personal data and personal rights, as recognised by the international community through various treaties and international agreements;

3. We are deeply disturbed about these online threats that, both directly and indirectly, can affect all our lives, happiness, and well-being along with fulfilment of the rights and duties bestowed upon us in order for us to fully participate in society;
4. We acknowledge the importance of our online privacy, and seek guidance on the rightful use of technology and the internet to safeguard it, both in terms of how we can act and what we can expect from others. We wish for the online world to be a safe environment, where our data is secure, where we can interact safely and last but not least, where we can safely grow as digital citizens;
5. We recognise the important role that law enforcement, and all relevant stakeholders (public and private institutions, educators, parents, care givers, etc.) play in ensuring the safety of youth, both online and offline;
6. We are convinced that it is up to each of us to contribute to our online and offline safety. However, in order to be able to defend ourselves, we need the right mechanisms and the empowerment that only those with more knowledge than us can provide. Therefore, we believe that prevention and awareness efforts are essential tools which law enforcement and its partners can use when it comes to combating online crimes against children. For example the Say No! campaign, which was launched by Europol in conjunction with European law enforcement agencies on 19 June 2017;
7. We are determined to make our voices heard and to ask law enforcement, decision makers and all relevant stakeholders to take our opinions into consideration when devising or updating cybersecurity strategies and internet-related policies.

In light of the points above, we would like to:

1. **Encourage** Europol experts and law enforcement agencies, with the help of schools and educational centres worldwide, to expand the Say No! campaign in order to amplify its messages aimed at the prevention of young victims of sexual exploitation, including sexual coercion and extortion;
2. **Empower** Europol to continue its role in coordinating and supporting law enforcement agencies in the fight against online sexual exploitation and related offline crimes against us;
3. **Call upon** Europol and law enforcement agencies to improve their working processes, technical ability and knowledge exchange among dedicated police officers and Europol experts;
4. **Remind** all relevant stakeholders from private and public institutions, including governments and law enforcement agencies, that they do play a key role in our education, as well as in educating our parents and carers on the safe use of internet;
5. **Call upon** internet governance institutions, internet providers, policy makers and all relevant stakeholders to create a safer internet for children and young people, for example in terms of

specific content and search options that could be tailored in an age appropriate way to meet our curiosity and needs;

6. **Insist** that our personal data is safeguarded by the companies who request it from us. We take upon ourselves to protect our information to the best of our knowledge, but we expect the same from those we entrust our details to;
7. **Further insist** on the need to draft the terms and conditions for mobile apps, websites and social media channels on a simple and clear manner, customized to our age, so that we can properly understand the privacy implications of their use;
8. **Encourage** every child and teenager around the world to make a respectful use of the internet, standing together by becoming a youth advocate against harmful online peer behaviours such as bullying, harassment, social exclusion and other technology misuses and abuses which could negatively impact our physical and mental health;
9. **Call upon** schools and educational institutions to develop policies and procedures to reinforce our safety while we are connected to internet during school hours, providing us with the necessary trusted environment to look for and find help as required;
10. **Remind** our parents and carers, that we live online just as much as we do offline, and when it comes to technology we need to be raised with the same ethical principles and values, protected with the same level of understanding, and guided with the same growing paths, in the real world and online;
11. **Invite** all professionals and in fact all members of society to support and promote every activity that could help to end any form of sexual exploitation of children and youth around the world;
12. **Recommend** that Europol continues to organise an European Youth Day at Europol on an annual basis in order for us to appraise the impact that this first Call for Action has had,- and to further develop our role in trying to ensure a safer online and offline world for young people.

Adopted by acclamation in The Hague, 20 November 2018
83 youth advocates
from
the European School of The Hague and International School of The Hague