



ANNA NACKT

Press Release

Stop image-based abuse online: European Movement of survivors calls for action

In an Open Letter, survivors of online sexual abuse and civil society organisations across Europe are calling on the EU to finally end the crisis of image-based abuse online, such as the accelerated spread of “revenge porn”. We demand that porn platforms are held accountable, which only can be enforced by EU-wide rules. The Open Letter is initiated by HateAid and Anna Nackt.

Berlin, 24th September 2021

Today, a European movement of survivors of online sexual abuse and civil society organisations from various EU countries call on the European Parliament, Council of the EU and the European Commission to end the abuse of intimate images online. The [Open Letter](#) was initiated by Anna Nackt and HateAid. The authors are women from across the EU, whose private and intimate images have been leaked on the Internet. They demand: Make porn platforms accountable and oblige them to take measures to stop image-based abuse on their websites.

Image-based abuse is a massive problem all over the EU. In the Open Letter published today, the survivors and various European organisations call on the European Institutions to finally put an end to this crisis. Among signatories are prominent advocates for victims’ rights, including activist Emma Holten, professor of law at Durham University Clare McGlynn and author Thordis Elva.

They demand from law makers to use a unique window of opportunity to effectively protect EU citizens from online sexual abuse: The current negotiation of the Digital Services Act (DSA). This act aims to regulate the relationship between large online-platforms and their users in a new way. Anna Nackt and HateAid have identified additional obligations for porn platforms as an important lever to prevent the spread of abusive material online. And they are not alone with this approach: An amendment to the DSA calling for this change has already been tabled in the European Parliament. This is not the first-time the fight against revenge porn is picked up by MEPs. In 2016 European Parliament Vice-President Roberta Metsola (EPP) launched a declaration against revenge porn. Now we are calling for a follow up - a legislative action.

Anna Nackt, Co-initiator of the Anna Nackt project, explains:

“Anyone can become a victim with private images getting stolen, manipulated and victims secretly filmed in public places like sauna or locker-rooms. We demand requirements, such as double user verification, trained human content moderators and time-bound take-down for non-consensually shared images, as the bare minimum that the European policy makers should stand by.”

In 2020, 140,000 illegally shared intimate and sexual images of mostly Irish women were found on the internet. Every day (!), more than nine cases of image-based abuse are reported to the

UK government-funded Revenge Porn Hotline. A survey showed that 12% of French men have shared or are considering sharing intimate images without consent. These are only the publicly reported cases, while many victims suffer in silence. Large online platforms have done hardly anything to stop this. Survivors of this abuse repeatedly express that they feel left alone after intimate images were stolen and published.

Emma Holten, Danish gender policy advisor, feminist, and survivor of digital sexual assault:

"I felt in some ways that the state agreed with what was being said about me online - that I was disgusting and that I deserved everything that was happening to me."

Anna-Lena von Hodenberg, Executive Director of HateAid, commented:

"Image-based abuse is targeted to discredit, intimidate and objectify women. The EU Parliament must now finally hold platforms accountable with additional regulations for porn platforms to protect women and members of the LGBTQI+ community from image-based violence. It is time to give them back their dignity."

Alexandra Geese, Member of the European Parliament, who supports the survivor's demand to stop the image-based abuse:

"It is high time that we give women back their rights and declare war on image-based sexual abuse. Many porn platforms are complicit in its proliferation and make huge profits on the backs of victims. I am committed to finally putting a stop to this."

Further information:

For more information and background on the Open Letter, please visit the website:

<https://dontlookaway.online/>

Anna Nackt

Anna Nackt fights for an internet free of non-consensually shared intimate images. The social impact organisation supports people affected by image-based abuse, informs about the problem and advocates for change on the global level. Founder of Anna Nackt is a woman who herself survived image-based abuse.

HateAid gGmbH

The non-profit organisation HateAid gGmbH was founded in 2018 and has its headquarters in Berlin. HateAid offers support for victims of digital violence: legal cost funding, emotionally stabilising initial, safety, and communication counselling. The founding managing director is Anna-Lena von Hodenberg. Advocating for victims of digital violence at the European level is part of the Landecker Digital Justice Movement of the Alfred Landecker Foundation.