

Report on the proceedings of Safer Internet Forum 2022

(including annexes on the preparatory work of the
SIF Youth Advisory Group and BIK Youth Panel)

Further information, including the Forum booklet with full agenda and contributor biographies, presentations and session recordings (where available) can be found at www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif.



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Safer Internet Forum 2022 was organised in a youth-led manner. We take this opportunity to thank the members of the SIF Youth Advisory Group, BIK Youth Panel and other youth contributors for their dedication and commitment to helping to create a safer and better internet for their peers, and young people across the globe.

We also take this opportunity to thank all speakers, panellists and video contributors for their input to the Forum, and all participants who contributed so fully to the discussions of the day both onsite and online.

In case of queries, please contact saferinternetforum@betterinternetforkids.eu.

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Overview

The **Safer Internet Forum (SIF)** is a key annual international conference in Europe where policy makers, researchers, law enforcement bodies, youth, parents and carers, teachers, NGOs, industry representatives, experts and other relevant actors come together to discuss the latest trends, opportunities, risks and solutions related to child online safety and making the internet a better place. This year's edition took place in a hybrid format in Brussels, Belgium and online on **Thursday, 27 October 2022** with a theme of ***A Digital Decade for children and youth: BIK+ to protect, empower and respect!***

In May 2022, the European Commission published its new [European strategy for a better internet for kids \(BIK+\)](#). The updated BIK+ strategy is the [digital arm of the rights of the child strategy](#) and reflects the recently proposed digital principle that “*Children and young people should be protected and empowered online*”. It takes into account the European Parliament Resolution on children's rights, the Council Conclusions on media literacy, and the Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee.

The new BIK+ strategy is based on an extensive [consultation process with children and young people](#), complemented by [targeted consultations](#) with parents, teachers, Member States, the ICT and media industry, civil society, academics and international organisations. It will support the implementation of EU legislation on child safety, including the [Audio-visual Media Services Directive \(AVMSD\)](#), the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#), the strengthened provisions on child online safety in the [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#), the [proposed Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Act](#) and the newly adopted [proposal for new EU legislation to protect children against sexual abuse](#).

Against this background, Safer Internet Forum 2022 provided an opportunity to discuss the BIK+ strategy in detail and identify its key objectives and priority actions for the coming years. It explored the roles and responsibilities for public and private stakeholders, along with how to monitor its impact and effectiveness. To mark the European Year of Youth, the event was organised in a youth-led manner, with young people playing an active role in the planning, preparation and delivery of the Forum.

Throughout the day, participants heard from many young people about how they use the online world, what their likes and dislikes are, and their hopes and dreams for the future of the internet. Along with multiple stakeholders, youth participants reflected on the pillars of the new BIK+ strategy and identified the key priorities to be addressed. Consideration was given to how the effectiveness of the BIK+ strategy can be assessed moving forward and how young people can continue to play an active role in this, also ensuring that the provisions of the strategy are future proof.

Please read on to discover more about the event. Further information, including session recordings and presentations (where available), can be found at www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif.

Safer Internet Forum (SIF) 2022 was organised by European Schoolnet on behalf of the European Commission in the framework of the EC's Better Internet for Kids (BIK) initiative, with funding provided by the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). In the future, actions will be funded through the [Digital Europe Programme \(DIGITAL\)](#). In case of queries, please contact the Safer Internet Forum Secretariat at saferinternetforum@betterinternetforkids.eu.

BIK+

Welcome and introduction: BIK+ and the voices of youth

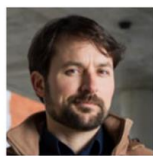
To kick off this youth-led edition of the Safer Internet Forum we asked young people – from across and beyond the European Union – to share their thoughts on the Better Internet for Kids strategy (BIK+). This is what they said...



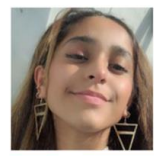
(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/vCZLHmyvMFw>)

Hans Martens (European Schoolnet) and SIF Youth Advisory Group member Manahil (Germany) then took to the stage to further set the scene for the day’s proceedings...

Welcome and introduction: BIK+ and the voices of youth



Hans Martens,
European Schoolnet



Manahil,
SIF Youth Advisory Group



SAFER INTERNET
FORUM 2022



Hans welcomed participants to the 2022 edition of the Safer Internet Forum, commenting that the event has been organised in a hybrid manner with around 150 people present onsite and more than 400 registered participants online, together representing more than 70 countries across and beyond the European Union. Hans further commented that this year's Safer Internet Forum is special, reflecting on the May 2022 launch of the European Commission's new European strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (also known as BIK+), following an extensive consultation process with children and young people, alongside many of the gathered stakeholders, which will frame the day's discussions. Secondly, 2022 is the European Year of Youth and, as such, the Forum has been organised in a youth-led manner, with young people playing a very active role in the planning, preparation and delivery of the event. Hans then handed over to SIF Youth Advisory Group member, Manahil, to give the inside story on how this approach was conceived.

Manahil shared that, following the 2021 edition of the Safer Internet Forum, the BIK Youth Panel approached the coordinating team as follows:

"To hear that an entire year will be dedicated to children and young people is something some of us have been waiting for for many years. 2022 is a year where the focus will be to ensure that young people's views and opinions are heard and, above all, taken seriously. 2022 is our year!"

"The Safer Internet Forum addresses relevant topics year after year; topics that are important for the future, and tasks that should be taken on. If we are the future, isn't it up to us to decide what these topics should be? In 2022, we want to shape the Safer Internet Forum."

"The BIK Youth Panel should not only set up a project but be given the chance to prepare the Forum... choose the topic, select the deep dive sessions, propose or select speakers. Children should not only be heard and consulted but should also be allowed to participate and lead. Such issues affect children. They are the best participants who can decide which topics and which experts are chosen. Let's not just be the participants but the protagonists of decisions because if not, words would mean nothing, and the motto 'Year of Youth' would just be a tagline."

Manahil, on behalf of BIK Youth

Manahil then went on to describe the specific actions which were taken in shaping this year's Forum, including the creation of a SIF Youth Advisory Group – a group of 10 more experienced BIK Youth Ambassadors from 8 EU Member States. Meanwhile, a new group of

BIK Youth Panellists started preparing many of the youth-led sessions – 27 young people, aged 13-19, from 18 countries, participated in months of online preparatory sessions to raise their views during the sessions ahead.

Hans then recapped on the planned format of the day – the aim is to realise the BIK+ vision step by step, while also giving it a more global twist and a discussion in which all stakeholders are involved.

To kick start the formal proceedings of the day, Hans and Manahil then introduced two video presentations, firstly from Commissioner Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market, followed by Commissioner Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President for Democracy and Demography.

BIK+

High-level opening remarks

Video address by Commissioner Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market

In this opening video address, Commissioner Breton introduced the work of Better Internet for Kids and the new BIK+ strategy. He reminded participants that work on BIK is part of broader efforts in the EU to reshape the digital space: to make it open and innovative, but also to ensure that EU values and rules are respected.

He commented that a major milestone this year has been the adoption of two key pieces of legislation: the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA). Together they will create a safer digital space in the EU, which is particularly important for young people growing up online. Commenting on the extent of usage, he noted that 95 per cent of young people in Europe are online on a daily basis while, during the pandemic, children spent between 6 and 7.5 hours online per day on average. The BIK+ strategy therefore builds upon the legislative framework and presents a range of actions to ensure that every child in Europe is protected, empowered and respected online, and especially those young people in vulnerable situations.

Following a brief overview of the various pillars of the BIK+ strategy – the subject of much of the day's discussions – Commissioner Breton concluded by encouraging all participants in the 2022 edition of the Safer Internet Forum to share their ideas. The key to success for BIK+ is to join forces and learn from each other, including young people, parents, teachers, industry, civil society, Member States, and the Commission.

Watch the full content of Commissioner Breton's video address here:



(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/S8e5zRmDmOQ>)

Video address by Commissioner Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President for Democracy and Demography

Commissioner Šuica commenced by stating that a safe, secure and trusted digital space needs to be a cornerstone of our digital society. This applies equally for all children, irrespective of their geographical, economic or personal backgrounds. She went on to reflect that the past 10 years have seen a surge in unprecedented opportunities for children and young people online in terms of education, entertainment, social contact, and active participation in society. She also reflected on how the European Union's Strategy for the Rights of the Child highlights the need for children to be safely and actively included in the digital transition. She further added that the United Nations General Comment 25 (2021) and the EU's own Declaration on European Digital Rights and Principles (2022) established that children's rights offline and online must be respected in the same manner.

Reflecting on Commissioner Breton's comments on the new BIK+ strategy, Commissioner Šuica also referenced the proposed regulation to combat child online sexual abuse in the European Union and, indeed, globally, given the inherently cross-border nature of the crime. She stressed that as the internet knows no borders, we must work with international partners to address online issues effectively and efficiently, encouraging high safety standards and children's empowerment and active participation in the digital space worldwide.

Commissioner Šuica especially mentioned the European Union's commitment to youth participation and empowerment going forward, including in the implementation of the BIK+ strategy. She concluded by wishing participants engaging discussions at the Forum as a backdrop to ongoing cooperation in the coming months and years.


Watch the full content of Commissioner Šuica's video address here:




(watch the video on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/TihEDe7-TDI>)

Following these video addresses, two members of the SIF Youth Advisory Group led an interactive discussion with European and national policy makers to open the conference and underline the importance of BIK+. Molly (Ireland) and George (Malta) introduced MEP Catharina Rinzema from the Netherlands, and June Lowery-Kingston, from the European Commission.


High-level opening remarks




George,
SIF Youth
Advisory Group







Catharina Rinzema,
MEP (The
Netherlands) and
Vice-Chair of the
Intergroup on
Children's Rights



Molly,
SIF Youth
Advisory Group



**June Lowery-
Kingston,** Head of
Unit, Accessibility,
Multilingualism &
Safer Internet, DG
CONNECT, European
Commission

The first question asked what has been happening so far with the BIK+ strategy and what key actions and priorities the European Commission will be focusing on in the coming months. June responded that a huge milestone was getting the BIK+ strategy adopted back in May 2022, commenting that “*although that marked the end of the beginning, it also marked the beginning of the rest*”. A key focus since that time has been on communication and outreach, to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the new strategy and its aims. This has included a presentation at this year’s Digital Assembly in Toulouse (in which BIK Youth representatives also participated), and conversations with the EU institutions and Member States, the European network of Safer Internet Centres, and industry representatives, among others.

June went on to stress that funding is critical to the success of the implementation of the policy, so alongside the communication piece, work has been ongoing to secure funding for Safer Internet Centres, alongside developing a new call for tender for coordination of the next phase of the BIK project which will allow for the effective implementation of the new BIK+ strategy.

June also referenced the imminent publication* of the horizontal legislation, the Digital Services Act (DSA), and its critical importance of application to all digital service providers in Europe, regardless of where they are based. The DSA includes specific provisions on child online safety and specific articles on codes of conduct. The aim is to “*hit the ground running*” with the BIK+ strategy as soon as the DSA is published.

(* It was subsequently announced that the DSA was published in the Official Journal of the European Union that day (27 October 2022). It entered into force on 16 November 2022. [Read a Q&A on the European Commission website](#)).

The next question was directed to Catharina Rinzema and asked her views on the safe digital experiences pillar of the BIK+ strategy and, in particular, its focus on age-appropriate design, and what needs to be done to make progress here. Catharina responded that it's crucial that, with every new product and service that is designed, the designers and engineers also take child safety into account. We are not there yet; there needs to be a shift in mindset to ensure that this happens systematically. Developers and designers need to be talking to children and young people to hear their insights, and also to parents to hear their concerns. Child rights assessments are key to ensure that products and services really take the well-being and health and safety of children into account. On this point, Catharina invited some comments from the industry members of the audience, with representatives from both Meta and Google/YouTube sharing some of their good practices in terms of co-design with young people, 'best interests of the child' frameworks, and supervised online experiences, among others. On the back of these interventions, Catharina then went on to stress the importance of effective age assurance and age verification processes, highlighting the challenges of finding the right balance between innovation, security, privacy and child rights in the provision of digital platforms and services. She also stressed the role of industry to lead with innovative solutions.

Moving back to June, Molly commented that the BIK+ strategy is really ambitious. She asked what the Commission plans to do to ensure that the vision becomes a reality, and what systems and mechanisms will be put in place to monitor the progress being made against the objectives in the strategy. June responded that although it is indeed ambitious, it is actually quite practical; there are actions which are really quite specific. One example is the code of conduct to help industry implement the legal provisions that already exist – ensuring that it is produced, drafted, signed, and implemented will be challenging, as will be pulling together all of the different aspects of the children's rights actors and industry business models. This is an output on which progress can be judged, however.

In terms of empowerment actions, existing resources such as the European network of Safer Internet Centres (SICs) and the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) portal will be utilised to expand the reach of awareness-raising activities. We need to reach a higher percentage of the population, and we need to better reach vulnerable communities. Multiplier models and examining how we work together, also within the Commission, will be key going forward.

Additionally, there is a call in the BIK+ strategy for industry to embed good practice of consulting children and young people in the design and development of child-specific products, and additional also in the 'mixed spaces' which children are using alongside adults, but where their best interests are not yet taken into account.

A continuation of the existing BIK Policy Map exercise will evaluate progress every two years, and there will also be an additional regular youth-led review under the new BIK+ strategy.

George asked a final question of Catharina in terms of what kind of opportunities she sees for children and young people in the digital world. She responded that it needs to be a space where young people can learn, engage and promote dialogue. Above all, however, we need to create a space where everyone feels respected and where we have a culture of tolerance. Catharina reflected on the challenges presented by cyberbullying, especially, and commented that this needs to be addressed through effective education. Members of the audience commented that teachers are often lacking in the knowledge and education themselves, and that also education needs to continue beyond the classroom and traditional learning structures.

To close the session, a question was invited from the audience. Sol, SIF Youth Advisory Group representative from Norway, asked what policymakers expect from BIK Youth representatives to move this agenda forward. June responded that a priority is to get the youth voice resonating among all stakeholders and, most importantly, with their peers; this approach is likely to have far more impact than an older person delivering the same messages. Complementing this approach, Catharina commented that it's important that opportunities are created for policymakers to really listen to youth ideas.

Watch the full recording of the discussion here (timestamp 00:20:40 to 00:51:30).



(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ijYSiphSvEE?t=1240>)

Keynote session: The BIK+ strategy – a view from youth

Sabrina Vorbau (European Schoolnet) and SIF Youth Advisory Group member Dimitris (Cyprus) welcomed participants to this next session. Dimitris introduced the two young influencers, Jacob Donegan and Lijana Risen, who would be speaking in this session.

Keynote session: The BIK+ strategy - a view from youth



Sabrina Vorbau,
European
Schoolnet



Jacob Donegan,
Content creator, Ireland



Lijana Risen,
Mindset influencer,
Germany



Dimitris,
SIF Youth
Advisory Group






Dimitris commented that the SIF Youth Advisory Group members chose these influencers because they found their stories interesting and wanted to give them space to be heard. Their stories also have some great links with the new BIK+ strategy.

Jacob Donegan

Jacob is a 21-year-old content creator from Ireland, with over 1.2 million followers on TikTok. Jacob is a transgender man, female to male, and has been creating content, mainly on TikTok, for over seven years, promoting self-love and the importance of living life as who you truly are without any fear or shame. Jacob uploads dance and lifestyle videos, but he has also documented his transition from female to male. Along with fitness and workout videos, he has also created a series called ‘Real Talks with Jacob’ where he gives people who are curious about transgender the chance to ask him questions without fear. His ultimate aim is to spread positivity online, and help people feel comfortable within themselves.

Jacob reflected that he has experienced some negativity throughout his journey; taking the step onto social media opens yourself up to the opinions of many people, and being transgender made him an easy target from day 1. As he gained visibility online, he discovered that a lot of people didn’t agree with who he is; people were very malicious and there was no filter to their thoughts. He commented that he put up with the negativity *“because the love always overpowered the hate, and the support made anything worth it”*.

Over time, he became people's safe space online, and that's a feeling which he will always be truly thankful for.

Jacob shared that, as he got older, the worse the abuse got. Comments that were once just written on his phone turned into his real, everyday personal life. He was verbally and physically abused, people laughed at him, spat on him, ganged up on him and beat him up. He commented that the dangers of going online are not talked about enough. As a teenager, he lacked knowledge of the cautions which need to be taken when putting your life on social media. While the internet is a powerful place, not everybody has a powerful mind or mindset, and that can result in some serious and damaging consequences to mental health and well-being.

Jacob cautioned the audience not to believe everything seen online, commenting that many people try so hard to 'follow the trend' and to look like society's expectation of them that they actually lose their identity and authenticity – they feel they need to be taller, fitter or have a better body. This affects people of all ages, not just children and young people. People are going to extremes to become society – and social media's – perception of perfection, and this is creating insecurities which we didn't previously have.

"I'd love to share a tip that I've used since I was young and that I still use to this day to overcome all the hate that has come my way... because I am not their words; I am who I say I am, because I know me best."

"So what I do is I sit, and I realise that all these words that are being said to me – all these negative words – are just words until I take them in and manifest them into something bigger. No one's words can define you until you give them the power to do so."

Jacob Donegan

Watch the full content of Jacob's presentation here:



(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/9EDjii9MnU>)

[View the slides from Jacob's presentation here.](#)

Lijana Risen

Lijana Risen, 25, is a mindset influencer. She was a contestant on Germany's Next Top Model and voluntarily dropped out of the final to make a statement against cyberbullying. Since then, she has started the non-profit organisation Love Always Wins (L.A.W.), where she's fighting for more self-love and respect, and less hate.

Lijana started by reflecting back to the person she used to be before the Next Top Model experience. As a child, she always longed to be on stage and was a dancer throughout her childhood. She was confident, positive, and laughed all the time. Above all, she liked herself.

And then came Germany's next Top Model. Lijana realises that there are many factors at play in such a TV show. Not everything is about the human aspects; there is a need to create soundbites and generate money, but she wasn't prepared for all the negativity that came with it. During the time the show was airing she received messages of hate and death threats, she was told to kill herself, she was told that she would be spat on and beaten up. In short, she was cyberbullied on a massive scale. She reflected on the severe impact on her mental health leading to depression and suicidal thoughts.

“...when so many thousands of people tell you that you are worth nothing, that you should kill yourself to make the planet a better place, you don’t have the opportunity to think that they are wrong... there comes a time when you believe what people say because they say it to you over and over again.”

Lijana Risen

Lijana then went on to describe how she took control of the situation by seeking professional help from an organisation fighting against cyberbullying and, ultimately, launching her own campaign to address the issue. Echoing Jacob’s earlier comments, she reflected that while she may not have the power to make people say nice things about her, she does have the power over her feelings... and only she has the power to define what she is and what she wants to be.

Since exiting the Germany’s Next Top Model competition and reflecting on her experiences, Lijana has realised that she still sees her future on the stage but no longer as a model. Instead, she wants to take her experiences and empower people with her story. Lijana wants to be part of the change and influence people’s mindset to ensure that love always wins.

Watch the full content of Lijana’s presentation here:



(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/fbwAYlhYEXI>)

[View the slides from Lijana’s presentation here.](#)

Thanking Jacob and Lijana for their presentations, Dimitris reflected that, sadly, cyberbullying is still the number one issue reported by children and young people online... hence it is a key priority within the BIK+ strategy.

Following on from the two influencer presentations, the BIK Youth Panel 2022 took to the stage to present their views with a musical interlude. It would be impossible to summarise their intervention in words alone; please take a look at the video showing both their preparations and performance:



(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/wcLmZ5yqZfo>)

To conclude this session, BIK Youth representatives then led interactive table debates, providing feedback in a plenary format on the topics discussed, as follows:

Manipulation on the internet

This is a very important topic currently, with fake news on politics and the economy, especially, flooding the internet. Consequently, many sources abuse this information, and many people online are misled and influenced as a result of the negative ideas that are circulated. The group talked to about the need to ‘think before you post’ but also discussed the requirement to ‘think before you interpret information found online’. We need to be critical when we’re analysing information, we need to be wary of biased sources, and we

need to not 'go with the flow' when consuming content. The group also discussed how we can educate effectively. They concluded that we need to have fact checking, we need to educate youth on critical source analysis skills, and we need to educate on the importance of objectivity for both content consumers and content creators.

Data issues

A key point of discussion here was the fact that many companies and websites are selling data without the consent of the data subject. Children, especially, can be unaware that their data is being used in this way. Discussion also touched upon the existence of information or filter bubbles meaning that users are only presented with a restricted view of the world, and whether we need to accept cookies to access content and services effectively. On the issue of terms and conditions, the individual circumstances of the user will likely impact on their willingness to read and digest them; for example, if we are in a hurry, we are unlikely to read the terms before accepting them. Finally, the group discussed the sharing of data across countries and continents, and how this can be regulated by law.

Cyberbullying

This group discussed a range of issues related to cyberbullying. They concluded that cyberbullying can be as bad or even worse than real-life bullying as it is not always clear who is behind the hateful speech; for example, perpetrators could be hiding behind a fake profile. Another key issue is that cyberbullying is typically not taken as seriously as real-life bullying; this needs to be addressed. There has always been bullying, whether with or without the internet – so it's not an online issue per se. The internet does, however, make bullying easier. Another issue is that teachers and adults are not ready to teach children and young people how to be safe online; this group needs educating so that they can better support the children in their care, and adults need to become better role models. Children and young people need to know how to access support if they do experience bullying online, such as through the Insafe helpline network.

Moderation and policies

The internet provides a lot of free content, and that's great in many ways as it supports inclusion and accessibility. However, with this access comes risks in terms of the data we need to supply, or associated with the content children and young people are exposed to as they grow and develop. In previous revolutions it has been acknowledged that young people are exposed to more things as infrastructure increases. The same is true of the internet. A key question, therefore, is are we doing enough to tackle the issues linked to this digital evolution? The group discussed factors such as internal investment being made by industry such as investment in policies and the development of good practices. Equally, there seems to be collaboration behind these initiatives, not only between companies but between policymakers and young people too. Platform providers need to work with platform users too to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account when developing policies and

moderation processes. The importance of education and the nurturing of responsible social networks was also discussed.

Harassment

This group started by identifying what harassment can mean. It was concluded that it can fall into several categories, for example, spam, non-consensual sharing, sexual exploitation, blackmail, privacy violations (such as doxing or leaking personal information), or impersonating someone online or stealing their identity. Again, harassment has already existed in many forms in real life, but the internet can make it easier because access is provided on a global scale. People from all across the globe can contact you and judge you, and the assumed anonymity of being online can make people less afraid to engage in negative behaviours online. Potential solutions for stopping harassment were discussed, looking primarily at blocking mechanisms. It was acknowledged, however, that there is not a simple answer but is essential that victims of harassment can access appropriate care and support.

BIK Youth Panellist Selma gave some final words to round off the BIK Youth Panel intervention with a compelling call to action to the gathered stakeholders:

*“We have grown up with the internet. While our experiences are essential for the future of the internet, you are the people with the power in your hands that can make these changes. We want you to take these conversations that you had and bring them to your tables in the European Parliament or in your companies. We also want to be permanently represented in the decision-making processes in order for changes to be made in a properly informed manner. But this is not a war we want to fight alone. We want cooperation. But with or without you, we will make it happen. This is an urgent matter impacting millions of people daily. The change is needed now, and we will take whatever it takes to do it...
with or without you.”*

Selma, BIK Youth Panellist

Watch the full recording of the discussion here (timestamp 01:15:38 to 01:39:18).



(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ijYSiphSvEE?t=4538>)



Deep dives into the BIK+ strategy

As is typical of the Safer Internet Forum, participants had the opportunity to participate in a number of deep dive discussions, across two sessions, each focusing on the pillars of the BIK+ strategy. Discussions further explored some of the opportunities and challenges as they relate to **protecting**, **empowering** and **respecting** children and young people online, and how these can be addressed by various stakeholders. Parallel sessions took place for onsite and online participants.

Session 1 – Safe digital experiences

Deep dives into the BIK+ strategy: Session 1 – Safe digital experiences



Karl Hopwood,
European Schoolnet



Yevgeny,
SIF Youth
Advisory Group

World Café discussions

- Addressing cyberbullying (awareness and helpline counselling).
- Child and young consumers.
- Effective age assurance/verification methods.
- Non-consensual sharing of intimate content (revenge porn).






The first session, hosted by Karl Hopwood (European Schoolnet) and SIF Youth Advisory Group member Yevgeny (Malta) focused on the *Safe digital experiences* pillar of the BIK+ strategy, specifically:

- Addressing cyberbullying (awareness and helpline counselling).
- Child and young consumers.
- Effective age assurance/verification methods.
- Non-consensual sharing of intimate content (revenge porn).

Following on from an introductory overview, where BIK youth representatives also shared their views, discussions focused on priorities, key actions to be taken, and how to monitor progress in the coming years.

Addressing cyberbullying (awareness and helpline counselling)

Globally, more than a third of young people have reported being a victim of cyberbullying¹. Children may be exposed to and participate in toxic, aggressive, disruptive or addictive behaviour² or be targeted by inappropriate, sexist or racist content. This can in turn discourage participation in online activities (for example, by girls), and impact children's rights³.

Despite current actions, cyberbullying remains the most reported topic to European Safer Internet Centre (SIC) helplines in the last decade. The existing 116 111 number is specially reserved for child helplines in the EU. Cyberbullying and other online problems can be addressed via this number, or directly by the SIC helplines. The BIK+ strategy will make the support offered by SICs more visible through enhanced cooperation around 116 111 and related online services (such as helpline apps) which should be also accessible for children in vulnerable situations. In addition, an ad hoc expert group will provide policy recommendations related to (cyber)bullying and well-being at school⁴.

Against this background, the European Commission commits:

- To ensure that the 116 111 harmonised number addresses cyberbullying, in cooperation with the EU co-funded SIC helplines, by 2023.
- To share the recommendations related to (cyber)bullying from the expert group for supporting well-being at school, from 2023.
- The Commission also calls upon Member States to support, including with trained staff, the harmonised number 116 111 to address cyberbullying.

In terms of **priorities**, discussions mainly focused on providing support for bullies and perpetrators, and the importance of looking more at the roots of cyberbullying while also really helping people. Other priorities discussed were the need to work with adults to raise their awareness and outlook on cyberbullying, and creating a knowledge bank of data on cyberbullying reports

In terms of **key actions to be taken**, discussions focused on the need to listen to children and give them responsibility, to focus more on bystanders, and to consider both prevention and reaction strategies.

In terms of **monitoring the progress in the coming years**, suggestions included constant monitoring of cases and having periodic surveys at both school and national levels.

See **Annex 3** for the full listings of responses on each of these discussion points.

Child and young consumers

Children are now more active and independent digital consumers than they were 10 years ago, often using digital products and services designed for adults. They are exposed to or targeted by a range of

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-poll-more-third-young-people-30-countries-report-being-victim-online-bullying>

² <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA16207/#tabs|Name:overview>

³ UNICEF, [Recommendations for The Online Gaming Industry on Assessing Impact on Children](#) (page 15) (2020).

⁴ [Communication on achieving the European Education Area](#) by 2025, COM(2020) 625 final.

online marketing techniques. Through social media recommendation systems and other algorithms, targeted advertising, influencer marketing and gamification of marketing, harmful or inappropriate content is proposed to young users, exploiting their inexperience and lack of self-control. The marketing of products high in fat, sugar or salt among children can exacerbate inappropriate dietary behaviour, for example. Similarly, the aggressive marketing to children of risky investments as safe bets can lead to severe financial consequences. To address the risks and harms associated with this for children, the DSA puts forward a number of obligations. These include a prohibition on online platforms to present minors with advertising based on profiling, and an obligation for online platforms to provide transparency about their recommender systems and options for users to modify or influence the main parameters used in the recommender systems.

Digital services now continuously collect and share data on children, and ‘datafication’ starts even before birth. While aggregated big data can allow for ground-breaking insights, for example into children’s health and education, the datafication of childhood may also have a potentially lifelong adverse impact on children’s well-being and development. Both children and parents lack awareness of the extensive sharing of personal data that may result from using digital services, notably those without monetary payments. While so much data is collected by industry on children’s use of digital services and related risks, academics have no or a very limited access to these important data sets.

Children are now systematically exposed to inappropriate content and commercial practices. Research on the long-term neurological impact on children of methods used for commercial purposes such as persuasive design, for example games of chance mechanisms such as ‘loot boxes’, is still needed.

Against this background, as part of the BIK+ strategy, the Commission commits:

- To map research into the impact of neuro-marketing on children in order to assist national consumer authorities to better assess how commercial influencing techniques may be unfair on children.
- To coordinate and promote exchanges of good practice among EU authorities and Member States about the enforcement of consumer law in respect of children.
- To develop awareness-raising tools and activities on the risks facing children as young consumers, with the support of the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) portal and European Safer Internet Centres (SICs).

The Commission also invites industry to consistently assess and address specific risks to children emerging from the use of their products and services including safety risks, as well as relevant marketing practices.

In terms of **priorities**, discussions mainly focused on the role of parents, caregivers and teachers in consumer concerns. Another point of focus was children as young consumers and games. Participants felt it important that children and young people are not persuaded to make in-game purchases with particular reference to loot boxes and dark patterns.

In terms of **key actions to be taken**, discussions focused on schools playing a role in providing education about personal data and consent but, equally, everybody should be educated (including

parents and caregivers). Participants also mentioned that there needs to be enforcement of the law, for example through the Digital Services Act (DSA), and by regulating in-app advertising. There should also be a code of conduct for online influencers and for advertising in games.

In terms of **monitoring the progress in the coming years**, suggestions included mapping what organisations are doing in each country, monitoring company practices, and also asking children about tech companies' commercial practices and see whether they understand. If not, then there is knowledge of the problem and involving children in the monitoring process is key.

See **Annex 4** for the full listings of responses on each of these discussion points.

Effective age assurance/verification methods

As explained in the BIK+ strategy, the Commission intends to facilitate a comprehensive EU code of conduct on age-appropriate design, building on the new rules in the Digital Services Act (DSA) and in line with the AVMSD (Audio-visual Media Services Directive) and the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). The code aims to ensure the privacy, safety and security of children when using digital products and services. This process will involve industry, policymakers, civil society, and children. Within this context, industry carries a significant responsibility. They have the tools to create products that – by default and by design – are easy to use, safe and private. All digital products and services likely to be used by children should therefore respect fair and basic design features that embed European values, as enshrined in the DSA.

Building on ongoing work⁵ and taking account of the new DSA rules for online platforms, the Commission will support methods to prove age in a privacy-preserving and secure manner, to be recognised EU-wide.

The Commission invites Member States to support effective age-verification methods and it calls upon industry to actively implement measures on access to age-restricted content, including adult content websites and 18+ games, in line with national and European rules.

In terms of **priorities**, discussions mainly focused on educating people about harms so that they can choose not to go to dangerous places online, fostering societal acceptance of age verification (just as has been done for seatbelts in vehicles, for example), and making it easier to verify your age online (for example, via www.euCONSENT.eu). Users should also be permitted to re-use age verification across multiple websites.

In terms of **key actions to be taken**, discussions focused on stopping algorithms from promoting harmful content to children and young people, making child-friendly platforms more accessible and better advertised, and guaranteeing that these spaces are safe places for children. It is also important that governments help with the implementation and interoperability of age assurance/verification methods.

⁵ [euCONSENT](http://www.euCONSENT.eu) is an EU-funded pilot project aiming to design and test an interoperable solution for age verification and parental consent.

In terms of **monitoring the progress in the coming years**, suggestions included training the police and monitoring reports, prosecutions, and fines, conducting regular research by polling children and young people on what harmful things they've seen online, and improving existing age verification systems, including making them less easy to cheat or circumvent.

See **Annex 5** for the full listings of responses on each of these discussion points.

Non-consensual sharing of intimate content (revenge porn)

As argued in a recent Council of Europe human rights comment⁶, *“though both men and women can experience incidents of online violence and abuse, women are considerably more likely to be victims of repeated and severe forms of harmful actions online or with the help of technology. Every day, we hear about women and girls who have been victims of – to name but a few – non-consensual image or video sharing, intimidation and threats via email or social media platforms, including rape and death threats, online sexual harassment, stalking, including with the use of tracking apps and devices, as well as impersonation, and economic harm via digital means. Young girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse as well as bullying by their peers in the digital space. In some cases, such acts have also resulted in physical violence or led to the victims even having suicidal thoughts.”*

In line with this, the EU gender equality strategy⁷ highlights that girls can become victims of gender-based violence; violence that is directed against a woman or girl because she is a woman or girl or that affects them disproportionately. The proposal for a directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence⁸ includes the criminalisation of gender-based cyber violence, and provides for measures to protect and support victims of such violence online and offline, regardless of their age. This includes specific reference to the need for Member States to ensure that the following intentional conduct is punishable as a criminal offence:

- a) Making intimate images, or videos or other material depicting sexual activities, of another person without that person's consent accessible to a multitude of end-users by means of information and communication technologies.
- b) Producing or manipulating and subsequently making accessible to a multitude of end-users, by means of information and communication technologies, images, videos or other material, making it appear as though another person is engaged in sexual activities, without that person's consent.
- c) Threatening to engage in the conduct referred to in points (a) and (b) in order to coerce another person to do, acquiesce or refrain from a certain act.

Likewise, the BIK+ strategy identifies cyberviolence, including the non-consensual sharing of intimate images or content, whether authentic or manipulated, as an important example of content that requires rapid processing if flagged by users, including children, and appropriate adaptation of content moderation practices.

⁶ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/no-space-for-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-digital-world>

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022PC0105>

In terms of **priorities**, discussions mainly focused on the importance of stopping victim blaming, instead focusing on protecting them. It is also important to teach children and young people about consent. There is a need to explain consent and privacy to young people and to explain that sending a picture without consent is harassment, not flirting. However, at the same time, we need to recognise that sexting is now very much part of young people’s reality, and they need to be aware of how to minimise risks if they do decide to share intimate content online.


In terms of **key actions to be taken**, discussions focused on improving the understanding of the police and justice system about the sensitivity of cases, alongside improved awareness raising about the topic. The topic also needs to be addressed with the people who are responsible for sharing the images, for example by having a specific programme for perpetrators.

In terms of **monitoring the progress in the coming years**, suggestions included facilitating joint working on this issue across industry, academia and governments, and ensuring that education on non-consensual sharing of intimate content is a compulsory part of the school curriculum in all countries.

See **Annex 6** for the full listings of responses on each of these discussion points.

Session 2 – Digital empowerment and Active participation

Deep dives into the BIK+ strategy: Session 2 – Digital empowerment and Active participation




Karl Hopwood,
European Schoolnet



Aveli,
SIF Youth
Advisory Group

World Café discussions

- Monitoring the impact of the digital transformation on well-being.
- Children in vulnerable situations (digital divide, migrant backgrounds, refugees, ...).
- Peer-to-peer and child-to-adult training and support.
- Co-creating policies, products and services with children and young people.






The second session, hosted by Karl Hopwood (European Schoolnet) and SIF Youth Advisory Group member Aveli (Estonia) focused on the *Digital empowerment* and *Active participation* pillars of the BIK+ strategy, specifically:

- Monitoring the impact of the digital transformation on well-being.
- Children in vulnerable situations (digital divide, migrant backgrounds, refugees, ...).

- Peer-to-peer and child-to-adult training and support.
- Co-creating policies, products and services with children and young people.

Following on from an introduction from the table leader and BIK youth representatives, table discussions focused on priorities, key actions to be taken, and how to monitor progress in the coming years.

Monitoring the impact of the digital transformation on well-being

While most EU Member States have developed strategies for developing digital skills (either as a cross curricular topic or as a separate subject), few undertake regular monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact and review these strategies. The Commission is working on a proposal for a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education⁹ to promote a common understanding, mobilise cross-national political engagement, promote peer learning and mutual exchange, and encourage investment.

Keeping an up-to-date knowledge base and monitoring the impact of the digital transformation on children's well-being is essential for this and future generations of children in the EU.

Therefore, as part of BIK+, the Commission invites Member States, industry and academics to work more closely across Europe to monitor the impact of the digital transformation on children's wellbeing.

In terms of **priorities**, discussions mainly focused on the need to establish better reporting flows, the guidance of young people in terms of using digital technologies effectively, and the importance of research on the topic.

In terms of **key actions to be taken**, discussions focused on the fact that more research is needed and we need to reshape thinking to consider the internet as a place where positive learning exists. It is also important to work with social media platforms and influencers to encourage them to share information in a more transparent way and promote the importance of well-being through their channels.

In terms of **monitoring the progress in the coming years**, suggestions included mandating that all devices need to measure screen time (through an obligatory app or similar), there should be regular pan-European analysis of the situation, and national-level research is needed to monitor developments.

See **Annex 7** for the full listings of responses on each of these discussion points.

Children in vulnerable situations (digital divide, migrant backgrounds, refugees...)

The BIK+ strategy pays particular attention to the opportunities and risks online for children in situations of vulnerability.

⁹ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/action-10>

Children in vulnerable situations, children at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and children living in rural and remote areas with inadequate broadband infrastructure should enjoy equal access to both digital devices and skills, and equal chances to harness the opportunities of the Digital Decade.

Recent studies¹⁰ on digital deprivation show that, in some European countries, around 20 per cent of children live in families who cannot afford a computer or internet connection at home, while 40 per cent of rural households do not have access to fast broadband. In some areas, more than 15 per cent of young people at the age of 15 feel digitally disengaged and, Europe-wide, 8 per cent of that age group lack digital confidence. Digital deprivation in childhood can result in a lack of digital skills and digital confidence in adult life, and reinforce the digital divide.

Meanwhile, the Commission points to the need to pay careful attention to children with special or specific needs, or from disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds. For example, migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background often face obstacles in accessing digital courses and services, including because of a lack of the digital skills to use these services^{11,12}. Children at risk of poverty and social exclusion, children with a migrant or Roma background and other children particularly exposed to discrimination and segregation¹³, children whose parents do not have basic digital skills, children with disabilities, children in care settings; all have specific needs. Initiatives must focus on gender balance so that both girls and boys acquire digital skills from an early age. Effectiveness should be measured, and best practice identified.

In response, BIK+ will contribute by expanding the scope of work of Safer Internet Centres (SICs) to help address the digital divide, particularly in imparting digital skills to vulnerable groups, with non-formal education and training. The strategy will also make the support offered by Safer Internet Centres more visible through enhanced cooperation around 116 111 and related online services (such as helpline apps) which should be also accessible for children in vulnerable situations.

In terms of **priorities**, discussions mainly focused on the vulnerability of parents and the need to reach difficult groups, for example, children with behavioural problems, disabilities and LGBTQIA+ youth. It was noted that online risks are largely the same for all children, but those in vulnerable situations are perhaps more exposed to potential harm.

In terms of **key actions to be taken**, discussions focused on the fact that more training opportunities are needed for teachers, along with a curriculum that covers digital skills, risks and opportunities. It was also suggested that peer group training and peer mediators could be a useful approach for engaging with children in vulnerable situations.

¹⁰ <https://www.digigen.eu/results/digitally-deprived-children-in-europe/>

¹¹ [Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027](#), COM/2020/758 final.

¹² 8.1 per cent of people born outside the EU report they cannot afford a computer, compared to 3.1 per cent among those born in the reporting country, Eurostat, EU-SILC (2018 data). Parents from migrant households may have more difficulties in supporting their children in remote learning when they do not master the school language.

¹³ [A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation](#), COM/2020/620 final.

In terms of **monitoring the progress in the coming years**, suggestions included creating an expert group and sharing best practices, testing children's digital and media literacy nationally, documenting and visualising the differences between countries, and considering using the annual Safer Internet Forum as part of the monitoring and reporting process.

See **Annex 8** for the full listings of responses on each of these discussion points.

Peer-to-peer and child-to-adult training and support

The BIK+ strategy will complement and work in synergy with the Digital Education Action Plan, for example by promoting national Safer Internet Centres as a one-stop-shop for reliable and age-appropriate information and support, tailored to national needs in formal and informal education.

Within this context, BIK+ promotes peer-to-peer learning and the example of BIK Youth Ambassadors and BIK Youth Panels as good practice for educational approaches in the EU and beyond. The Commission also invites Member States to support peer-to-peer training at national, regional and local level, for example with local schemes which may recognise peer-to-peer trainers.

Meanwhile, adults responsible for children (parents, carers, teachers, club and sports leaders, religious leaders, social care, healthcare, youth workers, and so on) need skills to support, advise and guide children. Child-to-adult teaching on digital issues may be an innovative approach to be explored further.

In terms of **priorities**, discussions mainly focused on new programmes that should be established, organising events or peer-to-peer programmes, and the importance of not focussing on short-term actions but instead working on long-term programmes and stable models of cooperation.

In terms of **key actions to be taken**, discussions focused on the need to involve a variety of different groups of children, adults, parents, industry, and policymakers. Adults should listen to what children have to say and acknowledge that adults can actually learn from children. Safer Internet Centres also have an important role to play here since they can provide expertise and training to young people, as well as support for peer-to-peer and child-to-adult education and training.

In terms of **monitoring the progress in the coming years**, suggestions included that peer-to-peer training should be included in teaching methodologies, and curriculums for relevant subjects should be updated to allow scope for this type of training. Additionally, programmes in schools should be evaluated and mechanisms are needed for real exchange of ideas and gaining feedback.

See **Annex 9** for the full listings of responses on each of these discussion points.

Co-creating policies, products and services with children and young people

Children are no longer passive consumers of technology but can actively use technology to express themselves and influence the world around them. Children should be listened to more, and included in the development and evaluation of digital products and services, and digital policies.

The BIK+ strategy recognises the importance of respecting and including children’s opinions in shaping the Digital Decade. Children should be supported in developing and practising citizenship skills in public policy and political debates, and enjoy their right to assembly and association via online social platforms. Research has shown that there is room for increasing online activities associated with creativity and digital citizenship¹⁴. It concludes that today’s children risk being underrepresented in policy decision-making processes, leading to unfulfilled needs and unmet expectations¹⁵.

In line with this, BIK+ acknowledges that it is important to actively involve children in all their diversity in shaping the digital environment, as the under-18s have a unique insight into a digital childhood. The Commission will therefore:

- involve children in the creation of the EU Code of conduct on age-appropriate design mentioned in pillar 1, from 2023.
- organise a child-led evaluation of the BIK+ strategy every two years.

The Commission invites Member States to engage an inclusive range of youth ambassadors to contribute to digital policies at local, regional and national level.

Meanwhile, it calls upon industry to:

- consult and actively involve children systematically in the development and deployment of their digital products and services.
- co-create with children of different ages and backgrounds child-friendly communications, including terms and conditions, about their digital products and services.
- develop inclusive¹⁶ products and services that promote children’s right to express themselves and facilitate their participation in public life.

In terms of **priorities**, discussions mainly focused on the challenge of shifting the mindset to realise that children’s contributions are valuable; it is vitally important to involve children and especially those from different backgrounds. Another topic discussed was the importance of and feedback loops when involving children; children want to be heard and listened to, and need to know that their opinions can influence real change.

In terms of **key actions to be taken**, discussions focused on the importance of both starting the process and developing indicators of success. There needs to be regular monitoring, and impact needs to be assessed in terms of child rights. It is important to listen to the opinions of children of different ages and from different backgrounds.

In terms of **monitoring the progress in the coming years**, suggestions included following the ‘Best interests of the child framework’, and using feedback loops between young people, policymakers and tech companies to ensure that action is being taken. The implementation of the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the age-appropriate design code will be key.

¹⁴ <https://www.eukidsonline.ch/files/Eu-kids-online-2020-international-report.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1019-ladder-of-childrens-online-participation-findings-from-three-gko-countries.html>

¹⁶ For example, diverse role models, products and services accessible for children with disabilities.

See **Annex 10** for the full listings of responses on each of these discussion points.

BIK+

Future-proofing the BIK+ strategy

The final session included a broad and international input from a variety of panellists. June Lowery-Kingston, Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet at DG CONNECT of the European Commission introduced SIF Youth Advisory Group member Billie (Ireland), Rodrigo Nejm, eSafety educational Director at Safernet Brazil and Brazilian Safer Internet Day committee coordinator, Debora Plein, Coordinator of the Luxembourgish Safer Internet Centre, Jand osianne Galea Baron, programme Specialist at UNICEF.

Future-proofing the BIK+ strategy



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Rodrigo Nejm,
E-safety educational
Director at Safernet
Brazil. Brazilian SID
committee coordinator
since 2009.



Billie,
SIF Youth
Advisory Group
member



Debora Plein,
Service national de la
jeunesse, Coordinator
of BEE SECURE (Safer
Internet Centre
Luxembourg)






June firstly asked all panellists for one takeaway from the day's sessions. Billie highlighted once more that since young people are the future of the internet, their voices must continue to be heard beyond the Safer Internet Forum when making decisions both in industry and in government. Rodrigo stressed the importance of having a multi-stakeholder approach together with meaningful youth participation. Debora and Josianne both agreed on the impressive work done by the young people in preparation for the day.

A video address from Marie Enemark Olsen, The LEGO Group, Responsible Child Engagement team, followed, in which she illustrated The LEGO Group's efforts to deliver age-appropriate, nurturing, safe experiences, and to inspire other businesses to act responsibly towards children and achieve positive digital innovation, one that puts the understanding of children's rights and their well-being at the centre of its design. Marie then identified three main areas for work: develop an understanding of the concept of well-being when designing for children; governments and policymakers should incentivise stakeholders to invest in a digital future prioritising children's rights; and build consensus around the collaboration and collective responsibility needed across all stakeholders to ensure children can benefit from online opportunities.

According to the World Benchmarking Alliance’s benchmark conducted in 2020, only 16 out of 100 companies demonstrated a high-level commitment to child online protection. In 2022, the Global Child Forum found that while 64 per cent of companies had a general product safety policy, only 20 per cent of those specifically mentioned children. More recently, UNICEF Australian Ethical Partners found that less than 3 per cent of companies disclose their data privacy standards for children. Efforts are undergoing in translating the concept of children’s online well-being into actions, such as the RITEC project (Responsible Innovation and Technology for Children), co-founded by UNICEF and The LEGO Group, aiming to develop a framework mapping how the design of children’s digital experiences affects their well-being.

Julie de Baillencourt, TikTok, stated in a video address that while technology can help companies such as TikTok to better detect and remove abuse and inappropriate content, technology for trust and safety purposes is still nascent and needs to be paired with the expertise of safety professionals. It can equally benefit from collaboration with industry experts, NGOs, and parents’ associations to share best practices.

Debora and Rodrigo brought the perspectives of their respective Safer Internet Centres: both agreed that while they have observed noticeable progress in co-creating and shaping policies in the child’s best interests, there is still a long way to go. Rodrigo furtherly emphasised the persistence of the “digital divide”, meaning the limited or non-existent access to online opportunities, lack of basic digital skills and lack of funding in Brazil, which is entrenching the existing inequalities and is worsened by the lack of regional policy efforts such as the BIK+ strategy. In addition, translation issues (in terms of language, technology, and policy) add to the previous vulnerabilities.

In her video address, Julie Inman Grant, Australia’s eSafety Commissioner, expressed her eagerness for the new code of conduct on age-appropriate design, which reflects the safety-by-design and age verification efforts undertaken by eSafety, as well as the focus on increasing child participation in the development of digital and online safety policies. She then reflected on some of the upcoming challenges related to the metaverse and virtual reality such as a likely escalation of harassment, exploitation and hate speech.

Moving to the end of the session, Billie reiterated the importance that panels composed of youth members are to be included when looking at shaping the future of the internet, the industry’s responsibility to protect their (young) users through safety-by-design approaches, and the need to involve governments to ensure that legislations are passed that regulate the safety of their users. Change should stem from three main domains: discussions among all stakeholders (including industry, parents and carers, education professionals, and so on); awareness-raising activities to be carried out beyond the Safer Internet Forum; and personal growth.

As child online safety has become a transnational issue, cross-border collaboration, communication, coordination, and sharing responsibilities remain critical ingredients to inform the discussions in the years to come.

Watch the full content of the session here (timestamps 00:00:19 – 00:41:55):



(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/eDXYnaGM1mM?t=19>)

Close of Safer Internet Forum 2022

In her closing remarks, June Lowery-Kingston, Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet at DG CONNECT of the European Commission, thanked all participants, both onsite and online, for their contributions to the day's discussions. She assured participants that the content of the discussions had been harvested and that the Commission team, along with representatives of European Schoolnet, will be studying this in detail to really benefit from the energy and expertise demonstrated during the Forum.

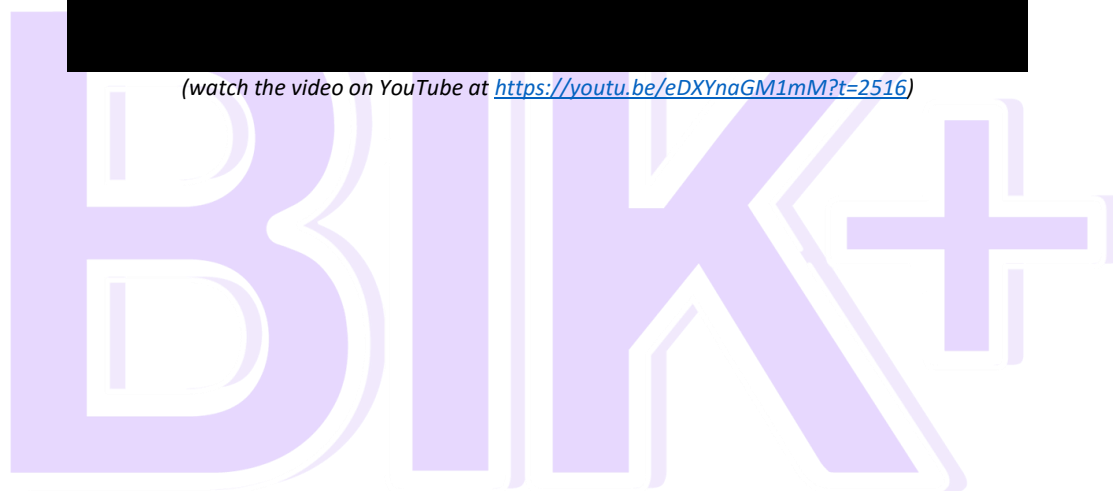
June further shared that the Commission is always moving forward, actively working to increase the synergies across various activity lines, working with European Safer Internet Centres and, more recently, with European Consumer Centres also to specifically address the commercial risks of children and young people being online. Work is ongoing across various European Commission directorates and across Member States to produce practical guidelines for delivering education on challenging topics such as artificial intelligence (AI), disinformation and cyberbullying. Equally, work will continue on bringing networks and contacts together to be sure that we are reaching all children in Europe, especially paying particular attention to those children in different situations of vulnerability. June reflected that there are many children facing disadvantages in Europe today, so it is vitally important that we bring them into this virtuous circle of benefiting from the opportunities that technology brings, equipping them with digital skills for jobs of the future, and hopefully taking them out of poverty.

The very final word of the day was given to BIK Youth Panellist, Daria. Daria expressed the gratitude of the BIK Youth Panel to everyone who had supported them in the process of making Safer Internet Forum 2022 a truly youth-led event. The preparation and delivery of the event had provided an inspiring opportunity for the young people – and indeed the gathered stakeholders – to start exploring the steps needed to protect, empower and respect children and young people online, which is the fundamental aim of the new BIK+ strategy. Daria hoped that everyone present – whether onsite or online – would leave the event with an optimistic view of the future, and would commit to making the changes needed, alongside youth, to create a better internet for kids... and for everyone.

Watch the closing remarks of Safer Internet Day 2022 here (timestamps 00:41:58 – 00:55:27):



(watch the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/eDXynaGM1mM?t=2516>)



Annex 1: Preparatory work of the SIF Youth Advisory Group

Following the adoption of the new European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) in May 2022, it was decided that the Safer Internet Forum (SIF) 2022 would provide an opportunity to discuss the BIK+ strategy and identify its key objectives and priority actions for the coming years. It would explore the roles and responsibilities of public and private stakeholders, along with how to monitor its impact and effectiveness. Additionally, to mark the European Year of Youth, the event would be organised in a youth-led manner, with young people playing an active role in the planning, preparation and delivery of the Forum.

Against this background, efforts were made to involve young people in the Safer Internet Forum, from the planning and organisation phase to the facilitation of the main event. To achieve this goal, European Schoolnet formed the SIF Youth Advisory Group (YAG) composed of a smaller group of ten experienced BIK Youth Ambassadors who have been actively contributing to the BIK Youth programme and activities. To this end, in order to select the members of the SIF YAG, the BIK Coordination Team took into consideration the young people with whom European Schoolnet worked during the #DigitalDecade4YOUth consultation, among others.

In this context, starting in May 2022, the SIF YAG members came together with the BIK Coordination Team in six planned meetings in addition to several ad-hoc meetings. During these meetings, the SIF YAG members voiced their opinions as to what the title of the SIF event should be, shaped the agenda of the SIF event, made recommendations on the format of the deep dive sessions, discussed and determined a shortlist of young influencers to deliver speeches and join the panel debates during the event, and decided their own roles as moderators and co-hosts alongside the BIK Coordination Team members during the main event. Moreover, a catch-up meeting among two representatives of the SIF YAG, the BIK Coordination Team and European Commission (EC) representatives took place during the summer months to discuss the progress of the SIF programme and the ideas that had been developed so far.

In addition, the SIF YAG members were regularly updated by the BIK Coordination Team about the preparations of the BIK Youth Panel, whose preparatory meetings were taking place in parallel to those of the SIF YAG, in order to achieve cohesion in the preparation of the structure by the SIF YAG and the content by the BIK Youth Panel.

The SIF Youth Advisory Group and BIK Youth Panel met for the first-time face to face in Brussels, Belgium, on 25-26 October 2022 to collaborate on the final preparatory efforts for the Safer Internet Forum. During these days, the SIF YAG members assisted their peers in the BIK Youth Panel in preparation for their active interventions in the Forum. To this end, the SIF YAG members provided guidance on how the BIK Youth Panel's performance would fit in the flow of the SIF. Both groups, along with the members of the BIK Coordination Team,

used this time to also rehearse the full choreography of the SIF agenda in order to ensure a smooth progression during the main event.



SIF YAG members Molly (Ireland) and George (Malta) chairing a panel discussion with MEP Catharina Rinzema and June Lowery-Kingston from the European Commission

As a result of these preparations, the members of the SIF YAG not only co-hosted various sessions with the BIK Coordination Team at the SIF and moderated the deep dive table discussions, but also chaired a panel where they interviewed Catharina Rinzema (MEP - The Netherlands and Vice-Chair of the Intergroup on Children’s Rights) and June Lowery-Kingston (Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism & Safer Internet, DG CONNECT, European Commission). Moreover, a member of the SIF YAG has also participated as a panellist in the “*Future-proofing the BIK+ strategy*” session chaired by June Lowery-Kingston. Furthermore, the participation of two young influencers who took to the stage as keynote speakers during the event was arranged thanks to the recommendations and the preparatory work of the SIF YAG members.



Keynote speakers and influencers Lijana Risen and Jacob Donegan were interviewed by SIF YAG member Dimitris (Cyprus)

Read the main body of this report to discover more about the Forum.

Read more about the SIF Youth Advisory Group and youth participation activities more generally at www.bikyouth.eu.



Annex 2: Preparatory work of the BIK Youth Panel 2022

In the framework of the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) project, each year, a BIK Youth Panel is organised prior to and during the Safer Internet Forum (SIF), encouraging a group of youth panellists to voice not just their personal opinions and challenges regarding safer/better internet issues, but also those of their peers whom they are representing at a European level. The BIK Youth Panellists are typically involved in other activities too at both national and European level, with many of them going on to become BIK Youth Ambassadors, representing the BIK agenda at high-level events such as the annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the 2022 Digital Assembly organised under the French Presidency of the Council of the EU in June, or events organised by industry partners such as a co-design workshop organised by Microsoft in March 2022.

As the restrictions due to the recent pandemic on travel and larger gatherings are lifting across Europe, the BIK Youth Panel and SIF 2022 were organised, once again, in a face-to-face setting. However, some good practices from the online editions of the previous years continued. These included the extended period of online preparatory meetings (seven weekly meetings over a two-month period as opposed to approximately four meetings during the pre-pandemic editions) as well as the use of a suite of secure open-source online meeting and collaboration tools such as the BigBlueButton platform for these preparatory meetings.



The BIK Youth Panel 2022 online preparatory meetings were themed; this one was on favourite mugs

Approximately two months prior to the Safer Internet Forum, 27 young people from 18 countries joined a total of seven preparatory online meetings, where they identified the topics they would like to focus on and the groups they would be working in.

Throughout these meetings, BIK Youth Panellists started to work out the details of their live performance of a musical composition, as well as the topics to cover in table discussions during the deep dive sessions. As the theme of this year's SIF was *A Digital Decade for children and youth: BIK+ to protect, empower and respect!*, the BIK Youth Panel focused their

work on the three pillars of the newly launched [European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids \(BIK+\)](#). To this end, they started their preparatory activities by reviewing and discussing the [child-friendly version](#) of the new strategy. On this basis, and with guidance from privacy expert Chris Pinchen and Austrian Safer Internet Centre Youth Coordinator Barbara Buchegger, panellists scripted their song and live performance revolving around the slogan of “*With or without you*”. This aimed to give the message that young people are determined to work towards a better future, and safer environments on the internet and on social media platforms, with or without the support of adults and other relevant stakeholders (such as the industry and the policymakers).

To make the preparatory online meetings a more fun experience for the youth panellists, and to establish a more relaxed work environment for them, the ‘theme nights’ approach, which had been successfully adopted in previous years, was continued. During these nights, everybody dressed or presented skills based on a pre-selected theme. These ranged from show your favourite mugs to mafia and superhero themes, as seen in the image above.

Following the conclusion of the online preparatory meetings, two days of face-to-face BIK Youth Panel activities took place in Brussels, Belgium, on 25-26 October 2022; the days immediately preceding SIF. Panellists used most of this time to finalise and rehearse their live performance and the song. With the guidance of facilitators Barbara Buchegger and Chris Pinchen, the BIK Youth Panel was divided into various subgroups (such as the music group and the catwalk models group), which had been determined during the online preparatory meetings. These groups developed their performances and regularly came together to ensure all components would fit well together and contribute to the general flow of the Forum.



Music group practising the song "With or without you"



Catwalk group preparing their costumes and banners

Read the main body of this report to discover more about the Forum.

Read more about the BIK Youth Panel 2022 and youth participation activities more generally at www.bikyouth.eu.

Annex 3: Deep dive discussion points – Addressing cyberbullying (awareness and helpline counselling)

Priorities

During the deep dive discussions, the following priorities were identified:

- More work is needed with adults to both raise their awareness and to change their outlook on cyberbullying and behaviour.
- Helping people is more important than resources and awareness. Cyberbullying should be constantly discussed, and we need to examine the roots of cyberbullying.
- The system worked 10 years ago and is not working any more.
- Awareness is not enough; it must lead to action.
- Consider different kinds of bullying.
- Focus on bullies and perpetrators and bystanders.
- Review current anti-bullying programmes.
- Ensure anonymity.
- Provide support for bullies.
- Create a knowledge bank of data on cyberbullying reports to highlight trends and gaps.

Key actions

During the deep dive discussions, the following key actions were identified:

- Specific research needs to be conducted into why cyberbullying is still so prevalent and what effective prevention looks like.
- We need to consider – and better understand – the nuances of cyberbullying in education (for example, bullying versus banter).
- Awareness raising is needed on recognising the warning signs of cyberbullying.
- More practical strategies are needed for reaching parents, and especially those that are hard to reach.
- Children and young people need to be part of decision-making processes in schools, in legislation and in government.
- We should create a knowledge bank of effective education, and set up clusters to share best practice.
- More focus needs to be placed on prevention. Many Safer Internet Centres are responding when children are already in crisis.
- Students should teach parents and teachers.
- Staff in schools should lead by example, and be welcoming to pupils.
- There needs to be proper dissemination of relevant resources.
- Victims should be involved in the creation of campaigns.
- We need to listen to children, and give them responsibility.
- We need to focus more on bystanders; bystanders are responsible and should take action.
- We need to consider both prevention and reaction strategies.
- We need more effective mental health services in schools.

- Social media could utilise language sensitive tools to cut off interactions and help to prevent bullying.
- Pop-up information campaigns for cyber victims on helplines and support would be useful.
- A campaign could be developed by/with young people on empathy and resources to support both victims and bullies.

How to monitor the impact

During the deep dive discussions, the following suggestions were made for monitoring impact:

- Constant monitoring of cases.
- Data, periodic survey at both school and national level.
- We need to consider that it takes time to see impact of actions.
- Success would be demonstrated through a reduction in the number of cases.

BIK+

Annex 4: Deep dive discussion points – Child and young consumers

Priorities

During the deep dive discussions, the following priorities were identified:

- Consumer/contract issues are a priority.
- It is vital to involve parents and caregivers in consumer concerns.
- Following the 4Cs risk model (content, contact, conduct, contract), we need to take the concerns to industry/platforms so they can be made to play their part.
- A focus needs to be placed on industry business models and design; there needs to be transparency in how platforms meet expectations.
- Training teachers is a priority.
- Stop payment in games for children (such as Minecraft), and stop platforms from keeping the card details after a single use. This will require regulation.
- Pay attention to games (as well as social media).
- A key risk is the lack of awareness that influencing is selling (which can be deceptive or harmful).
- Free is not always free!
- Children under 13 often lie about their age when setting up accounts, and conversely parents not realising that setting up a specific child account is safer than letting them use their account.
- Children's spending power is not the same as adults (reference Austrian research on junkfluencers).
- The Data Act should make better research possible.
- Media typically advertises a 'dream', not so much the product.
- The digital thinking skills of children must be improved, platforms are not (yet) taking enough responsibility towards advertisers and young consumers.
- Safety needs to come first, but online does provide opportunities and resources which would be difficult to otherwise access.
- Data privacy: we need to restrict excessive data processing and enforce the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Once young people turn 18, all protections are lost.
- Sensitive data: there are some inferior websites where you don't consent to data sharing. Additionally, many users suffer from 'consent fatigue' and are not really aware what they are consenting to.
- Young people are often unaware of monetisation practices when they play online games; parents often don't know about this either.
- There is a convergence of gaming and gambling, which can prevent a risk of addiction. Loot boxes can be especially concerning, effectively encouraging users to gamble.
- Dark patterns prevent another concern: these are features inherent in the game design to keep you hooked, or spend more money or time.
- With the Metaverse/Otherverses on the horizon, these will likely present more challenges.
- We need to keep up with developments regarding new and popular apps, and especially how they might become commercialised.

- Differentiate between short-term risks aimed at purchases and long-term risks aimed at monetising data, profiling.
- Persuasive design that treats attention as a commodity - there is a real shift: consumer risks are increasingly omnipresent on platforms where children are present as well.

Key actions

During the deep dive discussions, the following key actions were identified:

- Schools need to provide education about personal data and consent.
- Schools have a role, but everybody should be educated (including parents and caregivers).
- There needs to be enforcement of law, for example through the Digital Services Act (DSA).
- We need to utilise technology such as AI (artificial intelligence) to report and block those who harass others online.
- Parents need to educate children about online consumption.
- There should be a code of conduct for online influencers.
- There should be codes of conduct for advertising in games.
- Parents need to be involved in the development of parental control tools, as sometimes these are too rigid or don't work effectively for the needs of a family.
- Children and young people know what is not fair and they are ready to learn.
- Safer Internet Centres should take more of a role in this area.
- All teachers should receive online training on risk and online consumer issues.
- We should consider involving influencers to reach children and young people with key messages (for example, to promote the message that nothing is free).
- It is time to stop loot boxes being legal.
- We should address in-app advertising by regulation (this may be managed better on TV).
- Include consumer issues in schools' digital literacy education and provide more media literacy in schools, including data literacy.
- Engage youth groups and share resources to enable them to work with children and young people. There can't just be awareness raising if children have no meaningful choices with regard to their data.
- Use a child-friendly dictionary in relevant policies.
- Stop digital products from taking too much data.
- Don't rely on self-regulation.
- There should be child-friendly terms and conditions (T&Cs), including via videos. The EC should mandate this.
- Address children's licencing rights to their own content on social media. Follow good practice in this regard (for example, Lego Doom and Gloom).
- If rights apply online as offline, where is the consumer complaint body? Data Protection authorities should also accept complaints from children and young people.
- Legal framework; there are lots of frameworks underway and proposals have to be made. The adoption process is slow, but we are getting there.
- We need to expand the role of Safer Internet Centres: raising awareness is key, but they should be a more active discussion partner as they can give the national perspective.
- Have effective data minimisation procedures in place in social media and gaming companies.

- Is there a need for more legislation, or more effective enforcement of existing consumer law?
- Data shared before the age of 18 should be treated with specific protection even after the subject has reached the age of majority because it was shared as a minor.
- There is an obligation on the industry side to regularly review consent given as a minor (for example, every year).
- Platforms need to take greater responsibility for raising awareness of how data is collected, used and shared.
- Children need to learn that that data is a currency.
- Teachers need to be educated about consumer risks.
- More cooperation is needed between different regulators (for instance, regarding influencer marketing).
- Youth also want more obligations regarding consumer risks for companies – for example, technical and legal obligations should be translated into information and tools that is useful for civil society, teachers and parents.

How to monitor the impact

During the deep dive discussions, the following suggestions were made for monitoring impact:

- Each organisation should review their progress annually against their plans, and evaluate growth.
- We need to map what organisations are doing in each country (for example, like the BIK Policy Map) to compare and learn from others.
- We need to measure progress against the BIK+ strategy.
- Survey children and parents annually for views on what is working and whether things are improving. Surveys should be conducted annually to generate trends.
- Eurobarometer is useful for tracking the views of children and young people.
- Enable consumer complaints and measure the input. The EC should take action against companies that don't comply/improve.
- Keep talking about it; don't consider it a done deal. Frameworks can often be quite rigid but should be improved if required.
- An entire generation will grow up while this regulation takes shape. Innovation will not stop, so flexibility is needed.
- Monitor company practices; allow companies to report in their own ways.
- Ask children about tech companies' commercial practices and see whether they understand. If not, then we will know that there is still a problem. Involving children in the monitoring process is key.
- Monitoring need to be conducted by regulatory authorities who, in turn, need to cooperate to remedy fragmented rules.

Annex 5: Deep dive discussion points – Effective age assurance/verification methods

Priorities

During the deep dive discussions, the following priorities were identified:

- Educate people about harms so that they can choose not to go to dangerous places online.
- Foster societal acceptance of age verification, just as we did for seatbelts in vehicles.
- Make it easier to verify your age online (for example, via www.euCONSENT.eu) and allow users to re-use age verification on many websites.
- Educate companies and get them to offer more choice about functionality.
- Promote transparency and accountability for age verification providers.
- Promote crime prevention awareness, especially against cyberbullying.
- Protect privacy; euCONSENT has shown this is possible, but how do we ensure all companies do this?
- Apply age checks in platform app stores.
- Target awareness raising at parents who give parental consent to children way too young – educate them on age verification systems. Education could/should take place in their workplaces.
- Legislation should make it a responsibility of all platforms to empower and educate parents.
- Age verification must be trusted and trustworthy.
- Age verification doesn't always work – for example, age verification with credit cards is unreliable.
- What about solutions for non-Member States? These also need to be considered.
- Third-party, scalable solutions for companies are needed; an open-source solution would be good (also in terms of privacy considerations).
- Can the system be combined with "neutral" parental control tools?
- Robust industry measures should be put in place similar to offline for 18+ content and services.
- A holistic approach is needed between industry (to make a change) and government (to ensure children's rights).
- Empower parents and provide them with education to support young people.
- Privacy is a consideration in age verification methods; it needs to be more robust.
- Use peer-to-peer methods more to promote communication and education.
- There are new systems for age verification. We need to push for less judgment and educate parents more; we need to encourage traditional education and societal responsibility.
- We need to consider and distinguish between age groups; a 13-year-old does not need the same solution as a 17-year-old.
- Safer Internet Centres, hotlines, helplines, and national awareness centres should all lobby for national curriculum education and recognition.

Key actions

During the deep dive discussions, the following key actions were identified:

- Stop algorithms promoting harmful content to children and young people (and adults).
- Make child-friendly platforms more accessible and better advertised.
- Guarantee that kid spaces are safe places.
- Ensure more pages and apps are properly age-rated (a prerequisite for age verification to work effectively).
- Run public awareness campaigns to promote age verification; explain it and reassure people on privacy.
- Government needs to help with implementation and interoperability... but don't leave it all to governments as some may not always promote children's rights.
- Regulate age verification providers as we do banks and others who handle private data (such as the healthcare sector).
- Remember older people may be harmed online too and that, equally, children and young people are also victims of online scams.
- Provide education and training for parents and teachers.
- Age verification processed should provide a child-appropriate experience.
- Safety by design is needed alongside easy-to-use platforms.
- Rethink education in school communities; libraries could be key to providing community education.
- Explain the need for age verification in ways that the various stakeholder groups will understand.
- Companies/industries need to consult with families when designing their solutions.
- Empathetic education is needed.
- Educational discretion needs to be thought about.
- Based on an example shared from Poland, consider new solutions at network level that are being implemented in law; network providers are obliged to offer it.
- In another shared example, in Malta, you choose the information you want to put/upload/must place your id card. This gives citizens more control over their personal information.
- Action needs to consider privacy also, so there is a balance.
- There is legislation today through the DSA. There is also the AVMSD (Audio-visual Media Services Directive) that covers video sharing platforms. As a publisher, you need to decide what you publish, and users need to decide what is appropriate.
- We need to have systems that are robust; for example, verification of data such as social security details to ensure a match.
- Currently, not all countries have social security numbers for children. Could there be a clearing house linked to government? Does that raise privacy issues about what government can access and track? There are concerns about sharing data such as a passport number.
- Technology has to be designed from the outset with children and young people in mind so that the device can be set up according to your and only accesses age-appropriate content.
- There is a responsibility on the organisation/person/industry providing the service to put age assurance and verification in place. The correct tools to manage this need to be developed and provided, and industry need to be responsible for the use of those tools.

How to monitor the impact

During the deep dive discussions, the following suggestions were made for monitoring impact:

- Get statistics from the campaigns.
- Train the police and monitor reports, prosecutions and fines (including fines on companies).
- Conduct regular research by polling children and young people on what harmful things they've seen online.
- Conduct user feedback surveys and carry out impact analysis.
- Safer Internet Centres could act as a focal point for getting feedback from children and parents/carers.
- No longer seeing any "below 18" tick boxes on online platforms would be an indicator of success.
- Make age verification better; it is too easy to 'cheat' as it is.
- Work towards a joint solution instead of every platform doing their own thing.
- Young people trust their devices more than apps.
- Research is needed to monitor progress effectively.
- Experience of pornography and children watching it at younger ages (9-10). How can age-verification be implemented effectively, especially on smartphones?
- Implementation of tech solutions.
- Research has informed the legislation in Poland; and other countries might follow suit. Impact analysis is important.
- Changes are based on a risk-based approach.
- The public need to respond to industry, and vocalise their expectations for safety and security.
- We need to consider the role of a regulator in monitoring impact.
- A success metric would be if the volume of inappropriate material accessed by young people is significantly reduced.
- Better reporting leads to improved industry response rates and outcomes.

Annex 6: Deep dive discussion points – Non-consensual sharing of intimate content (revenge porn)

Priorities

During the deep dive discussions, the following priorities were identified:

- Training needs to be provided for the police and the judicial system.
- Change the mindset into one that the subject of the image should not be victimised, but that the person sharing the image has responsibility.
- Provide the correct information on how to reach out for help.
- Make provisions for quicker location and removal of content.
- Raise awareness that laws are different in different countries.
- Victims (and especially women, boys and minors) are often not comfortable discussing these issues with their parents/carers/educators, they prefer to report instead.
- Sextortion has up and downs; don't shame the victim; fight the stigma.
- Stop blaming the victims.
- Protect the victims.
- There should be consequences for intimate data leaks.
- Everybody needs to be taught about the consequences of our actions.
- Sexting is part of young peoples' reality.
- Teach children and young people about consent. We need to explain consent and privacy to young people. Explain that sending a picture without consent is harassment, not flirting.
- Young people can be blackmailed; we need to provide support for the victims.
- Young people need to be involved in decision-making on this matter; they need to learn about responsibility of sending and receiving pictures.
- Talk about the fact that things online can be taken down. Too many do not know how to get help, or consider it to be too embarrassing.
- Some children do not know how to say no; we need to empower children.
- Education is very important, but it needs to be taught earlier.
- Education is a priority at every level, delivered in age-appropriate ways. Children are using devices from ever younger ages, so the awareness raising on sharing data and images also needs to start earlier.
- Education also needs to take place in settings other than the classroom, and there needs to be microlevel discussions. This is especially important because the impact on victims can last a lifetime.
- Because of developments in facial recognition technologies, sharing of images could become even riskier and could have more negative consequences.

Key actions

During the deep dive discussions, the following key actions were identified:

- There needs to be improved understanding from the police/justice system about the sensitivity of cases.

- There needs to be improved awareness raising about the topic.
- The topic needs to be addressed with the people who are responsible for sharing the images.
- The judicial system is sometimes too slow to address the phenomenon.
- The non-consensual element should be the key in awareness-raising campaign.
- Online and offline sexual harassment is currently being dealt with differently.
- There needs to be more sexual education at schools (although it is recognised that this might be taboo in some countries).
- There need to be campaigns about smart sexing (for example, for those aged 12 and over).
- Educate people about the risks of non-consensual sharing of intimate content.
- There need to be improved tools to report, track the pictures, and take the images down.
- Laws and the legal framework need to be updated.
- Improved age verification mechanisms are needed.
- There needs to be assistance for victims, but also assistance or specific programmes for perpetrators.
- There needs to be increased funding of the important work which hotlines and helplines are doing.
- Teach the grown-ups (parents, teachers, etc.) that sexting is now a normal part of young people's lives.
- Social media platforms need to be more reactive to reports of revenge porn.
- We need to stop the gender norm that the girl is a "slut" and the boy is a "champ" for sharing pictures.
- Revenge porn needs to be stigmatised as wrong for the person who betrays the trust; the victim should not be stigmatised.
- Social media needs to implement an "Are you sure?" alarm when sending pictures.
- The response needs to be faster when incidents happen.
- Algorithms should be developed for good.
- Social media platforms need to stop doing the bare minimum when it comes to non-consensual sharing of images.
- Anonymous sites should be available for young people to get help.
- Sex education needs to be delivered in earlier schools, along with discussion about both online and offline relationships
- It needs to be easier to make a report.
- We need to better understand the mindset of youth; then we can offer more knowledge.
- We need to educate young people also on a micro level, for example, having peer-to-peer discussions (not just "It's not ok to send nudes" but to discuss possible consequences, possible motivations, and also how to "sext safely" (for example, ensuring faces or identifying features are not shown in images, and so on).
- We also need to educate parents and teachers so that they understand the issues and can support children and young people in an appropriate way (that is, not just "close the computer" as a solution).
- We need to better understand the legal framework(s) regarding this issue.
- There need to be clear guidelines on what you should do if you receive such an image.

How to monitor the impact

During the deep dive discussions, the following suggestions were made for monitoring impact:

- Conduct monitoring and evaluation of the work of helplines.
- Evaluate the awareness work done by Safer Internet Centres.
- Facilitate joint working on this issue across industry, academia, governments, and so on.
- Carry out monitoring of the sex education curriculum in schools.
- Set a benchmark so that there is a baseline to work from.
- Ensure that this is a compulsory part of the school curriculum in all countries.
- Include in compulsory initial teacher training.
- Success would mean that more cases should be reported initially, but ultimately work in this area should lead to a drop in cases.

BIK+

Annex 7: Deep dive discussion points – Monitoring the impact of the digital transformation on well-being

Priorities

During the deep dive discussions, the following priorities were identified:

- While the internet can enable creativity, interests, and discussions, we don't know what young people will come across.
- Reporting issues can be challenging because of lack of context.
- Young people can develop bad habits online, which could in turn lead to addiction – for example, bad patterns of behaviour, incessant checking, and so on.
- We need to establish better reporting flows.
- Young people need guidance on how to use digital technologies effectively.
- There needs to be more transparency of the potential impact of children and users on the products and platforms (for example, a consumer protection approach).
- Research needs to be conducted on the impacts of specific platforms on child well-being.
- We could consider a well-being rating of products based on well-being, based on a score of 1 to 10.
- Companies are typically driven by commercial interests; voluntary measures will only go so far.
- More autonomy is needed to control content being served to users (for example, to minimise infinite scrolling).
- Young people discuss limiting screen time as being equal to well-being; well-being involves so much more.
- Being physically removed from your device is seen as a positive for well-being. However, it is difficult to understand the impact of social media because there is no control group (practically all young people are on social media).
- There is an issue with potential dissociation from the world. This already happens on social media platforms to an extent; the metaverse poses an even greater threat.
- 'Norms' and behaviours can fuel a negative impact on well-being (for example, only posting positively biased content about our lives).
- There are many examples of research conducted on hormonal effects (France), on being online constantly (Belgium), and on how the brain works, as well as on the positive effects of tech. The priority is how to combine that all into an overview. Well-being is such a huge topic with so many aspects.
- There are lots of "cons" to social media. Things happen both online and offline, but online amplifies the negative effects.
- Some countries have strategies and services to support well-being online. Safer Internet Centres and helplines are good examples in this regard.
- We need to boost the critical thinking skills of children and young people.
- We need to address singularities and less-developed educational areas.
- We need reliable and strong data.

Key actions

During the deep dive discussions, the following key actions were identified:

- Industry should spend 5-10 per cent of their budgets on measuring the impact of the other 90-95 per cent spent.
- More research is needed.
- We need to reshape what the internet is to a place where positive learning exists.
- We need to find a balance.
- Academics should provide a basis for education (especially in weak areas, such as sex education), but other professionals working with people can also be a source of useful information (social workers, educators, psychologists, counsellors, and so on).
- We need to work with social media platforms and influencers to encourage them to share information in a transparent way.
- There needs to be an obligation for industry to publish data from reporting (for example, on data uses, use of devices) and time spent online warnings should be set by default.
- More frequent research from EU Kids Online is needed. Data from 2018 is already outdated, especially with the pandemic.
- Research needs to be shared in more child-friendly ways.

How to monitor the impact

During the deep dive discussions, the following suggestions were made for monitoring impact:

- We need to start at the root and conduct monitoring in schools.
- The European Data Act should show the path to follow in the coming years, while also involving all actors.
- We need an obligatory app to measure screen time.
- There needs to be regular pan-European analysis of the situation (for example, following the Insafe model of communities of practice, better sharing of good practices, collection of data on what works, knowledge sharing on effective solutions).
- National-level research is needed to monitor development. This should be regularly repeated to allow for comparison across time.
- There needs to be better monitoring of reporting on social media.
- Quantitative research is needed to know the scale of the issues; qualitative research is needed to know the story and the context.

Annex 8: Deep dive discussion points – Children in vulnerable situations (digital divide, migrant backgrounds, refugees...)

Priorities

During the deep dive discussions, the following priorities were identified:

- Many parents are also very vulnerable (for example, to fake news).
- Teaching parents in vulnerable situation can be very difficult. Additionally, sometimes they also don't have access to technology, making it difficult to deliver training on online safety and similar.
- Other groups might include children with behavioural problems. These are usually seen as 'bad kids' but this is often linked to the family situation; we need to remove the stigma and provide adequate support.
- Thinking specifically about LGBTQIA+ youth, we need to provide them with opportunities to find spaces to connect and share with others. They particularly need access to safe spaces (especially, for example, if their parents are not supportive).
- We need to find ways to monitor the impact of influencers, and equally how children find role models online. Role models could be an important way of reaching out to vulnerable youth and supporting them with digital skills (which may lead to digital jobs). We need to ascertain if such reach is actually having any impact.
- We need to find ways to use technology to connect with culture, especially for those children and young people that have been separated from their families.
- Children with disabilities need to have access and new opportunities and tech to reach them better.
- Online risks are largely the same for all children, but those in vulnerable situations are perhaps more exposed to potential harms (for example, receiving unwanted content, cyberbullying, and so on).
- We need to also consider other vulnerable groups, such as children that are staying in residential institution without the support of parents or direct caregivers.
- Education is vitally important, but this can be difficult in schools where multiple languages are spoken. It can also prove challenging to find time to focus also on the internet and related issues.
- Teachers are not trained enough on key topics. In Slovakia, for example, many teachers do not have access to technology; this is an important point to address.
- Vulnerability can be seen as a trigger for cyberbullying. Vulnerable groups are very sensitive to cyberbullying (the digital divide is prevalent here) and they can be more affected by problematic content.
- There is a high risk of radicalisation of opinions and attitudes. It is especially risky if children and young people are not aware of the potential consequences of their behaviour on the internet.
- Lack of access to modern technologies is very problematic. There is a digital divide between rural and urban areas.
- Moving from one country to another one can place children and young people in a vulnerable situation as they lose their peers/contacts/secure environment.

- Teachers are not educated enough about how to use technology.
- You can find a space with people in similar situation to share your experiences with.
- We need to talk about how to live together in society, and conversations need to be positive. Online platforms can help.
- Problems are mostly the same online as they are offline.
- Risks and opportunities can be very fluid.
- We should consider providing support session with a psychologist for migrant and refugee children, to also cover the challenges they might encounter online.
- There needs to be better collaboration with experts that work with vulnerable children. Children with disabilities need to be able to access digital tools and services suited to their specific needs.
- Education and support needs to be provided for social workers to allow them to support children with mental disabilities online.
- Vulnerable children should have a trustworthy person to talk to if they do encounter issues online (such as cyberbullying).
- Peer-to-peer support programmes should be developed – for example, young people explaining online issues to young people and accompanying them when they go online.
- Different styles of education need to be adapted to different vulnerable groups. For example, a one-to-one approach may be useful to allow children to open up and feel that they can talk to someone.

Key actions

During the deep dive discussions, the following key actions were identified:

- Often we focus a lot on parents, but children in vulnerable groups do not always have this type of support network.
- Children themselves needs to be empowered, for example, to report bad content etc. with information shared via videos and channels that youth use. They should also be able to get support via Safer Internet Centres, teachers, and so on if they do not feel comfortable reporting themselves.
- Children are also a multiplier and can talk to their peers about online safety issues and responses.
- Support needs to also be provided offline as well as online.
- Consideration needs to be given on how to reach out to vulnerable parents and how to explain different concepts and challenges to them. Here, the role of the Safer Internet Centre is extremely important in providing support in local languages. In Romania, for example, classes are delivered to migrants in different languages to also support teachers.
- In Portugal, it's policy to give all students and teachers a computer along with internet access to increase their opportunities. In parallel, however, it's also important to educate students about using the internet, and provide support to parents too.
- We need to provide a focus on the community and schools, particularly for those children and young people who are not living with parents
- More training is needed for teachers, along with a curriculum that covers digital skills, risks and opportunities.

- Industry and other stakeholders should be encouraged to provide training and awareness. This could also provide young people with a different viewpoint.
- Involve industry to find ways to reach more vulnerable youth, such as through gaming.
- Identify the real situation and needs of vulnerable groups through targeted research.
- Preparation of educational and preventive content should be based on research findings.
- Awareness and educational materials must be technically accessible to the given target group (for example, to those with visual impairments).
- Good practices should be shared between countries, to learn from each other's experiences.
- How can we identify which children and young people are in vulnerable positions? How do we identify the many ways of being vulnerable?
- Work throughout society to identify different groups; a whole community approach should be taken, encompassing policy, research, education, community, and family.
- More funding is needed.
- Working devices and free internet access should be available to "everyone"
- Peer group training and peer mediators could be a useful approach, especially among vulnerable groups (anecdotal feedback shows that some young people want to "help" and "protect" their parents so that they don't have to worry about the problems they are facing).
- Better collection and use of helpline data is needed.
- Migrant and refugee children may face more challenges online than other children.
- It's important to raise awareness on issues such as trafficking, and some of the which vulnerable users, especially, can be confronted with when online.
- We need to utilise digital devices to raise awareness of the experiences of migrant children via VR (an example being a journey of a migrant child that was reproduced through virtual reality).
- Technology can be seen as a space for inclusion. Social media can help children to connect with a community (for example, children with autism could find a community online).

How to monitor the impact

During the deep dive discussions, the following suggestions were made for monitoring impact:

- Create an expert group and share best practices, find a way to monitor and make/measure impact.
- Evaluate national educational programmes.
- Test children's digital and media literacy nationally.
- Safer Internet Centres could conduct Internal evaluation of their activities).
- Document and visualise the differences between countries (numbers, school rates, and so on). Keep talking about the issues, and compare data sets from various periods and groups.
- Consider using the annual Safer Internet Forum as part of the monitoring and reporting process.
- Consider convening a centralised "media literacy panel" which follows children's progress in schools.
- Consider working with representative groups of vulnerable children through Safer Internet Centres and helplines to report data in a more anonymous way.

Annex 9: Deep dive discussion points – Peer-to-peer and child-to-adult training and support

Priorities

During the deep dive discussions, the following priorities were identified:

- There has been a change in approach, and schools are using new methodologies. We need to understand how these were accepted.
- Programmes need to be established.
- Helplines and hotlines need to provide options for children seeking help to get advice from adults or from peers.
- We need to recognise that age is not the most important thing in the learning process.
- We need to appoint and nurture Youth Ambassadors.
- Regulation might be needed to ensure that all stakeholders include young people.
- Digital skills classes or during the teaching of topics including digital skills, child to adult learning should be explored.
- Youth panels can be used to share information with their peers.
- Organise events like the like Digital Youth Forum in Poland, or peer-to-peer programmes like Mediascouts in Germany.
- Regularly survey children to inform adults about current risks and trends.
- An example was shared of a project in Germany where children talked with parents and teachers on digital challenges; in this scenario, the kids were the experts.
- Create Safer Internet Day (SID) initiatives around peer-to-peer learning and child-to-adult learning
- It's important not to focus on one-off/short-term actions but instead to work long-term programmes and stable models of cooperation.
- An example was shared, from Germany, of an NGO conducting an annual conference for teenagers and young adults.
- The Safer Internet Forum could provide a great opportunity to nurture a child-to-adult learning environment.
- Reach out to young teachers in schools.
- It is very important to also educate parents.
- Any training or support should be a two-way interaction.
- Adults and youngsters should develop models or programmes together, reaching an agreement on rules and behaviours.
- Use the power of NGOs to change the mindset of pedagogues; let young people be involved in peer-to-peer work.
- Care should be taken to avoid engaging with children and young people just because it's the popular or 'correct thing to do'; organisations need to be really interested in young people's thoughts and be committed to giving them due consideration and action.
- Children and young people might be better at delivering key messages to other youngsters than adults.
- Teachers need to be supportive and place their trust in pupils to deliver.

- Young children are more open to their peers; they are not 'teaching' but more so talking to their peers.
- Care should be taken, however, to ensure that young people are not held (or feel) responsible for the safety of other youngsters.

Key actions

During the deep dive discussions, the following key actions were identified:

- It's important to involve a variety of different groups of children, adults, parents, industry, and policy makers, with everyone working on the same team.
- Adults should listen to what children have to say and acknowledge that adults can actually learn from children.
- Communication and the sharing of good practices should be promoted between schools on both a national and European level, with a focus on mindset, innovation and skills.
- Safer Internet Centres have an important role to play since they can provide expertise and training to young people, as well as support for peer-to-peer and child-to-adult education and training.
- Equip young people with public speaking skills to really empower them. Equally, recognise their work and achievements in this area with certificates and diplomas.
- Young people should support adults in providing awareness to children since adults don't share the experiences young people face.
- Peer-to-peer education should be part of a larger programme with the support of adults; young people should be trained and be available in schools to answer any questions students may have, taking a mentoring role. Consideration should also be given to the environment in which the training will take place; children need to feel happy and relaxed.
- Young people typically find it easier to seek help from someone who better understands their concerns.
- Experts should be readily available to provide support to young people.
- Young people should be rewarded for their work.
- Cyber-bullying is an area where peer-to-peer training is crucial; as is a whole-school approach.
- Young people tend to know more about topics like misinformation and data misuse than adults.
- Training programmes need a champion at school level to keep them going.
- A train-the-trainer model is required to sustain the approach to training.
- It's important to understand young people's issues and concerns.
- Parental control settings and how to set up accounts could be an area of priority for child-to-adult education involving parents.
- There could be a significant role for families here. Siblings often have greater respect for each other (siblings) than for adults on some topics (gaming, for example).
- Adults should be open to learn knowledge from kids; it's not a case of adults losing authority, but more so engaging in valuable conversation with youngsters.
- Discovering the internet and protecting from threats are different scenarios and will require different approaches.

- Youth Ambassadors have the power to reach out to their peers; they can educate and give advice on emerging trends and issues.
- Vulnerable groups are a particularly important target audience for peer-to-peer and child-to-adult training and support programmes.
- Child-to-adult learning should not just be conducted in schools; it could also happen in libraries, for example.
- We need to ensure that participation in such training models is not just tokenistic.
- To be able to really engage young people in peer-to-peer learning, we must be able to persuade young people to be active, and they must know that their voices are really important.

How to monitor the impact

During the deep dive discussions, the following suggestions were made for monitoring impact:

- Regular check ins should take place with trainers/teachers/those implementing the training with young people.
- Include peer-to-peer training in teaching methodologies and update methodologies in suitable subjects to allow room for this type of training.
- Evaluate programmes in schools.
- Check the level of participation (for example, there was high participation in such models during the pandemic).
- Ask for impressions and feedback from the participants; how do they feel working about working in this way.
- Provide mechanisms for a real exchange of ideas/gaining feedback.
- Conduct surveys after trainings to assess if the topics were explored both efficiently and sufficiently.

Annex 10: Deep dive discussion points – Co-creating policies, products and services with children and young people

Priorities

During the deep dive discussions, the following priorities were identified:

- It is still challenging to shift the mindset to realise that children’s’ contributions are valuable.
- It is important to involve children from different backgrounds.
- The agenda should be developed together with children and young people. There needs to be communication before involving children, so that their participation is informed.
- Organise training meetings for agencies, companies, and similar on how to develop meaningful child involvement and participation.
- It is very important to include young people of different ages and stages in the co-design process, especially when developing new apps or platforms.
- Avoid “youth washing”/making youth involvement tokenistic for public relations purposes.
- Ensure diversity and representation in participation. Ensure that young people know that opportunities to participate exist, including those from rural areas.
- Ensure youth participation from early on in the process.
- Teach companies how to do participation well, and creating guidelines and good practice examples.
- Co-creation should happen with a child-rights focus.
- Develop understandable rules (terms and conditions).
- Raise awareness and train young people about risks.
- Children want to be heard and listened to, so ensure that there are feedback loops and that their impact can be evidenced.
- Make it a mandatory compliance for all organisations (government, industry, and so on) to involve children and young people in service of policy development.
- Enable diverse children to take part and ensure diverse and inclusive voices (including different languages) are heard.

Key actions

During the deep dive discussions, the following key actions were identified:

- It’s important to start the process and develop indicators of success.
- It’s important to monitor regularly, and also assess the impact in terms of child rights.
- It’s important to listen to the opinions of children of different ages and from different background.
- We need to avoid involvement in tokenistic way – that is that children are invited to participate, but their input is not considered important.
- For young people, it’s important for them to see the impact of their involvement.
- We need to ensure that we meet children in places where they feel free to express themselves; they need positive and informed participation, and feel that their opinions really matter.

- It's important that regulation allows industry to continue to innovate on behalf of young people.
- Ensure education is included either in-app or through additional guidance.
- There is a need to ensure language support is available in most countries.
- We need to ensure that terms and conditions are understandable to children.
- The participation process needs to be made more transparent.
- We need to define what participation means.
- We need to involve young people in the development of supporting resources.
- Guidelines and toolkits on how to do meaningful participation need to be developed; both Safer Internet Centres and organisations would benefit from such resources.
- Companies should take time to talk with young people regularly (in schools, for example).
- Industry needs to be encouraged to take this approach. Could a child participation award be created and given to companies that have implemented youth participation well?
- We need to develop a child-friendly code of conduct.
- We need to illustrate the (economic) benefit for youth participation.
- Diversity and representation is essential; we need to include youth groups that represent various vulnerable groups. We should consider reaching vulnerable populations through social media and peer-to-peer learning in schools.
- Industries and institutions should be encouraged to conduct focus groups. Focus groups should be conducted with children and young people of different ages.
- Organisations need to have youth or advisory panels which are diverse and inclusive, and flexible to allow for a significant turnover of children.
- Could we consider establishing accredited organisations to represent children's voices and/or to certify organisations' practices?
- We need to raise awareness of the importance of child participation (for example, invite children to share opinions as soon as they access a service, provide pop-up notices or conduct surveys).
- In the case of corporates, they need to educate children and young people and allow them to develop the technical expertise to shape informed input.

How to monitor the impact

During the deep dive discussions, the following suggestions were made for monitoring impact:

- Follow the 'Best interests of the child framework'; it is important to craft good policy.
- Young people need a feedback loop with policy makers and tech companies.
- Tech companies should make algorithms less intrusive and harmful by being more transparent in their practices.
- We need to compile data on participation.
- We need to follow the trajectory for an individual participant, and monitor how input from a child or young person can actually bring about change.
- We need to assess whether the result is actually good (for example, is the child friendly version really child friendly?).
- We need to monitor and evaluate both the process of participation and the results.
- There is a need for research to ensure regulation; policies and industry can then ensure that the approach works.

- Create focus groups to assess success and impact.
- Create a platform to monitor progress.
- Ask governments and companies to create youth panels and, after two years, ask for feedback from young people about whether it worked. There should be regular reporting cycle in any case (at least annually).
- Organisations should be obliged to publish the feedback received from young people and explain the changes made as a result of that feedback.
- The implementation of the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the age-appropriate design code will be key.

BIK+