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WK 832/2023 INIT

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MEETING DOCUMENT

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Law Enforcement Working Party (Police)

Subject: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse
- EDPB/EDPS Joint Opinion 4/2022

Delegations will find attached the speaking points and presentation made by EDPS at the Law Enforcement WP (Police) meeting of 19-20 January 2023 on the above-mentioned subject.

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Speaking Points (Active)

Introduction

- Thank you for the invitation and for the opportunity to present the joint EDPB-EDPS Opinion on this highly important topic. The proposal to combat CSAM is particularly close to my heart, mainly for two reasons:
- On the one hand, I am a father of two minors, daughters. This legislative proposal has made it clear to me that we, as a society, obviously have a problem that we cannot close our eyes to and which urges us to act.
- On the other hand, the outcome of this legislative process will decisively determine how free and secure we Europeans will be in using communication technology in the future.
- As commendable as it is that the proposal has drawn the attention of Europe and the world to child sexual abuse and its depiction, the question remains whether the chosen strategy to combat it is the right one.
- The European Data Protection Board, i.e. the heads of the data protection supervisory authorities in Europe, together with the EDPS, gave a unanimous answer to this question and set it down in Joint Opinion 4/2022 of July last year. **In short, we do not believe that the approach chosen by the Commission is fully compatible with European fundamental rights**, and I will come to that in a minute.

Disclaimer:

- Please bear in mind that the EDPB-EDPS Joint Opinion is a consensual work of 31 independent supervisory authorities, focusing on high-level comments on the main issues within our specific data protection expertise.

Relevant CJEU case law

- When analysing the Proposal, the EDPS and EDPB took care to carefully consider the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice. Since there have been no comparable encroachments on the confidentiality of communications so far, we had to orientate

ourselves mainly on the Court's extensive case law on data retention.

- Two key words from that jurisprudence are “general and indiscriminate”. According to the Court's jurisprudence, **general and indiscriminate retention** of traffic and location data, **even for combatting serious crime is not compatible** with Article 7 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- Another important element in the Court's case law is that measures permitting public authorities to have access on a generalised basis to the **content of a communication** are more likely to affect the **essence** of the rights guaranteed in Articles 7 and 8 of the Charter.
- Both elements are highly relevant also with respect to measures for the detection of CSAM and solicitation of children, like the measures envisaged by the Proposal.

Are detection orders targeted?

- According to the Explanatory Memorandum, the Commission's proposal aims to provide for a system of **“targeted” detection** orders. The EDPS and EDPB consider, however, that the proposed conditions for the issuance of a detection order will still lead to detection orders with a very broad scope in practice.
- Indeed, the **Proposal does not set clear ‘limits, on the basis of objective and non-discriminatory factors’**, as the Court required in its data retention jurisprudence for traffic and location data¹. Instead, the Proposal includes a number of general conditions for the issuance of a detection order, but those **conditions still leave a very broad margin of appreciation**, which would lead to considerable uncertainty on how to balance the rights at stake in each individual case.

¹ According to the CJEU, Member States could provide, for the purposes of safeguarding national security, combating serious crime and preventing serious threats to public security, for the targeted retention of traffic and location data which is limited, on the basis of objective and non-discriminatory factors, according to

- o the categories of persons concerned or
- o using a geographical criterion,

for a period that is limited in time to what is strictly necessary, but which may be extended

- And while the Proposal also provides for a number of procedural safeguards, I must underline that **procedural safeguards can never fully replace substantive safeguards**.
- The Proposal envisages the involvement of independent authorities and national courts, who are expected to ensure that detection orders remain as targeted as possible. **Without clear and precise substantive obligations, however, the risk remains that detection orders remain very broad in practice.**
- Another aspect, which I consider as highly problematic, is that in the construction chosen by the Commission, **the provider's own risk management** (or even the provider's willingness or unwillingness to avoid a detection order) could ultimately be decisive for the decision on the encroachment on fundamental rights.
- Under the Proposal, the legislator would effectively delegate his task to regulate to a judge or other independent administrator, who shall be responsible not only to consider the totality of circumstances, but also to balance the interests involved. But as we are mostly dealing with the provider's risk management, the interests involved may not be clearer to the judge than to the legislator. The judge will probably not learn more about the individual children at risk or the individuals using the service. The balancing would have to be very abstract. It would actually be the balancing that would normally be required from the legislator.
- This is an unprecedented level of vagueness and legal uncertainty. While the Proposal certainly tries to make the detection orders look 'targeted', the conclusion of the EDPB and EDPS, however, is that the Proposal **fails to ensure a targeted approach**.

Types of detection orders

- Now I would like to briefly address the three types of detection measures that can be ordered, for
 - known CSAM,
 - unknown CSAM, and
 - grooming.

- In all three types of detection orders, the technologies currently available rely on the automated processing of content data of all affected users. **Given the general conditions for the issuance of a detection order under the Proposal, there is a real risk of general and indiscriminate monitoring for all three types of detection orders.**
- In addition, the EDPS and EDPB consider that the measures envisaged for the detection of unknown child sexual abuse material ('CSAM') and solicitation of children ('grooming') in interpersonal communications are particularly problematic due to their intrusiveness, their probabilistic nature and the error rates associated with such technologies.
- But the fact that the Joint Opinion labels new CSAM and grooming detection as "particularly problematic", should not be interpreted to infer that detection of known material as proposed could be lawful.
- Indeed, the EDPB and EDPS consider that the interference created by the detection orders as proposed would be incompatible with the requirements imposed by the EU Charter of fundamental rights.

The role of the EU Centre

- Before concluding, I would like to briefly reflect upon the role of the EU Centre. The Proposal aims to move, at least in part, the task of dealing with immanent errors of the technology from the providers to the EU Centre. As an old-school administrator, I think this is a good thing.
- Moreover, manual sifting of content data is a very significant intrusion into the privacy of communications, that should be executed only by trustworthy staff without a particular interest in the matter and with the necessary knowledge, neutrality and supervision. I do not see such conditions fulfilled by the providers. However, if we install such a neutral, civil authority to handle false positives and make sure they do not reach law enforcement, then we should also aim at the necessary organisational and technical separation of the centre from Europol.
- This concludes my introductory remarks. I am happy to elaborate on aspects in response to your questions.



The EDPB/EDPS Joint Opinion 4/2022 2022 on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse

**EUROPEAN
DATA
PROTECTION
SUPERVISOR**

The EU's independent data
protection authority

Wojciech Wiewiórowski

19 January 2023





Outline



- Relevant CJEU case law
- Are detection orders targeted?
- Different types of dection orders
- The role of the EU Centre

- Focus on communication providers (where we have more case law at EU level and probably more severe interference)



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Relevant CJEU case law



Relevant CJEU case law

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- case law on data retention: Tele2 Sverige and Watson and Others (C-203/15 and C-698/15, EU:C:2016:970), of 6 October 2020, La Quadrature du Net and Others (C-511/18, C-512/18 and C-520/18, EU:C:2020:791), and of 5 April 2022, Commissioner of An Garda Síochána and Others (C-140/20, EU:C:2022:258), Spacenet and Deutsche Telekom (C-793/19 and C-794/19) of 20 September 2022.
- no general and indiscriminate retention of traffic and location data to combat serious crime
- EDPS Opinion 7/2020 on the Proposal for temporary derogations from Directive 2002/58/EC for the purpose of combatting child sexual abuse online: general and indiscriminate scanning of all text-based communications not proportionate



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Are detection orders
targeted?



,Targeted Retention` in the jurisprudence of the CJEU

The national legislator could 'provide, for the purposes of safeguarding national security, combating serious crime and preventing serious threats to public security, for the **targeted retention** of traffic and location data which is limited, **on the basis of objective and non-discriminatory factors**, according to

- the **categories of persons concerned** or
- using a **geographical criterion**,

for a period that is limited in time to what is strictly necessary, but which may be extended.

(Spacenet and Telekom Deutschland, para. 75)



Are detection orders targeted?

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No limitation in the sense of the jurisprudence of the Court:

- no clear regulation with preconditions and legal consequences, and
- the Proposal would ultimately leave the decision to the judge.
- the Proposal does not effectively guard against generalised and indiscriminate monitoring by multiple providers for extend periods of time.

The decisions to seek and issue detection orders do not depend on the bearers of the fundamental right to privacy of communication and data protection, but on the behaviour of the provider



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Types of detection orders



Types of detection orders: known CSAM, unknown CSAM, and grooming detection

Risk of general and indiscriminate monitoring exists for all three types of detection orders.

In addition, some types additionally stand out due to high error rates, especially false positives rates, according to the Impact Assessment:

- known CSAM: 0,000000002% (1 in 50 billion)
- unknown CSAM: 0,1% false positives with 80% of total CSAM in the data set
- grooming: 88% accuracy, 12% false positives
- no information on audio communications



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The role of the EU Centre



The role of the EU Centre



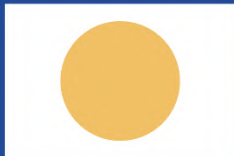
- can help to sort out the false positives
 - limited technical and organisational separation from Europol
 - criteria and safeguards conditioning Europol's access and subsequent use of data obtained from
- the EU Centre's information systems are not specified

Transmission of personal data from the EU Centre to Europol should only take place on a case-by-case basis, following a duly assessed request, via a secure exchange communication tool



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