

REPORT CENTRE

against
Child Sexual Abuse Material
and National Socialism



ANNUAL REPORT
2020

www.stopleveline.at

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FOREWORD

2020 was different - in every respect. It was the „Corona Year“. Home office, social distancing and on-line meetings suddenly dominated our everyday life and led to increased internet consumption. At the same time, it was also the year of the most reports to Stopleveline. Reports on an unprecedented scale. Only the future, when Corona no longer influences our daily life, will show whether there is a connection.

Stopleveline received almost 27,000 reports in 2020, which corresponds to a threefold increase compared to 2019. The share of valid reports was also enormously high with more than 7,700 cases. A big thank you to the internet users who did not look away! An equally big thank you to the Stopleveline staff members who process every single report and who make sure that illegal content is removed from the internet immediately, in cooperation with the police and the host providers. In Austria, this is achieved within one working day on average. For this, too, a heartfelt thank you to all those involved.

Dr. Barbara Schlossbauer, Stopleveline project manager

Reports received

Statistics of the last 20 years - Stopleveline: 2000 - 2020



STOPLINE REPORT CENTRE

Stopline is the online reporting centre for people who encounter child sexual abuse material and National Socialist content on the internet. Stopline's overarching goal is to work with host providers to remove illegal content, with a particular focus on material published in Austria.

Stopline was established in 1998 and is an officially authorised and recognised report centre. It works in close cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry for the Interior and domestic internet service providers. To help it successfully combat illegal internet content at an international level, Stopline is part of the global INHOPE hotline network.

HOW STOPLINE WORKS

Stopline employees do not actively seek out illegal material, instead they focus on processing incoming reports. The reports are submitted by vigilant internet users and INHOPE partner hotlines.

Which content can you report?

Stopline 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.

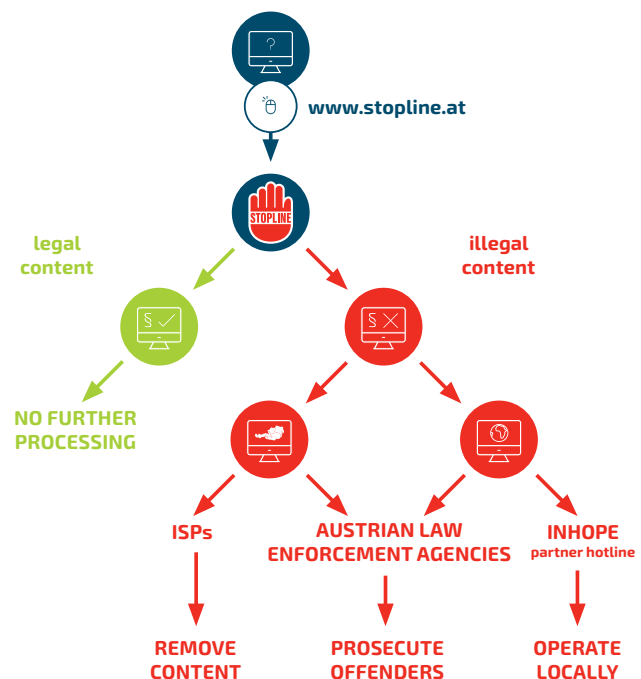
How can you report?

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

- using the online form at www.stopline.at
- or by sending an e-mail to office@stopline.at

* The full German-language text of the Criminal Code can be found at www.ris.bka.gv.at.

HOW IT WORKS:



IMPORTANT!

You must not actively embark on a search for illegal content and do not send any images to Stopline! This could be interpreted as an illegal act in itself. All it takes for Stopline to follow up a report is an accurate as possible indication of the source of the suspicious material.

KEY DETAILS AT A GLANCE

Incoming reports at a record high

Compared to 2019 (9,106 reports), the total number of reports received almost tripled in 2020. A total of 26,992 reports were submitted to Stopline - this corresponds to an increase of almost 300 %. This number is significantly higher than the long-term average.

Approximately 30 percent valid reports

The percentage of reports that were actually classified as valid - i.e. sexual abuse depictions of minors or National Socialist engagement - remained roughly the same in comparison to recent years. In absolute numbers, 7,731 reports were accurate.

In percentage terms, this means that about one third (29 %) of all reported content in 2020 was categorised by Stopline as actually unlawful. Due to the significant increase in reports in recent years, the number of valid reports has also increased (2017: 1,822 reports, 2018: 2,867 and 2019: 2,697).

Little illegal content on National Socialist engagement

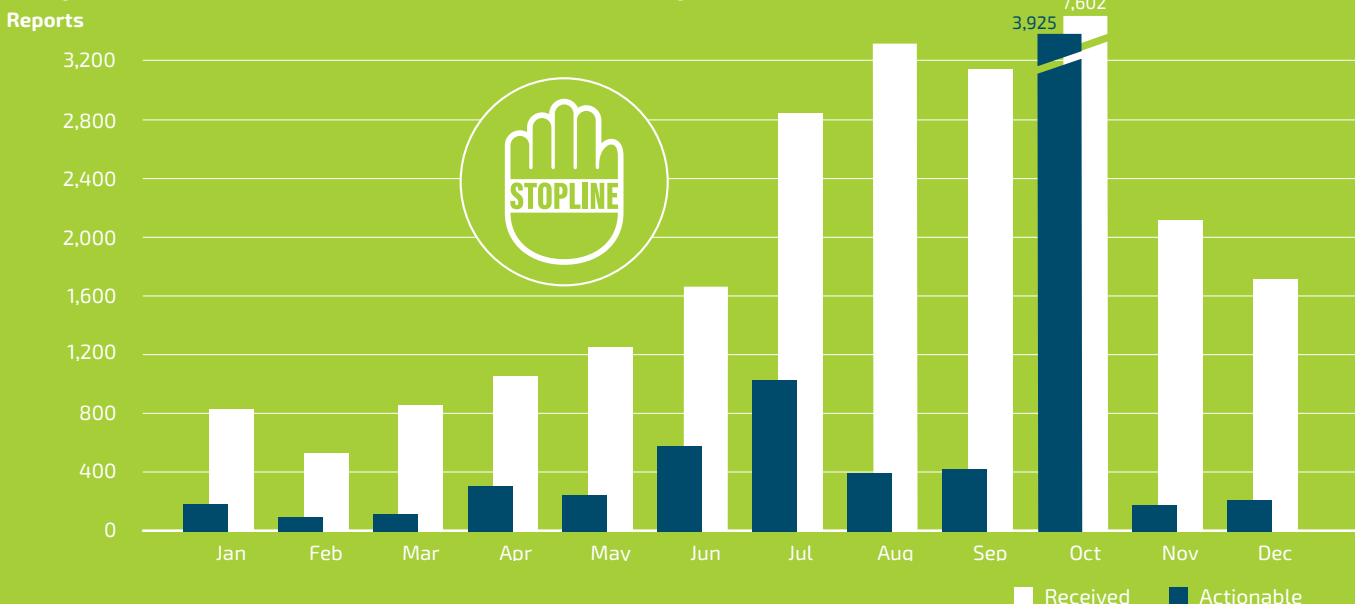
In terms of the breakdown of material classified as illegal, the 2020 figures return to the pattern set in 2017 and 2018, as there had been a significant deviation in 2019. Thus, in 2020, over 99.7 % of illegal reports (7,709) concerned sexual abuse depictions of minors and only 22 reports (0.3 %) concerned National Socialist content.

Austria still an unattractive hosting location for illegal content

Although the number of cases of illegal content hosted in Austria increased from 3 cases (in 2019) to 53 cases in 2020 due to the high number of reports received and the large amount of illegal content, Austria is still not classified as a country with a lot of illegal content in an international context.

One case of content hosted in Austria was classified as National Socialist re-activation. All other cases fell into the category of sexual abuse depictions of minors. This corresponds to about 1 % of all examples of illegal content processed by Stopline in 2020. With the help of the relevant Austrian host providers, the material was removed from the internet quickly in order to make it impossible for internet users to access it again.

Reports received vs actionable reports in 2020

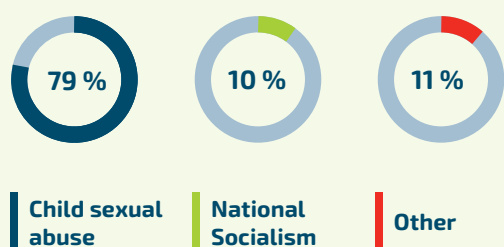




PROFILE OF REPORTS IN 2020

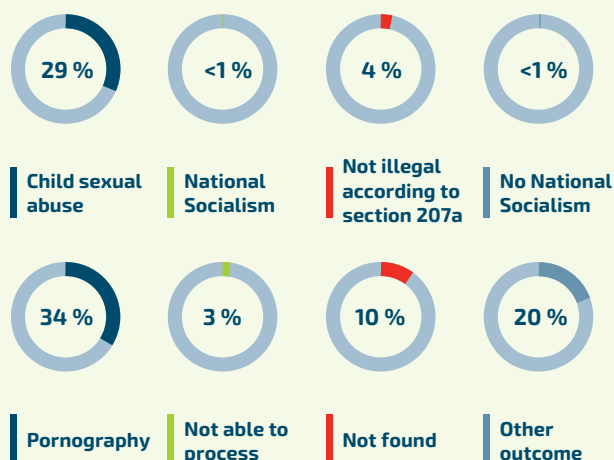
Categorisation of reports by reporters in 2020

On average, about 2,250 cases per month were reported to Stopline in 2020. This indicates a considerable increase compared to the previous years. 79 % (21,427 in absolute numbers) of the total of 26,992 reports sent were defined as sexual abuse of minors by the reporters. Just under 10 % (2,711 reports) were categorised as National Socialist content. In the remaining 11 % (2,854 reports labelled as „other“), users referenced content that they could not clearly categorise.



Categorisation of reports by Stopline in 2020

Stopline checks all incoming reports and determines whether there is criminal content. About 29 % of the reported cases, namely 7,731, were actually classified as unlawful. This is roughly the same percentage as in 2019 (30 %). If one contrasts the categorisation of the reporter with that of Stopline, about 36 % of the cases reported as child sexual abuse are actually illegal, while for National Socialist re-activation it is only 1 %.



34 % of the reports were pornography depicting persons of legal age. About 4 % of the cases regarding child sexual abuse material or National Socialist content, Stopline came to the conclusion that while perhaps appearing illegal to laypeople, the reported material was not in contravention of section 207a of the Austrian Criminal Code or the National Socialism Prohibition Act 1947 (Verbotsgesetz) or the Abzeichen-gesetz outlawing National Socialist regalia and symbols.

Of the remaining 33 % of content, either it could not be processed (e.g. incorrectly transmitted data), the content could not be found (e.g. access barriers due to passwords or removed content), or it fell under the category „Other outcome“, which are either legally harmless or concern topics that could theoretically be illegal, but are beyond Stopline’s responsibility - such as online fraud.

Reports received vs actionable reports in 2020

Reports received by Stopline / categorised as actionable – by content:

	Received	Actionable
Child sexual abuse	21,427	7,709
National Socialism	2,711	22
Other	2,854	-
Total	26,992	7,731

Reports received by Stopline / categorised as actionable – by online service:

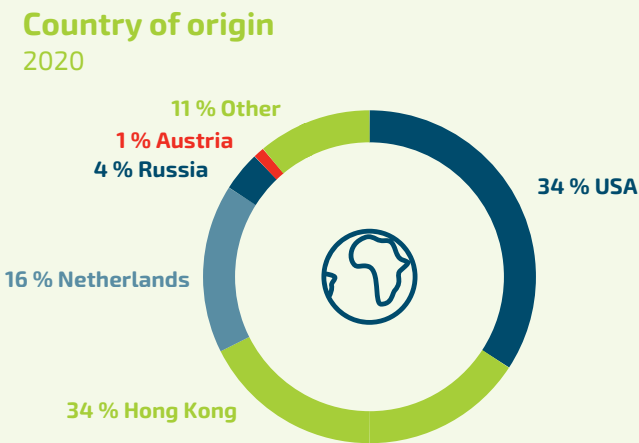
	Received	Actionable
World wide web	26,097	7,449
Social media	386	10
YouTube	56	3
TOR network	378	269
File sharing	5	0
Other	70	0
Total	26,992	7,731

ORIGIN OF ILLEGAL CONTENT IN 2020

Most common hosting locations

Illegal content is often hosted where unbureaucratic and cheap IT infrastructure (server, web space, connectivity) is available, or where the legal situation allows the publication of such content. However, this does not mean that the illegal material, especially the depiction of sexual abuse of minors, was also produced in these countries. It is merely the place where the content was published on the internet. In terms of content reported to Stopline, the USA has led the hosting country statistics for illegal material in recent years, including in 2020 with 34 % (2019: 36 %). Surprisingly, Hong Kong took a prominent position in 2020 with 34 % (in 2019 less than 1 %). The Netherlands followed with 16 % (2019: 55 %).

Due to the high number of incoming reports in 2020 Stopline registered a noticeable increase in illegal content originating in Austria. With less than 1 % of the cases (53 reports in absolute terms), this share is clearly above the number from 2019 - 3 cases (0.1 %), but still in the minimal range in relation to the total number of reports. Austria therefore remains unattractive as a hosting location, partly due to the swift intervention of all parties involved, especially the host providers concerned.



International partnerships

The majority of all reports that were classified as illegal by Stopline were hosted on foreign servers. This shows the importance of international cooperation to remove illegal content from the internet. Therefore, one of Stopline’s primary activities is to immediately inform its partner hotlines in the respective host countries.

In 2020, Stopline was able to directly inform a competent hotline in almost 60 % of all cases of sexual abuse depictions of minors hosted abroad. The number was lower than in previous years (2019: 90 %), as Hong Kong was a frequent country of origin of illegal content in 2020 and there is no partner hotline there.

National partnerships

And even if the illegal material is hosted on a foreign server, Stopline also reports the content to Austrian prosecutors.

If the content is hosted by an Austrian internet service provider, Stopline notifies the relevant executive agencies. To ensure immediate reaction, Stopline has been working closely with the government departments at the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs for many years: the Report Centre for Child Pornography and Child Sex Tourism on the Internet at the Federal Criminal Police Office (BK) and the Report Centre for National Socialism at the Federal Office for Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism (BVT).

Stopline also subsequently contacts the host provider, asking them to remove the content from the internet so that it can no longer be accessed online. Stopline does not delete or censor any allegedly illegal material itself. Instead, it gives providers recommendations on how to proceed if any is discovered. It is down to the provider to decide how to react. In Austria, all of the providers are highly aware of their responsibilities, meaning that any illegal content is rapidly removed from the internet.

Content categorised by Stopline as illegal was (without duplicate reports) forwarded to:

	Reports
Executive agencies (BK and BVT)	7,103
Austrian providers	53
INHOPE partner hotlines	3,948



SAFER INTERNET CENTRE AUSTRIA

Together with Saferinternet.at, Rat auf Draht and ISPA, Stopline makes up Safer Internet Centre Austria, which is the Austrian partner in the European Union's Internet Network (www.betterinternetforkids.eu), which provides a range of measures designed to raise awareness of safe internet use.

A highlight of the Safer Internet Centre Austria's activities is the annual Safer Internet Day, which took place on 11th February in 2020 themed „Together for a better internet“.



Web: www.ispa.at

Saferinternet.at

Das Internet sicher nutzen!

Web: www.saferinternet.at



Web: www.rataufdraht.at

NATIONAL PARTNERS

Child Pornography and Child Sex Tourism Report Centre



The Federal Criminal Police Office (BK) operates the Police Report Centre for Child Pornography and Child Sex Tourism on the Internet.

Web: www.bmi.gv.at/meldestelle

Report Centre for National Socialism



The Report Centre for National Socialism is part of the Federal Office for Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism (BVT).

Web: www.bmi.gv.at/meldestelle

nic.at GmbH



nic.at is the registry for .at, .co.at and .or.at domains and has provided financial support to Stopline since the beginning.

Web: www.nic.at

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERNET HOTLINES

INHOPE

Report centres worldwide cooperate quickly, efficiently and with minimal bureaucracy via the INHOPE global hotline network. INHOPE was founded in 1999 as an international association and had 47 members in 43 countries worldwide at the end of 2020.

Web: www.inhope.org

Stopline info material

is available for download at www.stopline.at

A print version of our leaflet is also available to order.

Stopline at events

The Stopline experts talk about the work they do at their report centre at various events. Interested in a Stopline talk? Write to us at office@stopline.at and let us know about the event you are planning.

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