

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

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.

- **Alignment with the goals of the BIK+ strategy is currently under development.**
- There are **separate, dedicated policies which address the topic of children and the digital environment** (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 Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights "Protected Children, Safe Romania 2022-2027" was adopted in October 2023. Its two key objectives are a) increasing the capacity of adults to support the safe use of the virtual environment by children and b) increasing the safety of children's use of the digital environment.
- An [operational plan](#) for implementing the National Strategy, "Protected children, safe Romania", is currently in development.

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.

- Research is undertaken by [Save the Children Romania](#) to inform the development of educational resources.
- There is **currently no system in place at the government level** to gather information on children and the digital environment.
- No information is available on **research funding availability**.
- **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:

- Internet in the Family, February 2024, Save the Children Romania
- Study on the use of social networks by children and adolescents, June 2023, Save the Children Romania
- Study on the impact of cyberbullying, 2023, Save the Children Romania
- Internet use by children, February 2022, Save the Children Romania

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.

- **Policy development sits across a range of ministries, and no lead is specifically assigned responsibility for developing government policies, guidelines and programmes** relating to children and the digital environment.
- **There is no coordination mechanism in place:** policies, guidelines and programmes relating to children and the digital environment tend to be implemented independently of one another.
- **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

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.

- **A formal mechanism has yet to be created at the government level** for stakeholder groups to contribute to policy deliberation and development.
- Actions of the "Protected children, safe Romania" (2022 – 2027) approved by Governmental Decision no 969/2023 **are monitored to ensure they are implemented** within the specified deadlines outlined in the legislative act.
- **Children's interests are considered indirectly** (e.g., through analysis of existing surveys, data collections)

| | 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

Since 2008, the [National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption](#) (NAPCRA) has contributed to strengthening online safety awareness. NAPCRA has joined the initiative against cyberbullying, "Digital Citizenship: Rights and Responsibilities on the Internet regarding personal data," launched by Save the Children Romania. NAPCRA has continued to support the programme by promoting training on child online protection, enabling an interdisciplinary team operating within each county to promote the [Internet Safety Hour Programme](#).

NAPCRA has also strengthened its mission to monitor the prevention and combating of any form of violence against children, including online violence. It continues to support the improvement of collaboration between representatives of the interdisciplinary team network dealing with child protection to facilitate increased awareness of online safety and to promote events organised by the [Internet Safety Hour Programme](#).

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – safe digital experiences

Safe digital experiences refer 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 the audiovisual field, the [Ministry of Culture](#) has the mission to align itself with current European concerns regarding new regulations in the field, especially those that target the audiovisual content available on the internet.
- Audiovisual media service providers are covered by [Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002](#), as amended, and the Regulatory Code of the Audiovisual Content (Decision no. 220/2011) adopted by the National Audiovisual Council of Romania.

- According to the [Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002](#), as amended, the [National Audiovisual Council \(CNA\)](#) "is consulted on all draft normative acts that regulate activities in the audiovisual field or related to it."
- In March 2023, the Romanian Government proposed a Memorandum that the [National Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications \(ANCOM\)](#) takes up the role of the Digital Services Coordinator (DSC) as required by the [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#). The same memorandum granted ANCOM the necessary powers to meet the deadline for DSC designation.

Addressing harmful online content:

- According to the art. 42⁹ of the [Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002](#), as amended, where the content of a video-sharing platform infringes the provisions on the protection of minors and the general public from illegal audiovisual content and no other effective means are available to prohibit the infringement of those provisions and to avoid the risk of serious harm to the collective interests of the public or the legitimate interests of a person, the Council will require video-sharing platform providers to remove or restrict access to illegal content or display a warning to users when accessing such content or to disable the user's account for up to 12 months.
- The National Audiovisual Council can also request service providers offering storage space for video-sharing platforms to remove, disable, or restrict access to such a platform and domain name registrars who allocate domain names to such a platform to remove the domain name for such a platform.

Addressing harmful online conduct:

- Within the "Caring for Children" government program, the [Special Telecommunications Service \(STS\)](#) has made operational the 119 telephone number which can be used nationally for reporting cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and any other forms of violence against children, including online violence.
- The Child's Phone Line and the counselling line of the [Ora de Net Programme](#) implemented by Save the Children Romania are also operational.

- There are also procedures in place for managing cases of violence against pre-school/primary children /students and school staff, including online; the procedure defines cyberbullying as a form of online bullying and provides an identification sheet as well as support measures for students, in line with the Order of Minister of Education no 6235/6th September 2023.

Age verification and digital identity systems:

- Digital identity systems are not available for minors in Romania.
- Under the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002, as amended, the National Audiovisual Council (CNA) ensures that video-sharing platforms protect minors from harmful content. This includes implementing age verification systems for video-sharing platforms to safeguard minors' physical, mental, and moral development.

| | 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:

- Under the now approved new school-based curriculum for the school year 2023/2024 there are several integrated optional school-based curricula with an important digital dimension. Amongst others:
 - EduGaming aims at developing responsible and safe online gaming behaviour for fifth- and sixth-grade students; the optional includes learning activities, valid for digital and board games;
 - Digital Culture is an optional curriculum that offers students in the seventh and eighth grades forms of digital cultural expression (sketch, book trailer, art trailer, photo gallery, interactive story, graffiti, etc.) of cultural products, as well as adapting the message to different communication contexts specific to multiliteracies.
- **Updating the national register of teacher training programmes:** Teacher training programmes include a digital dimension, in particular, the use of educational teaching-learning tools and platforms, coaching in the teaching-learning or assessment process in a blended-learning context, and creating digital educational resources.
- **Updating the educational profile of pre-university graduates:** According to the Order of the Minister of Education no. 6731/6th December 2023, the revised educational profile of graduates integrates digital skills in learning activities by level of education (primary, secondary, and upper-secondary levels), including a cross-curricular approach to Internet security and cybersecurity tools.

Informal education:

- Article 10(3)(i) of the Audiovisual Law provides that: “As a guarantor of the public interest in audiovisual communication, the Council is obliged to ensure raising public awareness of the use of audiovisual media services by developing and promoting media literacy across all social categories, including through or in partnership with the Ministry of Education”.
- Save the Children's [online safety programme](#) promotes online safety and provides the public, parents, children and teachers with educational materials on internet safety and digital wellness.
- Safety Measures for Children through the "Internet Safety Hour" Programme: The "[Internet Safety Hour](#)" program aims to promote the creative, useful, and safe use of the Internet by children, adolescents, parents, and specialists. Safety measures implemented through the program include a Helpline, a dedicated counselling line for adolescents and parents providing support and guidance on internet-related concerns.
- Internet Safety Awareness Activities are conducted through training sessions on online safety topics for children, parents, and teachers. Additionally, a nationwide volunteer network comprising students, teachers, and specialists from the child protection system is developed to raise awareness and promote safe online practices.
- The National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption is a member of the Coordination Council of the "[Ora de Net](#)" program and consistently contributes to its development and its connection with relevant public institutions in the field and with the industry.

Empowering through digital skills:

- Updating the educational profile of pre-university graduates: the revised educational profile of graduates integrates, in a cross-curricular approach, the digital skills in learning activities by level of education (primary, secondary, and upper-secondary levels), including Internet security and cybersecurity

tools, according to the Order of the Minister of Education no. 6731/6th December 2023.

- A "Digital Citizenship Initiative" has joined the initiative against cyberbullying, focusing on "Digital Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities on the Internet regarding personal data". This initiative, launched by Save the Children under the [European Insafe network](#), aims to educate and empower children regarding their online presence and personal data protection.
- Numerous initiatives (especially by NGOs) are also underway to prevent and mitigate online hate speech. Some national authorities (such as the General Police Inspectorate) have developed projects for combating hate crimes in general, which can include cases of online hate speech.

| | 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:

- National/regional activities are in place to promote active participation, youth civic engagement, and advocacy in the digital environment. The initiatives are mostly at the NGO level, though some have support from national/local authorities.
- Save the Children also has a broad network of young individuals trained in online safety who have become ambassadors for the “Ora de net” program. They actively help organise activities among peers in schools, creating a supportive community that encourages responsible and secure online behaviour among adolescents.
- Youth participation is primarily carried out through involvement in the activities of NGOs.
- Save the Children has launched national activities to promote better awareness of children’s rights in the digital environment

Digital creativity:

- Save the Children Romania hosts forums and camps that nurture digital creativity. These events provide platforms for young individuals to explore and enhance their skills in various digital domains, fostering innovation and collaboration within a dynamic and interactive learning environment.
- The educational initiative "[The rights of children and adolescents in the online environment](#)" was developed by Save the Children through the European project Ora de Net, in partnership with Endava. Over the last decade, the Ministry of Education has supported this approach.

| | 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: Romania

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 Romania compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.

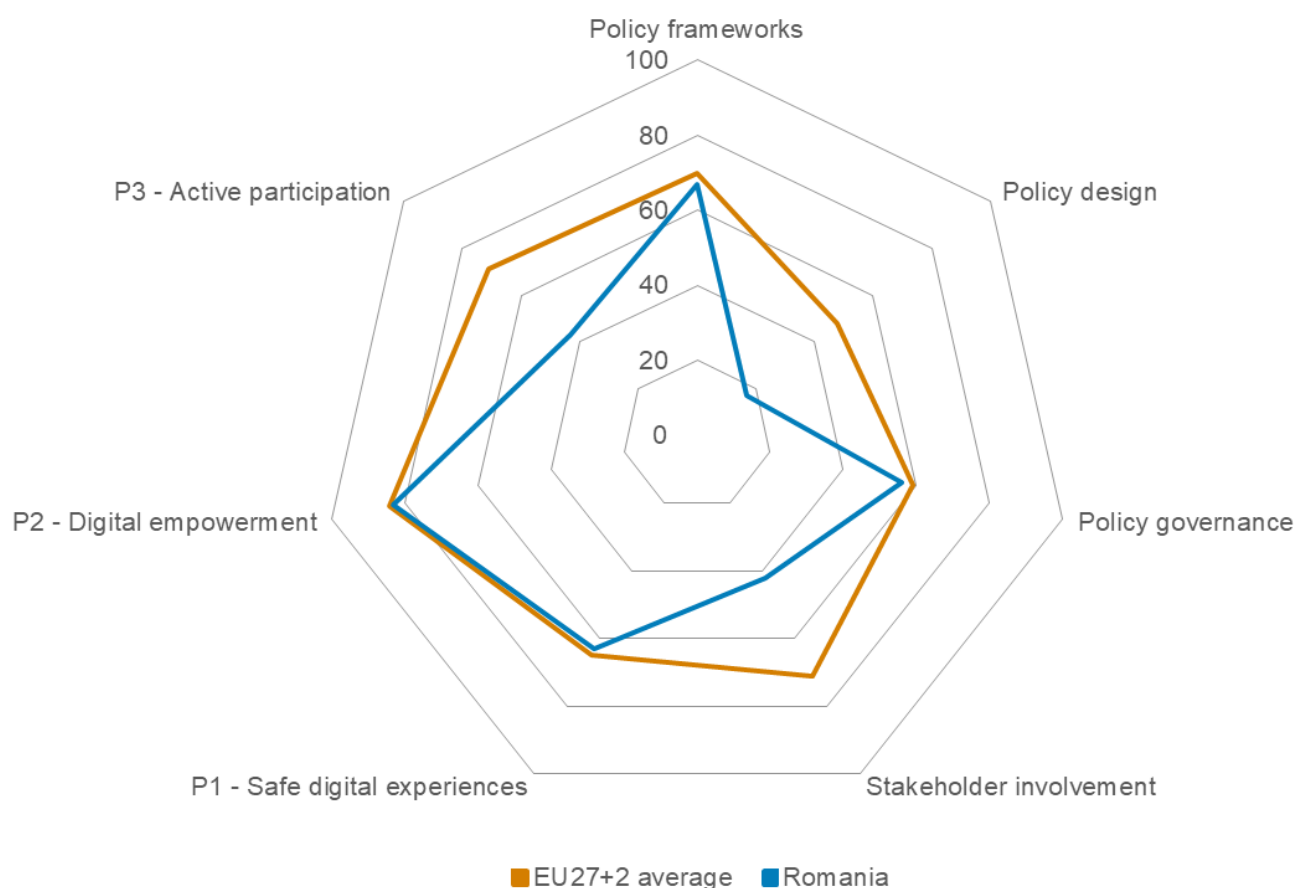


Figure 1: BIK+ index 2024: Romania - EU27+2 average comparison



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