



Joint Declaration between the Department of Homeland Security and the European Commission

We, the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security and the European Commission Vice-President for Digital Agenda, met today, November 20, 2012, in London, England to set out our commitment to work collectively and in partnership to reduce the risks and maximize the benefits of the Internet for children.

We re-affirm our joint commitment to maintaining an open, global Internet, recognizing that regard for fundamental freedoms online and united efforts to strengthen cybersecurity are mutually reinforcing. It is our mutual belief that the Internet is an inherently civilian space operated by industry and civil society for the benefit of all.

The Internet is an extraordinary place for children—yet while online exploration opens a world of possibilities, it can also expose unwary users to possible dangers. We have a shared vision of the opportunities and of the steps that should be taken to empower and protect children online and better secure our public and private networks. The United States and European Union share a long and historic commitment to increase public awareness of the risks posed by children’s activities online. Through the EU-U.S. Working Group on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime, we have worked to address these vulnerabilities by collaborating on four key cybersecurity issue areas. This joint declaration is a key milestone for EU-U.S. cooperation in this field and for highlighting how we should partner together and on a global level to raise awareness about a safer Internet for children. Efforts like the Global Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Online seek to expand this partnership beyond the U.S. and the EU.

Last month marked the United States’ National Cyber Security Awareness Month and the EU’s pilot Cyber Security Month. Both aimed to deliver clear, powerful messages on this issue to the public. The theme of the United States’ Cyber Security Awareness Month this year was “Achieving Cybersecurity Together: Our Shared Responsibility,” a concept echoed in this Declaration. Public-private collaboration in cybersecurity is also taking place year-round through the Stop.Think.Connect.TM campaign, which aims to increase public awareness of cyber threats and empower people to be safer online.

We intend to carry out, a number of actions where, by working together , we can make significant progress:

First, children, their parents, and teachers should be aware of risks, to understand what they are doing when they go online, and to have the skills to make the best use of the opportunities the Internet can offer them. We look to collaborate on cybersecurity awareness-raising efforts to unite approaches and share developed material, such as messaging under the Stop.Think.Connect.TM campaign. We also intend to jointly support an annual Safer Internet Day, and we look to industry, public authorities, schools, and civil society to pool their efforts to ensure that we reach the largest audience possible. As a first step, the U.S. Department of

Homeland Security intends to participate in the EU's Safer Internet Day for young people on February 5, 2013.

Secondly, parents and guardians should be able to trust the content and services their children access. Here we intend to continue working with industry, law enforcement, and other stakeholders so that parents and children can make informed choices online.

Thirdly, international cooperation is essential if we are to be effective in fighting child sexual abuse online. Excellent work in this field is already being undertaken by the Virtual Global Taskforce on law enforcement collaboration to combat child sexual abuse worldwide and by Interpol, which houses a valuable, international database of child exploitation images that facilitates law enforcement cooperation. We look forward to contributing to international cooperation in fighting child sexual abuse online in the immediate future.

We intend our joint coordination to improve cybersecurity to continue well beyond today's meeting—good cyber hygiene is a daily responsibility for all citizens. The U.S. and the EU intend to continue to work to raise cybersecurity awareness, promote public-private partnerships, and improve our ability to collaborate on cybersecurity issues of mutual concern. Through such work we hope to reduce risk for our societies and improve our ability to mitigate harm and prosecute perpetrators of heinous crimes such as child exploitation.

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