



brave movement™

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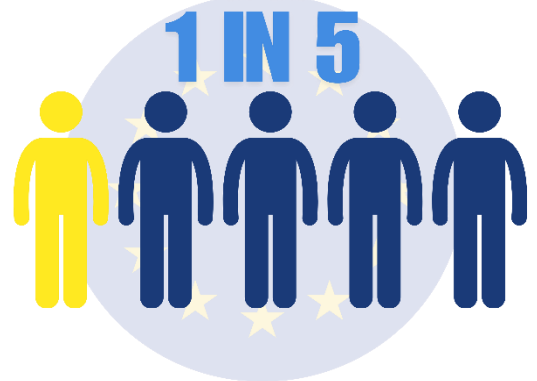
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The Urgency of Reforming Criminal Limitation Periods for Child Sexual Abuse in the EU



Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a public health epidemic affecting 1 in 5 children in the European Union. Extensive research establishes that CSA victims experience trauma distinct from that of other crime victims, often resulting in devastating physical, psychological, and social effects both in the short and long-term. It also causes a high economic burden for survivors, their families and taxpayers. Many victims suffer in silence for decades before they talk to anyone about their traumatic experiences—if they choose to disclose at all. The average age of disclosure for survivors is 52 years. By the time victims have processed their abuse and are ready to come forward and press charges or file a civil claim, many find themselves barred from seeking justice due to expired statute of limitations (SOLs).

children are victims of sexual abuse



When short SOLs prevent prosecution of these crimes, child abusers are not convicted, and they do not enter the sex offender registry thus leaving serial predators free to access professional and volunteer positions that require close contact with children. Some institutions like the Catholic Church have taken advantage of this legal loophole to send sex abusers to developing countries where they have continued to commit new crimes against very vulnerable children. To solve this problem all EU member states should abolish the criminal and civil SOLs for all CSA crimes. At the bare minimum the updated EU Directive should establish that the limitation period for all CSA offenses should not run out before survivors reach age fifty-three. We therefore call on EU decision-makers to ensure the new Directive seeks the abolition of SOLs throughout EU national laws as an objective and, as an interim measure, for article 16 of the Recast Directive to establish SOLs run until survivors are fifty-three years old.

52

the average age of disclosure for survivors

Access to Justice for Child Sexual Abuse Survivors Should Not Be a Postcode Lottery



The legal solutions implemented at the European level during the last fifteen years to try to solve this problem have been unsuccessful. The Lanzarote Convention, the Istanbul Convention and the Directive 2011/93 include vague language that tries to ensure that victims have enough time after reaching the age of majority to press charges. The practical implementation of this mandate has created [a three-tiered justice system](#). One group of EU countries have abolished SOLs for all, most or some CSA offenses; a second group has extended SOLs without abolishing them and a third group has not made significant changes in their legislation. Currently, access to justice for EU CSA survivors is [a “postcode lottery”](#) - a survivor’s country of residence determines their access to justice. SOLs must be abolished to allow survivors of CSA to truly access justice and to protect children and adolescents from sexual violence.

Alignment of SOLs: An EU solution for an EU problem

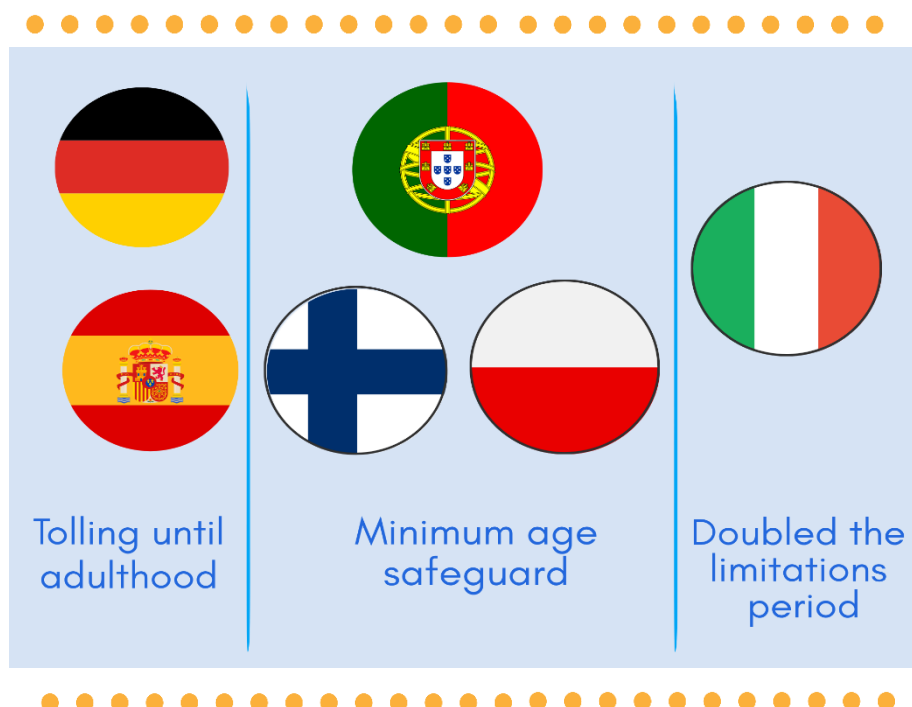
The violation of survivors’ right to access justice is an EU problem that needs an EU solution. Due to freedom of movement, the existence of safe havens for CSA offenders in some EU countries generates a safeguarding risk for all EU countries. If a child abuser moves to a new EU country and tries to access a role that implies permanent and direct contact with children, he/she will be asked to pass a criminal background check (CBC). If the abuser is not in the child offenders’ register of their country of origin, because their previous crimes have not been prosecuted due to short SOLs, they will pass the CBC, endangering children in the host country. The EU has long recognized that when there's a significant risk that freedom of movement may be exploited by criminal individuals and/or organizations (i.e. terrorism, drug trafficking), the EU should implement legal safeguards. By completely abolishing or at least establishing minimum limitation periods for CSA offenses across the whole EU, our proposal seeks to implement this safeguard.

**ACCESS TO
JUSTICE FOR
CSA VICTIMS
IN THE EU
DEPENDS ON
GEOGRAPHY,
NOT EVIDENCE**



Significantly expanding or abolishing SOLs has gained unanimous political consensus among the 27 EU Member States in June 2024, at a Lanzarote Committee meeting, which was reflected in the adoption of an [Opinion on article 33 of the Lanzarote Convention](#). Our call for expanding SOLs until survivors reach 53 years old respects the legal principle of proportionality as it allows each EU Member State to decide how exactly to achieve that goal. Member States do not have to change their general rules regarding criminal statute of limitations for most crimes to comply with this Directive as there are [well established technical options available to establish specific limitation periods for CSA offenses](#). Some Member States may decide to toll the limitation period until survivors reach a certain age as Spain and Germany have done. Others may establish that the limitation period cannot run out before survivors reach a certain age as Poland, Finland, and Portugal have done. Others may decide to double the standard limitation period for CSA offenses (as Italy has done). All options are valid as long as the limitation period does not run out before survivors have reached 53 years old.

Our proposal also respects the fundamental rights of the accused to a fair trial. The experience in countries that have no SOL such as the United Kingdom, Ireland or Cyprus proves [that it's possible to successfully prosecute historical CSA offenses](#). There are certain types of evidence that have been particularly useful to successfully prosecute these types of offenses such as DNA, a confession by the perpetrator, documents (i.e. personal files of institutions that sheltered abusers such as the Boy scouts or the Catholic church), child sex abuse material (i.e. photos, videos) or multiple testimonies by independent victims who do not know each other against the same perpetrator in the case of serial abusers.



The Need to Increase the Level of Ambition of the Directive

The Brave Movement and CHILD Global believe that Member States should increase the ambition of the proposed revision of the Directive. The new Directive must seek to redress the unequal situation of CSA survivors in the EU and ensure CSA survivors can exercise their rights to access justice anywhere in the EU. The new Directive must seek abolition of SOLs throughout the EU as an objective and a trajectory for improved alignment of EU national laws. In addition, and at a minimum, it should allow survivors to press charges until they are 53 years old, irrespective of the seriousness of the crime.



The Directive establishes a legal floor not a ceiling. When they implement it at the national level, Member States can and should aim to implement the gold standard of child protection regarding statute of limitations reform: complete abolition of criminal and civil SOLs for all or most CSA offenses. By doing that they would be following the recommendations [of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) and of [the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#).

At the bare minimum, article 16 of the Directive should establish that all survivors should have at least until age 53 before the limitation period runs out. Establishing that the length of the limitation period should be

proportional to the severity of the punishment for the crime, as the recast Directive does, is not consistent with the best scientific evidence. According to the [seminal Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) study](#), the severity of the mental and physical health long term consequences of ACEs are dose dependent. They depend on the overall number of ACEs a child experiences. Thus, a CSA survivor of a “less severe” sex crime such as fondling but who has had many other severe adverse childhood experiences such as a chaotic family environment may have most severe long term health consequences that a victim who has suffered a “very severe” sex crime such as rape but who does not have any other ACE. In short, children and adolescents may experience a variety of ACEs and

their consequences, EU policy must reflect that breadth of experience and provide adequate access to justice.

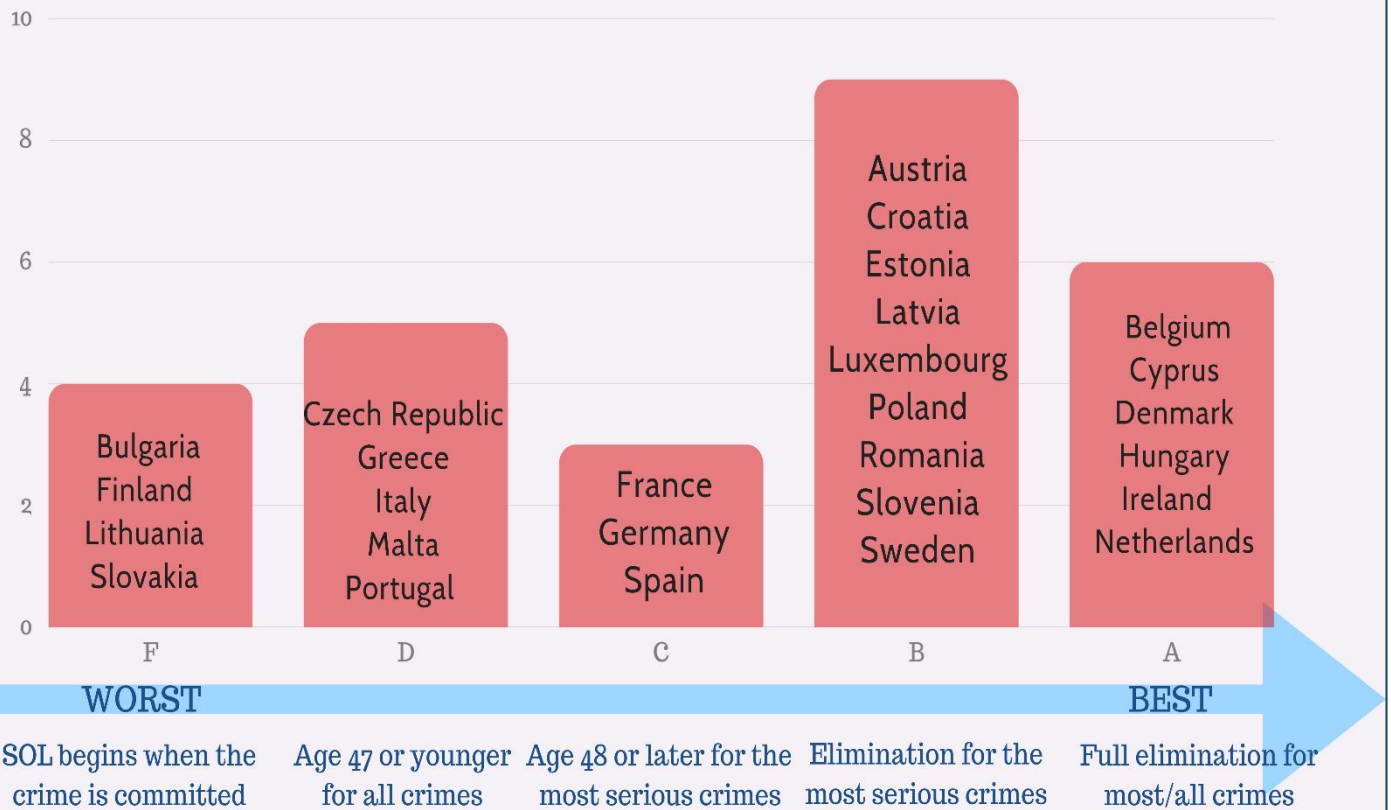
In summary, for both children and adults, disclosure of CSA trauma is a process and not a discrete event in which a victim comes to terms with their abuse. To effectively protect children from abuse, SOL laws must reflect this reality.

EU Member States Criminal SOL Rankings



EU Member States Criminal SOL Report Card		
A	Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, & Netherlands	No criminal SOL for most/all crimes
B	Austria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, & Sweden	No criminal SOL for most serious crimes
C	France, Germany, & Spain	SOL ends Age 48 or later for most serious CSA crimes
D	Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Malta, & Portugal	SOL ends age 47 or earlier for all CSA crimes
F	Bulgaria, Finland, Lithuania, & Slovenia	SOL begins when the crime is committed
 		

EU Member States Criminal SOL Ranking



Summary of EU Member States Criminal SOL Ratings and Legislation



EU member states with a Grade A criminal SOL rating. Examples of very good practice.

The following EU member states do not have a criminal statute of limitations for all/ most child sex abuse offences. In comparison with their EU peers, their criminal statute of limitations legislation is very good and deserves an A rating.



Denmark does not have a criminal statute of limitations for most child sex abuse offences (Only a few offences like child trafficking, distribution or possession of child sexual abuse material; selling pornography to a child; indecency in front of a child have a limitation period). For some of those crimes (i.e. child trafficking) the limitation period is suspended until the victim reaches age 21 whereas for others it runs from the time the offence is committed. *Section 93b (1), (2), 94(4). Danish Criminal Code.*



Ireland does not have a criminal statute of limitations for any child sex abuse offences. According to Irish criminal law “indictable offences” (judged in front of a judge and a jury like child sex abuse and exploitation) have no limitation periods. The Director of Public Prosecutions has the discretion to determine whether or not a prosecution is in the public interest and can thus begin proceedings at any point. However, if prosecution takes excessively long, the judge may decide not to hear the case. *Art 7 Irish Criminal Justice Act 1951.*



Belgium does not have a criminal statute of limitations for most child sex abuse offences. Only a few misdemeanors (i.e. possession of child sexual abuse material or indecency in front of a child) have a limitation period which starts to run from the time the crime is committed. *Article 21bis Belgian Criminal Procedural Code*



Cyprus does not have a criminal statute of limitations for any child sex abuse offences. There is a limitation period for the prosecution of some misdemeanors that can be punished by a custodial sentence that does not exceed twelve months or a fine, but that provision does not apply to child sex abuse offences. There is no other provision in the Cypriot criminal legislation that establishes a limitation period for the prosecution of any criminal offence. *Art 88 Criminal Procedure Code (Cap.155).*



The Netherlands does not have a criminal statute of limitations for most child sex abuse offences (only a few offences like indecency in front of a child or grooming have a limitation period). For the offence of grooming, its tolling has been suspended until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen). It has a limitation period of six years, so the limitation period ends when the victim reaches age twenty-four. *Articles 70 and 71 Dutch Criminal Code.*



Hungary does not have a criminal statute of limitations for all/ most child sex abuse offences. For a minority of child sex abuse offences there's a limitation period of five years (ie. Child trafficking). Its tolling is suspended until victim reaches age twenty-one. Thus, the limitation period runs out when the victim reaches age twenty-six. *Art 26 and 27 Hungarian Criminal Code.*

EU member states with a Grade B criminal SOL rating. Examples of good practice.

These EU member states do not have a criminal statute of limitations for the most serious child sex abuse offences. In comparison with their EU peers these member states' criminal statute of limitations legislation is good and deserves a B rating.



Luxembourg does not have a criminal statute of limitations for the most serious child sex abuse offences. For all other child sex abuse offences, it has a minimum limitation period of ten years an intermediate limitation period of twenty years and a maximum limitation period of thirty years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime. For the offences which have a limitation period, its initiation has been suspended until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen).

- In less serious child sex abuse offences, the limitation period does not run out until the victim reaches age twenty-eight.
- For the most serious CSA offences there's no criminal statute of limitations.
- For other CSA related crimes, the limitation period runs out when the victim reaches age thirty-eight or forty-eight depending on the severity of the crime.
Article 637, 638 Luxembourg Criminal Procedure Code.



Poland does not have a criminal statute of limitations for the most serious child sex abuse offences. For all other child sex abuse offences, the limitation period cannot run out until the victim reaches age forty. *Article 101 § 4, Article 105 pt. 3-5 Polish Criminal Code.*



Austria has abolished the limitation period for the most serious child sex abuse offences, those punished by life imprisonment. For all other child sex abuse offences, it has suspended the initiation of the limitation period until the victim reaches age twenty-eight. Austria has a minimum limitation period for child sex abuse offences of five years and a maximum limitation one of twenty years. It has intermediate limitation periods of ten years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime.

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age thirty-three.
- For the most serious offenses, there's no criminal statute of limitations.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches age thirty-eight or forty-eight, depending on the gravity of the offense. *Articles 57(1), 58(3) Austrian Criminal Code.*



Croatia does not have a criminal statute of limitations for the most serious child sex abuse offences. For all other child sex abuse offences, it has a minimum limitation period of ten years and maximum limitation period of twenty-five years. It has intermediate limitation periods of fifteen and twenty years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime. For most child sex abuse offences which still have a limitation period, the running of the limitation period has been suspended until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen).

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age twenty-eight.
- For the most serious offenses, there is no criminal statute of limitations.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches age thirty-three, thirty-eight or forty-three, depending on the severity of the offense. *Articles 81(1), (2), 82(3) Croatian Criminal Code.*



Sweden does not have a criminal statute of limitations for the most serious child sex abuse offences. For all other child sex abuse offences, it has a minimum limitation period of five years and a maximum limitation period of twenty-five years. It has intermediate limitation periods of ten and fifteen years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime. For the offences which have a limitation period, its initiation has been suspended until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen) except for child trafficking offences and online grooming, for which the limitation period starts running from the time the crime is committed.

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age twenty-three.
- For the most serious offenses, there's no criminal statute of limitations.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches age twenty-eight, age thirty-three or age 43 depending on the severity of the crime. *Chapter 35, Sections 1, 2 and 4 Swedish Criminal Code.*



ESTONIA



Estonia does not have a criminal statute of limitations for the most serious child sex abuse offences, those punished by life imprisonment. For all other child sex abuse offences, it has a minimum limitation period of five years and maximum limitation period of ten years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime.

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age twenty-three.
- For the most serious offenses, there's no criminal statute of limitations.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches age twenty-eight. *Article 81 (1), (2), (3), (7) point 3 Estonian Criminal Code.*



LATVIA



Latvia does not have a criminal statute of limitations for the most serious child sex abuse offences, those punished by life imprisonment. However, the courts make the final decision whether or not to apply the limitation period in these cases when the victim is older than age 48 (thirty years after reaching age of majority). For all other child sex abuse offences, it has a limitation period of twenty years. For the offences which have a limitation period, its initiation has been suspended until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen). For the offences which have a limitation period, it does not run out until the victim reaches age thirty-eight. *Articles 56 (1'), (2), (4) Latvian Criminal Code.*



Romania has abolished the criminal statute of limitations for most trafficking and sexual offences committed against adults and children. Romania still has limitation periods for child sex abuse material offences (CSAM) as well as some less serious CSA offences (i.e. grooming, sexual harassment, inducing or facilitating the performance of sexual acts between minors, sexual corruption of minors). For all CSAM as well as less severe child sex abuse offences, it has a minimum limitation period of five years and maximum limitation period of eight years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime. For the offences which have a limitation period, its initiation has been suspended until the victim reaches the age of majority (age of majority). For those offences, the limitation period does not run out until the victim reaches age twenty-three or age twenty-six depending on the severity of the crime. *Articles 153(2), 154 (1), (4) Romanian Criminal Code.*



In practice Slovenia does not have a criminal statute of limitations for the most serious child sex abuse offences. Slovenia has suspended the initiation of the criminal limitation period in child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen). Slovenia has a minimum limitation period of thirty years, an intermediate limitation period of sixty years and a maximum limitation one of ninety years. This is due to a special SOL rule that applies in most child sex abuse offences that triples the length of the usual limitation periods for ordinary crimes. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime. For some CSA offences (i.e. grooming, distribution of pornography to children) the ordinary limitation period rules apply. Grooming has a limitation period of six years. This crime can be prosecuted until victim reaches age twenty-four. Distributing pornography to a child has a limitation period of ten years. This crime can be prosecuted until the victim reaches twenty-eight.

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age forty-eight.
- For the most serious offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age one hundred and eight.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches seventy-eight. *Article 90, 95 Slovenian Criminal Code.*

EU member states with a Grade C criminal SOL rating. Examples of mediocre practice.

These EU member states have not abolished the limitation period for any child sex abuse offence. Their criminal statute of limitations legislation ensures prosecution of at least the most serious child sex abuse offences until thirty years after the victim turns eighteen (age forty-eight). In comparison with their EU peers, their criminal statute of limitations legislation is mediocre and deserves a C grade.



Spain has suspended the initiation of the limitation period in child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches age thirty-five. Spain has a minimum limitation period of five years and a maximum limitation one of twenty years. It has intermediate limitation periods of ten and fifteen years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime.

- In less serious child sex abuse offences, the limitation period does not run out until the victim reaches age forty.
- For the most serious CSA offences prosecution remains possible until the victim turns fifty-five.
- For other CSA related crimes, the limitation period runs out when the victim reaches age forty-five or fifty depending on the severity of the crime. *Articles 131, 132 Spanish Criminal Code.*



France has suspended the initiation of the limitation period in child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen). France has a minimum limitation period of ten years and a maximum limitation one of thirty years. It has an intermediate limitation period of twenty years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime.

- In less serious child sex abuse offences, the limitation period does not run out until the victim reaches age twenty-eight.
- For the most serious CSA offences prosecution remains possible until the victim turns forty-eight.
- For other CSA related crimes, the limitation period runs out when the victim reaches age thirty-eight. *Articles 7 and 8 French Criminal Procedure Code.*



Under the German Criminal Code, the initiation of the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse offenses is suspended until the victim turns thirty. Depending on the severity of the offense, the limitation period ranges from five to thirty years, with intermediate durations of ten and twenty years.

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age thirty-five.
- For the most serious offenses, prosecution remains possible until the victim turns sixty.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches age forty or fifty, depending on the gravity of the offense.
German Criminal Code §§ 78(3), 78b (1)(1)

EU member states with a Grade D criminal SOL rating. Examples of poor practice.

These EU member states have not abolished the limitation period for any child sex abuse offences. Their criminal statute of limitations legislation does not ensure prosecution of at least the most serious child sex abuse offences until thirty years after the victim turns eighteen (age forty-eight). They have suspended the initiation of the limitation period at least until the victim reaches the age of majority (eighteen years). In comparison with their EU peers, their criminal statute of limitations legislation is poor and deserves a D grade.



Czech Republic has suspended the initiation of the limitation period for child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen). For child sex abuse offences, the Czech Republic has a minimum limitation period for child sex abuse offences of three years, intermediate limitation periods of five and ten years and a maximum limitation one of fifteen years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime.

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age twenty-one.
- For the most serious offenses, prosecution remains possible until the victim turns thirty-three.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches age twenty-three or age twenty-eight, depending on the severity of the offense.
Article 34 (1), (3) c) Czech Criminal Code.



Malta has suspended the initiation of the limitation period for child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches age twenty-three. For child sex abuse offences, Malta has a minimum limitation period for child sex abuse offences of five years, intermediate limitation periods of ten and fifteen years and a maximum limitation one of twenty years. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime.

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age twenty-eight.
- For the most serious offenses, prosecution remains possible until the victim turns forty-three.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches age thirty-three or age thirty-eight, depending on the severity of the offense. *Articles 208B (6), 688 Maltese Criminal Code.*



Greece has suspended the running of the limitation period for felony child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches age twenty-one. For child sex abuse felonies, Greece has a minimum limitation period of fifteen years and a maximum limitation period of twenty years (for crimes punished by life imprisonment). The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime. For child sexual abuse felonies, the limitation period runs out when the victim reaches age thirty-six or age forty-one depending on the severity of the crime. Greece has suspended the running of the limitation period for misdemeanor child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches age nineteen. For child sex abuse misdemeanors, Greece has a limitation period of five years. For child sexual abuse misdemeanors, the limitation period runs out when the victim reaches age twenty-four. *Articles 111, 112, 113(4) Greek Criminal Code.*



Portugal has suspended the initiation of the limitation period for child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen). Portugal has also established that in child sex abuse offences the limitation period cannot run out before the victim reaches age twenty-five. Portugal has a minimum limitation period for child sex abuse offences of seven years and a maximum one of fifteen years and an intermediate one of ten years from the time the victim reaches the age of majority. The limitation period depends on the severity of the crime.

- For less serious CSA offenses, the limitation period expires when the victim reaches age twenty-five.
- For the most serious offenses, prosecution remains possible in theory until the victim turns thirty-three. However, no CSA offence has a punishment that is severe enough to warrant this limitation period.
- For other CSA-related crimes, the limitation periods expire when the victim reaches age twenty-eight. *Articles 118(1) a), b), (5), 119(5) Criminal Code of Portugal.*



Italy has not abolished the limitation period for any child sex abuse offences. Italy has suspended the initiation of the limitation period in child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen). In Italy the limitation period for ordinary crimes is equal to the maximum penalty for the crime. Italy has a minimum limitation period of twelve years and a maximum limitation one of twenty-eight years. This is due to a special statute of limitations rule that applies in child sex abuse offences that doubles the length of the usual limitation periods for ordinary crimes. The limitation period ends when the victim reaches age thirty for less severe crimes and age forty- six for the most severe crimes. *Articles 157, 158 Italian Criminal Code. Article 392 1-bis Italian Code of Criminal Procedure.*

EU member states with a Grade F criminal SOL rating. Examples of very poor practice.

These EU member states have not abolished the limitation period for any child sex abuse offences. The limitation period starts running from the commission of the child sex abuse offence. Most of them, for child sex abuse offences, have established a minimum age of the victim before which the limitation period cannot run out. In comparison with their EU peers, their criminal statute of limitations legislation is very poor and deserves an F grade.



Finland has not suspended the running of the limitation period for child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches age the age of majority (age eighteen). The limitation period starts to run from the commission of the crime. Finland has established that in most child sex abuse offences the limitation period cannot run out before the victim reaches age twenty-eight (with an exception for the crime of grooming where the minimum age before the limitation period can run out is age twenty-three). Finland has a limitation period for the most serious child sex abuse offences of twenty years from the commission of the crime. No child sex abuse offence can be prosecuted after a victim reaches age thirty-eight (maximum possible age if victim is aged seventeen when crime is committed). *Chapter 8 Sections 1 and 2 Finnish Criminal Code.*



Lithuania has not suspended the running of the limitation period for child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches the age of majority (age eighteen). The limitation period starts to run from the commission of the crime. Lithuania has established that in child sex abuse offences the limitation period cannot run out before the victim reaches age twenty-five. Lithuania has a limitation period for the most serious child sex abuse offences of twenty-five years from the commission of the crime. It has intermediate limitation periods of fifteen, twelve years and eight years and a minimum limitation period of seven years. Therefore, no child sex abuse offence can be prosecuted after a victim reaches age forty-three (the maximum possible age if victim is aged 17 when crime is committed). *Article 95(1)-(3) Criminal Code of Lithuania.*



Slovakia has not suspended the running of the limitation period for child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches age eighteen. The limitation period starts to run from the commission of the crime. Slovakia has established that in many child trafficking, child sex abuse (CSA) and child sex abuse material (CSAM) offences the limitation period cannot run out before the victim reaches age thirty-three. Slovakia has a limitation period for the most serious CSA and CSAM offences of twenty years from the commission of the crime. Therefore, no child sex abuse offence can be prosecuted after a victim reaches age thirty-eight (the maximum possible age if victim is aged 17 when crime is committed). *Article 87 (5), (6) Criminal Code of the Slovak Republic.*



Bulgaria has not suspended the initiation of the limitation period for child sex abuse offences until the victim reaches age of majority (age eighteen). The limitation period starts to run from the commission of the crime. Bulgaria has a special limitation period for child sex abuse and human trafficking offences of twenty years. Unlike other Member States where the limitation period starts running from the time the crime is committed (i.e. Finland, Lithuania, Slovakia), Bulgarian criminal law does not prevent the limitation period to run out before the victim reaches a certain age. However, since Article 80 (1) point 1 Bulgarian Criminal Code has established a standard limitation period of twenty years for all child sex abuse and exploitation offences, the victim will at least have reached age twenty before the limitation period runs out, even when it was younger than one year when the crime was committed. No child sex abuse offence can be prosecuted after a victim reaches age thirty-eight which is the maximum possible limitation period when the victim was seventeen when the crime was committed. *Article 80(1) point 1, (3) Bulgarian Criminal Code.*

Recommendations for Improvement



The European Council should support during trilogue negotiations the EU parliament proposal of completely abolishing criminal statute of limitations for all child sex abuse offences following the example of best practice established by six EU countries (Ireland, Cyprus, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Hungary). At the very least it should agree to a minimum limitation period of thirty-five years from age of majority (age fifty-three) for all child sex abuse offences to ensure the criminal SOL age cap for CSA offences is above the average age of disclosure for European survivors (which is age fifty-two).

About the Global SOL Task Force



The Global Statute of Limitations Reform Task Force (Global SOL Task Force) brings together two powerful forces—the Brave Movement and CHILD GLOBAL—to eliminate statutes of limitations (SOLs) for child sex abuse (CSA) worldwide. CHILD GLOBAL is the leading organization to document, research, and analyze SOL reform for CSA victims, with a proven track record in the United States, Scotland, and Chile — where the movement was led by Global SOL Task Force member Vinka Jackson and Derecho al Tiempo. CHILD GLOBAL supplies intellectual assets to open the door for victims' access to justice. Its role in the Global SOL Task Force is to provide its expertise and the creation of a global dashboard to inform the public about SOL reform around the globe.

The Brave Movement is leading the grassroots advocacy goals of the Global SOL Task Force. It brings together diverse survivor-leaders, survivor networks, and allies from around the world who have proven track records and peer standing for their advocacy. Focused on transformational change, its members are bound by a common purpose: to create a world where children and adolescents can grow up safely, free from sexual violence. The Brave Movement is a powerful and transformational voice for systemic, socio-political and socio-cultural change.