



---

# Operational Training Needs Analysis

## Child Sexual Exploitation

EDUCATE, INNOVATE, MOTIVATE



# Operational Training Needs Analysis

## Child Sexual Exploitation

2021

## Contents

Contents .....	3
List of abbreviations .....	4
Executive Summary .....	5
Background .....	11
Analysis .....	11
Consolidation of data and responses .....	11
Relevance of topics .....	12
Training dimensions .....	13
National level training .....	18
Training dimensions for main topics .....	19
1. Victim identification .....	19
2. Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming .....	20
3. OSINT and social media analysis .....	20
4. Darknet .....	21
5. Prevention and education .....	22
Conclusion .....	23
Annex 1. EU-STNA Chapter on CSE .....	24
Annex 2. Proficiency levels .....	27
Annex 3. Urgency levels .....	28

## List of abbreviations

CAM – Child Abuse Materials

CKC – CEPOL Knowledge Centre

CNU – CEPOL National Unit

CSA – Child Sexual Abuse

CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation

EMPACT – European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats

EU – European Union

EU-STNA – European Union Strategic Training Needs Assessment

JHA – Justice and Home Affairs

JIT – Joint Investigation Team

LE – Law enforcement

MB – Management Board

MS – Member State/s

OCG – Organized Crime Group

OTNA – Operational Training Need Analysis

SPD – Single Programming Document

## Executive Summary

As defined by the Article 3 of the Regulation 2015/2219, CEPOL shall support, develop, implement and coordinate training for law enforcement officials. The **Operational Training Needs Analysis (OTNA) methodology** (as adopted by the Management Board (MB) decision 32/2017/MB (15/11/2017) and 09/2020/MB (29/05/2020)) establishes a structured training needs analysis procedure taking into account deliverables of the EU Strategic Training Needs Assessment (EU-STNA) process.<sup>1</sup> The methodology was piloted in 2018 with limited number of thematic priorities for CEPOL training portfolio planning 2019, namely CSDP missions and Counterterrorism. Building on the strategic training priorities defined by the EU-STNA, CEPOL launched the OTNA on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in 2020. The outcomes of the research will be used to define CEPOL's training portfolio in CSE for 2022.

This report describes training priorities in the area of Child Sexual Exploitation for 2022 based on the analysis of the data received from law enforcement agencies and CEPOL National Units (CNU), and hence represents a part of the law enforcement community in the European Union. The main training topics and subtopics that respondents rated by relevance are stemming from strategic training priorities defined in the EU-STNA. Training aspects identified in the EU-STNA were discussed, validated and finalised by a focus group of experts on Child Sexual Exploitation comprised of representatives of the respective European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) group, the European Commission, Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies and CEPOL. The relevant chapter of the EU-STNA Report is available in Annex 1.

A short-term expert was contracted from the list of individual external experts to assist CEPOL in the analysis of responses and drafting of the OTNA report.

In October 2020, CEPOL approached 26 Member States (MSs)<sup>2</sup> and EU structures (hereinafter institutions) to provide direct contact points dealing with the subject of the OTNA. 25<sup>3</sup> MSs and one EU structure<sup>4</sup> responded to this initiative and nominated 51 experts to respond to the survey. The questionnaire was sent to these nominated contact points and was also distributed via the EMPACT group on Child Sexual Exploitation. This resulted in 58 individual completed answers from different law enforcement (LE) agencies and EU structures representing 12 801 law enforcement officials. In terms of Member States, the responses indicate an exceptional 100% response rate.

All responses indicated clear relevance for the scope of activity, and the **most relevant main topics** (out of the eight individual topics) for law enforcement officials in this area were related to

- **Victim identification** (72% of institutions found it relevant)
- **Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming** (66% of institutions found it relevant)

---

<sup>1</sup> European Union Strategic Training Needs Assessment aims at identifying those EU level training priorities in the area of internal security and its external aspects to help build the capacity of law enforcement officials, while seeking to avoid duplication of efforts and achieve better coordination.

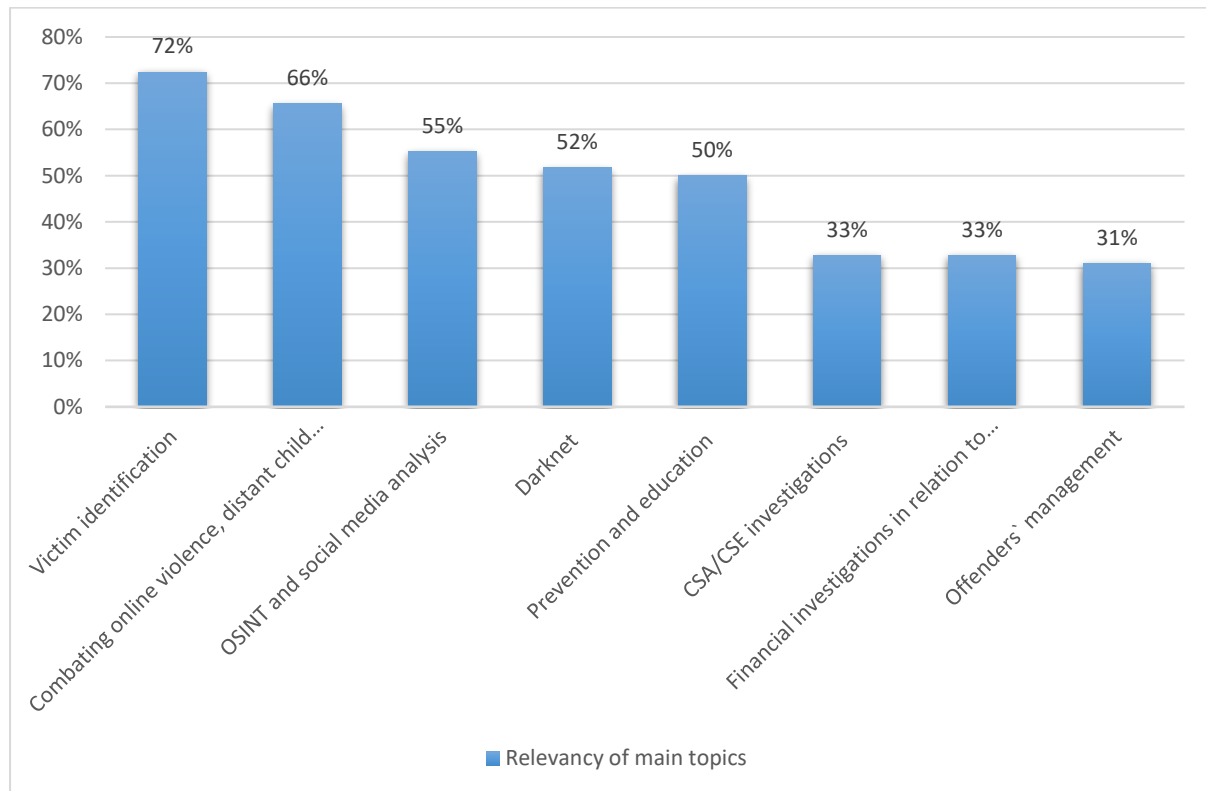
<sup>2</sup> The terminology 'Member States' (MSs) hereinafter refers to 26 Member States of the European Union participating in CEPOL regulation, i.e. all EU Member States excluding Denmark.

<sup>3</sup> Responding countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

<sup>4</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

- **OSINT and social media analysis** (55% of institutions found it relevant)
- **Darknet** (52% of institutions found it relevant), and
- **Prevention and education** (50% of institutions found it relevant).

**Chart 1.** Distribution of training needs depending on the indicated relevance rate



**Table 1.** Relevance rate of main topics

Main Topic	Relevance
Victim identification	72%
Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming	66%
OSINT and social media analysis	55%
Darknet	52%
Prevention and education	50%
CSA/CSE investigations	33%
Financial investigations in relation to CSA/CSE	33%
Offenders' management	31%

As per the methodology, training topics that more than 50% of MSs indicated as relevant training needs are to be considered for further analysis in terms of their content, urgency, proficiency level and number of participants.

Examining the four most relevant main topics, it can be said that they are all considered relatively urgent, ranging from 65% to 73%, meaning that it would be essential and necessary to deliver training

within a year's period<sup>5</sup>. The distribution of the more relevant training needs, depending on the indicated urgency, rate is as follows:

**Table 2.** Relevance and urgency rate of prioritised main topics

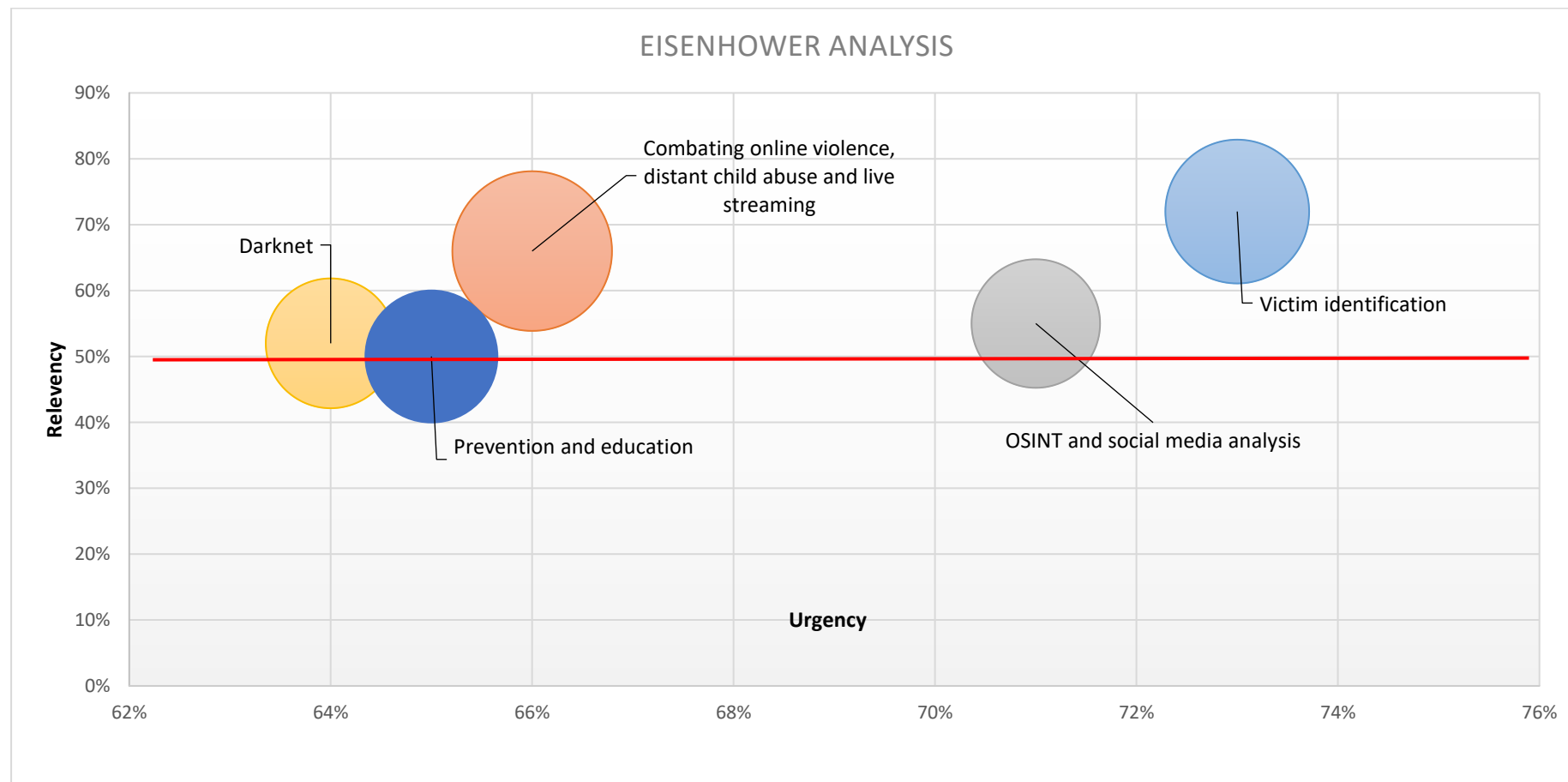
Main Topic	Relevance	Urgency rate	Trainees
Victim identification	72%	73%	1 339
Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming	66%	65%	1 648
OSINT and social media analysis	55%	71%	1 072
Darknet	52%	64%	1 094
Prevention and education	50%	65%	1 140
CSA/CSE investigations	33%	66%	-
Financial investigations in relation to CSA/CSE	33%	61%	-
Offenders` management	31%	59%	-

The Eisenhower Decision Method was applied to demonstrate the distribution of main topics by urgency and relevance rate. The Eisenhower Decision Principle evaluates tasks using the criteria important/unimportant and urgent/not urgent and places them in according quadrants in an Eisenhower Matrix. The order of implementation of tasks should be 1. Important/Urgent, 2. Important/Not Urgent, 3. Unimportant/Urgent, 4. Unimportant/Not Urgent. Chart 2. displays main topics according to this logic, giving a clear overview of priorities for training design.

<sup>5</sup> See explanation of Urgency levels in Annex 3.

**Chart 2.** Relevance and urgency rate of the prioritised main topics

The size of the bubbles corresponds to the number of trainees indicated by respondents.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Number of trainees requiring awareness, practitioner, advanced practitioner, expert and train-the-trainer level training.



With the aim of better understanding training needs of law enforcement officials, various **subtopics** and **horizontal aspects** were presented for the assessment of respondents under each topic. The relevance rate for each subtopic was calculated by adding categories of “Extremely relevant”, “Very relevant” and “Relevant” together.

In reference to the findings, it can be concluded that under the topic of **Victim identification**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- Media files & their visual, contextual, digital analysis
- Proactive investigation
- Investigation standards and sources of child abuse material (CAM)

Under the topic **Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- Tools and mechanisms, including the potential of EU agencies, in particular Europol
- Experiences from other countries

Under the topic **OSINT and social media analysis**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- Case studies
- Methods of open-source intelligence gathering
- Preservation of open-source evidence
- Anonymity on the internet / dangers of OSINT investigations

Under the topic **Darknet**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- Undercover operations on Darknet and deep web
- Securing, obtaining and handling of e-evidence
- Anonymisation; new trends
- Information exchange

Under the topic **Prevention and education**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- EU prevention package

It should be noted that the horizontal aspects identified via the strategic training needs analysis have generally not gained the same popularity compared to the main topics. The first three main topics are ranging from 72% to 55% in relevancy, while the first three horizontal aspects are ranging from 55% to 48%. However, it should be also highlighted that the differences of relevance between **subtopics** and horizontal aspects remain rather small.

**Table 3.** Average relevancy of horizontal aspects among prioritised topics

Horizontal aspect	Relevance
Information exchange	55%
Law enforcement cooperation, JITs	51%
Respective areas of forensics	48%
Links between different crime areas and operational cases	47%
Fundamental and human rights, children’s rights, data protection	46%
Analysis of big data	45%

Respondents indicated that **6 293 participants would need training in 2022 from the 26 responding MSs**. The highest need is indicated by respondents in the proficiency levels of **practitioner, advanced practitioner and awareness**, while expert and train-the-trainer level training is lower on the priority scale (Table 4.). Please find the details of training dimensions in the Analysis section of this report.

**Table 4.** Proficiency levels and number of participants of all institutions

Proficiency level	Number of participants
Awareness	1 640
Practitioner	2 733
Advanced practitioner	1 228
Expert	392
Train-the-trainer	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 293</b>

The OTNA questionnaire identifies the profiles of LE officials who would need training in different topics. Most references were given to investigators, forensic experts and prosecutors; these are the target groups that should be provided with the opportunity to be trained first. Lower priority was indicated for managers, trainers and researchers.

Data on previous training attended at national or regional level is scattered and not apt for statistical analysis. However, CEPOL's previous training activities were mentioned several times, and Europol's training activities a few times. Otherwise, it can be assumed that most other training activities have been implemented by the MSs.

## Background

As defined by the Article 3 of the Regulation 2015/2219, CEPOL shall support, develop, implement and coordinate training for law enforcement officials, while putting particular emphasis on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the context of law enforcement, in particular in the areas of prevention of and fight against serious crime affecting two or more Member States and terrorism, maintenance of public order, international policing of major events, and planning and command of Union missions, which may also include training on law enforcement leadership and language skills.

The SPD 2019-2021 describes Operational Training Needs Analysis as a process to help the realization of strategic goals through the implementation of operational training activities.

The OTNA methodology (as adopted by the MB decision 32/2017/MB (15/11/2017)) was piloted in 2018 with a limited number of thematic priorities for CEPOL training portfolio planning 2019, namely CSDP missions and Counterterrorism. OTNA methodology was updated in 2020 (9/2020/MB) based on CEPOL's experience and the feedback of the MSs.

The methodology consists of a series of seven steps encompassing close and dynamic cooperation with the MSs, in particular the CEPOL National Units and LE agencies, and involving CEPOL Knowledge Centres (CKCs) in the training portfolio design. The overall OTNA process entails data collection and analysis, conducted via and corroborated by introductory surveys, detailed questionnaires and expert interviews. The target group referred to in this methodology is law enforcement officials, as defined in Article 2 of Regulation 2015/2219<sup>7</sup>.

Building on the strategic training priorities defined by the EU-STNA and the experience gained from previous OTNA studies, CEPOL launched the OTNA on Child Sexual Exploitation in 2020. The outcomes of the research will be used to define CEPOL's training portfolio in CSE for 2022.

This report describes training priorities in the area of CSE for 2022 based on the analysis of the data received from law enforcement agencies and CEPOL National Units, and hence represents a part of the law enforcement community in the European Union. The main training topics and subtopics that respondents rated by relevance are stemming from strategic training priorities defined in the EU-STNA. Training aspects identified in the EU-STNA were discussed, validated and finalised by a focus group of experts on Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse comprised of representatives of the respective European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) group, the European Commission, Justice and Home Affairs agencies and CEPOL. The relevant chapters of the EU-STNA Report are available in Annex 1.

## Analysis

### Consolidation of data and responses

The data was processed from the online survey platform Qualtrics to Microsoft Excel. The data was synthesized and analysed by Excel functions. Furthermore, interviews were organized with selected MSs<sup>8</sup> to verify and consolidate the responses from two different perspectives: the difference between reported officials working in the field of CSE and the reported training needs; and the general low-

---

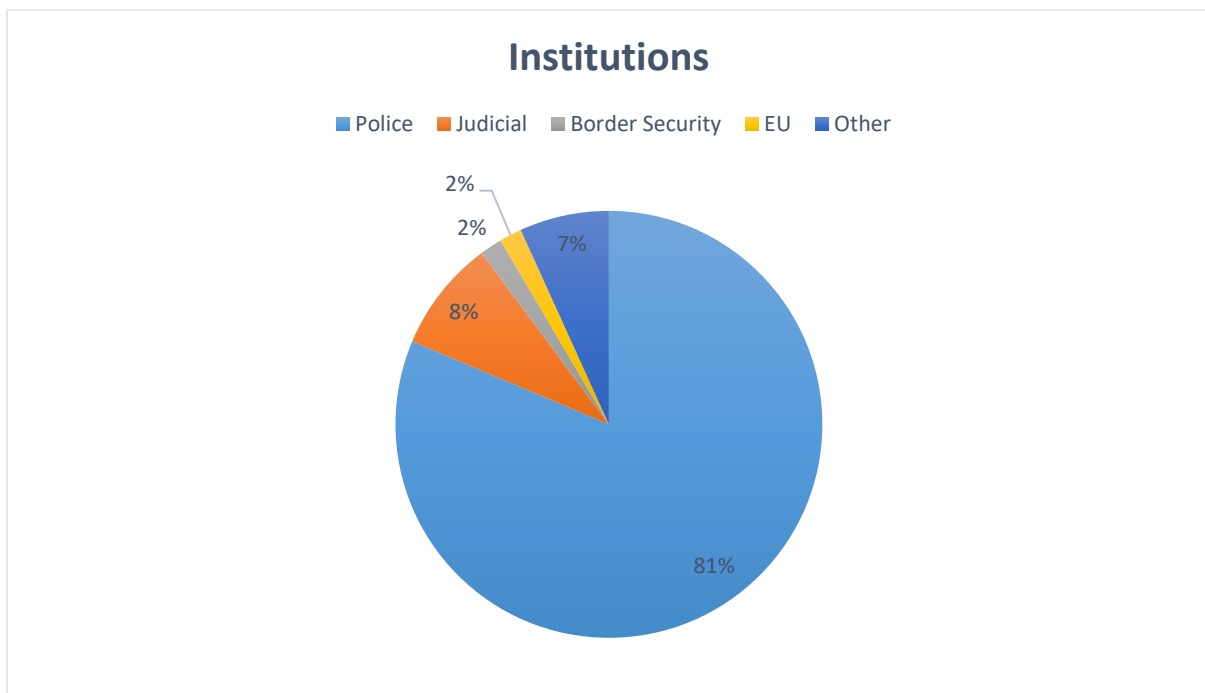
<sup>7</sup> <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c71d1eb2-9a55-11e5-b3b7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>8</sup> Belgium and Finland.

scoring horizontal aspects of **analysis of big data, fundamental and human rights, children’s rights and data protection**.

CEPOL approached 26 MSs<sup>9</sup>, as well as EU structures dealing with the subject of the OTNA asking them to provide a response from their respective jurisdiction. 26<sup>10</sup> MSs and one EU structure<sup>11</sup> responded to this, resulting in 58 individual completed answers from different law enforcement agencies and EU structures. In terms of MSs, the responses indicate **100%** response rate, representing **12 801 law enforcement officials<sup>12</sup> across Europe**. Regarding the institutions, 81% of the responses represented the Police, followed by the Judiciary (8%).

**Chart 3.** Distribution of responding institutions



### Relevance of topics

Potential training needs were presented based on the outcomes of an expert group discussion held in November 2020, in line with the training priorities defined in the EU-STNA process. Respondents were asked whether they found a main topic arising from the EU-STNA outcomes relevant for the performance of the LE service. The main training topics in relation to CSE are as follows:

Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming

<sup>9</sup> The terminology ‘Member States’ (MSs) hereinafter refers to 26 Member States of the European Union participating in CEPOL regulation, i.e., all EU Member States excluding Denmark.

<sup>10</sup> Responding countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

<sup>11</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

<sup>12</sup> Number of officials, as indicated by the respondents, performing their duties in the area related to Child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

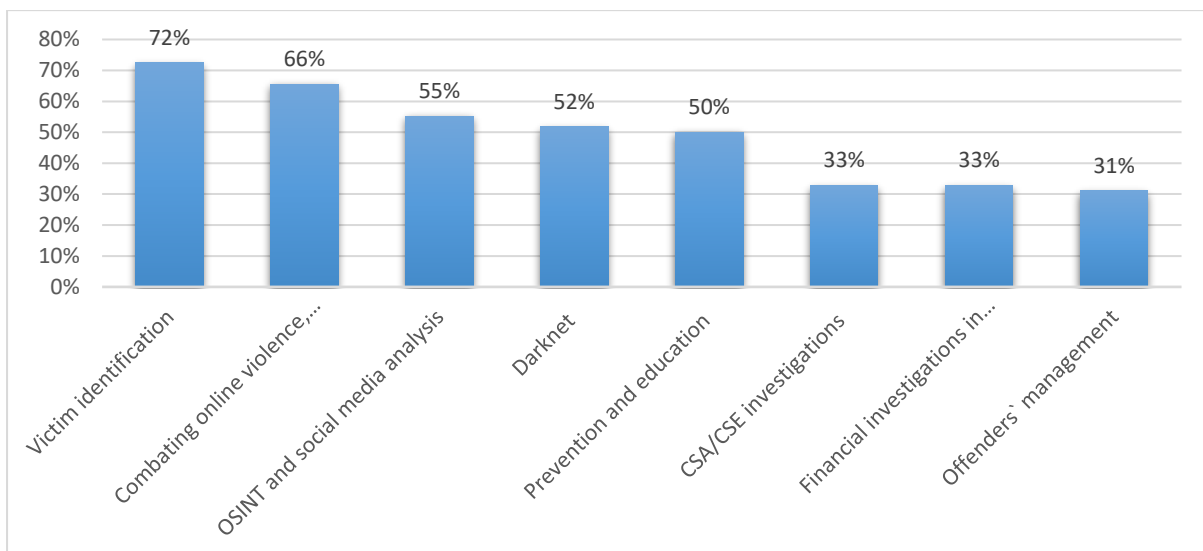
Darknet
CSA/CSE investigations
Prevention and education
Victim identification
Financial investigations in relation to CSA/CSE
OSINT and social media analysis
Offenders' management

The final relevance rate of a given main topic was calculated by summing up how many MSs found each topic relevant. Where several LE agencies submitted answers from the same MS, entries were consolidated. The ratio of relevance was calculated by dividing the sum of MSs that found the topic relevant by the number of responding MSs. If more than 50% of MSs found a certain topic relevant, it was considered relevant and it will be processed for further analysis as per the OTNA methodology. Four of all main topics passed the 50% threshold of relevance rate.

**Table 5.** Relevance rate of main topics

Main Topic	Relevance
Victim identification	72%
Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming	66%
OSINT and social media analysis	55%
Darknet	52%
Prevention and education	50%
CSA/CSE investigations	33%
Financial investigations in relation to CSA/CSE	33%
Offenders' management	31%

**Chart 4.** Relevance rate of main topics



## Training dimensions

With the aim of better understanding training needs of law enforcement officials', various **subtopics** and **horizontal aspects** were presented for the assessment of respondents under each topic. The

relevance rate for each subtopic was calculated by adding categories of “Extremely relevant”, “Very relevant” and “Relevant” together.

The horizontal aspects common to all main topics are:

- Analysis of big data
- Fundamental and human rights, children’s rights, data protection
- Respective areas of forensics
- Links between different crime areas and operational cases
- Information exchange, and
- Law enforcement cooperation, Joint Investigation Teams (JITs)

In reference to the findings, it can be concluded that under the topic of **Victim identification**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- Media files & their visual, contextual, digital analysis
- Proactive investigation
- Investigation standards and sources of CAM

Under the topic **Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- Tools and mechanisms, including the potential of EU agencies, in particular Europol
- Experiences from other countries

Under the topic **OSINT and social media analysis**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- Case studies
- Methods of open-source intel gathering
- Preservation of open-source evidence
- Anonymity on the internet / dangers of OSINT investigations

Under the topic **Darknet**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- Undercover operations on Darknet and deep web
- Securing, obtaining and handling of e-evidence
- Anonymisation; new trends
- Information exchange

Under the topic **Prevention and education**, the following thematic areas should be emphasized:

- EU prevention package

**Table 6.** Relevance and urgency rate of prioritised main topics

Main Topic	Relevance	Urgency rate	Trainees
Victim identification	72%	73%	1 339
Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming	66%	65%	1 648
OSINT and social media analysis	55%	71%	1 072
Darknet	52%	64%	1 094
Prevention and education	50%	65%	1 140
CSA/CSE investigations	33%	66%	-
Financial investigations in relation to CSA/CSE	33%	61%	-

Offenders' management	31%	59%	-
-----------------------	-----	-----	---

Respondents could rate the relevance of each subtopic on the following scale: Not relevant at all – Somewhat relevant – Relevant – Very relevant – Extremely relevant. The relevance score of each subtopic was calculated by drawing the sum of the responses. If the relevance score (i.e., the sum of scores given by each respondent) reached 50% of the maximum score, the subtopic was found relevant.

It should be noted that among the horizontal aspects (Table 7 and 8, in *red italics*) **Information exchange** and **cross-border LE cooperation** (e.g., JITs) are considered the most relevant aspects at the operational training needs level. The lowest scoring aspects are **analysis of big data** and **fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection**.

In view of the latter, the question of possible reasons for such low scores was posed to Belgium and Finland. The responses highlighted that for operational personnel, fundamental and human rights are not relevant as a separate theme in the day-to-day investigative operations. These topics are more connected to the way investigations are conducted in accordance with the national law. Moreover, children's rights are practically enshrined in the articles of the criminal code, forming the foundation for criminal investigations. Although it was clearly recognized that the aspect of fundamental rights (including children's rights) is obviously important, the applicability of such information in daily investigations may be limited. With regards to data protection, it was noted that the ongoing debate between data protection and children's rights against CSE is very much topical and a policy resolution is critically needed, but this discussion may not be the most relevant for operational personnel.

Regarding analysis of big data, it was noted by both MSs that their view towards the OTNA has been to identify training needs for operational personnel (such as investigators), and as the big data analysis is a part of specialised support services, the relevancy to the former target group is comparatively low. It was further noted that big data analysis is still something not in reach of everyday investigations and investigators, especially in smaller MSs, and hence more emphasis is needed to elevate the threshold of basic level competencies and methodologies.

Conclusively, none of the aspects is gaining high popularity under the main topics. Such findings invite for further discussion and examination of possible reasons. The first three main topics are ranging from 72% to 55% in relevancy, while the first three horizontal aspects are ranging from 55% to 48%. However, it should be highlighted that the differences of relevance between subtopics and horizontal aspects remain volatile, but relatively small, as can be observed from Table 8.

**Table 7.** Average relevancy of horizontal aspects among prioritised topics.

Horizontal aspect	Relevance
Information exchange	55%
Law enforcement cooperation, JITs	51%
Respective areas of forensics	48%
Links between different crime areas and operational cases	47%
Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection	46%
Analysis of big data	45%

**Table 8.** Relevance rate of most relevant subtopics and horizontal aspects (in red) from prioritised main topics.

Main topic	Subtopic / Horizontal aspect	Relevance
Victim identification	Media files & their visual, contextual, digital analysis	71%
	Proactive investigation	71%
	Investigation standards for CAM	69%
	Sources of CAM	69%
	Live data analysis	69%
	OSINT	67%
	<i>Information exchange</i>	66%
	<i>Respective areas of forensics</i>	64%
	<i>Law enforcement cooperation, JITs</i>	64%
	Services from Europol & Interpol in relation to Victim ID (including ICSE DB)	62%
	Welfare/psychological support to CSE Investigators	62%
	<i>Analysis of big data</i>	62%
	<i>Links between different crime areas and operational cases</i>	59%
	<i>Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection</i>	55%
Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming	Experiences from other countries	66%
	Tools and mechanisms, including the potential of EU agencies, in particular Europol	62%
	<i>Information exchange</i>	60%
	<i>Respective areas of forensics</i>	57%
	<i>Law enforcement cooperation, JITs</i>	55%
	Undercover operations online	53%
	<i>Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection</i>	52%
	<i>Links between different crime areas and operational cases</i>	52%
	<i>Analysis of big data</i>	50%
OSINT and social media analysis	Case studies	53%
	Methods of open-source intel gathering	53%
	Preservation of open-source evidence	53%
	Anonymity on the internet / dangers of OSINT investigations	53%
	Tools (free and paid)	52%
	<i>Information exchange</i>	50%
	<i>Respective areas of forensics</i>	47%
	<i>Law enforcement cooperation, JITs</i>	47%
	<i>Analysis of big data</i>	43%
	<i>Links between different crime areas and operational cases</i>	43%
	<i>Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection</i>	40%
Darknet	Undercover operations on Darknet and deep web	50%
	Securing, obtaining and handling of e-evidence	50%
	Anonymisation; new trends	50%
	<i>Information exchange</i>	50%



	Connectivity with Clearnet	48%
	<i>Law enforcement cooperation, JITs</i>	48%
	Removing material	45%
	<i>Links between different crime areas and operational cases</i>	45%
	<i>Respective areas of forensics</i>	43%
	<i>Analysis of big data</i>	40%
	<i>Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection</i>	38%
Prevention and education	EU prevention package	50%
	Countries with good prevention campaigns to share their experiences with others	48%
	Prevention campaigns for law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities	48%
	Child participation and involving general public, schools and parents	48%
	<i>Information exchange</i>	48%
	<i>Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection</i>	47%
	Information exchange between law enforcement authorities and border control authorities	45%
	<i>Law enforcement cooperation, JITs</i>	40%
	<i>Links between different crime areas and operational cases</i>	36%
	<i>Analysis of big data</i>	31%
	<i>Respective areas of forensics</i>	31%

The number of participants was calculated as the sum of the participants indicated by each MS. The median number of participants was calculated in order to be able to estimate the potential number of attendees, should all MSs<sup>13</sup> take part in the training.

Respondents indicated that **6 293 participants would need training in 2022 from the 26 responding MSs.**

As the biggest target group numbers were reported by Belgium, Finland and Portugal, the issue between reported officers working in the field of OTNA and the reported training needs was clarified during the interviews. From the three MSs, Portugal reported not being available for an interview. Belgium clarified that LE officials reported as working with the subject of the OTNA do not include those investigators and other personnel that are involved with the subject matter at operational level. The number of the potential target group was calculated by estimating 2-3% from the full capacity of the LE personnel in the MS. Hence, the number of potential participants refers to all of the officials dealing with any or all of the main topics in Belgium. Finland reported that the target group number seems to have multiplied unintentionally and in fact roughly 350 LE personnel are involved with CSE, representing the target group for any and/or all main topics for training activities.

<sup>13</sup> All EU Member States not including Denmark.

Respondents were asked to indicate the proficiency level of training needed under each main topic. The levels of proficiency were the following: Awareness, Practitioner, Advanced practitioner, Expert and Train-the-trainer. (Please find detailed description of proficiency levels in Annex 2.) Each proficiency level under each main topic has related data, such as urgency level and the number of requested participants per profile.

Where the same proficiency level was indicated by several LE agencies of the same MS, the attributes of the training were calculated as follows: For urgency level, the highest rate indicated was taken into consideration, and for the number of participants, the sum of the indicated numbers.

The Likert-type scale of urgency levels (Training need is low –not urgent at all, Training need is secondary – not urgent, Training need is moderate – somewhat urgent, Training need is urgent, Training need is crucial – very urgent) was converted into a numerical scale from 1-5, five meaning Training need is crucial – very urgent. The highest urgency score under each proficiency level was taken into account. Please find the detailed description of urgency levels in Annex 3.

The highest need indicated by respondents is in the proficiency levels of **practitioner, advanced practitioner** and **awareness**, while expert and train-the-trainer level training is lower on the priority scale (Table 9.).

**Table 9.** Proficiency levels and number of participants

Proficiency level	Number of participants
Awareness	1 640
Practitioner	2 733
Advanced practitioner	1 228
Expert	392
Train-the-trainer	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 293</b>

The questionnaire offered the possibility of indicating the **profiles** of law enforcement officials who need training under each main category. This allows assessing the training need in terms of number of participants who need training per profile and per proficiency level, providing a more detailed picture on the target groups to be trained. Respondents could indicate profiles of LE officials as free text. Most references were given to **investigators, forensic experts and prosecutors**; these are the target groups that should be provided with the opportunity to be trained first. Lower priority was indicated for managers, trainers and researchers.

### National level training

Reports on training provided at national or regional level for law enforcement officials are rarely available, therefore the questionnaire had a section with a question referring to data on previous training organised/attended. 51 answers were provided with highly heterogenic content. Therefore, data on training provided on national level is scattered and not apt for statistical analysis. However, CEPOL's previous training activities were mentioned several times, and Europol's training activities a few times. Otherwise, it can be assumed that most other training activities have been implemented by the MSs.

## Training dimensions for main topics

Each of the five prioritised main topics was analysed in terms of level of proficiency. Levels of proficiency are: Awareness, Practitioner, Advanced practitioner, Expert and Train-the-trainer. For each level of proficiency, respondents indicated the potential number of participants per profile.

With the aim of better understanding training needs, various subtopics were presented for assessment under each topic. Respondents could rate the relevance of each subtopic on the following scale: Not relevant at all – Somewhat relevant – Relevant – Very relevant – Extremely relevant. The relevance score of each subtopic was calculated by drawing the sum of the responses. This chapter presents more detailed training needs related to each main topic. After a summary of training needs, the first table of each main topic shows the relevance rate of subtopics and the horizontal aspects in a descending order.

The second table demonstrates the number of participants who need training in different proficiency levels and the urgency level of training to be delivered.

### 1. Victim identification

Victim identification is the most relevant main topic, as indicated by the MSs (relevance 72%). Within this main topic, training should focus on most relevant subtopics and horizontal aspects, as indicated below. The training need is urgent, and training should be delivered within one year to approx. 1 300 trainees.

*Relevance rate of subtopics and horizontal aspects in descending order*

Main topic	Subtopic / Horizontal aspect	Relevance
Victim identification	Media files & their visual, contextual, digital analysis	71%
	Proactive investigation	71%
	Investigation standards for CAM	69%
	Sources of CAM	69%
	Live data analysis	69%
	OSINT	67%
	Information exchange	66%
	Respective areas of forensics	64%
	Law enforcement cooperation, JITs	64%
	Services from Europol & Interpol in relation to Victim ID (including ICSE DB)	62%
	Welfare/psychological support to CSE Investigators	62%
	Analysis of big data	62%
	Links between different crime areas and operational cases	59%
	Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection	55%

*Urgency and number of participants by proficiency level*

	Urgency	Number of participants
Awareness	83%	273
Practitioner	72%	533
Advanced practitioner	68%	335
Expert	69%	117
Train-the-trainer	72%	81
<b>Average/Total</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>1 339</b>

## 2. Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming

Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming is the second most relevant main topic, as indicated by the MSs (relevance 66%). Within this main topic, training should focus on most relevant subtopics and horizontal aspects, as indicated below. The training need is relatively urgent, and training should be delivered within one year to approx. 1 600 trainees.

*Relevance rate of subtopics and horizontal aspects in descending order*

Main topic	Subtopic / Horizontal aspect	Relevance
Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming	Experiences from other countries	66%
	Tools and mechanisms, including the potential of EU agencies, in particular Europol	62%
	Information exchange	60%
	Respective areas of forensics	57%
	Law enforcement cooperation, JITs	55%
	Undercover operations online	53%
	Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection	52%
	Links between different crime areas and operational cases	52%
	Analysis of big data	50%

*Urgency and number of participants by proficiency level*

	Urgency	Number of participants
Awareness	73%	421
Practitioner	66%	679
Advanced practitioner	64%	335
Expert	60%	99
Train-the-trainer	64%	114
<b>Average/Total</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>1 648</b>

## 3. OSINT and social media analysis

OSINT and social media analysis is the third most relevant main topic, as indicated by the MSs (relevance 55%). Within this main topic, training should focus on most relevant subtopics and horizontal aspects, as indicated below. The training need is urgent, and it would be advantageous to deliver training within a year's period to approx. 1 100 trainees.

*Relevance rate of subtopics and horizontal aspects in descending order*

Main topic	Subtopic / Horizontal aspect	Relevance
OSINT and social media analysis	Case studies	53%
	Methods of open-source intel gathering	53%
	Preservation of open-source evidence	53%
	Anonymity on the internet / dangers of OSINT investigations	53%
	Tools (free and paid)	52%
	Information exchange	50%
	Respective areas of forensics	47%
	Law enforcement cooperation, JITs	47%
	Analysis of big data	43%
	Links between different crime areas and operational cases	43%
	Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection	40%

#### Urgency and number of participants by proficiency level

	Urgency	Number of participants
Awareness	87%	283
Practitioner	75%	499
Advanced practitioner	66%	233
Expert	74%	33
Train-the-trainer	65%	24
<b>Average/Total</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>1 072</b>

#### 4. Darknet

Darknet is the fourth most relevant main topic, as indicated by the MSs (relevance 52%). Within this main topic, training should focus on most relevant subtopics and horizontal aspects, as indicated below. The training need is urgent, and it would be advantageous to deliver training within a year's period to approx. 1 100 trainees.

#### Relevance rate of subtopics and horizontal aspects in descending order

Main topic	Subtopic / Horizontal aspect	Relevance
Darknet	Undercover operations on Darknet and deep web	50%
	Securing, obtaining and handling of e-evidence	50%
	Anonymisation; new trends	50%
	Information exchange	50%
	Connectivity with Clearnet	48%
	Law enforcement cooperation, JITs	48%
	Removing material	45%
	Links between different crime areas and operational cases	45%
	Respective areas of forensics	43%
	Analysis of big data	40%

	<i>Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection</i>	38%
--	---	-----

#### *Urgency and number of participants by proficiency level*

	<b>Urgency</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Awareness	76%	268
Practitioner	67%	524
Advanced practitioner	67%	214
Expert	68%	81
Train-the-trainer	45%	7
<b>Average/Total</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>1 094</b>

## 5. Prevention and education

Prevention and education is the fifth most relevant main topic, as indicated by the MSs (relevance 50%). Within this main topic, training should focus on most relevant subtopics and horizontal aspects, as indicated below. The training need is moderately urgent, and it would be advantageous to deliver training within a year's period to approx. 1 100 trainees.

#### *Relevance rate of subtopics and horizontal aspects in descending order*

<b>Main topic</b>	<b>Subtopic / Horizontal aspect</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
Prevention and education	EU prevention package	50%
	Countries with good prevention campaigns to share their experiences with others	48%
	Prevention campaigns for law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities	48%
	Child participation and involving general public, schools and parents	48%
	<i>Information exchange</i>	48%
	<i>Fundamental and human rights, children's rights, data protection</i>	47%
	Information exchange between law enforcement authorities and border control authorities	45%
	<i>Law enforcement cooperation, JITs</i>	40%
	<i>Links between different crime areas and operational cases</i>	36%
	<i>Analysis of big data</i>	31%
	<i>Respective areas of forensics</i>	31%

#### *Urgency and number of participants by proficiency level*

	<b>Urgency</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Awareness	63%	395
Practitioner	66%	498
Advanced practitioner	69%	111
Expert	62%	62

Train-the-trainer	63%	74
<b>Average/Total</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>1 140</b>

## Conclusion

This OTNA report describes training priorities in the area of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse for 2022. The high number of respondents and MSs indicates an interest to both the topics under assessment and towards the services provided by CEPOL.

The outcomes of the Operational Training Needs Analysis on Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse show that half of the main topics are relevant and relatively urgent for law enforcement officials.

**Victim identification; Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming; OSINT and social media analysis** as well as **Darknet** should be given the highest priority when designing training activities. Although not exceeding the 50% relevance threshold, **Prevention and education** has reached precisely 50% relevance. Among subtopics, LE officials would improve their competencies best if horizontal aspects, such as *Information exchange* and *Law enforcement cooperation, JITs* (identified in the EU-STNA) **were be covered in each prioritised training activity**, including selected subtopics identified as most relevant. Training should be prioritised at practitioner and advanced practitioner level. Naturally, the train-the-trainer and the awareness proficiency levels could also be addressed partially in e-modules.

Ultimately, as the European Union is founded on the strong commitment towards human rights, it should be noted that in spite of its low ranking, the topic of **fundamental rights, especially children's rights** should be taken into consideration when designing the training portfolios on CSE. This view could be reinforced with the fact that CSE as a law enforcement activity is targeting one of the most vulnerable groups in society. However, careful thought is required on how the aspects of fundamental rights could bring operational or service-oriented value to the practitioners in LE agencies.

## Annex 1. EU-STNA Chapter on CSE

### *2.4.1 Environmental Challenges*

Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is a relatively recent topic. It requires a high level of expertise that can deal with the rapid changes of tools and *modi operandi*. The number of cases is very high, especially when compared to the available human and technical resources. MSs should have adequate high-tech hardware and software at their disposal for the identification and extraction of e-evidence, enabling their authorities to work and cooperate using comparable evidence of that nature.

Cross-border cooperation is an issue. On the one hand, the harmonisation of legislation with regard to cyber-investigation would be required to facilitate the work of law enforcement officials, as well as cross-border cooperation and sharing of e-evidence. Differences in data retention time per country, for instance, creates problems. On the other hand, more cases should be investigated on international level. For example, each country investigates the suspects of live streaming of child sexual abuse mainly at national level. It was suggested to create a permanent task force at Europol that could try to understand the best way to investigate and to identify victims online. Another challenge is specifically the cooperation with Southeast Asia (e.g. the Philippines), as there is either no cooperation partner in place or the cooperation is not functional.

Prevention in the context of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is a very specific challenge as it involves also parents and the need for age-related instruction of children. Furthermore, field officers lacking prevention expertise need to cooperate with specialised prevention officials, who sometimes have no knowledge of the topic. Law enforcement officials must also cooperate with NGOs.

### *2.4.2 Challenges related to knowledge, skills and competences and related training needs*

#### **a) Challenges**

Due to the rapid development of this type of crime over the past few years, staff in some countries have multiplied, requiring high-quality training that is not always readily available. Continuous challenges in relation to the rapid changes in *modi operandi* include constant updating, the encryption of hard drives and cloud services, anonymization, and the fight against person-to-person distribution of CSA/CSE material. The collection and exchange of data is made difficult by hidden IP addresses, unknown administrators, and the quantity of material. Another issue is that law enforcement officials should have a proper understanding of the psychology of the offender for undercover activities. Cooperation with the private sector, in particular Internet Service Providers (ISP) and Email Service Providers (ESP), needs to be improved.

#### **b) Training needs**

##### *Summary*

Training should focus on Darknet investigation and data collection techniques and tools, specifically, OSINT, e-evidence and social media analysis. Training should address the combat of live streaming of child sexual abuse and the removal or blocking of CSA/CSE material. Offender psychology for undercover activities and interviewing techniques are also mentioned as relevant training needs. Training could also help further cooperation with financial investigators, IT specialists, forensic experts



and judicial staff. Prevention is mentioned as a highly important and sensitive issue, for which training of field officers and prevention officials would be useful.

#### *Further details*

The tenor is that existing EU-level and national training is not enough, and that therefore an EU Train-the-Trainers type of activity could lead to enhanced national training, e.g. on victim identification, removing and blocking of CSA/CSE material, handling of perpetrators, etc. EU-level courses on such topics are already provided by CEPOL, but as they can only be attended by one person per MS at the time, this does not fulfil the countries' need of well-trained staff. Training on OSINT, social media analysis, victim identification, psychology of offenders, as offered by Europol (COSEC<sup>14</sup> Course) should be more in-depth, e.g. a two-step course going from a beginner to a more advanced level. INTERPOL offers a course on victim identification that is similar to the CEPOL course, and some of this training also exists at regional level within the EU. It is specifically noted that the content of such training should include ways of cooperating with Southeast Asia, e.g. by means of liaison officers from other countries, in case there is no liaison officer representing the investigator's own country. All this should include the exchange of good practices in the different countries, e.g. on the identification of victims in the context of live streaming, as well as on securing, obtaining, handling and exchanging e-evidence. Experiences with workflow changes, the enhancement of technical skills and knowledge of investigators around these and other cyber-investigation matters should be addressed. Equally, sharing good practices on undercover operations is considered useful, not only within the EU, but also when involving the USA. This type of training should include the legal frameworks in different countries as a topic, and prosecutors as participants. The same is valid for training on undercover operations and countering live streaming.

Cooperation with the private sector, in particular Internet Service Providers and Email Service Providers needs to be improved by increasing the knowledge of law enforcement officials on their activities. In addition, by means of the involvement of prosecutors and judges, training should provide opportunities for law enforcement officials to discuss methodologies to ensure that the gathering of e-evidence takes place pursuant to current legislation, to allow its admissibility in court proceedings.

When speaking of prevention, a proposal was made for awareness training both for field officers, who could be involved in prevention campaigns and measures, as well as for prevention officials so they will understand more about CSA/CSE. Participation could be enhanced by doing this via webinars. Furthermore, EU-level training allowing the exchange of good prevention practices could lead to the development of an EU Prevention Package. Moreover, the higher administration levels could benefit from a more thorough understanding of the importance of prevention.

An overview of existing training on the diverse topics concerning CSA/CSE would be appreciated.

According to Europol, categorisation of training needs may lead to false expectations on behalf of the MSs, e.g. victim identification training identified under OSINT and social media analysis may attract the wrong type of students to the training activities.

EU-level training is available concerning subjects like methodologies to fight against child sexual exploitation on the internet and also victim identification, offered by Frontex and CEPOL, whilst Frontex organises training on child protection as well.

#### *List of identified and prioritised training needs*

---

<sup>14</sup> Combating Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

The following list evidences the prioritisation of sub-topics in the area of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse-related training, as done by MSs.

<b>1</b>	<b><i>Combating online violence, distant child abuse and live streaming (undercover operations online; tools and mechanisms, including the potential of EU agencies, in particular Europol; experiences from other countries; data protection; human rights)</i></b>
<b>2</b>	<i>Darknet (undercover operations on darknet and deep web; securing, obtaining and handling of e-evidence; anonymisation; new trends; removing material)</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>CSA/CSE investigations (behaviour of offenders; interviewing techniques; data encryption; international cooperation and information exchange; involving IT, forensic and psychology experts; data retention; intelligence gathering and analysis; sharing of operational best practices; involving the judicial community and the private sector; data protection; human rights).</i>
<b>4</b>	<i>Prevention of CSA/CSE (countries with good prevention campaigns to share their experiences with others; EU prevention package; prevention campaigns for law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities; information exchange between law enforcement authorities and border control authorities)</i>
<b>5</b>	<i>OSINT and social media analysis for victim identification (in-depth training on OSINT and social media analysis; technical skills; best practices; cooperation with non-EU countries and the private sector; data protection; human rights)</i>
<b>6</b>	<i>Financial investigations in relation to CSA/CSE (money flows; cooperation with FIUs; financial intelligence)</i>

## Annex 2. Proficiency levels

	Level 1 – Awareness	Level 2- Practitioner	Level 3 – Advanced Practitioner	Level 4 - Expert	Level 5 – Train-the-trainer
Definition	Refers to those who only need an insight into the particular topic, they do not need specific skills, competences and knowledge to perform the particular tasks, however require general information in order to be able efficiently support the practitioners working in that particular field.	Refers to those who independently perform their everyday standard duties in the area of the particular topic.	Has increased knowledge, skills and competences in the particular topic because of the extended experience, or specific function, i.e. team/unit leader.	Has additional competences, highly specialised knowledge and skills. Is at the forefront of knowledge in the particular topic.	Officials who are to be used as trainers for staff
Description	Has a general factual and theoretical understanding of what the topic is about, understands basic concepts, principles, facts and processes, and is familiar with the terminology and standard predictable situations. Taking responsibility for his/her contribution to the performance of practitioners in the particular field.	Has a good working knowledge of the topic, is able to apply the knowledge in the daily work, and does not require any specific guidance in standard situations. Has knowledge about possible situation deviations and can practically apply necessary skills. Can assist in the solution development for abstract problems. Is aware of the boundaries of his/her knowledge and skills, is motivated to develop self-performance.	Has broad and in-depth knowledge, skills and competences involving a critical understanding of theories and principles. Is able to operate in conditions of uncertainty, manage extraordinary situations and special cases independently, solve complex and unpredictable problems, direct work of others. Is able to share his/her knowledge with and provide guidance to less experienced colleagues. Is able to debate the issue with a sceptical colleague, countering sophisticated denialist talking points and arguments for inaction.	Has extensive knowledge, skills and competences, is able to link the processes to other competency areas and assess the interface in whole. Is able to provide tailored advice with valid argumentation. Is able to innovate, develop new procedures and integrate knowledge from different fields.  Is (fully or partially) responsible for policy development and strategic performance in the particular area.	Has knowledge and skills to organise training and appropriate learning environment using modern adult training methods and blended learning techniques. Is familiar with and can apply different theories, factors and processes of learning in challenging situations. Experienced with different methods and techniques of learning. Can prepare and conduct at least one theoretical and one practical training session for law enforcement officials.
EQF equivalent	EQF Level 3-4	EQF Level 5	EQF Level 6	EQF Level 7	n/a

EQF levels – Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework, more information is available at <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page>

Images from <https://askfortheworld.wordpress.com/levels/>

## Annex 3. Urgency levels

Urgency in the context of this questionnaire refers to the criticality of timely training intervention and its impact to the operational performance.

Urgency scale level	1	2	3	4	5
Training need is	Low	Secondary	Moderate	Urgent	Crucial
Training impact	Training has a minor role in the performance boost, it would refresh the knowledge, officials could benefit from training, and however, it is not essential.	It would be useful if the training would be delivered, however, the need is not urgent. Training can be delivered in (predictable) 2-3 years' time, it is needed to stay updated.	It would be advantageous to receive training within a year's period, it would improve the performance, however, not significantly.	Training is essential, it is necessary to be delivered within a year's period, it is important to perform qualitatively.	Training is critical, it is necessary as soon as possible, it is crucial for the successful performance of duties.