

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

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 an important and emerging policy priority**
- **There is one main overarching policy framework** that addresses 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.

- Children's rights in the digital environment **are not explicitly recognised in national policy documents but receive implicit support** in policies dealing with children's digital activity

	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:

- In 2019, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family adopted the **National Strategy for the Protection of Children in the Digital Environment**. This is the main overarching framework for BIK-related policies and focuses on three main areas - prevention, intervention and aftercare.
- The **Action plan for the years 2024 - 2025 based on the National Concept for the Protection of Children in the Digital Space** is currently in the legislative process.

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.

- Surveys of children's digital activities **are undertaken but only irregularly**.
- There is **currently no system in place at the government level** to gather information on children and the digital environment.
- There is **little or no funding available for research** on children and the digital environment
- No specific monitoring system is in place** for the area of children and the digital environment.

	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 EU Kids Online Country Report for the Slovak Republic was published in 2020.
- Selected Forms of Risk Behaviour of Children and Young People (2023) was a report prepared at the request of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children under the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. The research was conducted on a sample of 1,932 children and adolescents aged nine to 18. The research used a questionnaire that was primarily based on a survey instrument used by the EU Kids Online IV project.
- The Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathophysiology participated in an international study on parental regulative efforts regarding school-aged children’s media use (2021; Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland; total sample 2,032 respondents). A new project, again with the participation of the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathophysiology, is currently following up on this research, focusing on digital media and parental stress regulating children’s media use.

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.

- The **lead ministry, public agency or regulatory authority is an informal arrangement** depending on the requirements at a particular point in time.
- **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** on 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

In 2014, the Government of the Slovak Republic established the **National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children (NCC)** as an organisational unit of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. One of the roles of the NCC is to act as a coordinator of the **National Strategy for the Protection of Children in the Digital Environment**, to create and maintain communication with cooperating entities active in the area of protection of children against violence. The **Action plan for the years 2022-2023** outlines specific tasks to be taken in support of the implementation of the specific objectives of the National Strategy.

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.
- **Slovakia has an inter-ministerial working group** on the National Strategy for the Protection of Children in the Digital Environment, which is led by the NCC.
- **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’s interests are considered indirectly** (e.g., through analysis of existing surveys, data collections)
- **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

Representatives of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children, as well as representatives of other ministries concerned, actively participate in national and international working groups related to digital policies for children.

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:

- The [Act on Media Services](#) is currently in the legislative process. According to the draft law, the [Council for Media Services](#) is to become the coordinator for digital services (DSC).
- The Act transposes the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. It introduces an obligation of audiovisual media services providers to take appropriate measures to protect minors from content that may impair their physical, mental or moral development.

Addressing harmful online content:

- A definition of harmful online content is not included in laws, regulations or policies at the country level.
- The [OCHRÁNMA.sk](#) hotline serves to report potentially illegal or obviously inappropriate content and is intended for anyone who has encountered it on the Internet.

Addressing harmful online conduct:

- Non-consensual sharing of intimate images is covered under § 368 (Production of child pornography) and § 369 (Distribution of child pornography) of the [Criminal Code](#) (though it is irrelevant whether the sharing of intimate photos took place without consent or out of revenge).
- National laws in place to protect children and young people from cyberbullying include the application of § 360b (Dangerous electronic harassment) of the Criminal Code.
- In Slovakia, an initiative to establish a Safe Internet Centre has recently been in the works.

Age verification and digital identity systems:

- According to the [Act on Media Services](#), measures to protect minors from content which may impair their physical, mental or moral development may include effective parental controls or age verification mechanisms.
- Currently, [digital identification systems](#) are also available for minors in Slovakia. Authentication for minors can be carried out by means of an ID card with an electronic chip (eID) and a personal security code (BOK). The electronic chip on the ID card contains the data stored on the ID card itself.

	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:

- Teaching online safety has been fully incorporated into the national/regional school curriculum.
- The new [National Curriculum for Primary Education](#) addresses digital literacy as part of the key cross-cutting literacies. One of the aims of the Man and Society learning standard is to be able to distinguish between trustworthy sources of information and to behave safely in an online environment.
- The educational standard of informatics also has as one of its main goals to be able to use digital technologies - to meaningfully select and use appropriate tools to achieve goals and to work correctly and safely in the digital environment. A new curriculum is being prepared for secondary schools at this time.
- [Paragraph 153 of Act No.245/2008](#) regulates the issuance of a school code of conduct, which sets and regulates the rules in the school, where the school may also regulate the use of mobile phones. The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic has currently set up an expert working group composed of experts not only from the school environment but also from psychologists and the third sector, who will set new rules regarding the use of mobile phones in primary schools. New rules on the use of mobile phones are expected at the beginning of April 2024, updating the ordinance on the use of mobile phones.
- The National Coordination Centre for addressing violence against children implements the educational programme Children's Safety on the Internet aimed at the professional public, teachers, helping professions, psychologists, social workers etc.

Informal education:

- In 2024, the [National Institute of Education and Youth](#) plans to develop prevention programmes for pedagogical and vocational staff in schools to recognise emotions, to build self-values and sensitivity to important events in

the classroom, school and society, and to manage pupil conflicts and develop skills to resolve them.

- Digital skills are also addressed in the [Lifelong Learning and Counselling Strategy 2021-2030](#) and the [National Youth Strategy 2021-2028](#).
- The Ministry of Education plans to issue guidelines, a handbook and a video for teachers and educators on combating misinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training.

Empowering through digital skills:

- A successful example of peer-to-peer education is the [digiPEERS](#) programme. [digiPEERS](#) is an annual nationwide volunteer development programme for young people aged 14 to 19 who raise awareness and educate their peers about digital citizenship, i.e., how to behave responsibly in the online world, learning about the opportunities, benefits, rules, and risks.
- The [digiPEERS](#) programme is led and administered by the civil association [Digital Intelligence](#), which was established in 2017 in response to the need to advocate for human rights online and expand the positive use of digital technologies.
- The [Council for Media Services](#) has initiated a [Media Literacy+ Platform](#) to provide space for the exchange of best practices in media literacy. The platform's focus is on the general public, and its members' activities are aimed at various socio-economic groups, including young people.

	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:

- Members of the [Media Literacy+ Platform](#), such as digiQ, Zmudri, Rada mládeže Slovenska and Slovak debate association organise activities at the regional and local level on this topic.
- Young people are mandated to participate in public debate and decision-making processes, mostly via school and local/regional parliaments. Those were established by law No. 488/2021. According to this legislation, at the request of students, a school may establish a school parliament that advises the director on matters related to students. The same applies to local and regional administrations, which can engage students gathered in parliaments to advise them on youth-related matters.
- There is no government system in place to publish child-friendly versions of policy documents or policy initiatives relevant to BIK+ topics.

Digital creativity:

- Activities to encourage children’s digital creativity and to promote creative uses of digital technologies include the [Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information](#), which has a [FABLAB](#) model consisting of a space that is open to the general public to foster creativity, inventiveness, new technological and innovative practices. Children have the opportunity to participate in a digital skills club, DTDT2 camps, digital technology camps and other activities.

	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: Slovak Republic

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

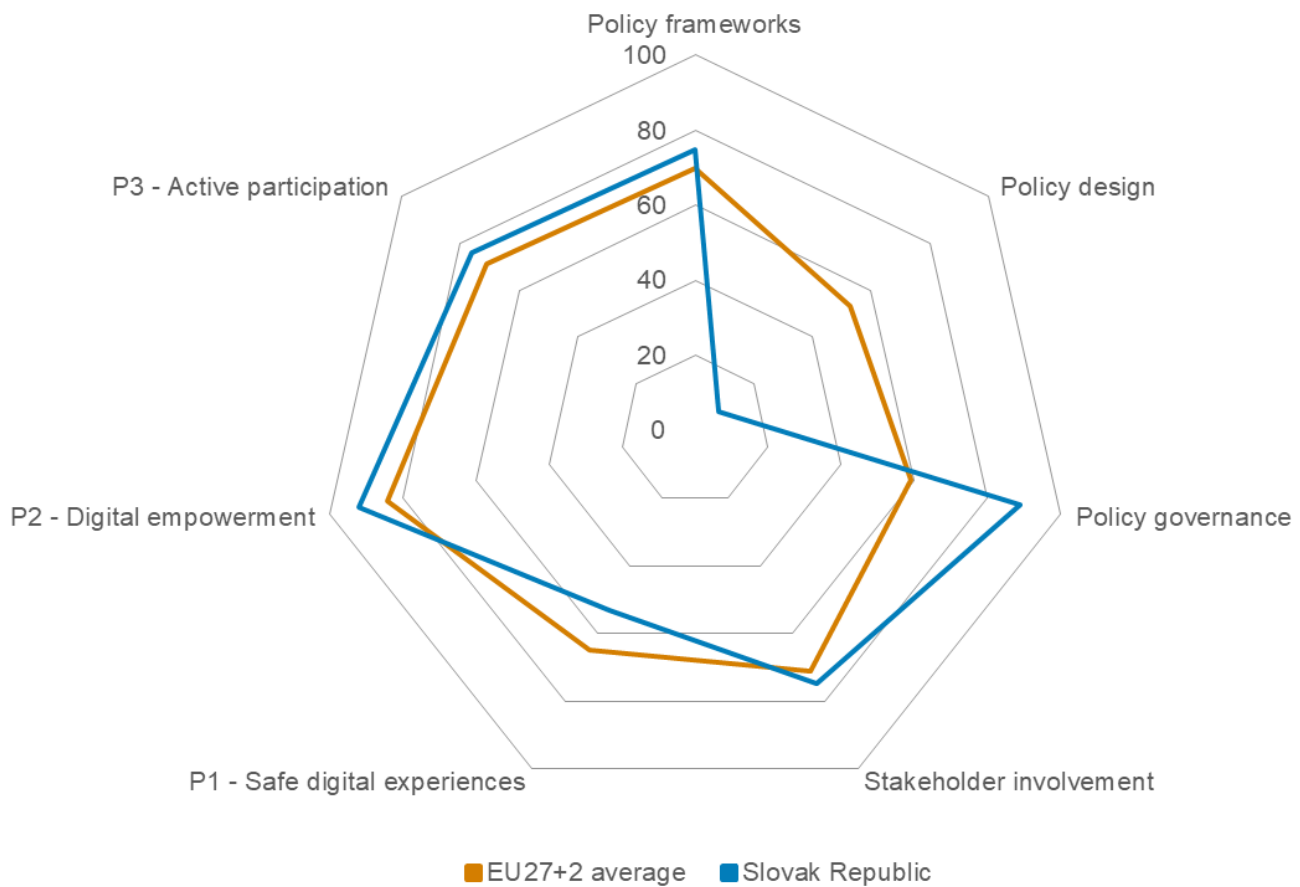


Figure 1: BIK+ index 2024: Slovak Republic - EU27+2 average comparison

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