

Home » Briefing Room » Justice News

**JUSTICE NEWS**

**Department of Justice**

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

**Attorney General Eric Holder and High-Level Officials Launch  
Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online**

*49 Countries Worldwide Join Forces to Fight Online Child Sexual Abuse*

Attorney General Eric Holder and European Union (EU) Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström will launch the Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online at a ministerial conference tomorrow, Dec. 5, 2012, in Brussels. The initiative aims to unite decision-makers all around the world to better identify and assist victims and to prosecute the perpetrators.

Participants at the launch include ministers and high-level officials from 27 EU member states, who are also joined by 22 countries outside the EU, including Albania, Australia, Cambodia, Canada Croatia, Georgia, Ghana, Japan, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Serbia, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United States and Vietnam.

“This international initiative will strengthen our mutual resources to bring more perpetrators to justice, identify more victims of child sexual abuse, and ensure that they receive our help and support,” said Attorney General Holder. “Through this global alliance we can build on the success of previous cross-border police operations that have dismantled international pedophile networks and safeguard more of the world’s children.”

“Behind every child abuse image is an abused child, an exploited and helpless victim. When these images are circulated online, they can live on forever. Our responsibility is to protect children wherever they live and to bring criminals to justice wherever they operate. The only way to achieve this is to team up for more intensive and better coordinated action worldwide,” said Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström.

The countries of the alliance are committing themselves to a number of policy targets and goals aimed at combating the pervasive problem of child sexual abuse online - including the manufacturing and sharing of child pornography, online enticement of minors and online child prostitution. Thanks to increased international cooperation, the fight against child sexual abuse online will therefore be more effective.

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes International studies indicate that more than one million images of children subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation are currently online. According to the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, 50,000 new child abuse images are added online each year.

No country can fight this horrible phenomenon alone, as the criminal networks behind it know no boundaries and exploit the lack of information exchange and the legal loopholes that exist within and between countries. This is why international cooperation is crucial to effectively investigate cases of child sexual abuse online and to better identify and prosecute offenders.

Global Alliance: Greater Commitments for Better Results

Tomorrow at the launching conference, the participating countries will make political commitments to pursue a number of goals, notably:

- Enhancing efforts to identify victims and ensuring that they receive the necessary assistance, support and protection;
- Enhancing efforts to investigate cases of child sexual abuse online and to identify and prosecute offenders;
- Increasing children's awareness of online risks, including the self-production of images and 'grooming' methods used by paedophiles
- Reducing the availability of child abuse material online and the re-victimization of children.

Countries would then choose the appropriate action to take at national level to achieve them, and would report regularly.

## **Background**

The United States, through the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, Secret Service, Postal Inspection Service and other government agencies, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry and international partners, has made progress in combating all forms of child sexual exploitation.

The largest U.S. prosecution of an international criminal network organized to sexually exploit children, called Operation Delego, was a U.S.-led operation announced just last year by Attorney General Holder and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. Operation Delego resulted in 72 defendants being charged in the U.S. and more than 500 individuals being targeted for investigation by foreign authorities for their participation in Dreamboard – a private, members-only, online bulletin board that was created and operated to promote pedophilia and encourage the sexual abuse of very young children, in an environment designed to avoid law enforcement detection.

The identification and arrest of the defendants spanned years and involved extensive international cooperation between the United States; Eurojust, the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit; Europol, the European law enforcement agency; and dozens of law enforcement agencies throughout the world. Dreamboard members across five continents were arrested in countries like Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, Kenya, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Qatar, Serbia, Sweden and Switzerland. The location and arrest of Dreamboard members abroad have led to the capture and investigation of other global targets, as well as the identification of numerous children suffering ongoing abuse at their hands. Operation Delego is a good example of the success we can achieve when we work together with our international partners.

To better prosecute these crimes, the Justice Department has created a dedicated team of prosecutors in its Criminal Division called the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) and appointed one specialist in each of the 93 U.S. Attorneys' Offices around the country. CEOS regularly trains and advises the specialists in those offices and has created a network that joins them together, known as Project Safe Childhood. The Justice Department also created a dedicated team of computer forensic specialists and co-located them with our CEOS prosecutors, to ensure that they have the technical support they need to build these important investigations and operations.

In addition, the U.S. Congress has funded the creation of state-level task forces, known as the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces which help state and local agencies to develop successful, long-term responses to online child exploitation. These task forces are supported by the Department of Justice, not just with funding, but with training.

Despite vigorously fighting all aspects of child exploitation, the Justice Department recognizes that more work remains to be done and that work is vital to our collective success in combating this global problem.

For more information regarding the Justice Department's efforts to combat child exploitation, please visit:  
[www.justice.gov/criminal/ceos](http://www.justice.gov/criminal/ceos)

The Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online ministerial conference will take place in Brussels on Dec. 5, 2012. Experts and practitioners from participating governments, as well as representatives from international organizations and academics will examine the state of the problem and discuss the different policy targets of the Global Alliance. Attending ministers from the participating countries will endorse the alliance, in the form of a declaration.

12-1438

Attorney General