

**INHOPE General Assembly, European Commission, Luxembourg
14th & 15th May 2009**

Vital new alliance welcomed as **Russia and South Africa** join forces with the INHOPE network in the fight against online child sex abuse images.

The INHOPE network of Internet Hotlines convened a special session in Luxembourg which has resulted in a major boost in the fight against illegal content on the Internet, with the membership of three new Hotlines from Russia and South Africa. The expansion of the network to **35 Hotlines** in **31 countries** around the globe has increased the ability to remove child sexual abuse images from the Internet and in consequence help to protect the children behind the images.

The year 2009 marks the ten-year anniversary of INHOPE. A Hotline is where the general public can report illegal Internet content, primarily child sexual abuse images. To encourage new Hotline initiatives worldwide, INHOPE, in cooperation with the EC has been working to prioritise countries where illegal material can potentially be hosted or produced and countries which are deemed to be important in the fight against illegal and harmful material online.

Richard Swetenham of the Safer Internet Programme in the European Commission commented *“I am delighted that new Hotlines from Russia and South Africa have joined the INHOPE Association. Fighting the distribution of child abuse images is a global task. Hotlines make a significant contribution to this. It is an important step forward, extending INHOPE's geographical coverage in Europe and, for the first time, in Africa.”*

INHOPE welcomed the three new Members – the Film Publication Board (FPB) from South Africa, the Friendly Runet Foundation and the National Internet-Safety Node in Russia and commended their joining the network in the fight to stop the dissemination of illegal content.

Hotlines have proven to be an effective first line of defence against illegal content online and in the fight against online predators. Over the past ten years the outreach of INHOPE has evolved into a global network of Hotlines, providing a means to pass the relevant information on illegal content, without delay, to be handled in the country where the site is hosted. Illegal activity on the Internet is a cross border problem that no organisation can effectively tackle alone.

(*) In some countries hotlines are called tiplines

About INHOPE

INHOPE, the International Association of Internet Hotlines, was founded in 1999 under the European Commission's Safer Internet Action Plan to represent and coordinate a global network of Hotlines.

The mission of INHOPE is to support and enhance the performance of Internet Hotlines around the World, ensuring swift action is taken in responding to reports of illegal action, making the internet a safer place. A Hotline is where the general public can report illegal internet content such as child sexual abuse images. The Hotline confidentially reviews each report, referring illegal material onto the relevant law enforcement agencies or Internet Service Providers for further action. Today, there are thirty five members of INHOPE worldwide in thirty one countries, including members from Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and Australia. Through meeting regularly to share knowledge and best practice, INHOPE and its members are working to tackle the global problem of illegal content online.

www.inhope.org

About Safer Internet plus programme:

The Safer Internet plus programme aims to promote safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly for children, and to fight against illegal content and content unwanted by the end-user, as part of a coherent approach by the European Union.

Hotline Contact details:

Film Publication Board (FPB) – www.fpbprochild.org.za/Home.aspx
(South Africa)

Friendly Runet Foundation – www.FriendlyRunet.ru (Russia)

National Internet-Safety Node in Russia – www.saferunet.ru (Russia)

INHOPE Press Contact:

Kerry Gordon, INHOPE Marketing & Communications Coordinator
25 Sandford Office Park, Dublin 18, Ireland

e: kerry.gordon@inhope.org

w: www.inhope.org

m: +353 87 99 614 99