

**REPORT CENTRE**  
against Child Sexual Abuse Material  
and National Socialism



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



# FOREWORD

A friend recently asked me: „Tell me, don't you always tell the same story about Stopleftine?

My answer: Yes, I always say the same thing! Why? Because it is extremely important that I am heard and that everyone understands how indispensable Stopleftine's work is. And why it would of course be our wish that we need no longer talk about it at all. Because our goal is that the report office would no longer be needed.

But as long as there are images and videos of sexually abused children on the internet that are requested, viewed and downloaded, Stopleftine will exist and we will continue to talk about it. And as long as there are websites on the Internet that glorify the Nazi era, deny the existence of concentration camps or offer Nazi memorabilia for sale, Stopleftine will exist and we will continue to talk about it.

Our team will not stop processing the reports and trying to make the online world a little bit better. That is why we will continue to tirelessly appeal to each and every internet user that they can contribute: Don't trivialize, don't deny, don't click away! Report it!

Please help everyone!

Together, let's make the internet a safe place for us and our children!

Dr. Barbara Schloßbauer  
Stopleftine Project Manager



„Our goal is to make the Internet a safe place. Hence our appeal to all Internet users: Don't hesitate, report illegal content!“

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# ABOUT STOPLINE



# 227,000

REPORTS RECEIVED

# 51,000

ILLEGAL REPORTS

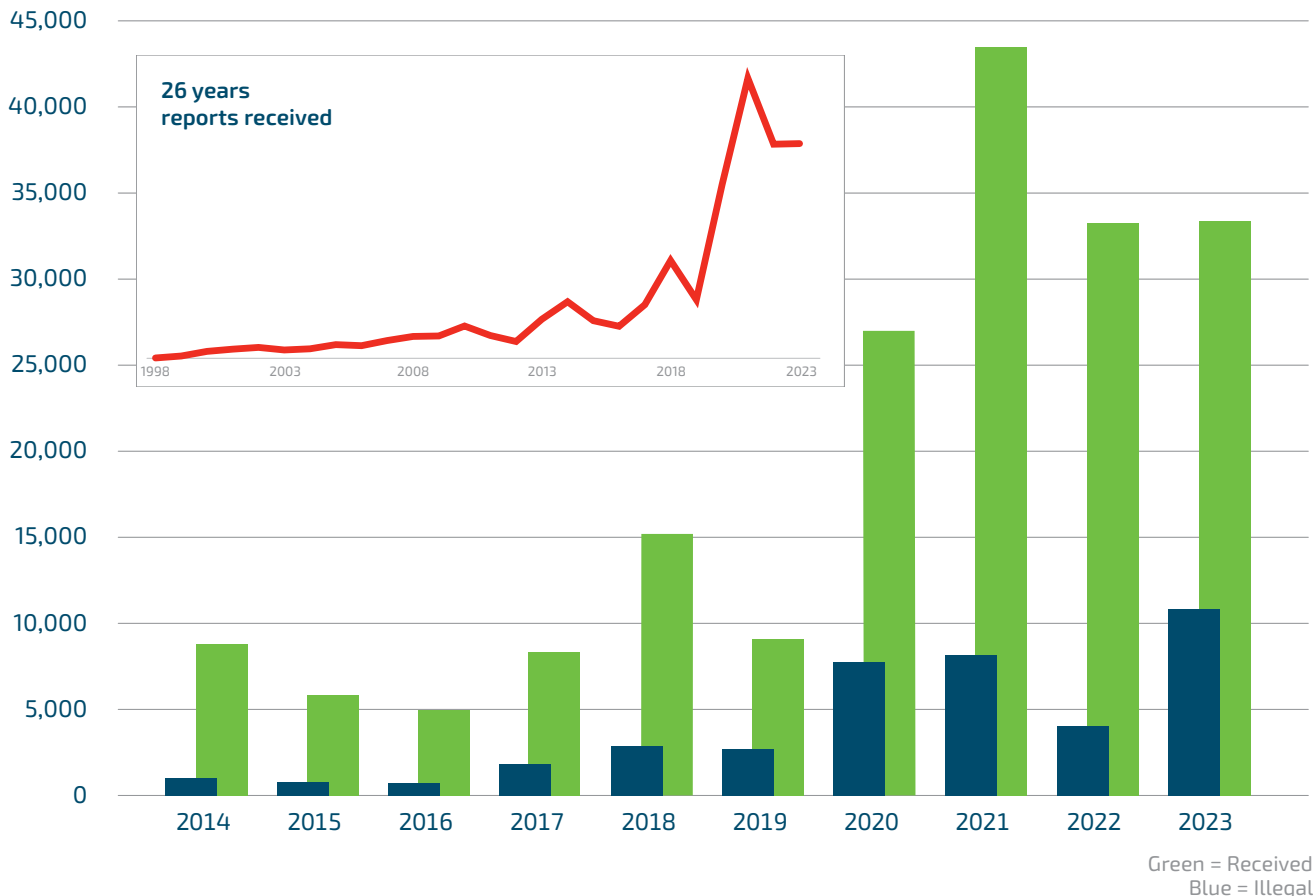
Reports 1998 - 2023

Stopleveline is an online reporting center for people who come across sexual abuse depictions of minors (often still referred to as child pornography) or content relating to National Socialism on the Internet.

The primary objective of Stopleveline is the prompt and straightforward removal of such content from the internet, especially when it is hosted in Austria.

This reporting center was established in 1998 by the Association of Austrian Internet Service Providers (ISPA). Over the course of its 26-year existence, Stopleveline has processed more than 227,000 reports. Approximately 22% of these were actually classified as illegal material, predominantly images of sexual abuse involving minors, the majority of which were hosted on servers overseas.

## Reports received vs actionable reports for the last 10 years (2014 – 2023)



# HOW TO REPORT: SIMPLE & ANONYMOUS



## Which content can you report?

Stoplevelne is responsible for processing reports regarding:

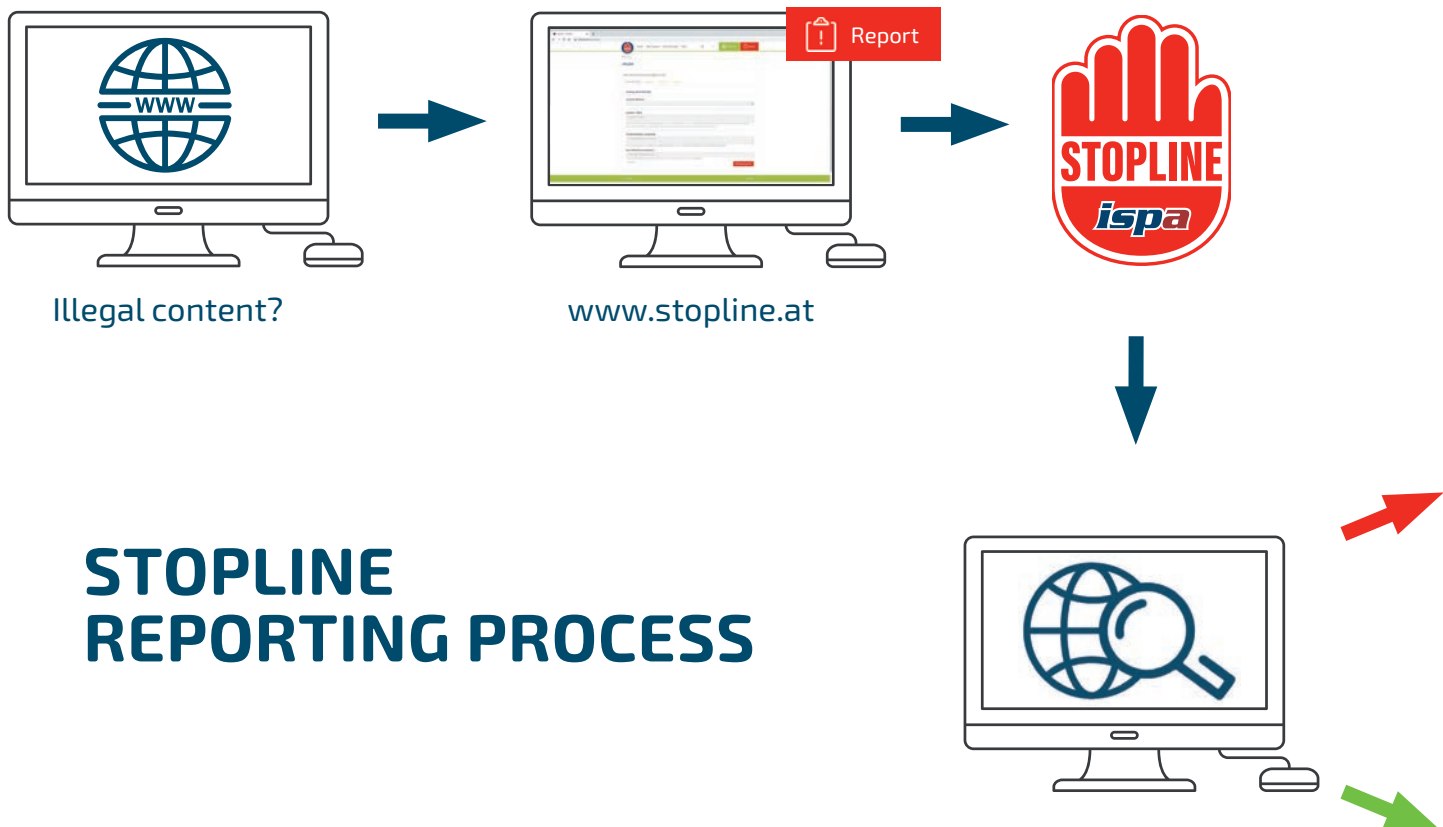
- Child sexual abuse material pursuant to section 207a Austrian Criminal Code (Strafgesetzbuch, StGB) and
- National Socialism in accordance with the National Socialism Prohibition Act 1947 (Verbotsgesetz) and the 1960 Austrian Abzeichengesetz which prohibits National Socialist regalia and symbols.

## How can you report?

You can notify Stoplevelne of illegal content online – anonymously if you wish – in the following ways:

- using the online form at [www.stoplevelne.at](http://www.stoplevelne.at)
- or by sending an e-mail to [office@stoplevelne.at](mailto:office@stoplevelne.at)

No matter where on the internet you come across illegal content, do not hesitate to report it to Stoplevelne!



## ... HOWEVER, DO NOT ACTIVELY SEEK OUT ILLEGAL MATERIAL!

Under no circumstances should you track any leads on the Internet on your own, nor should you send any images or screenshots to Stopleveline. Doing so could potentially constitute a criminal offense. For Stopleveline, providing as detailed a source of information as possible (including passwords, if applicable) is sufficient for the report to be investigated.

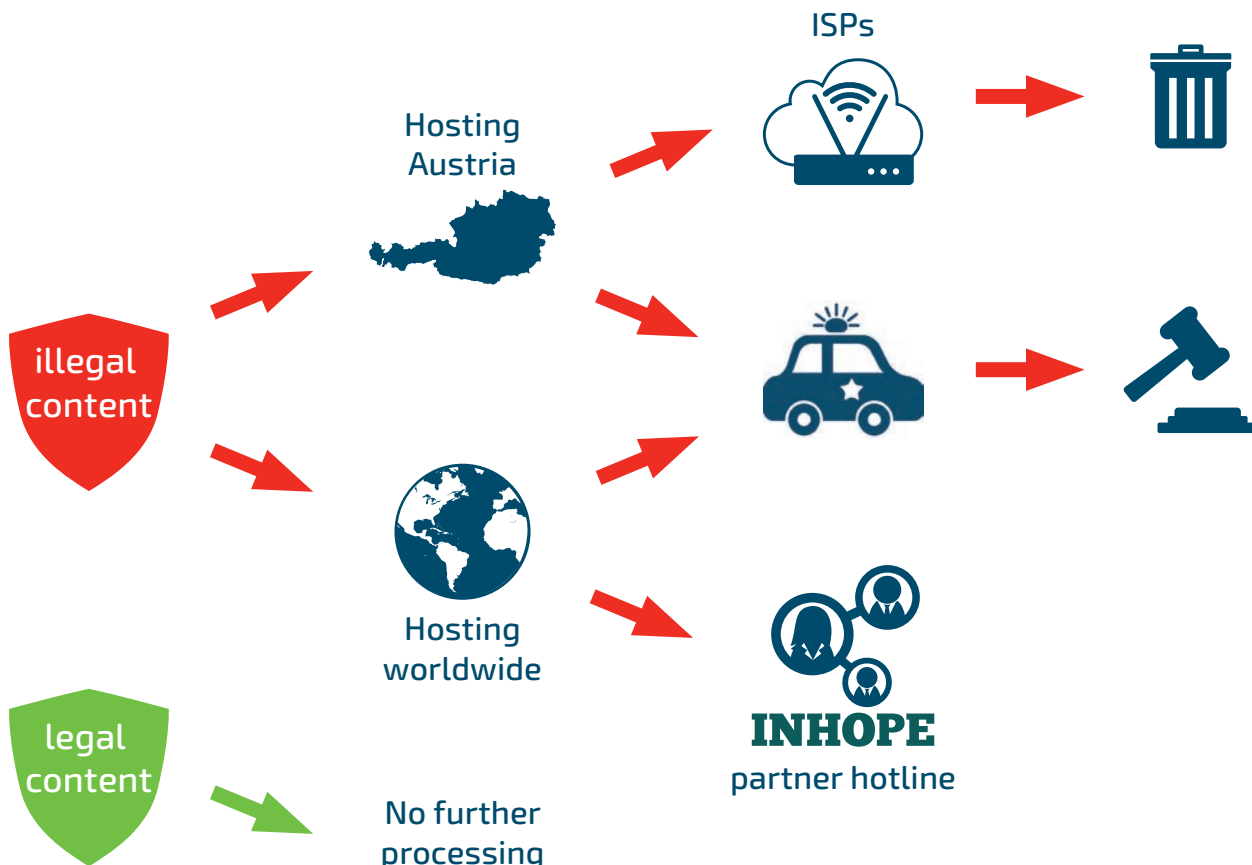
## HOW DOES STOPLINE OPERATE?

The Stopleveline team members do not actively search for illegal content. Instead, they exclusively process incoming reports. These reports are submitted by vigilant internet users and international partner hotlines. For each reported content, Stopleveline verifies whether it contravenes the legal regulations concerning depictions of minor sexual abuse or National Socialist resurgence.

### Dealing with illegal content

As soon as Stopleveline categorizes content as illegal, it notifies the relevant law enforcement agency in Austria. For content featuring depictions of minor sexual abuse, the Federal Criminal Police Office (child pornography and child sex tourism reporting office) is responsible, while the Directorate of State Protection and Intelligence (DSN) handles National Socialist material. These agencies then initiate further measures to investigate the perpetrators and, if necessary, the victims.

Simultaneously, an examination is conducted to determine which country is hosting the material, as the provider's country of origin is crucial for further processing (for details, see pages 8 - 9). If the content deemed illegal by Stopleveline is hosted in Austria, the reporting office informs the responsible Austrian host provider, ensuring that the content is promptly removed from the internet. Illegal content hosted abroad is forwarded by Stopleveline to the INHOPE partner hotline in the respective country.



# REPORTS 2023 IN DETAIL

## Accurate reports of illegal content at an all-time high

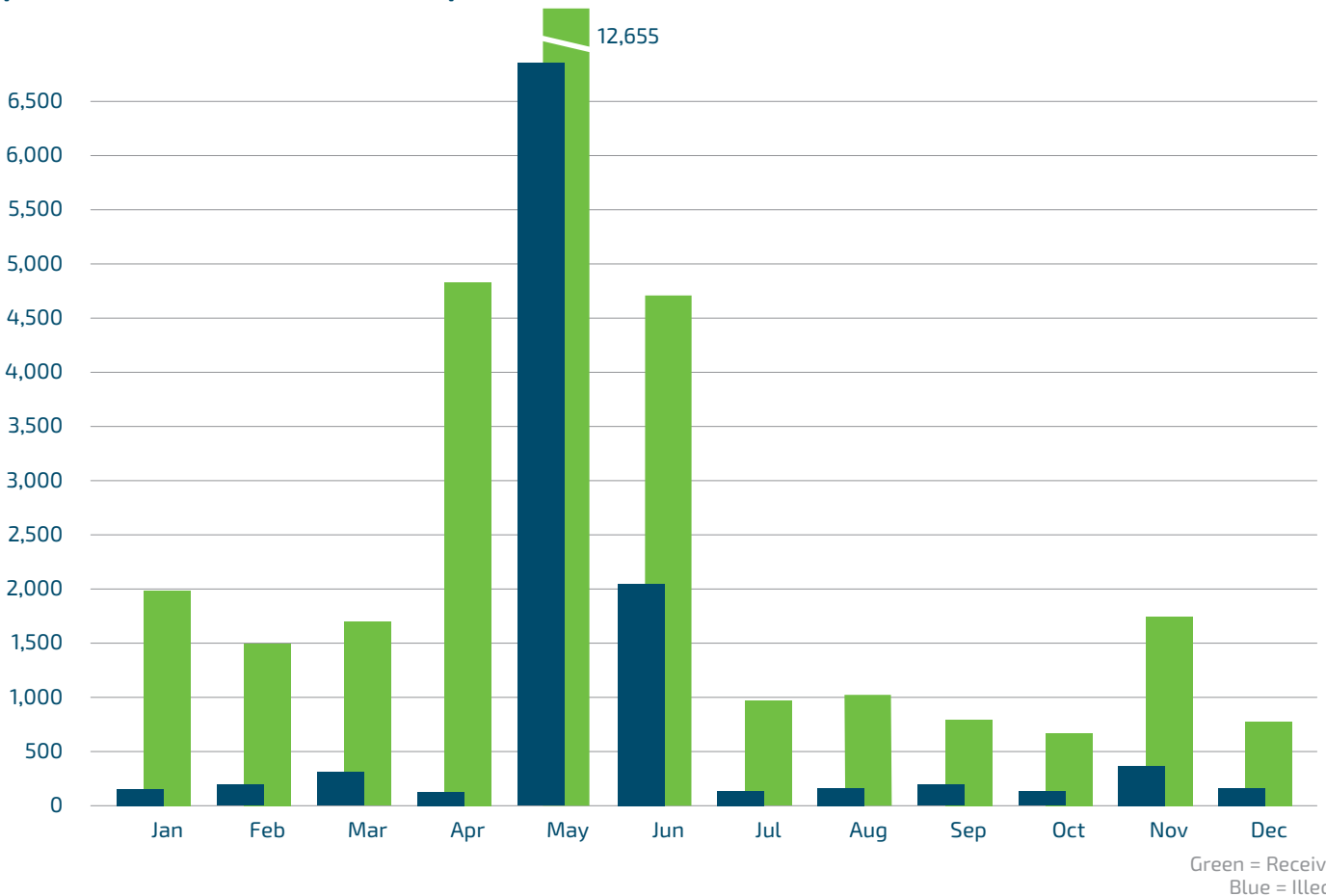
33,349 reports were sent to Stopline by vigilant internet users in 2023. While the number of reports received remained almost the same as in 2022 (33,257), the proportion of content classified as illegal by Stopline was higher than ever before. Almost a third of the reported content violated Austrian law and was therefore processed accordingly.

The reports to Stopline were almost exclusively submitted via the online form on the website [www.stopline.at](http://www.stopline.at). Only a handful of reports were submitted by e-mail.

# 33,349

## REPORTS RECEIVED

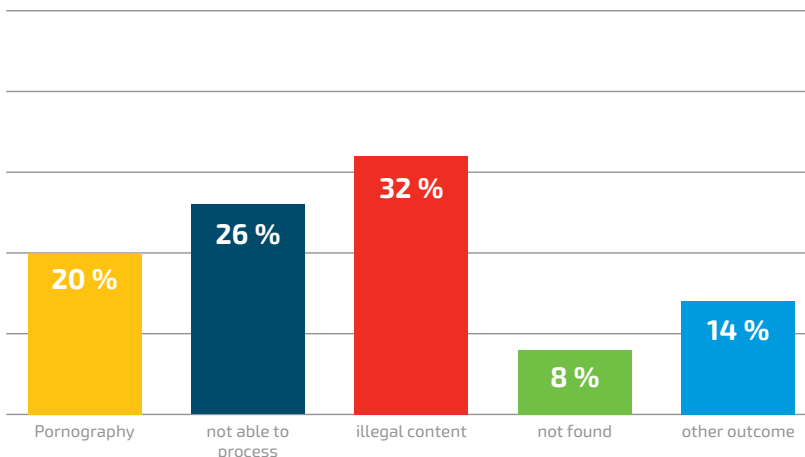
## Reports received vs actionable reports in 2023



## Classification of 2023 reports by Stopline

Stopline reviews all incoming reports, determining whether the content pertains to criminal activities. Approximately 33% of the reported content, totaling 10,850 instances, were indeed classified as illegal. This represents a significant increase compared to previous years.

As in previous years, the proportion of reports concerning sexual abuse of minors significantly outweighs other categories with 10,828 instances. In only 22 cases did Stopline staff detect violations related to National Socialist resurgence.



### Categorisation of reports by Stopline in 2023

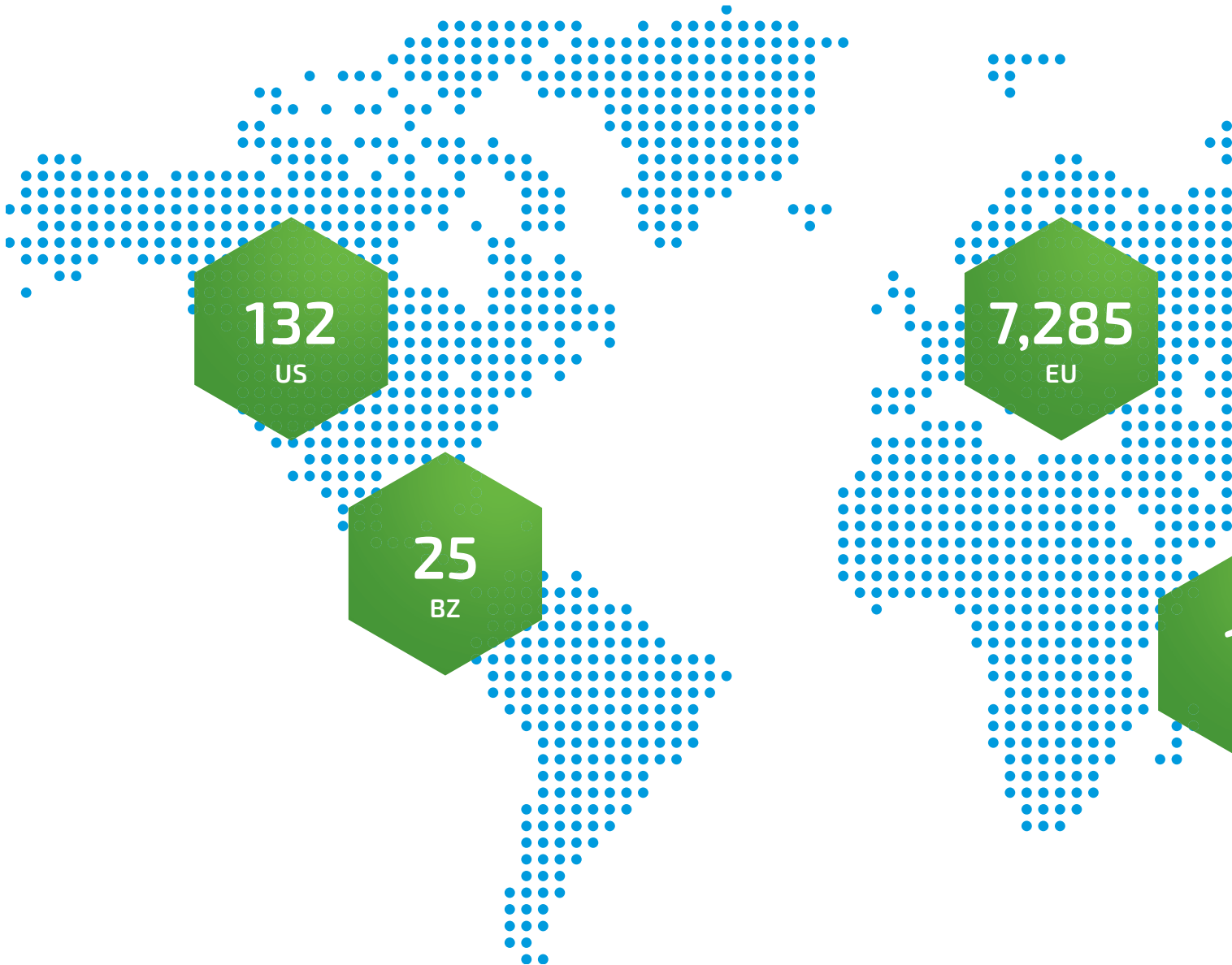
## Technical analysis and hosting

If the Stopline staff classify the content of a reported website as illegal, a technical analysis is undertaken to ascertain the country where the content was published online and which host provider was utilized by the offender. This enables efforts to directly address the source to remove the content entirely, thereby making it inaccessible to internet users. In 2023, all reports classified as applicable by Stopline were hosted on foreign servers.

## WARNING: DON'T BECOME AN OFFENDER!

Material involving sexual abuse depictions of minors is criminal, with its prosecution reserved for the police and public prosecutor's office. Stopline strongly advises against users performing targeted searches on the internet. Even those acting with the best intentions may face legal repercussions.

# COUNTRY OF ORIGIN 2023



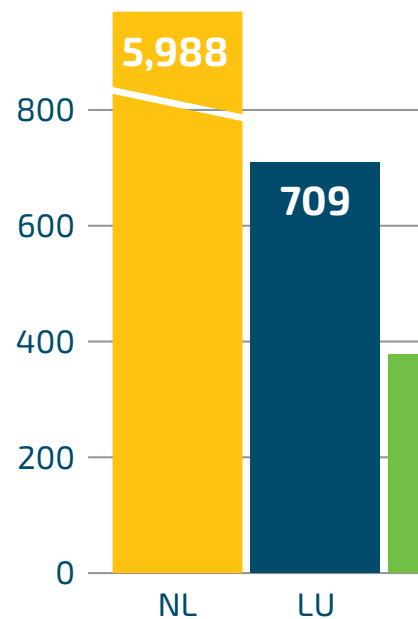
## Origin of illegal content

Illegal content is often hosted in locations offering straightforward, inexpensive IT infrastructure (servers, web space, connectivity), or in places where the law allows for the publication of such content.

However, this doesn't imply that the illegal material, particularly depictions of minor sexual abuse, was produced in these countries. Rather, it indicates the location where the content was posted on the Internet.

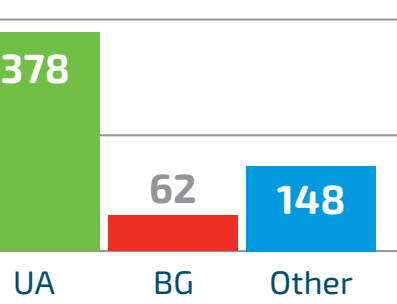
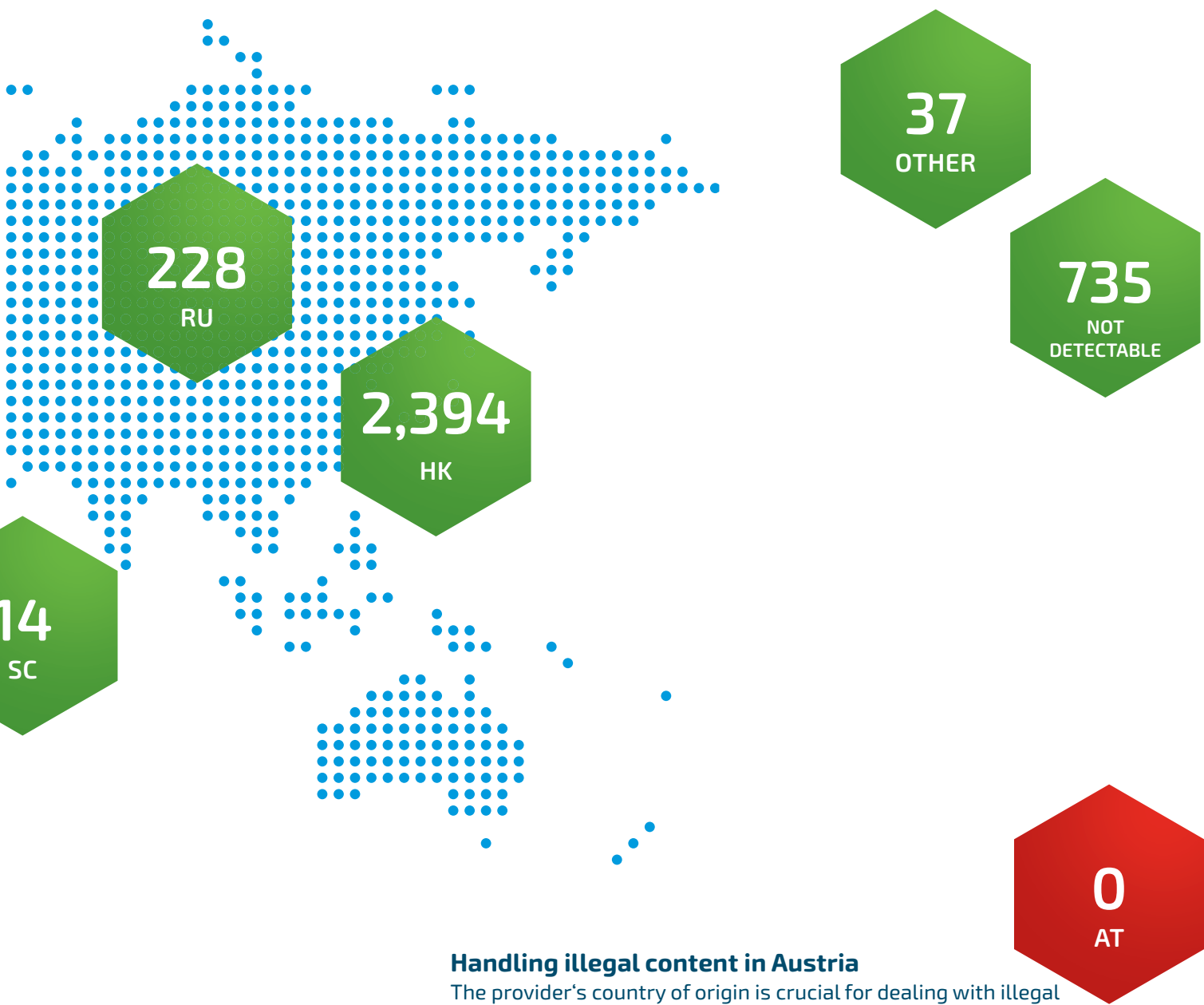
In 2023, all reports classified by Stoptline as accurate were hosted on foreign servers. Whereas in previous years, the USA was the leading country for hosting illegal material, this content is now increasingly hosted in Europe, primarily in the Netherlands, but also in Luxembourg and Ukraine.

An ongoing trend also continues to be observed. 735 times in 2023 the country of origin could not be determined for some of the reported illegal content. This is due to the use of TOR browsers (the so-called "dark web").



Most common hosting locations





### Handling illegal content in Austria

The provider's country of origin is crucial for dealing with illegal content. If the content is hosted online by an Austrian internet service provider, Stopleveline reaches out to the respective host provider. They are then requested to technically remove the content from the internet, thereby rendering it inaccessible to internet users.

Stopleveline itself does not delete or block purportedly illegal content, but rather offers recommendations to the providers on how to proceed.

In Austria, the host providers acknowledge their responsibility, ensuring that illegal content is immediately removed from the network. The prompt response from all parties involved, especially the concerned providers, has made Austria an unattractive hosting location for several years.

AT - Austria, BZ - Belize, EU - Europe, DE - Germany, GB - United Kingdom, HK - Hong Kong, NL - Netherlands, RU - Russia, SC - Seychelles, UA - Ukraine, US - United States of America

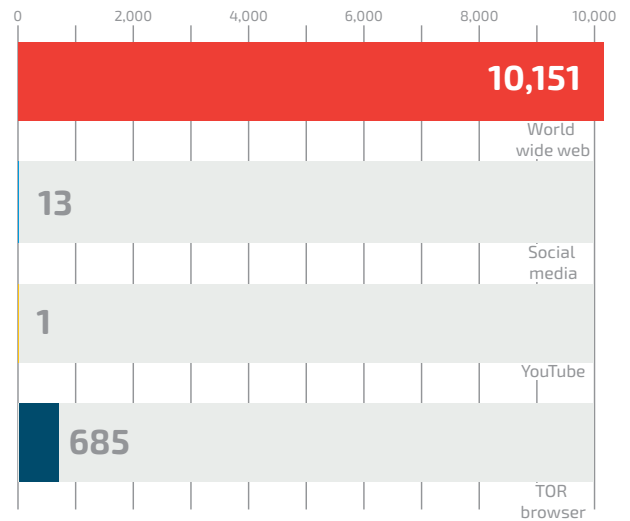
# ILLEGAL REPORTS 2023

## Where did reporters discover the illegal content?

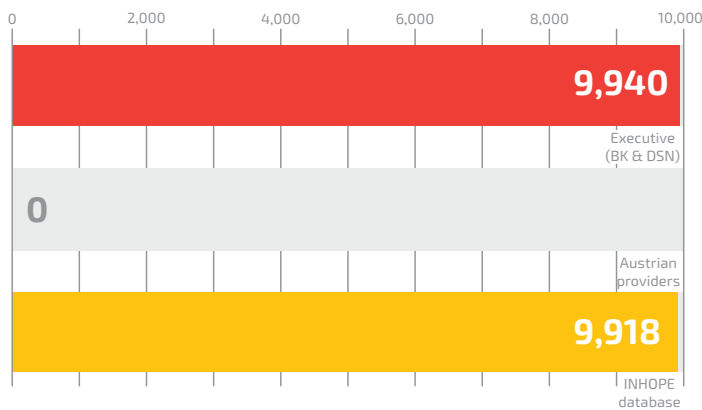
Internet users have the option to report various sources where they discovered illegal content to [www.stopline.at](http://www.stopline.at), such as the World Wide Web (e.g., Internet browsers), social media channels, newsgroups, and file sharing services.

In 2023, no illegal content was reported via newsgroups and file sharing services. However, one source increasingly prevalent in Stopline's statistics is the so-called Dark Web, which can be accessed using a TOR browser.

This poses significant challenges for the Stopline staff, their international partner hotlines, and also for the police: it's becoming increasingly difficult to trace the origin of the illegal content and thereby contribute to its successful removal.



Reports categorised as actionable – by online service



Content categorised as illegal was forwarded to

## Who does Stopline inform about illegal content?

For transparency's sake, Stopline notifies the Austrian police about all reported illegal content.

Although the number of illegal reports was very high in 2023, not a single website was hosted in Austria and therefore no Austrian host provider was contacted.

Stopline informs the INHOPE partner hotline in the respective country about illegal content hosted abroad. Consequently, almost 70 % (7,247) of the reports could be directly processed onsite. In the other cases, Stopline informed the responsible reporting office in the Federal Criminal Police Office or the Directorate for State Security and Intelligence, so that the reports could be followed up through international police cooperation such as Interpol.

## SMALL HOTLINE - BIG IMPACT!

Stopline is one of the smaller hotlines in the international INHOPE network with over 50 partner hotlines. However, due to the large number of accurate reports, Stopline was one of those hotlines that entered most reports of illegal content into the joint INHOPE database in 2023.

# STOPLINE ACTIVITIES

The primary objective of Stopleveline is the swift and efficient removal of illegal content from the internet. This isn't only achievable due to the rapid and professional efforts of the Stopleveline team. The goal is accomplished year after year, thanks to strong partnerships, regular exchanges in various committees, and continuous press and public relations work.



## NATIONAL COOPERATION

Stopleveline regularly organizes meetings of the Stopleveline advisory board and participates in the Saferinternet.at advisory board. Additionally, Stopleveline is a member of the National Forum against Anti-Semitism.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Within the framework of several INHOPE member and working group meetings, as well as numerous online INHOPE webinars each year, an intensive exchange of experiences with worldwide partner hotlines takes place. Moreover, Stopleveline is a significant participant at meetings of the Meta - Safety Roundtable and at the annual EU Safer Internet Forum in Brussels.

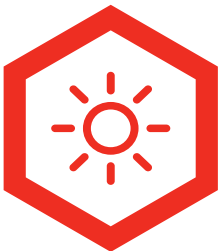


## PRESS ACTIVITIES

The customary annual press conference of Stopleveline and ISPA, accompanied by the relevant press release, leads to extensive media coverage online, in print, and on the radio and TV. Interviews with journalists occur regularly throughout the year.

## RAISING AWARENESS

Every year, Stopleveline participates in Safer Internet Day. To reach the widest possible audience, Stopleveline regularly posts articles on Facebook and Twitter, where they explain the nature of illegal content and various internet hazards.



## EMPLOYEE WELFARE

The work at Stopleveline, especially handling the consistently high volume of reports, is demanding. Hence, the Stopleveline staff members regularly partake in coaching and discussions with psychologists. Emphasis is also placed on fostering mutual support within the team, which is facilitated through collective activities.

## MONTH WITH MOST REPORTS

In May 2023, Stopleveline received more than 12,500 reports from vigilant internet users. Nearly 7,000 of these reports referred to actual illegal content.





# CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

## What is illegal in Austria?

Since December 1, 2023, Section 207a of the Austrian Criminal Code has been called „Pictorial sexual child abuse material and pictorial sexual depictions of minors“. This refers to the depiction of sexual acts or images focusing on the genitals of persons under the age of 18. In Austria, any action in connection with this is prohibited: Knowingly accessing, producing, offering, procuring, providing, showing, possessing or otherwise making available. The spectrum ranges from images of unclothed children with a focus on their genitals to severe sexual violence.

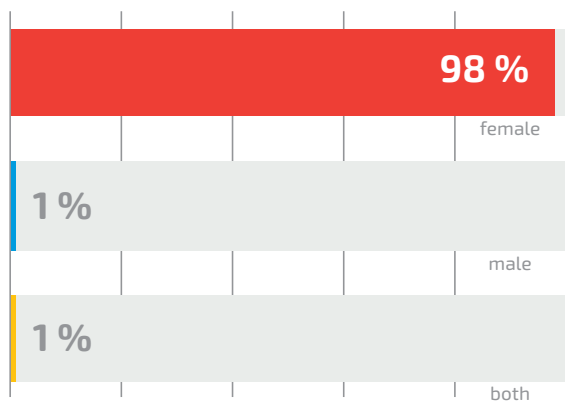
A problematic development in this context does not stop Stopline’s work: More and more minors photograph or film themselves performing sexual acts and publish these images online (sexting). With this self-portrayal, they not only make themselves liable to prosecution, but also unintentionally make this ma-

terial available to consumers of pedophilic content.

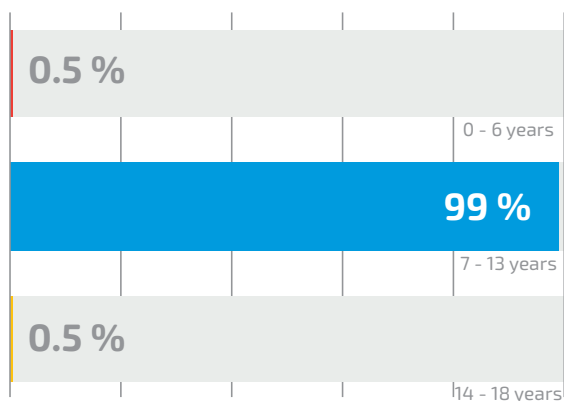
Grooming“, i.e. the initiation of sexual contacts with minors via the Internet is also punishable.

If you are not sure whether it is an illegal presentation, please let us know anyway. The Stopline staff members check for reported contents, if the depiction

- shows an underage person
- depicts sexual acts or
- focuses on sexual parts.



Sexual abuse by sex in 2023



Sexual abuse by age in 2023

**REMINDER:**  
Be wary of posting pictures of your children, no matter how innocuous. You do not know on which websites on the Internet these pictures will be found.

# NATIONAL SOCIALISM

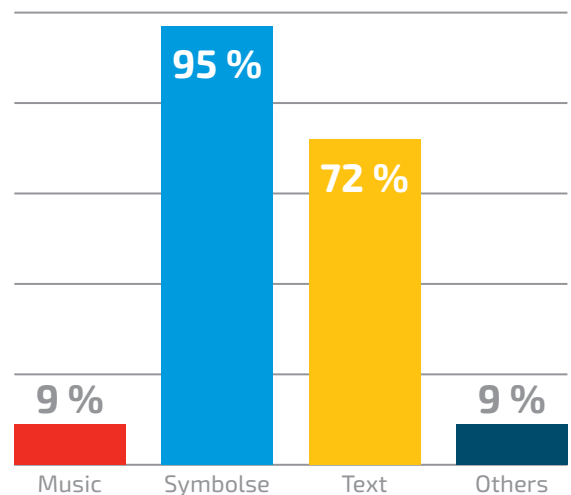
National Socialist reaffirmation has many facets, but not every racist or inflammatory statement is automatically an endorsement of National Socialist ideas. In Austria, the denial of National Socialist crimes as well as the dissemination and glorification of National Socialist content count as re-activation and are punishable.

This also includes activities such as the dissemination of speeches by National Socialist functionaries, the heroicizing portrayal of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), Schutzstaffel (SS) or Sturmabteilung (SA), the founding of National Socialist associations, the recruitment of members for such an association or even mere participation in it.

In combating National Socialist content on the Internet, the legal provisions according to the Prohibition and Badge Act are used as a basis in particular. Both provisions clearly state that it is not the critical discussion of the National Socialist past per se that is prohibited, but rather the endorsement of these activities, measures and ideas.



As a rule, the use of National Socialist images and texts is not punishable if it is clear from the depiction that it opposes National Socialism and its ideology. For example, a crossed-out swastika or above a trash can.



**National Socialism: Type of offence 2023**

## Prohibition and insignia law as a basis

If you are not sure whether the content is illegal national socialistic content, please contact Stopleveline. The employees check if it is one of the following contents:

- the denial of NS crimes
- the glorification of NS ideas or
- the representation of forbidden badges and uniforms



# STOPLINE AND ITS PARTNERS

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERNET HOTLINES

# INHOPE

54 MEMBERS

50 COUNTRIES

INHOPE (International Association of Internet Hotlines) is an organization of global hotlines aimed at combating illegal content on the Internet.

The collective aim of the 54 INHOPE hotlines, now present in 50 countries, is to eradicate depictions of minor sexual abuse from the internet and to shield young individuals from harmful and illegal internet usage.

With a few exceptions INHOPE partner hotlines exist in the most frequently reported origin countries (see chart on pages 8 and 9) from which Stopleveline receives reports.

Moreover, INHOPE is consistently committed to establishing new hotlines worldwide, ensuring the continued growth of the network. The rapid and secure exchange of information between INHOPE partners enables, among other things, the swift and non-bureaucratic removal of illegal content from the internet.

## Exchange of reports and experiences

Learning from other organisations' experiences and working together to improve overall efficiency – this is what makes INHOPE such a valuable platform for its members.

New hotlines in particular benefit from the years of practical experience built up by established report centres such as Stopleveline. And, in turn, Stopleveline can put its expertise in the global fight against child sexual abuse material to good use worldwide and make the most of the technologies it co-develops with its partners.

See [www.inhope.org](http://www.inhope.org) for further information.

10,828

CHILD SEXUAL  
ABUSE MATERIAL

7,247

REPORTS TO  
INHOPE HOTLINES



## SAFER INTERNET CENTRE AUSTRIA

In collaboration with Saferinternet.at (realized by ÖIAT and ISPA), Rat auf Draht, and the ISPA, Stopleveline comprises the „Safer Internet Centre Austria“. As the Austrian partner in the Safer Internet Network of the European Union ([www.betterinternetforkids.eu](http://www.betterinternetforkids.eu)), it offers comprehensive awareness-raising efforts for safe internet usage. The focus is on education and guidance in handling digital media.

[www.saferinternet.at](http://www.saferinternet.at)  
[www.rataufdraht.at](http://www.rataufdraht.at)  
[www.ispa.at](http://www.ispa.at)

**Saferinternet.at**  
Das Internet sicher nutzen!

**ispa**  
Internet Service Providers Austria

147 **RAT**  
auf Draht  
von SOS-Kinderdorf



**nic.at**

**Bundesministerium Inneres**  
Bundeskriminalamt

**Bundesministerium Inneres**  
Direktion Staatsschutz und Nachrichtendienst

### Meldestellen des Bundesministeriums

Reporting offices of the Federal Ministry include the Federal Criminal Police Office (BK), which runs the police hotline for child pornography and child sex tourism on the internet.

The reporting office for National Socialist re-enactment within the executive branch is situated within the Directorate of State Protection and Intelligence (DSN).

[www.bmi.gv.at/meldestellen](http://www.bmi.gv.at/meldestellen)

### nic.at GmbH

nic.at serves as the registry for domains under .at, .co.at, and .or.at. Since its foundation by ISPA, Stopleveline has received financial support from nic.at.

[www.nic.at](http://www.nic.at)

## Stopline info material

is available for download at [www.stopline.at](http://www.stopline.at)  
A print version of our brochure is also available  
to order.

## Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

Mehr Information über Stopline, die Österreichische Meldestelle gegen sexuelle Missbrauchsdarstellungen Minderjähriger und nationalsozialistische Wiederbetätigung im Internet, finden Sie hier: [www.stopline.at](http://www.stopline.at)

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