

PRESS RELEASE

How to fight child sexual abuse online effectively: Thorn's co-founder Ashton Kutcher joins high-level ECLAG event

- **European child protection organizations have formed an informal coalition – ECLAG – to jointly make available their expertise to policymakers**
- **ECLAG will host a high-level event on March 20 in Brussels on what the vital new EU legislation needs in order to be effective**
- **Among the speakers will be Mié Kohiyama, a survivor of child sexual abuse, MEPs Javier Zarzalejos and Hilde Vautmans, and Ashton Kutcher, co-founder of Thorn**

March 16, 2023, Brussels – Ending child sexual abuse requires a multi-perspective approach including law enforcement, child rights professionals, prevention, victim support, survivors, technology, and more. A closely-knit ecosystem encompassing all these fields of expertise has helped increase child safety online and offline in Europe over the past decades. The legislative proposal crafted by policymakers in Brussels to tackle child sexual abuse is urgently needed and holds tremendous potential to further boost these efforts.

To join efforts and bring together child rights and technical experts an informal coalition of child rights and protection organizations has formed as the European Child Sexual Abuse Legislation Advocacy Group (ECLAG). ECLAG brings together over 60 organizations with the Brave Movement, ECPAT, Missing Children Europe, IWF, Terre des Hommes and Thorn as members of the steering group.

On March 20, ECLAG will host a high-level hybrid event in Brussels on the need for an EU regulation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse online. The first part of this gathering will consist of keynote speeches from MEP Javier Zarzalejos and MEP Hilde Vautmans, both members of the European Parliament, and Ashton Kutcher, the co-founder of Thorn.

In the following debate, panelists will discuss what policymakers will need to adjust in the regulation to better protect children globally. The panel will consist of Mié Kohiyama, co-Founder of the Be Brave Movement France, SAGE Member of the Brave Movement and survivor of childhood sexual violence, Michael Tunks, Head of Public Affairs at IWF, Heidi de Pauw, CEO of Child Focus and founding member of Missing Children Europe, and Cathal Delaney, a former law enforcement officer from Europol who now works for Thorn. The panel will be moderated by Amy Crocker, Head of Child Protection and Technology at ECPAT International. Closing remarks will be given by Nathalie Meurens, EU Advocacy Lead at Terre des Hommes Netherlands.

“I put the highest hopes in the European Union. We must get this legislation right to make sure that as few children as possible have to live through the horrible nightmare I have been through”, says Mié Kohiyama from the Brave Movement and survivor of childhood sexual violence *“We are brave so that children can be safe.”*

“For ECPAT, being part of ECLAG means building a strong coalition of voices and professionals to ensure EU policymakers recognise how much this legislation is needed. Leveraging the unique insights and expertise of the group's members, we will do everything in our power to make sure the new legislation effectively protects children from sexual abuse online.”, says Amy Crocker, Head of Child Protection and Technology at ECPAT International.

“Defending children from sexual abuse is a never-ending task, because with every new technology – no matter how positive its advances are for our lives – comes new threats to children’s safety,” says Ashton Kutcher, co-founder of Thorn. “I’m proud that Thorn is part of the European child protection ecosystem. Bringing together all our different areas of expertise is the only way to ensure child safety.”

Registration for the event on-site or online is open [here](#).

Press contact

Caroline Schröder, FGS Global
caroline.schroeder@fgsglobal.com
0049 151 16 30 89 49

About ECLAG

The European Child Sexual Abuse Legislation Advocacy Group (ECLAG) is an informal coalition of NGOs and IGOs fighting to protect children from sexual violence and abuse. The ECLAG Group has been established to join forces in the advocacy around the Child Sexual Abuse Regulation proposed by the European Commission in May 2022. ECLAG brings together more than 60 organizations present in Europe and globally. The steering group consists of the Brave Movement, ECPAT, Missing Children Europe, IWF, Terre des Hommes and Thorn.