

## **Abstract**

This research aims to understand the securitization process of online child sexual abuse by analysing the EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse in the online realm published in 2020 and other additional sources. The objectives are to get insights into how this institution presented this threat, to analyse what tools are being used and how whether a securitization process is being carried out. For that purpose, employing critical discourse analysis as the research method and following Balzacq's conceptualization of the securitization theory, this research examines all the initiatives proposed in the strategy, analysing the securitization through speech and practice. The main finding is that the European Commission has failed to successfully securitize online child sexual abuse. Gaps between the speeches and practices have been identified: measures to tackle this issue have been presented, but the needed actions that follow have not been completely executed. Further, issues concerning the Commission's authority and unbalanced power relation with the functional actors, lack of prioritization of the initiatives as well as lack of criticism and suitable connexions among the initiatives have been identified.

*Keywords: online child sexual abuse, securitization process, EU strategy, securitization through the speech, securitization through practices.*