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**PRESS RELEASE****Under Embargo until 6:00 CET on 1st June 2022**

## **WeProtect Global Alliance brings together world leaders including the EU, Microsoft, and Ashton Kutcher's Thorn at Global Summit to turn the tide on child sexual abuse online**

- World's largest gathering of leaders from governments, the tech industry and charities focused on ending child sexual abuse online is taking place in Brussels, in the midst of rising pressure on tech companies to act and on governments to regulate online spaces.
- The Tech Coalition will unveil *Trust: Voluntary Framework for Industry Transparency* developed in consultation with civil society and governments.
- European Commissioner Ylva Johansson is urging more than 700 delegates representing governments from 60 countries, tech industry and civil society to back the newly proposed EU legislation and work towards one common objective: to better protect children against child sexual abuse.
- Ashton Kutcher, co-founder of Thorn, is encouraging the over 200 WeProtect Global Alliance members to have a unified approach to protect the millions of children worldwide that are affected by sexual harm online.

Brussels, Belgium (1 June 2022) – Over the last decade, the world has seen a 'tsunami' of growth in child sexual exploitation and abuse online. In response, WeProtect Global Alliance, a movement of over 200 governments, companies, and charities, is co-hosting a Global Summit with the European Commission to drive urgent action to turn the tide on this critical issue for children around the world.

Alliance members are coming together for this Global Summit on 1-2 June in Brussels to ensure child sexual abuse online remains a global political priority, share knowledge on the scale and complexity of this issue, and what is working to tackle it. Significant commitments from members are expected to be announced during the two-day event.

### **Ernie Allen, Chair of the Board, WeProtect Global Alliance says:**

"The scale of child sexual exploitation online is increasing and outstripping the global capacity to respond. This is a problem so complex and so urgent that we need to place it on the agendas of world leaders as a top priority. The WeProtect Global Alliance Summit

is doing that by bringing together high-level decision makers to leverage skills and resources to produce tangible solutions and commitments that will keep all children safe.”

WeProtect Global Alliance recently launched their latest [Global Threat Assessment Report](#), detailing the extent and scope of the threat of child sexual exploitation online, calling for a new approach to reduce the risk to children and prevent abuse before it happens.

The report revealed how child abuse online is a borderless issue affecting minors living everywhere: over half of all survey respondents across 54 countries expressed that they have experienced at least one form of online sexual harm.

WeProtect Global Alliance members are actively participating in the Summit, with concrete commitments and announcements, showing how the forum plays a key role in elevating the conversation on this critical issue and driving further action:

- EU Commissioner Ylva Johansson’s participation in the Summit reiterates that protecting children against child sexual abuse is a priority for the European Commission and stresses the importance of the newly proposed legislation, which would notably make it mandatory for relevant online service providers to detect abuse and report it to a new independent EU Centre to prevent and combat child sexual abuse.
- The Tech Coalition, representing 27 global tech companies, is unveiling *Trust: Voluntary Framework for Industry Transparency* during the Global Summit. The development of this Framework, in consultation with civil society and governments, represents a step forward in the pursuit of greater industry transparency and accountability on responses to child sexual abuse online. Tech Coalition members include Microsoft, Google, TikTok, Meta, PayPal, Twitter, and Apple, among others.
- Adult survivors of childhood sexual violence, who will be represented by delegates from the Brave Movement, are announcing the launch of a Global Day of Action on June 9. They are mobilising survivors and allies around the world to call on the G7 to invest billions and make transformative commitments to end childhood sexual violence everywhere and for every child, including a demand to legislate on a child-rights-driven approach to online end-to-end digital encryption.

A Summit Communiqué will be published following the event. It will include key commitments and announcements from WeProtect Global Alliance members, as well as drawing on the findings and recommendations from the new ‘Framing the Future Report’ carried out in partnership with UNICEF, reviewing the national responses to child sexual abuse online across 42 Alliance countries, launched at the Global Summit.

**Iain Drennan, Executive Director, WeProtect Global Alliance concludes:**

“Child sexual exploitation and abuse online is increasing at a rapid rate and a step change is required in the collective response to create safe online environments for children. WeProtect Global Alliance and our members know that there is much work to be done, and the commitments made during the Global Summit underline that deeper collaboration is the only way turn the tide on this important global issue.”

## **Supporting quotes**

**Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs:**

“Protecting children online and offline is our responsibility as adults, and my responsibility as a politician. I have tabled proposals that are clear, targeted, and proportionate. That means an obligation for providers to detect, report, remove and block child sexual abuse material; and an EU centre to help these efforts and support the victims.”

**Markus Richter, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community and Commissioner for Information Technology of Germany:**

“The fight against sexual abuse of children is one of an international level. Therefore, we welcome the initiative of the EU to launch a new regulation to combat child sexual abuse as this will be a huge step not only for Europe, but for the world. The German government is putting this topic on top of the list of its presidency of G7. We will work together on how we can improve and develop more efficient networks and instruments to fight against this issue.”

**Davor Božinović, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of Croatia:**

“It is precisely due to the alarming situation when it comes to child abuse online that I am particularly thankful to the Commission for launching the new legislative proposal, which also sets ground for the establishment of the EU Centre on Child Sexual Abuse. In its implementation, we are ready to further enhance the cooperation with Internet service providers on a similar basis as to the one which we have already set in the context of the TCO regulation.”

**Cornelius Williams, Director, Child Protection, Programme Group, UNICEF:**

“Every day there are new tragic cases to remind us that no country or region is immune from the threat of online child sexual abuse. Nationally representative surveys with children across 12 countries during 2020–2021 show that up to 20 per cent of children suffered online sexual exploitation and abuse in the past year. We are working in all regions of the world to address this serious violation of children’s rights. I’ve seen

impressive progress in many countries, but gaps remain. It's only through multisectoral and comprehensive action that we will be able to make a difference. The WeProtect Global Alliance and its model national response framework are critical for driving forward this collective action."

**Mama Fatima Singhateh, UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children:**

"We are witnessing today a serious problem at a very critical time. Given the transnational nature of online child sexual abuse offences, addressing this issue requires a holistic approach and commitment from all stakeholders to keep children safe. We therefore all have a role to play to addressing this scourge and we can only succeed if we all work together."

**Dr Paul Zeitz, survivor and Executive Coordinator of the Brave Movement:**

"Survivors of childhood sexual violence and our allies from all over the world have backed our #BeBrave Call to Action and G7 global petition, informed by national survivor movements in over 20 countries. The #BeBrave Global Day of Action on June 9, 2022, that we are announcing during the WeProtect Alliance Global Summit will call on G7 leaders to be brave and take bold action to end childhood sexual violence when they meet in June."

**Alexandra Evans, Director of Safety Public Policy, Europe, TikTok:**

"Child sexual exploitation and abuse is a global challenge that requires an urgent and sustained collective response. We are proud members of the WeProtect Global Alliance who share our mission to end child sexual exploitation online and we value the important cross-stakeholder collaboration made possible through their Global Summit."

**Jacqueline Beauchere, Global Head of Platform Safety, Snap Inc.:**

"Snap has a long-standing commitment to combating child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on our platform. The exploitation of any member of our community, especially young people and minors, is illegal, unacceptable, and explicitly prohibited by our Community Guidelines. We use the latest technologies and develop our own tools to detect, disrupt, remove and report illegal content and activity. We also fight back against such abuse through public awareness-raising and education, and cross-platform and multi-sector collaboration. The WeProtect Global Alliance Summit is a great example of the multi-party cooperation and collaboration necessary to help stop these heinous crimes."

**Sean Litton, Executive Director, Tech Coalition said:**

"When we launched Project Protect, our Members pledged to increase transparency and accountability in their efforts to combat online sexual exploitation and abuse of children,

and this Framework is a critical step in seeing those efforts through. Transparency is imperative to both our understanding of how sexual exploitation and abuse is manifested online and to driving effective measures to combat it. I am proud of the work our industry Members have put into the creation of this framework, and grateful to the industry, civil society, and government leaders whose feedback was crucial to its development. I continue to be inspired by industry's commitment to combating the sexual exploitation and abuse of children online and look forward to supporting them in their efforts as leader of this Coalition."

## Global Summit 2022 content

To access the latest content, information and developments on the Global Summit 2022 click [here](#) and follow the hashtag **#TurnTheTide** on social media.

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## Notes to Editors

### WeProtect Global Alliance

WeProtect Global Alliance brings together experts from government, the private sector and civil society to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse online.

The Alliance generates political commitment and practical approaches to make the digital world safe and positive for children, preventing sexual abuse and long-term harm.

In 2020, WeProtect Global Alliance relaunched as an independent organisation and is the combination of two initiatives:

- The European Commission and US Department of Justice’s Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online; and
- WePROTECT Children, established by the UK Government as a global multi-stakeholder response to combating online child sexual abuse.

The Alliance consists of 99 governments, 56 companies, 71 civil society organisation and nine intergovernmental organisations.

Learn more at: <https://www.weprotect.org/>

#### **Definition for ‘Child sexual exploitation and abuse online’**

Child sexual exploitation and abuse that is partly or entirely facilitated by technology, i.e., the internet or other wireless communications. This includes the production and sharing of child sexual abuse material online, the livestreaming of abuse and the online grooming of children for sexual exploitation.