Combating sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography

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The Council held a first **exchange of views** on a draft framework decision aimed at improving the fight against sexual abuse and exploitation of children. The debate followed a Commission presentation on this proposal issued on 25 March 2009.

Member agreed to step up initiatives and measures to combat these crimes.

The new proposal, which is intended to replace the framework decision 2004/68/JHA, covers the following main priorities relating to:

- **criminal law**: serious forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation currently not covered by EU legislation would be criminalised;
- **use of new technologies**: new forms of sexual abuse and exploitation facilitated by the use of the Internet would be criminalised, such as "grooming" (on-line solicitation of children for sexual purposes);
- **criminal investigation and initiation of proceedings**: a number of provisions would be introduced to assist with investigating offences and bringing charges, in the absence of reporting by the child victim;
- **prosecution of offences committed abroad**: rules on jurisdiction would be amended to ensure that child sexual abusers or exploiters from the EU face prosecution even if they commit their crimes in a non-EU country;
- **protection of victims**: ensuring that abused children have easy access to legal remedies and do not suffer as a result of participating in criminal proceedings;
- **prevention of offences**: special programmes to be implemented throughout the EU and mechanisms to be adopted to block access to websites containing child pornography.