Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy Monitor Country Profile 2024: PORTUGAL

The Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy Monitor is a tool used to compare and exchange knowledge on policy making and implementation in EU Member States, Iceland and Norway on the pillars and recommendations of the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children (BIK+ strategy). The 2024 edition of the BIK Policy Monitor report examines the implementation of the BIK+ strategy in 29 European countries, including all EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway.

The country profile outlines findings about the implementation of the BIK+ strategy based on BIK policies and BIK+ actions across the strategy's three pillars as surveyed in the BIK Policy Monitor (as per February 2024). Download the full BIK Policy Monitor report 2024 from the Better Internet for Kids website.

BIK policies

Policy frameworks

- Policy frameworks describe the overarching approach for a better internet and establish the underlying goals, principles and guidelines that shape individual policies within this area.

- This topic is being **comprehensively addressed** with children's online protection, digital empowerment and digital participation incorporated into national/regional laws, regulations and policies.

- The topic **is covered by broader policies (e.g., national digital strategy) rather than in separate dedicated policies** and/or covers only one or two of the dimensions of protection, empowerment and participation.

- The BIK / BIK+ strategy **is not explicitly referred to** in national policies but has informed policy development on children and the digital environment

- National/regional policies and policy documents **explicitly recognise children's rights in the digital environment**.

	High	Medium	Low	Other
Coverage of BIK+ issues in national policies	X			
Integration of policy provision			X	
Influence of the BIK+ strategy		X		
Recognition of children's rights	X			

Table 1: Topic summary - policy frameworks

Key national policy frameworks are:

- The National Strategy for Children's Rights for the period 2021-2024 (ENDC 2021-2024) was approved by Council of Ministers Resolution 112/2020 of 18 December 2020. The ENDC is structured around five priorities. The ENDC's fourth priority, Preventing and Combating Violence Against Children and Young People, aims to implement strategic objectives in the field of preventing and combating all forms of violence in various contexts, namely at school, at home, in the different communities that children and young people attend and in the digital world

- The National Strategy for Cyberspace Security, under its Axis "Prevention, education and awareness-raising", addresses the need to create instruments and reinforce measures to raise awareness among civil society about the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, with particular emphasis on the training and knowledge gained by children, adolescents, senior citizens and other at-risk groups.

- The Portuguese Charter on Human Rights in the Digital Age (Law 27/2021 of 17th of May states that "Everyone has the right to safety in cyberspace, and it is up to the state to define public policies that guarantee the protection of citizens and information networks and systems, and to create mechanisms that increase safety when using the Internet, especially for children and young people" (Art.15 Right to Cybersecurity).

Policy design

Policy design asks whether evidence and research support BIK-related policies and whether systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating those policies.

- Quantitative data on some aspects of children's digital activity **is collected regularly as part of broader surveys**.

- **Information is regularly gathered to inform policies on children and the digital environment**. However, this relies primarily on third-party sources, and there are limited opportunities to commission new data on children's digital activity.

- There is **little or no funding available for research** on children and the digital environment.

- **Policies undergo systematic and regular monitoring and evaluation** to assess the effectiveness of actions in different contexts and to take account of new technologies or emergent risks.

	High	Medium	Low	Other
Regular data collection		X		
Other information supports		X		
National research fund			X	
Monitoring and evaluation	X			

Table 2: Topic summary - policy design

Recent national research studies include:

- The National Statistics Institute (INE) aims to produce quality official statistical information. In this context of Eurostat, INE collects data, but not much, on children's digital activities in the survey "ICT usage in households and by individuals", on an annual basis.

- The Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics (DGEEC) has the mission of ensuring the production and statistical analysis of education and

science. A national study, "Children and Teenagers Well-being in the Digital Context," will collect national data on children and young people's well-being, especially regarding their views in the digital environment, in conjunction with Lisbon NOVA University, as part of the Cria.On programme.

● Although children are not the main research target, the Cybersecurity Observatory from CNCS collects data on that matter, mainly by applying surveys about awareness-raising campaigns and education.

● Funds are available for research in the field of children and young people. However, there is little funding for research at the national level targeting this specific topic. This topic has been worked on and has been the subject of research mainly by universities through European funds available.

Policy governance

Policy governance examines how policies are coordinated at the governmental level, whether other implementation bodies are involved in their delivery, and whether structured mechanisms are available to guide their implementation.

● There is **one central body (e.g., central ministry office, public agency, or regulatory authority) that is formally mandated to lead and develop policies, guidelines, and programmes** relating to children and the digital environment, if necessary, in consultation with other departments.

● A **clearly defined coordination function is in place**, involving all relevant stakeholders and encompasses the cross-cutting policy issues relating to children and the digital environment.

● **There is a defined national action plan** for children and the digital environment with accountabilities such as defined timelines, assigned responsibilities or key performance indicators (KPIs).

	High	Medium	Low	Other
Lead ministry for policy development	X			
National coordination body	X			
National action plan or strategy	X			

Table 3: Topic summary - policy governance

The National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and Protection of Children and Young People (CNPDPCJ) is the coordinating body for the National Strategy for Children's Rights for the period 2021-2024 and the respective action plans, assisted by a technical commission for monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and an advisory commission. An inter-ministerial committee ensures the definition, articulation and execution of public policies between the various organisations responsible for implementing policy and intervention measures for the promotion of children´s and young people´s rights. Policies relating to children in a digital environment fall within the remit of CNPDPCJ together with the relevant public bodies.

The National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and Protection of Children and Young People (CNPDPCJ) is the national coordination body mandated to coordinate policies, guidelines, and programs relating to children and the digital environment, in coordination with other public authorities responsible for designing and implementing activities aimed at children.

In Portugal, the Resolution of the Council of Ministers 112/2020, of 18 December, approved the National Strategy for the Promotion of the Rights of the Child for the period 2021-2024, which includes the digital environment. The strategy has defined accountabilities such as priorities, strategic and operational objectives, targets, KPIs, etc.

The National Education Strategy for Citizenship also includes a set of domains that address Digital Citizenship dimensions. The Portuguese curriculum is based on essential learning and promotes the autonomy and curricular flexibility that allow

the interdisciplinary work of contemporary concerns, such as Digital Citizenship and Emerging Technologies.

It should also be noted that the National Plan for the Reduction of Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies includes explicit targets and indicators focusing on young people's perceptions of risk and problematic use of the Internet.

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement enquires how different stakeholders can participate in policy development. Children's involvement in policy-making is one such key issue. Additionally, international knowledge exchange about children's digital participation is also relevant to this topic.

- There is **a designated multi-stakeholder forum in place** which facilitates the involvement of all relevant stakeholder groups.

- **Members of the public are consulted on occasion** in the course of the development of new policies. However, this is not always the case.

- **Children are listened to directly in the policy development process** (e.g., through hearings, consultations, specific surveys) but are not formally involved in decision-making.

- **Policymakers actively participate in various EU-level and other international inter-governmental groups** related to digital policies for children.

	High	Medium	Low	Other
Stakeholder forum	X			
Public consultation		X		
Involvement of young people		X		
International knowledge exchange	X			

Table 4: Topic summary - Stakeholder involvement

An inter-ministerial committee ensures the definition, articulation and execution of public policies between the various organisations responsible for implementing policy and intervention measures for the promotion of children´s and young people´s rights. In this context, children and the digital environment are included. In this inter-ministerial committee representatives of the various ministries/public entities responsible for promoting children´s and young people´s rights participate.

A National Forum for Gambling and the Internet, which comprises the main partners active in the digital area, regardless of the sector they come from. From a health point of view, this forum aims to contribute to the study of good practices in the use of the Internet and to the development of prevention and supply control strategies concerning problematic use of the internet in a broad sense, including video games and gambling as well as risky digital behaviour.

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – safe digital experiences

Safe digital experiences refers to actions taken to protect children from harmful and illegal online content, conduct, contact, and risks as young consumers and to improve their well-being online through a safe, age-appropriate digital environment created in a way that respects children's best interests.

Responses to EU laws:
- In Portugal, no legislation to give further effect to the Digital Services Act (DSA) has been published to date, except for Decree-Law no 20-B/2024, February 16th, 2024, designating the competent authorities and the coordinator of digital services.

- ANACOM (National Communications Authority) was appointed as the competent authority and coordinator of digital services in Portugal.

Addressing harmful online content:
- While there may not be a specific definition of harmful content, various laws address different forms of harmful online behaviour. Specific legal provisions

aim to safeguard individuals' right to privacy and family intimacy. Additionally, there are legal measures to establish effective guarantees against abusive or undignified use of information relating to individuals and families, reinforcing the protection of privacy rights in the digital realm.

- There is a process in place for children to report about the availability of potentially harmful online content. Children can directly approach various entities responsible for handling such complaints, including the police, schools (which are then obligated to report), NGOs, and specifically the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV), which operates a hotline and has a specific protocol with the Judiciary Police for intervention in this area. Additionally, the programme Escola Segura is available for minors, their families, and schools to seek assistance.

- Administrative bodies, as per DL n.o 7/2004 (art. 13º a , 19º -A, e 19º - B), are mandated to ensure the removal or disabling of access to online content deemed potentially harmful to children. This includes obligations for intermediaries to report illicit activities promptly to the Public Prosecutor, particularly concerning content such as child pornography or sexual exploitation.

Addressing harmful online conduct:
- Article 176º of the Penal Code addresses the dissemination of intimate images involving minors, and Article 193º prohibits the dissemination of private images without consent. This includes the production, distribution, or dissemination of pornographic materials involving minors. There are also penalties for using minors in pornographic performances or enticing them for such purposes, as well as for producing, distributing, or displaying pornographic materials involving minors.

- Regarding cyberbullying, in Portugal, no specific law prohibits it. However, various actions can be punishable, such as disseminating intimate images, publishing unauthorised information, private data, images, defamation, threats, coercion, etc.

- The Portuguese Charter on Human Rights in the Digital Age approved by law 27/2021, of 17 May, also addresses this topic and has a specific article on cyberbullying.

- The anti-bullying and cyberbullying combat plan, "School Without Bullying | School Without Violence" aims to equip educational communities with a series of tools to help prevent and combat bullying and cyberbullying, especially among young people.

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
DSA legislation enacted	X			
Codes of practice of digital services	X			
Consumer code of practice			X	
Definition of harmful content	X			
Children's complaints mechanism	X			
Bodies can order content removal				X
Intimate image abuse laws	X			
Cyberbullying laws	X			
Age verification for adult content				X
Digital identity systems			X	

Table 5: Topic summary - pillar 1: safe digital experiences

Pillar 2 – digital empowerment

Digital empowerment incorporates actions so that all children, including those in vulnerable situations, acquire the necessary skills and competences to make sound choices and express themselves in the online environment safely and responsibly.

Supports in formal education:

- The Curriculum Guidelines for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the first cycle define ICT as a cross-cutting area, with one of its domains being digital citizenship.

- In the Essential Learning of the ICT subject, which covers students from the fifth to the ninth grades, the domain of security, responsibility, and respect in digital environments is included.

- School libraries also collaborate with teachers from different curricular areas to teach children about online safety. The document Learning with the School Library supports this work.

- Teacher training plays a crucial role in digital empowerment in schools, helping teachers stay updated on fast changes in education. Continuous training helps teachers stay updated with the latest trends, methodologies, and educational tools. This is important to ensure that they are up-to-date and prepared to integrate new practices in the classroom. All Portuguese teachers received training in digital skills based on their proficiency levels.

Informal education:

- The SeguraNet Awareness Centre promotes digital citizenship and media education in educational communities since 2004. Its action involves teacher training, awareness-raising sessions in schools, development of educational resources, promotion of campaigns, and awareness initiatives. Notable initiatives include Digital Leaders, which promotes the action of children and young people in raising awareness in educational communities; the "SeguraNet Challenges" competition; the European eSafety Label certification; awareness campaigns such as "Safer Internet Day in Schools"

and "Cybersecurity Month in Schools", and the most recent campaign "Safe and Healthy Online Practices".

- The "Navegas em Segurança" project, coordinated by the Portuguese Institute Youth Institute, IPDJ, aims to contribute to the development of responsible and safe internet use by organising information sessions and awareness-raising activities aimed at children, young people, parents and citizens in general. The programme also aims to develop and promote peer-to-peer training and support.

- The Digital Leaders Programme aims to encourage peers and other educational community members to adopt a critical, reflective, and responsible attitude in the use of technologies and digital environments. This initiative has had 9 editions, with over 2,800 students and 110 School Groups and Non-Grouped Schools participating in the last edition. The participation of Digital Leaders in national and European events and conferences is noteworthy. These young people have the opportunity to contribute regarding the risks and solutions related to child protection in digital environments, always to make the internet a better place.

- The Digital Academy for Parents (ADP) Programme is an initiative of E-Redes, in partnership with the DGE. It gives parents and guardians of children in Primary and Secondary Education the opportunity to attend training sessions promoting digital skills. The ADP initiative was launched in 2020 based on the conviction that digital citizenship is essential for social inclusion.

Empowering through digital skills:

- The National Strategy for Education for Citizenship encompasses a set of domains addressing themes of Digital Citizenship, including Human Rights (Hate Speech, including Cyberbullying), Media (Media Literacy and Education), Health (Online Dependency, all forms of violence, including bullying), Sexuality (online risky behaviours such as sexting, sextortion, and grooming), and Security, Defense, and Peace (Cybersecurity).

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Teaching online safety	X			
Online safety policies in schools	X			
Adequate teacher training	X			
Informal education about online safety	X			
Peer-to-peer training in online safety	X			
Support for digital literacy skills	X			
Children's media literacy		X		
Challenge hate speech/digital civil courage	X			

Table 6: Topic summary - pillar 2: digital empowerment

Pillar 3 – active participation, respecting children's rights

Active participation, respecting children's rights, refers to actions which give children and young people a say in the digital environment, with more child-led activities to foster innovative and creative safe digital experiences.

Active participation:

- IPDJ promotes several initiatives for children and young people to reinforce active participation and civic engagement in the digital environment. Some examples are the "Youth Participatory Budgeting Portugal" in which the presentation of proposals, technical analysis and the project voting process is done exclusively online. Other examples in this field are the "Youth Parliament" program and "Euroschool" program

- The National Youth Plan (PNJ) has as one of its strategic objectives to promote active citizenship and youth participation in the decision-making processes. Furthermore, it is being designed a National Youth Participation Strategy aimed to promote participation and active involvement of children and young people, namely in decision-making processes.

- Young people were consulted to define the Profile of the Student upon Completion of Compulsory Education - the document that serves as the basis for the Portuguese Education System. The youth are consulted monthly by the DGE regarding their action plan. The young Digital Leaders are regularly consulted to voice their opinions on educational resources and awareness campaigns, also participating in the training of teachers and other educational agents, in national and European meetings.

Inclusivity:

- 70JÁ! is a campaign promoted by the XXII Constitutional Government and the IPDJ. The name refers to article 70 of the Constitution, which deals with the rights of young people in different areas of life, such as: culture, education, access to the first job, housing, sport and leisure.

- There is a government system in place to publish child-friendly versions of policy documents or policy initiatives relevant to BIK+ topics. The Safer Internet Centre has developed various actions in this regard. Also, National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and Protection of Children and Young People (CNPDPCJ) translates information/documentation related to these topics in a child-friendly language.

Digital creativity:

- The Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth, IP (IPDJ) supports a range of digital content and services for children. Several initiatives promoted by IPDJ aim to promote the development of digital skills and competences. For example, the "Choices" Program aims to promote the digital skills of children and young people.

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Activities to promote active participation	X			
Laws that mandate youth participation	X			
Awareness raising on children's rights	X			
Inclusiveness regarding active participation	X			
Child-friendly versions of policy documents	X			
Positive digital content	X			
Activities encouraging digital creativity	X			

Table 7: Topic summary - pillar 3: active participation, respecting children's rights

BIK+ index 2024: Portugal

The BIK+ index has been developed to provide an aggregated at-a-glance overview of the levels of implementation across the two dimensions, BIK policies and BIK+ actions, in Portugal compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.
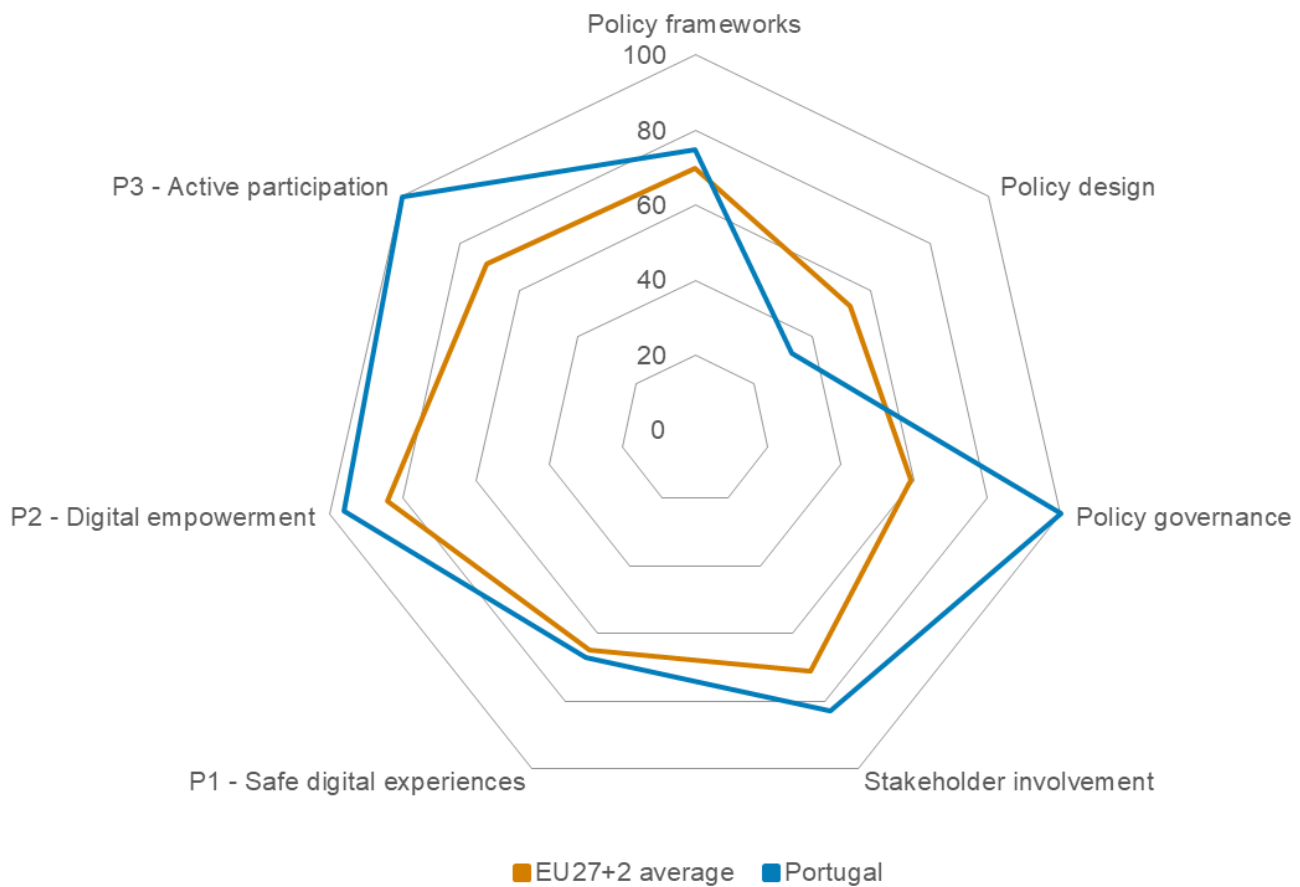

Figure 1: BIK+ index 2024: Portugal - EU27+2 average comparison

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