

# Annual Report 2020



Saving Missing Children

Home of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons

As supported by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU



European Parliament



Council of the  
European Union

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AMBER Alert Europe is registered in the EU  
Transparency Register: [488692317424-44](#)  
and is recognized by the Dutch government  
as foundation (stichting) with charitable  
status ("ANBI")  
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Beek, June 1st 2021

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# Welcome letter

Dear friends and supporters,

It is with great pleasure that I present AMBER Alert Europe's Annual Report 2020.

## COVID-19

2020 has been an exceptional year to say the least. The limitations and hurdles the COVID-19 pandemic has brought, compelled us to rethink our priorities and reinvent ourselves in every possible way. In-person meetings and events, shifted to the online realm, as did everyday activities and campaigns. By introducing the Common European Approach on Missing Children – Missing Persons, a strategic plan to better protect missing children in Europe, we also marked a new chapter for our organisation.

## Common European Approach on Missing Children – Missing Persons

Every year, 600.000 people go missing in Europe. Half of whom are children. Even though these numbers are staggering, missing is still 'missing' on the EU agenda. We want to change this. Together with the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons, we have devised the Common European Approach on Missing Children and Missing Persons (CEA), a European-wide strategy supported by 4 pillars, that will help prevent children from going missing and ensure that appropriate action is taken if a child does go missing.

## Preventing children from becoming victims of online grooming

The COVID-19 pandemic has also shed a light on other pressing issues. Cybercrime against

children, such as online grooming, increased tremendously during the COVID-19 pandemic. To fight this issue, we launched a campaign against online grooming in cooperation with Europol, national police forces, and NGOs in the field of missing children and children's rights. The #DontBeAnEasyCatch campaign was met with wide support in 23 countries.

## Exponential growth

In 2020, our organisation has also grown exponentially. We have formed new alliances with national police forces in Finland, Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Kosovo, Serbia, North-Macedonia, and Hungary, as well as with NGOs and organisations in the field of child protection in Greece, Albania, Israel, Portugal, and Spain. My gratitude goes out to our partners, new and old, who fight every day to better protect children in Europe. I am personally looking forward to joining forces in 2021 and beyond.



**Frank Hoen**

Founder and Chairman  
AMBER Alert Europe



01

**AMBER Alert Europe  
Foundation**

# 1. AMBER Alert Europe Foundation

**AMBER Alert Europe is a foundation that assists in saving missing children at risk by connecting law enforcement with other police experts and with the public across Europe. AMBER Alert Europe advocates that one missing child is one too many and aims for zero missing children in Europe.**

## **Network of knowledge and expertise**

AMBER Alert Europe brings together 40 official organisations, public authorities and business entities from 24 countries. The foundation actively contributes to the EU and national policy debate on saving missing children. AMBER Alert Europe also officially facilitates the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP), so far consisting of over 80 experts from 30 countries, and the Task Force on AMBER Alerts. The goals of AMBER Alert Europe are backed by 465 Members of the European Parliament: most successful Written Declaration since 2011.

AMBER Alert Europe is a neutral platform. It operates either evidence based (scientifically proven) or expert based. All activities are executed with respect for the privacy of missing persons and data protection laws.

## **Background**

In 2008, AMBER Alert Netherlands was launched. With a reach of more than 12 million Dutch citizens, AMBER Alert Netherlands quickly became an example of how citizen sourcing can work; in 94 percent of the cases, the child was successfully found

## **The creation of AMBER Alert Europe**

Inspired by the success of the Dutch AMBER Alert, the AMBER Alert Europe foundation was launched in 2013 with the following goal:

- To be a life-saving factor in abductions or disappearances of children throughout Europe;
- To undertake any further actions necessary related to achieving or advancing the above-mentioned goal, in the broadest sense.





# 02

## **Police Expert Network on Missing Persons**

## 2. Police Expert Network on Missing Persons

The Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP), founded by the AMBER Alert Europe foundation, is officially recognised by the Council of the European Union and all member states. The PEN-MP is the official European missing persons police network consisting of police experts in the field of missing persons from all over Europe. So far, the PEN-MP consists of over 80 law enforcement experts from 30 countries. Goal of the PEN-MP is to bring together law enforcement experts in the field of missing persons, specifically children.

In order to save more missing persons across Europe, members can quickly contact and consult each other about missing person cases. The PEN-MP also provides specialist support, advice and training to its members.

### Goal of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons

The goal of the Police Expert Network is to bring together law enforcement specialists in the field of missing persons, specifically children, so that they can quickly contact and consult each other about missing children cases, at any time.

In addition, they can learn from each other, and exchange best-practices and experiences on missing children cases – on national and international level. In accordance with national laws and procedures, the Police Expert Network aims to find the most effective solutions to improve the search for missing children. Besides cross-border cooperation, the Police Expert Network also provides training to competent law enforcement authorities on how to deal with missing children cases.

### PEN-MP Presidency (2020-2022)

On January 1st, 2020, Damjan Miklič, Senior Criminal Police Inspector Specialist at the Slovenian Police Directorate, was officially appointed as president of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP). The PEN-MP makes use of a rotating presidency.

The PEN-MP was announced in 2016 under the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union. At its launch, the Dutch Presidency called on every Member State to appoint a national contact for the network. In support of the Dutch initiative, a majority of 465 Members of the European Parliament from all EU Member States signed AMBER Alert Europe's Written Declaration for better European cooperation on saving the lives of missing children.

The PEN-MP is officially recognised by the Council of the European Union with its formal affiliation to the Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP).



### **Strict separation of operational activities**

AMBER Alert Europe is primarily responsible for administrative and logistical support of the PEN-MP, including its Public Affairs. The foundation also facilitates the PEN-MP's expert training sessions and supports, manages and supervises the EU-funded PEN-MP projects. These activities are strictly separated from the operational police activities of the PEN-MP.

The exchange of operational police information takes place through the official channels (such as SIS, SIENA, and INTERPOL), also respecting the EU legal framework plus relevant legislation, directives and regulations relating to privacy and data protection.

### **Exponential growth PEN-MP**

In 2020, the PEN-MP has undergone substantial growth. The group has welcomed several new member countries. With Finland, Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Kosovo, Serbia, North-Macedonia, and Hungary joining, the PEN-MP, expanded to over 80 members from 30 countries.

## **2.1 Police Expert Network Digital Conference 2020**

On November 3rd, over 80 police officers from all over Europe attended the Digital Conference: Police Expert Network on Missing Persons 2020. The Ministry of the Interior and National Police of Slovenia and AMBER Alert Europe hosted the annual conference, which was held online this year due to COVID-19. During the event, law enforcement experts were given the unique opportunity to share experiences and exchange best practices on missing person cases. The interactive conference also enabled law enforcement from different countries in Europe to connect with each other and strengthen cooperation across regional and national borders. To get an impression of the conference see: <https://www.amberalert.eu/successful-digital-conference-2020>



Damjan Miklič, Senior Criminal Police Inspector Specialist at the Slovenian Police Directorate and president of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP)

## Real-life missing person cases and expert sessions

In the course of the event, real-life missing person cases were introduced by the national police of Poland, while the Slovenian national police spoke about the correlation between online grooming and missing children. Additionally, special guest Dr. Josip Pavliček PhD, criminalist and professor at Zagreb Police College and Expert in the field of investigative interviewing and lie detection, explained the role of the investigative interview and lie detection methods in assessing the truthfulness of a missing person report.

“Missing persons is a very complex area of policing, where one can never gain enough additional knowledge. The fact that so many of you responded and are with us today, shows that the issue of missing persons remains important, and of interest, all across Europe. Today we have with us representatives of national police forces from almost all European countries,” said Mr. Damjan Miklič, PEN-MP

President and Senior Criminal Police Inspector Specialist at the Slovenian Police Directorate, while addressing the attendees.

## Common European approach

The importance of joining forces was emphasized again by Mr. Frank Hoen, Founder and Chairman of AMBER Alert Europe. “Despite hundreds of thousands of missing persons annually in Europe, there currently is no EU Strategy on missing persons. Missing is still ‘missing’”, Hoen pointed out. “In Europe, a common space without borders, missing persons cannot be protected only through Member States acting on their own, but by Member States working together. That is exactly why we need a common European approach on missing persons.”



## 2.2 Members of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons



National Crime Agency, United Kingdom



National Police, Romania



An Garda Síochána, Ireland



National Police, Slovenia



Policia Judiciara, Portugal



Polizia di Stato, Italy



National Police Force, Malta



Ministerio del Interior, Spain



Police Presidium, The Czech Republic



National Police, The Netherlands



Ministry Justice and Security, The Netherlands



Bundeskriminalamt, Germany



National Police, Finland



Policia Nacional, Spain



Police and Border Guard, Estonia



Missing Persons Bureau, United Kingdom



National Police, Poland



Police, Republic of Srpska



Bundesamt für Polizei, Switzerland



Guardia Civil, Spain



National Police,  
Denmark



Ministry of the  
Interior, Slovakia



Hellenic Police,  
Greece



Grand Ducal Police,  
Luxembourg



Ministry of the  
Interior, The Czech  
Republic



National Police, Lithuania



Directorate for  
Coordination of Police  
Bodies, Bosnia and  
Herzegovina



Swedish Police  
Authority, Sweden



National Police,  
Hungary



General Directorate  
of the National Police,  
Bulgaria



Ministry of Interior,  
Criminal Police  
Directorate, Croatia



Ministry of Interior,  
North-Macedonia



Ministry of Interior,  
Republic of Serbia



National Police Chiefs  
Council, United  
Kingdom



Judicial Police, France

## 2.2.1 Observers of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons



Frontex



Eurojust



Kosovo Police, Kosovo



Royal Canadian  
Mounted Police,  
Canada



Europol



# 03

## **Common European Approach on Missing Children – Missing Persons**

# 3. Common European Approach on Missing Children – Missing Persons

Every year, 600.000 people go missing in Europe. Half of whom are children. Even though these numbers are staggering, missing is still ‘missing’ on the EU agenda. We want to change this.

Together with the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons, we have devised the Common European Approach on Missing Children and Missing Persons (CEA), a European-wide strategy supported by 4 pillars, that will help prevent children from going missing and ensure that appropriate action is taken if a child does go missing.

The CEA follows our 5-point Plan, which included 5 key points to better the protection of missing children in Europe. In 2016, A great majority of 465 Members of the European Parliament from all 28 Member States and all 9 political groups supported the 5-point Plan.



## Common European Approach

Join our mission to bring missing children home safely

Together we can save children’s lives. Support the Common European Approach by bringing it to the attention of your local government and parliamentary representatives.

Download the guide here:

[https://www.amberalert.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Proposal\\_Common\\_European\\_Approach\\_Missing\\_Children\\_Missing\\_Persons.pdf](https://www.amberalert.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Proposal_Common_European_Approach_Missing_Children_Missing_Persons.pdf)

# The 4 Pillars of the Common European Approach

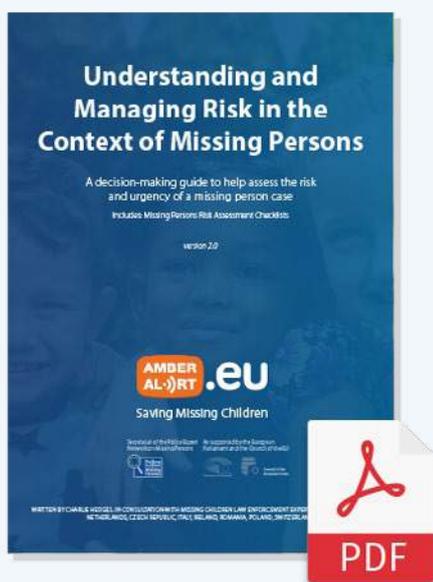
## 3.1. Missing Persons Risk Triage: immediate risk identification of missing children saves lives

When a missing child is reported to the police, law enforcement agencies should make a timely assessment to qualify or disqualify risk for the life or well-being of the missing child. This risk assessment is crucial to determine which steps need to be taken to successfully recover the child. Under-reaction can result in serious harm or death to the child. Over-reaction and doing too much is wasteful of resources and potentially an unwarranted intrusion on a child's privacy.

### 3.1.1 Activities

#### AMBER Alert Europe hosts multiple webinars on Risk Assessment

On June 23rd, AMBER Alert Europe hosted an initial webinar on Risk Assessment together with the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP). More than 50 police experts in the field of missing persons attended the webinar held by Mr. Charlie Hedges, renowned UK specialist in the field of missing children and European Training Coordinator of the PEN-MP. Due to its success, a second webinar on Risk Assessment was held on July 7th. This time in cooperation with the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC). Over 110 members of law enforcement agencies and non-profit organisations in the field of missing persons from 20 countries attended the webinar



## Guide on risk assessment

### Understanding and Managing Risk in the Context of Missing Persons

In consultation with missing children law enforcement experts from all over Europe and Canada, AMBER Alert Europe has developed a decision-making guide on risk management. A quick risk assessment is crucial to identify the correct response.

Download the guide here:

<https://ftp.amberalert.eu/risk/risk-assessment.pdf>

## **AMBER Alert Europe hosts 'Save The Missing Person First, Solve the Crime Later' webinar in cooperation with Eurojust and PEN-MP**

On September 30th, AMBER Alert Europe hosted the webinar 'Save The Missing Person First, Solve the Crime Later' in cooperation with Eurojust and the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP). Over 50 law enforcement professionals and Eurojust members from 22 countries across Europe attended the online event. During the webinar, speakers from the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, addressed the differing priorities between pursuing prosecution and saving a missing person.

Mr. Han Moraal, Chief Prosecutor and National Member of the Netherlands at Eurojust, kicked off the webinar by welcoming all participants and emphasizing the importance of a good balance between the search for a missing person and the judicial process. Especially when these missing person cases concern children.

"We all agree that everything should be done to fight crimes, especially those that involve children. In order to act quickly and effectively, we need to work together, not only nationally but also across borders. This is exactly what Eurojust is for", says Moraal. "However, sometimes priorities for law enforcement and judicial authorities are not the same. Traditionally, prosecutors are looking for proof to support their cases, which might not always be in line with law enforcement's main objective of finding the missing person. Therefore, this webinar is of the utmost importance."

# Save The Missing Person First, Solve The Crime Later

IN COOPERATION WITH THE DUTCH DESK OF EUROJUST AND  
THE POLICE EXPERT NETWORK ON MISSING PERSONS



## 3.2. Enhanced Cross-Border Law Enforcement Cooperation on missing children

With the abolishment of national borders, the Schengen Area, a zone with unrestricted movement of people was created. This also entails that missing children can easily be moved across a border into a neighbouring country. To prevent the investigations from stagnating at the border, resulting in vital time being lost, law enforcement agencies need to be able to quickly communicate and cooperate with their counterparts in other countries. In 2016, this belief resulted in an informal network of law enforcement experts in the field of missing persons. In 2019, this Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP) was officially recognised by the Council of the European Union.

### 3.2.1 Activities

#### Further expansion of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP)

The Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP) has grown to over 80 members from 30 countries. Law enforcement experts from Finland, Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Kosovo, Serbia, North-Macedonia, and Hungary joined the official European missing persons police network. The new members were introduced on November 3rd during the Digital Conference: Police Expert Network on Missing Persons 2020.

#### Digital Conference: Police Expert Network on Missing Persons 2020

On November 3rd, over 80 police officers from all over Europe attended the Digital Conference: Police Expert Network on Missing Persons 2020. The Ministry of the Interior and National Police of Slovenia and AMBER Alert Europe hosted PEN-MP's annual conference, which was held online this year due to COVID-19. During the event, law enforcement experts were given the unique



Ms. Maria Rossi (l) and Ms. Miia Lehtinen (r), National Police Finland.

opportunity to share experiences and exchange best-practices on missing persons cases. The interactive conference also enabled law enforcement from different countries in Europe to connect with each other and strengthen cooperation across regional and national borders.

### **Police academies and universities collaborate through unique international cold case analysis project**

In 2020, for the first time, police officers, researchers, and students worldwide worked hand in hand to discover new evidence in unresolved criminal cases. The International Cold Case Analysis Project is a result of a collaboration between the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP), AMBER Alert Europe, Locate International, the Police Academy of Lower Saxony and several British and Australian Universities.

Besides enabling young police officers and students to establish a close link between theory and practice in cold cases, the participants ultimately aim to help families across Europe to find closure after the disappearance of a loved one. The primary objective of this international collaboration was to enable young police officers and students to establish a close link between theory and practice in cold cases. It also enhances their investigative mindset by drawing on and learning from students from a variety of disciplines including criminology, policing, forensic science, psychology, forensic archaeology and anthropology. In addition, the outcomes of the cold case analysis project also serve as an incentive to set up similar fixed structures to be established from 2021.

## **INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN COLD CASE ANALYSIS**



Universities of South Wales, Leeds Beckett, Staffordshire, Winchester, Central Lancashire (GB), Murdoch, Newcastle (AUS) and the Police Academy of Lower Saxony (GER)



### 3.3. Connecting the public with law enforcement in the search for a missing child

In missing children cases, law enforcement frequently reaches out to the public for assistance. In 2008, the European Commission recognised the urgency of the missing children issue and set an objective for all EU Member States to establish an interoperable child alert system that would enable law enforcement agencies to alert their respective public and even coordinate the search across borders. Interoperability, however, has yet to be realised. In fact, currently, only 20 EU Member States have a child alert system for missing children in place. With 37.5% of Europeans living near national borders, protocols must be examined to ensure citizen sourcing in cases of missing children beyond the borders of the originating country.

#### 3.3.1. Activities

##### Task Force on AMBER Alerts

In 2018, AMBER Alert Europe launched its dedicated Task Force on AMBER Alerts in order to save more missing children in Europe. Police experts on missing children from the Czech Republic, Malta, Poland and the Netherlands joined the first virtual meeting to set out the Task Force's framework and priorities. In 2020, the Task Force on AMBER Alerts built on the outcomes of this meeting. The Task Force on AMBER Alerts provides a platform for discussion and sharing of information among missing children experts. As members of the Task force, police experts can network with colleagues across Europe, to exchange best practices, and to overcome challenges when working on missing children cases. They can also learn about the latest innovations to enhance their national AMBER Alert systems.



The publication of missing person appeals on ATM screens led to the recovery of eight missing people in Spain.

## **AMBER Alerts published on ATM screens across Europe**

From January 13th, Euronet Worldwide, a leading global financial technology solutions and payments provider, publishes active AMBER Alerts on 23,000 ATM screens across Europe following a partnership with AMBER Alert Europe. The screens on which alerts are published are located in Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, The Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom, and Ukraine.

This use of Euronet's ATM screens, which are potentially viewed by millions of users and passers-by across Europe each day, is a tremendous step forward in the search for missing children across Europe.

"We are delighted to support an initiative, such as AMBER Alert Europe via our ATMs," says Nikos Fountas, Executive President and Chief Executive Officer, Euronet EMEA EFT Processing. "Our

ATM technology and locations such as airports, railway stations, and city centers, places the alerts in front of large audiences. We are able to upload an alert on a missing child onto the ATM screens quickly and hope this activity accelerates the safe return of any missing children."

## **AMBER Alert Europe trains National Police of Luxembourg on the effective operation of the Luxembourgish national AMBER Alert System**

On July 16th, AMBER Alert Europe visited the office of the National Police of Luxembourg to give a continued training on the operation of the Luxembourgish national AMBER Alert system. The system, which was set up by AMBER Alert Europe, was launched in 2016 by Félix Braz, former Minister of Justice of Luxembourg, and Francine Closener, former Secretary of State of the Ministry of Internal Security of Luxembourg.



AMBER Alert Europe visited the office of the National Police of Luxembourg to give a continued training on the operation of the Luxembourgish national AMBER Alert system.

### **3.4. Preventing children from going missing as a joint effort of all stakeholders**

Preventing children from going missing consists of two key elements: Firstly, training and awareness-building of key stakeholders to reduce the number of children going missing. Secondly, determining the reason a child has gone missing to prevent children from going missing again. Law enforcement agencies are aware that when a child goes missing, it can be a strong indicator of underlying problems such as abuse, sexual exploitation, gender issues, and trafficking. If a child returns and these issues remain unrecognised and untreated, often children go missing again. In order to prevent this re-victimisation, it is imperative that the risk to the missing child is identified as well as the origins of this risk. Not only does this lead to a reduction in the number of incidents, or reoccurring incidents, of children going missing; it also helps law enforcement agencies identify and address any associated criminal activity.

#### **3.4.1. Activities**

##### **Child Rights Centre Albania joins AMBER Alert Europe**

On June 15th, AMBER Alert Europe proudly welcomed its newest member Child Rights Centre Albania (CRCA/ECPAT Albania). "This is a great achievement for Albania and above for child protection in our country. Together with AMBER Alert Europe, we can make the difference in saving children's lives from abuse and exploitation. This is a milestone in our work for children and young people", comments Altin Hazizaj, General Director of CRCA/ECPAT Albania.

##### **Greek Safer Internet Center joins forces with AMBER Alert Europe to protect children online**

On June 15th, the Greek Safer Internet Center officially joined AMBER Alert Europe. The partnership follows a successful collaboration on the #DontBeAnEasyCatch prevention campaign, which aimed to educate children, teenagers specifically, on online grooming.

Prof. Paraskevi Fragopoulou, Coordinator of the Greek Safer Internet Center, says: "In our digital era children connect with each other on a range of devices and platforms and therefore it is our main priority to educate them on how to make safer choices online about who they trust and what content they share. Our partnership with AMBER Alert Europe is of great importance for us since together we can spread awareness on how children can protect themselves, especially now with the increase of groomers online."

##### **Fundación ANAR and AMBER Alert Europe partner up to save more missing children in Europe**

On June 23rd, Fundación ANAR officially joined AMBER Alert Europe. Silvia Moroder, President of Fundación ANAR: "We are really pleased to reach this collaboration agreement with AMBER Alert Europe as it represents a further step in our mission of helping missing minors and their families. We know that the phenomenon of missing children is still unknown and complex and all efforts are important. Each case is unique and singular and deserves our best attention. We are confident that this alliance will bring more effective help to our children as we strive for the same goal."

## Portuguese NGO Instituto de Apoio à Criança joins AMBER Alert Europe

On June 23rd, Portuguese NGO Instituto de Apoio à Criança (IAC) officially joined AMBER Alert Europe. "IAC is very proud of this new partnership, because Portugal has been developing work in the field of missing children for a long time. This collaboration will streamline procedures in the case of missing children and we hope to find them more quickly and effectively", according to Maria João Cosme of IAC.

## WePROTECT Global Alliance and AMBER Alert Europe partner up to better protect children in Europe

On October 16th, AMBER Alert Europe has joined forces with WePROTECT Global Alliance, an international organisation combating online child sexual abuse and exploitation, to better protect children in Europe.

"We are delighted to welcome AMBER Alert Europe to WePROTECT Global Alliance (WPGA) as our newest civil society member. AMBER Alert's work on bringing public, law enforcement

and private partners together to collaborate and provide expertise to support saving missing children fits perfectly with WPGA's approach to tackling online child sexual exploitation and abuse. We are looking forward to deepening our collaboration, particularly in relation to cases of missing children that involve sexual exploitation and abuse with an online element, and working together to better protect children", says Iain Drennan, Executive Director, WePROTECT Global Alliance.

## AMBER Alert Europe launches global prevention campaign against online grooming in cooperation with PEN-MP

On May 25th, AMBER Alert Europa and the Police Expert Network On Missing Persons (PEN-MP) kicked off a global prevention campaign for International Missing Children's Day. The '#DontBeAnEasyCatch' campaign aimed to educate children, teenagers specifically, on online grooming. The campaign, which was shared in 23 countries, was a response to the alarming rise in online grooming cases during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Child Rights Centre Albania,  
Albania



Greek Safer Internet Center,  
Greece



Fundación ANAR, Spain



Instituto de Apoio à Criança



WePROTECT Global Alliance



**04**

**International Missing  
Children's Day 2020**

## 4. International Missing Children's Day 2020

On the occasion of International Missing Children's Day, AMBER Alert Europe and the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons launched the #DontBeAnEasyCatch campaign to educate children, especially teenagers, on the dangers of online grooming.

Awareness of online grooming is still lacking. The focus often lies on the dangers in the outside world, while children could just as easily be at risk in the safety of their own home when engaging in online activities. Additionally, not all children have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe online.

The '#DontBeAnEasyCatch' campaign comprised an animated video in which valuable tips are given to children to point out the dangers of online grooming. That online, not everything is what it seems. Examples of tips given are 'keep personal information to yourself', 'never share photos you might regret later' and 'always tell someone who you're meeting and where you are going'.

The campaign is available in 20 languages and was shared in 24 countries.

The campaign was shared with the public by national police forces and NGOs in the field of missing children and children's rights in Albania, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Srpska, Taiwan, and the United States, with the support of Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency. To read more about the campaign please see: <https://www.amberalert.eu/dontbeaneasycatch/>

Online, not everything  
is what it seems...



AMBER  
ALERT .eu

#DontBeAnEasyCatch

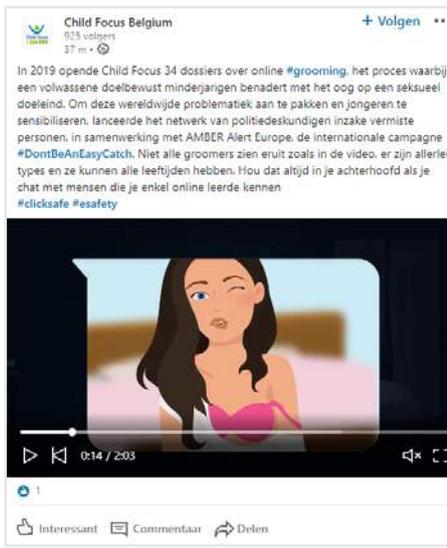
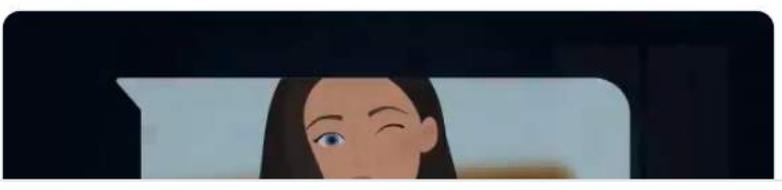
Online not everything is what it seems... Check out the new #Don'tBeAnEasyCatch #prevention campaign led by @AmberAlertEU & the #Police Expert Network On Missing Persons (PFN-MP)



Hoy es el Día Internacional del Niño Desaparecido

Desde el Centro Nacional de Desaparecidos de @interiorgob, junto con @FundacionANAR y en colaboración con @AMBERAlert, recordamos la importancia de la prevención para evitar que se produzcan este tipo de desapariciones

+ 116 000  
Translate Tweet



#25maggio #giornatainternazionaleminoriscomparsi per tenere sempre alta l'attenzione su un fenomeno preoccupante Quest'anno tra le tante iniziative a cui ha preso parte #PoliziadiStato una è dedicata agli adolescenti e ai pericoli della rete #essercisempre poliziadistato.it/articolo/385ec...

Translate Tweet



網路使用，別輕易落入陷阱Don't be an easy catch  
隨手網友來搭訕，迎招學識保護自己  
不分享確鑿自己確鑿的隱私照片  
保護好個人隱私  
如果要和網友見面，一定要在公開場所  
赴約時，要讓親人或朋友知道你要去哪裡，和誰見面

各國請真新法 <https://www.amberalert.eu/dontbeaneasycatch/>  
活動發起 AMBER Alert Europe  
協力中譯 吳毓輝 吳毓輝-孩子的守護者 失蹤兒童少年資料管理中心  
#別輕易落入陷阱 See loss





# 05

**Statistics 2020**

# 5. Statistics 2020

**AMBER Alert Europe only maps AMBER Alerts and Child Alerts issued by law enforcement authorities across Europe. The aim of this data collection is to gain better knowledge of the number of AMBER Alerts and Child Alerts shared by law enforcement or police-mandated organisations and the use of AMBER Alert systems in Europe.**

The data in this report are collected by daily monitoring of law enforcement and police-mandated organisations' websites from European Union Member States. This data does not represent the total number of children who annually go missing in Europe.

## 5.1 Criteria for an AMBER Alert

The decision to launch an AMBER Alert is country specific. In the Netherlands for example, the National Police is responsible for issuing AMBER Alerts. In other countries the Public Prosecutor has the final say. In general, however, the following criteria are used:

- The victim is a minor (i.e. under 18 years of age);
- It is a proven abduction or there are clear elements indicating that it could be a case of abduction;
- The health or the life of the victim is at high risk;
- Information is available which, once disseminated, will allow the victim to be located. Publication of this information is not expected to add to the risk facing the victim;
- There are good reasons to believe that the perpetrator has crossed the border with the child, or the abduction occurred in a region very close to a border that can be an escape route for the perpetrator

Of course, other cases of child disappearances are also important, and, in some of these cases, publicity can help find the child more quickly. The level and the kind of publicity for endangered missing children strongly differs per country. In some countries, for example, the police ask the public to help via Twitter or Facebook, while the police in other countries use targeted SMS text messages in the area where the child went missing.

## 5.2 Yearly statistics 2020

In 2020, AMBER Alert Europe shared 27 AMBER Alerts issued by competent law enforcement in Europe. In 93 percent of these cases, the children were safely recovered.

### Poland: Parental abduction

On Monday, February 17th, a Polish Child Alert was issued for a 10-year-old boy from Gdynia, Poland. According to police, the boy was abducted by his father, a Moroccan citizen. Later, the child was found in good health.

### The Netherlands: Girl found thanks to tips following an AMBER Alert

An AMBER Alert was issued for a fifteen-year-old girl from Berghem, the Netherlands. The teenager was found safe and sound thanks to good detective work and tips stemming from

the AMBER Alert. The police arrested a 31-year-old male as a suspect in her disappearance.

### France: Alerte Enlèvement had heart wrenching outcome

On February 8th, a French Alerte Enlèvement was issued for a 1-year-old girl from Angers. The infant girl was taken by her mother, who failed to return the child to her foster family after an arranged visit. The next day, the remains of the girl were found in a clothing dumpster. The mother was apprehended in a hotel and confessed to taking her daughter's life.



An AMBER Alert was issued for a 15-year-old girl from the Netherlands.

## Amber Alert voor 15-jarige Celine die mogelijk in levensgevaar is: 'Kom alsjeblieft naar huis'

2020

27 ALERTS

FOR 30 CHILDREN

83%

were successfully recovered

19 GIRLS



11 BOYS



Q1

10

ALERTS

Q2

10

ALERTS

Q3

2

ALERTS

Q4

5

ALERTS



1 ALERT IN FRANCE

12 ALERTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

1 ALERT IN POLAND

12 ALERTS IN GREECE

1 ALERT IN THE NETHERLANDS

## 5.3 Quarterly statistics 2020

### Quarter 1: January – March

In the first quarter of 2020, competent law enforcement issued 10 AMBER Alerts for 12 children across Europe. In 75 percent of these cases, the children were successfully recovered. The AMBER Alerts were issued in France (1), the Czech Republic (4), Poland (1) and Greece (4).

### Quarter 2: April – June

In the second quarter of 2020, AMBER Alert Europe shared 10 AMBER Alerts for 11 children across Europe. Ten of these children were found. The AMBER Alerts were issued in the Czech Republic (4) and Greece (6).

#### 2020: QUARTER 1

10 ALERTS

FOR 12 CHILDREN

75%

were successfully recovered

9 GIRLS



3 BOYS



JAN

5

ALERTS

FEB

3

ALERTS

MAR

2

ALERTS

4 ALERTS IN GREECE

1 ALERT IN POLAND

1 ALERT IN FRANCE

4 ALERTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

#### 2020: QUARTER 2

10 ALERTS

FOR 11 CHILDREN

91%

were successfully recovered

7 GIRLS



5 BOYS



APR

3

ALERTS

MAY

4

ALERT

JUNE

3

ALERTS

6 ALERTS IN GREECE

4 ALERTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### Quarter 3: July – September

In the third quarter of 2020, competent law enforcement issued 2 AMBER Alerts for 2 children across Europe. In both cases, the child was found safe and sound. The AMBER Alerts were issued in the Czech Republic (2).

### Quarter 4: October – December

In the fourth quarter of 2020, AMBER Alert Europe shared 5 AMBER Alerts for 5 children across Europe with the public. The AMBER Alerts were issued in the Netherlands (1), Greece (2) and the Czech Republic (2). In 80 percent of these cases, the child was successfully recovered.

#### 2020: QUARTER 3

2 ALERTS  
FOR 2 CHILDREN

100%  
were successfully recovered

1 GIRL 1 BOY



JULY AUG SEPT

1 0 1  
ALERT ALERTS ALERT

2 ALERTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

#### 2020: QUARTER 4

5 ALERTS  
FOR 5 CHILDREN

80%  
were successfully recovered

2 GIRLS 3 BOYS



OCT NOV DEC

2 1 2  
ALERTS ALERT ALERTS

2 ALERTS IN GREECE

1 ALERT IN THE NETHERLANDS

3 ALERTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



# 06

## **Participating Organisations and Partners**

# 6. Participating Organisations and Partners

In 2020, AMBER Alert Europe is backed by 40 official organisations, public authorities and business entities from 24 countries.

## 6.1 Participating Organisations



AMBER Alert Netherlands, Netherlands



Dutch Missing Persons Bureau, National Police, Netherlands



Initiative Vermisste Kinder, Germany



Ministry for Home Affairs and Security, Malta



Ministere de la Sécurité Interieure, Luxembourg



National Police – Central Operational Service, Italy



CEOP, United Kingdom



Malta Police Force, Malta



ITAKA, Centre for Missing People, Poland



Ministere de la Justice, Luxembourg



La Police Grand-Ducale, Luxembourg



Missing Persons Center KGP, National Police, Poland



Child Helpline at Slovak Committee for UNICEF, Slovak republic



National Coordination Mechanism of the Search for Missing Children (NKMPD), part of the Ministry of the Interior, Czech Republic



Action Against Abduction, formerly PACT, United Kingdom



Greek Safer Internet Center, Greece



Ponimanie, NGO focused on child protection, Belarus



Save the Children, Romania



ICMEC, International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children, US



Groupcall, United Kingdom



ROCIT, Regional Centre of Public Internet Technologies, Russia



RijnmondVeilig, The crisis alert platform in the Dutch region of Rotterdam-Rijnmond, Netherlands



APCD, Associação Portuguesa e Crianças Desaparecidas, Portugal



Missing Children Society of Canada, Canada



Kadunud, Estonia



Österreich Findet Euch, Austria



Missing Persons' Families Support Centre Lithuania



CNDES, Centro Nacional de Desaparecidos, National Police and Guardia Civil, Spain



Ministry of the Interior, Spain



Ministry of the Interior, The Republic of Srpska



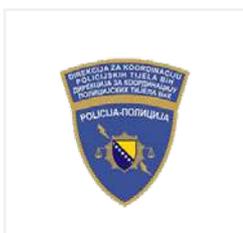
VOSTeuskadi, Spain



Locate, United Kingdom



National Police, Lithuania



Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina



Swedish Police Authority



Fundación ANAR, Spain



WePROTECT Global Alliance



Instituto de Apoio à Criança



Child Rights Centre Albania, Albania



ActiveFence



Victim Support Europe

## 6.2 New participating organisations

In 2020, AMBER Alert Europe welcomed six new participating organisations: WeProtect Global Alliance, Instituto de Apoio à Criança (PT), Fundación ANAR (ES), Greek Safer Internet Center (GR), Child Rights Centre Albania (AL), and ActiveFence (IL).

### **WePROTECT Global Alliance**

The WePROTECT Global Alliance (WPGA) is a global movement dedicated to putting online-facilitated child sexual abuse and exploitation (online CSAE) on the global agenda and mobilising a worldwide campaign to end it. The organisation brings together the influence, expertise and resources required to transform how online abuse is dealt with worldwide.

### **Greek Safer Internet Center**

The Greek Safer Internet Center was launched in July 2016 under the auspices of the Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas and, in particular, the Institute of Computer Science. The ultimate goal of the organisation is to promote a safer, responsible, and better use of the internet and mobile technologies among children and young people, interacting with all stakeholders to bridge the digital gap between home and school and between generations. It provides information, assistance, and support to young and adult internet users through its awareness website [www.SaferInternet4Kids.gr](http://www.SaferInternet4Kids.gr), Help-line ([www.help-line.gr](http://www.help-line.gr)), and SafeLine ([www.safeline.gr](http://www.safeline.gr)), its Hotline dealing with illegal content.

### **Fundación ANAR**

Fundación ANAR is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting and defending the rights of children and adolescents, through the

development of projects both in Spain and in Latin America, within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Since 2010, Fundación ANAR has been managing the 116 000 Hotline, the European hotline number for missing children, in Spain. This hotline provides free, immediate life-saving support when children go missing. Calls are answered locally by trained and professional staff from organisations specialising in dealing with cases of missing children by providing emotional, psychological, social, and legal advice.

### **Instituto de Apoio à Criança**

IAC is a non-profit organisation which was established in 1983 by a group of people with different professional backgrounds- doctors, magistrates, teachers, psychologists, lawyers, sociologists, social service technicians, and educators. Its main objective is to contribute to the integral development of the child, as well as to defend its rights. Since 2004, IAC has been managing the 116 000 hotline, the European hotline number for missing children, in Portugal. The hotline provides free, immediate life-saving support when children go missing. Calls are answered locally by trained and professional staff from organisations specialising in dealing with cases of missing children by providing emotional, psychological, social, administrative, and legal advice.

### **Child Rights Centre Albania**

The non-governmental organization, CRCA/ ECPAT Albania, was established in 1997 to help improve children's rights in Albania. CRCA works with various stakeholders to help increase awareness of the need for better legislation and policies to protect children from violence, abuse, and exploitation. Furthermore, CRCA promotes the implementation of the UN Convention on

the Rights of the Child and all other national and international human rights standards.

### **ActiveFence**

ActiveFence is the leader in online integrity, empowering Trust & Safety and other abuse prevention professionals through proactive detection of malicious activities on the internet, at scale. Merging AI-powered technologies with world-class data and intelligence, ActiveFence protects billions of people worldwide from violent extremism, disinformation, child predators, fraud, and other harms on the internet. Covering millions of malicious data sources in dozens of languages across platforms, ActiveFence supports some of the world's largest technology companies as they work towards a better and safer online world.

## **6.3 Partners**

Since 2016, AMBER Alert Europe has joined forces with Victim Support Europe and Eurojust to save the lives of missing children. Victim Support Europe provides support and information services to victims of crime. Representing 61 national organisations, Victim Support Europe advocates on behalf of all victims of all crimes and their family members. Eurojust, in turn, is the European agency responsible for dealing with judicial cooperation in criminal matters. When a serious crime has been committed against a child, Eurojust initiates cooperation between EU member states.



## 6.4 Sponsors

AMBER Alert has the support of thousands of organisations that voluntarily aid the search when a child goes missing. These sponsors make their knowledge and technology available in various ways to quickly find missing children with AMBER Alert. The power of crowdsourcing has made the AMBER Alert platform so extensive and progressive. Partners think along with AMBER Alert, so that the system becomes stronger, more extensive and more effective.

Everyone contributes in their own unique way. For example, Euronet Worldwide, a leading global financial technology solutions and payments provider, publishes active AMBER Alerts on 23,000 ATM screens across Europe. By doing so, the chance of a successful outcome is considerably increased.

Below you can find a few of our sponsors:

### **TRUE**

The website of AMBER Alert is more powerful than ever since the gratuitous support of our hosting partner TRUE. The Amsterdam-based IT company keeps the AMBER Alert platform, including our website, up and running 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When a child goes missing, the AMBER Alert website is now able to process one hundred times as many page views as Dutch top websites. The services are provided entirely free of charge and can be quantified at an amount of approximately €160,000 annually.

### **Axon Advocaten**

Axon is a law firm based in Amsterdam that specializes in internationally oriented services. They apply an hourly rate of €325 (excl. VAT). The service, as requested by AMBER Alert Europe, is provided free of charge. An exact amount to be quantified cannot be provided in advance. No min-max has been agreed upon between parties.

### **Accon AVM**

Accon AVM provides AMBER Alert Europe with financial advice, as well as financial statements. This service, costing around €10,000 annually, is provided free of charge.

### **Notariaat Pas**

A contract has been concluded with notary office Notariaat Pas whereby the necessary notarial-legal advice and support will be given free of charge. This is difficult to quantify in advance.

### **CompuTest**

CompuTest performs a periodic "stress test" of the AMBER Alert Europe systems. This service is approximately €7,000 annually and is provided free of charge.



**07**

**AMBER Alert Europe  
Board**

# 7. AMBER Alert Europe Board

AMBER Alert Europe Foundation is run by a Board of Directors, who develop policy and execute tasks at the benefit of the foundation. AMBER Alert Europe's Advisory Board functions as an advisory organ to the Board of Directors, regarding the foundation's policy and general affairs.

AMBER Alert Europe's Board and Advisory Board are composed of a selection of experts from law enforcement, academia, civil service as well as civil society. Board membership is an honorary position. Board members do not receive a salary.

## Board of Directors

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**Dr. Petra Binková (Czech Republic)**

Bureau of Criminal Police and Investigation Unit – Search Department – Czech Police Presidium



**Carole Bird (Canada)**

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP ret.)



**Frank Hoen (The Netherlands)**

AMBER Alert Europe, Founder and Chairman

## Advisory Board

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**Damjan Miklič (Slovenia)**

Criminal Police Inspector Specialist at the Slovenian Police Directorate – PEN-MP President



**Carmelo Abela (Malta)**

Ministry within the office of the Prime Minister



**Patrícia De Sousa Cipriano (Portugal)**

Associação Portuguesa de Crianças Desaparecidas



**Caroline Humer (USA)**

International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children



**Henk Jansen (The Netherlands)**

Independent Security and Investigations Professional, former Dutch Police (a.o. head of Organised Crime Division)



**Lars Bruhns (Germany)**

Initiative Vermisste Kinder



**Rinus van Schendelen (The Netherlands)**

Erasmus University Rotterdam



**Victor Reuter (Luxembourg)**

Grand Ducal Police



**Maurice Lenferink (The Netherlands)**

Safety Region Rotterdam-Rijnmond

The logo for AMBER ALERT .eu. It features the word "AMBER" in white uppercase letters above the word "ALERT" in white uppercase letters, both contained within an orange rounded rectangle. To the right of this rectangle is the ".eu" domain extension in white lowercase letters.

Saving Missing Children

Home of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons

As supported by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU

