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# Welcome to Safer Internet Forum 2024



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 will take place in a hybrid format in Brussels, Belgium and online on **Thursday, 21 November 2024** with a theme of ***Where's the harm? Protecting children and young people against inappropriate content and bullying online.***

The past 12 months have seen heightened concern globally around the potential dangers and risks to children and young people online, including cyberbullying, which remains the most common reason for contacting Insafe helplines. Campaigns to ban the use of social media and smartphones for younger teens have gained traction, and more legislation and regulations are being enacted.

For example, [an expert panel was convened in France](#) late last year to address rising concerns about excessive screen time and its effects on youth, including mental health and developmental issues, and released a set of recommendations including barring young children from having smartphones and limiting social media use to those 15 and older. [In Italy, new guidelines have been issued banning the use of smartphones and tablets](#) in classrooms in kindergartens, primary schools, and lower secondary schools, extending an existing ban on non-academic use of these devices.

Against this background, Safer Internet Forum 2024 will place a particular focus on pillar one of the BIK+ strategy: safe digital experiences and, more specifically, how to protect children and young people against inappropriate content and bullying online.

The Forum aims to take stock of the new DSA rules and their implementation, discuss the risks of exposure to potentially harmful online content and behaviour, including cyberbullying, and explore the tools and strategies currently available or needed to mitigate these risks.

**The event is being organised in a youth-led manner, with young people playing an active role in the planning, preparation and delivery of the Forum.**

**We take this opportunity to thank the members of the SIF Youth Advisory Group, BIK Youth Panel, and International Youth Panel for their dedication and commitment to helping to create a safer and better internet for their peers, and young people across the globe.**

As is typical of the Safer Internet Forum, participants will have the opportunity to participate in a youth-led workshop and a deep dive session.

- **Onsite participants** should check the front of their badge for session allocations and location.
- **Online participants** will have the opportunity to tune into the youth-led workshop on **cyberbullying and hate online**. A separate deep dive session will take place in the virtual meeting environment for online participants.

**Please browse the full agenda on the following pages.**

As participants in Safer Internet Forum 2024, we hope that you will find it to be both a thought-provoking and inspiring opportunity. Whether joining onsite or online, we encourage you to use the event to:

- keep informed of emerging trends and issues, especially as they relate to the rights of all children and young people to be protected, empowered and respected in the digital environment.
- be aware of the potential harms online, and how to mitigate against these.
- facilitate knowledge, experience and good practice sharing.
- identify opportunities to collaborate with others on new ideas, resources and projects.
- contribute to the implementation of the European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+) and ongoing policy work in this field.

We look forward to working with you today, and in the future, to continue the mission of creating a Better Internet for Kids. Find out more at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu).

A Forum report, presentations, and session recordings (where available) will be made available after the event and progressively published at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/sif](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/sif).

Safer Internet Forum (SIF) 2024 is 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 [Digital Europe Programme \(DIGITAL\)](#).

In case of queries, please contact the Safer Internet Forum Secretariat at [saferinternetforum@betterinternetforkids.eu](mailto:saferinternetforum@betterinternetforkids.eu).

# Agenda

**Thursday, 21 November 2024**

Please note: all times are in Central European Time (CET).

08:00 – 09:00	<p><b>Arrival and registration</b></p> <p><i>Onsite and online registration will both open at 08:00 CET. The Forum will start promptly at 09:00 CET. ALL participants are encouraged to register in good time.</i></p>
09:00 – 09:30	<p><b>Opening and welcome</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Věra Jourova, Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency</li> <li>• June Lowery-Kingston, Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism &amp; Safer Internet, DG CONNECT, European Commission</li> <li>• Dónal and Sanya, SIF Youth Advisory Group members</li> </ul> <p><i>Online participants will follow a live stream of this session within the virtual meeting environment. Closed captioning will be provided for this session.</i></p>
09:30 – 10:20	<p><b>Keynote presentation</b>  <b>Young people's exposure to harmful content and behaviour online</b></p> <p><b>Keynote speaker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor Debbie Ging, Dublin City University</li> </ul> <p><i>Online participants will follow a live stream of this session within the virtual meeting environment. Closed captioning will be provided for this session.</i></p>

10:20 – 11:00	<p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p><b><i>Online harms – finding the balance between protection and empowerment</i></b></p> <p>This panel will start from the various types of age-inappropriate and potentially harmful content and behaviour young people are exposed to online, including cyberbullying, and the negative consequences this may have on their mental health and well-being. Panellists will together discuss the line between protection and empowerment, and the role different stakeholders have to play within this context.</p> <p><b>Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diya and João, SIF Youth Advisory Group members</li> </ul> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evin Incir, Member of the European Parliament (Sweden)</li> <li>• Renate Nikolay, Deputy Director General, DG CONNECT, European Commission</li> <li>• Karen McAuley, Coimisiún na Meán</li> <li>• Justine Atlan, Association e-Enfance/3018</li> <li>• Constantin Gissler, DOT Europe</li> </ul> <p><i>Online participants will follow a live stream of this session within the virtual meeting environment. Closed captioning will be provided for this session.</i></p>
11:00 – 11:15	<p><b>Setting the scene</b></p> <p><b><i>Young people’s perspective on online harm</i></b></p> <p>This intro session will present the rationale of the youth-led workshops and what is on the menu.</p> <p><b>Chair:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vincent, SIF Youth Advisory Group member</li> </ul> <p><i>Online participants will follow a live stream of this session within the virtual meeting environment. Closed captioning will be provided for this session.</i></p>
11:15 – 11:45	<p><b>Coffee break</b></p>
11:45 – 12:30	<p><b>Youth-led workshops</b></p> <p><b><i>Young people’s perspective on online harm</i></b></p> <p>Participants will be pre-assigned to a youth-led workshop, which will run in parallel during this time slot. During these workshops, Youth Panellists will draw upon their own experience to present a number of priorities they see for the protection of minors against online harm. Together with participants, they will discuss the key issues at stake, and how to respond to this.</p> <p><i>Onsite participants should check the front of their badge for workshop allocations and location. Online participants will follow a live stream of the youth-led workshop on cyberbullying and hate online within the virtual meeting environment. Closed captioning will be provided for this session.</i></p>
12:30 – 13:45	<p><b>Lunch break</b></p>

As is typical of the Safer Internet Forum, participants will have the opportunity to participate in deep dive discussions. During these sessions, participants will explore in more depth a more specific range of online risks and harms which children and young people are facing online.

**13:45 – 15:15**

## **Deep dive session**

### ***Young people's harmful experiences online***

Each session will start from an analysis of the current state of play, with input from a mix of researchers, policy makers and other professionals and experts, including youth. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on how the problem is evolving and what solutions to aim for, against the background of emerging technological developments such as generative AI and ongoing changes in the EU regulatory landscape.

#### **ONSITE parallel sessions**

The deep dive sessions will cover the following topics:

#### **1. Young people's exposure to violent and aggressive content online – normalising the extreme?**

Presenters:

- Martin Huigsloot, NICAM, The Netherlands
- Rachel Madden, CNAM, Ireland (video contribution)

#### **2. Cyberbullying: reluctant to report – why it matters...**

Presenters:

- Roberta Mestichella, Italian National Police, Italy
- Manon Gonnin, e-Enfance, France
- João, SIF YAG Member, Portugal
- Sanya, SIF YAG Member, Italy
- Vincent, SIF YAG Member, Croatia

#### **3. Pornographic sexual content (including AI-generated) and its impact on young people (desensitization, objectification, misogyny, etc.)**

Presenters:

- Manon Cassoulet-Fressineau, ARCOM, France
- Carolina Soares, APAV, Portugal
- Gabrielle Gane, Paris Psychology Centre, France (video contribution)

#### **4. Potentially harmful peer sexual conduct online – is it “hot” or should they not?**

Presenters:

- Dr Zoe Hilton, Praesidio Safeguarding, UK
- Maria Thell, ECPAT, Sweden
- Sharone Franco, Yubo, France

#### **5. Disarm the (self-)harm in online peer communities (e.g. suicide, anorexia, humiliation)**

Presenters:

- Andy Burrows, Molly Rose Foundation, UK
- Niels-Christian Bilenberg, Center for Digital Youth Care, Denmark
- Henry Adams, Resolver, UK

#### **ONLINE session**

Online participants will follow a panel discussion via a live stream within the virtual meeting environment. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from three experts and participate in a panel discussion covering key problems and solutions, across the most important forms of potentially harmful content, contact, conduct and contract.

Presenters:

- Laura Higgins, Roblox, UK
- Davinia Marie Muscat, BeSmartOnline, Malta
- Dr Chelly Maes, University of Antwerp, Belgium

	<p><b>6. How do young people experience hateful content online (e.g. misogyny, racism, homophobia) and what impact is it having?</b></p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Katie Freeman-Tayler, Internet Matters, UK</li> <li>• Emil Ludvigsen, Center for Digital Youth Care, Denmark</li> </ul> <p><b>7. Screen time and persuasive design – who’s behind the ban?</b></p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idah Klint, Mediemyndigheten (The Swedish Agency for the Media), Sweden</li> <li>• Irene López Medina, ALMMA (Mobile-Free Adolescence Association of Madrid), Spain</li> <li>• Diya, SIF YAG Member, Finland</li> <li>• Dónal, SIF YAG Member, Ireland</li> <li>• Liise, SIF YAG Member, Estonia</li> </ul> <p><b>Onsite participants</b> should check the front of their badge for session allocations and location.</p>	
<b>15:15 – 15:45</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>	
<b>15:45 – 16:55</b>	<p><b>Closing keynote and panel</b></p> <p><b><i>How to foster children’s and young people’s mental health and well-being online and act against cyberbullying?</i></b></p> <p>In this final session, participants will hear from Professor Jessica Piotrowski about the key actions and tools we need to better safeguard and foster children’s and young people’s mental health and well-being in a digital world. In response, a multiple stakeholder panel will start drawing the <i>Forum</i> to a close, identifying key lessons learned and how to move forward.</p> <p><b>Keynote speaker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. dr. J. Piotrowski, University of Amsterdam</li> </ul> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. dr. J. Piotrowski, University of Amsterdam</li> <li>• Professor Ersilia Menesini, University of Florence</li> <li>• Maria-João Horta, Ministry of Education, Portugal</li> <li>• Nel Broothaerts, Child Focus, Belgium</li> <li>• Liise, SIF Youth Advisory Group member</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manuela Martra, Deputy Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism &amp; Safer Internet, DG CONNECT, European Commission</li> </ul> <p><i>Online participants will follow a live stream of this session within the virtual meeting environment. Closed captioning will be provided for this session.</i></p>	
<b>16:55 – 17:00</b>	<p><b>Closing remarks from the European Commission and official close of Safer Internet Forum 2024</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June Lowery-Kingston, Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism &amp; Safer Internet, DG CONNECT, European Commission</li> </ul> <p><i>Online participants will follow a live stream of this session within the virtual meeting environment. Closed captioning will be provided for this session.</i></p>	
<b>17:00 onwards</b>	<b>Networking reception for onsite participants</b>	



**SAFER INTERNET FORUM 2024**

# **A YOUTH-LED EDITION**



This year's Safer Internet Forum (SIF) has been organised in a youth-led manner, with young people playing an active role in the planning, preparation and delivery of the Forum.



# SIF Youth Advisory Group 2024

The SIF Youth Advisory Group is formed of six young people from various European countries. Over recent months, they have worked collaboratively at preparatory meetings aimed at sharing their respective views on the three main pillars of the BIK+ strategy and shaping the development of the Forum's agenda.

Meet the SIF Youth Advisory Group members here:



## Vincent, Croatia

My name is Vincent, I am 19 years old, and I'm currently a college student studying in Croatia. My field is philosophy and art history, and besides college, I also volunteer at my national Safer Internet Centre. I have participated as a member of the BIK Youth panel in 2023 and 2024, but this is my first year as a SIF Youth Ambassador. I'm highly interested in making the internet not only a safe space for everyone but also a place for truly enriching and educational experiences, both in an academic and personal sense.



## Liise, Estonia

Hello, my name is Liise and I'm from Estonia. I'm currently 17 years old. I'm interested in politics and psychology. My favourite after-school activities are fashion design and singing. I have been a BIK Youth Ambassador for one year now. My mission is to make the internet better for kids, not only in Europe but around the world.



## Diya, Finland

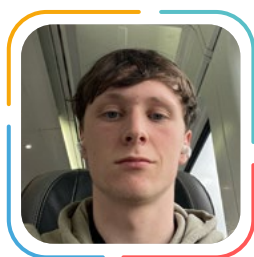
Hi! I'm Diya, I'm 17 years old, and from Finland and India. I was part of the BIK Youth Panel in 2023, and I am also a BIK Youth Ambassador, through which I've had the amazing opportunity to participate in events such as the European Kick-off Week, representing the voice of the youth. I am incredibly excited to be returning this year, and actively contributing to a space that I am very active in: the digital space! We, as youth, can contribute significantly to the safety of our peers, and we can only do that with passionate contributions from policymakers, companies, and industry experts. I hope to continue my efforts as I develop my career further, and I am excited to connect with specialists in their respective fields through this Forum.



## Sanya, Italy

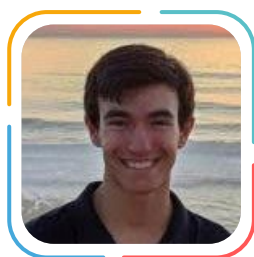
Sanya is 17 years old, comes from Italy, and is currently in her fourth year at classical high school. She is the president of the provincial student council of Matera, representing all students in her province and region, and serves as the regional coordinator of student councils. She is also the national secretary of the Council of Student Council Presidents and has previously been the spokesperson for the "school reform" committee. She is now part of the "active citizenship" committee of the

CNRR of the National Authority for Childhood and Adolescence. She represents Italy in the Youth Council of the European Film Club and has had a strong inclination for activism and youth representation in institutions from a young age, advocating for youth voices and, above all, ensuring their rights, especially in the digital realm. The topic of digital rights has always been a fundamental aspect of her activism; since childhood, she has been involved in the “Generazioni Connesse” project in Italy and its Safer Internet Centre. Last year, she participated as a BIK youth panellist in SIF 2023 and, through the same project, at the Eminent Conference 2023 in Rome with European Schoolnet. Today, she is at SIF as a member of the Youth Advisory Group.



## Dónal, Ireland

Hi, I'm Dónal, an 18-year-old software engineering student. Since 2021, I've been involved with the Irish Webwise Youth Panel and had the pleasure of joining the BIK+ youth panel last year. My mission is to share young people's perspectives in this AI-driven era of tech. In my spare time, I play Gaelic Football and row. I'm thrilled to return to the Safer Internet Forum 2024, representing Ireland on the SIF YAG panel.



## João, Portugal

Hi, I'm João. I was born in Lisbon, and I'm 16 years old. I study at college in Lisbon. I've had a huge interest in music, planes, and cars since I was young, and I have a particular interest in technology, which has shaped much of my journey. From a young age, I've been a member of a digital citizenship and awareness initiative called Digital Leaders in Portugal. There, I've had the opportunity to collaborate with the Ministry of Education, the Directorate-General for Education, and many other entities on numerous projects and activities. I've previously participated in the Safer Internet Forum in Brussels with the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Youth panel, where I engaged with various decision-makers and leaders from the technology industry, alongside participating in youth-led sessions at the Forum. I later became a BIK Youth Ambassador, working with the European Commission, decision-makers and industry experts, to discuss the scope of new digital regulations and how to implement them in the community. More recently, I've been part of the Youth Advisory Team for the AdWiseOnline campaign, which looks at child and youth consumer protection online. I really want to help youngsters be safer online and make sure we, as youngsters, are heard and taken into account!

## BIK Youth Panel 2024

Each year, a Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Youth Panel is organised prior to and during the Safer Internet Forum (SIF). Drawn from national youth panels convened by Safer Internet Centres across Europe, BIK Youth Panellists are encouraged to voice not just their personal opinions and challenges, but also those of their peers whom they are representing at a European level.

Since the beginning of September, through a series of online meetings, BIK Youth Panellists have been actively preparing their contributions to this year's Forum by sharing their respective perspectives on better and safer internet issues with their peers, agreeing on key themes, and preparing awareness materials on these topics.

In the days preceding this year's Forum, a group of 28 BIK Youth Panellists from 21 European countries have come together, face-to-face in Brussels, to finalise their work which they will present throughout the course of the day. Together with the SIF Youth Advisory Group, they will also lead various workshop sessions, to ensure that their voices can inform the perspectives of the various stakeholders participating in the Forum, and influence ongoing work in this field.

## International Youth Panel 2024

This year, for the first time, we welcome young people from across the globe to participate in youth panel activities. Young people from Albania, Armenia, Brazil, Turkey, the UK, and Ukraine will participate in the Forum person, while young people from Australia and Ghana will also join online.

**We take this opportunity to thank the members of the SIF Youth Advisory Group, BIK Youth Panel, and International Youth Panel for their dedication and commitment to helping to create a safer and better internet for their peers, and young people across the globe.**

## Meet the other Forum speakers and contributors



### Henry Adams

**Resolver, United Kingdom**

Henry Adams is Director of Trust and Safety (strategy, partnerships and policy) at Resolver, a Kroll business. He has spent the past decade working across domains to mitigate risk in high-harm settings. Henry is a former Head of Intelligence with a background in counter terrorism, national policing operations, and crisis negotiation. At Resolver, he initially led global intelligence operations with a focus on rapid response services, before overseeing product development of advanced network analysis capabilities. Today, Henry leads Resolver's strategy and engagement with wider industry, as a passionate advocate for the protection of children online and a proponent of the power in taking proactive intelligence-led approaches to online safety.



### Justine Atlan

**Association e-Enfance/3018, France**

Justine Atlan has nearly 20 years of experience in child protection in the digital world. A lawyer in public law (Paris 5 René Descartes- Faculté de MalakoG), she trained in family mediation (ICP-Institut Catholique de Paris) after a career as a journalist in the written press for ten years (Agence Regards, HFM group, Emap group). Since 2010, she has been the general director of the e-Enfance Association for the protection of children on the internet (2005, recognised as being of public utility, approved by the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports) and of the national number 3018 - against harassment and digital violence. As a member of the Insafe/Safer Internet programme network of the European Commission as Director General of 3018, she participates in prefiguring the model of the "trusted flagger" formalised by the Digital Service Act (DSA) in 2023.

As Director of the Association, Justine is a founding member of Collectif EducNum (CNIL), of the GIP cybermalveillance.gouv.fr and France Enfance Protégée (Snated-119), of the Committee of Experts against Harassment (Ministry of National Education), and of the Laboratory for the Protection of Children Online (Elysée-President Macron), and she joined as an expert the Young Audience Committee of French regulator ARCOM and the college of the National Gaming Authority ANJ.

She is a member of the Bureau of the Renaissance Numérique think tank and of The GAP (Good Advertising Project), as well as of the working group "Freedom of expression in the digital age" of the think tank Villa Numeris (with the Samman firm).

Justine works as a French expert on young people's digital uses with national and European institutions, and on advisory committees on the security of digital giants. She is very regularly asked by the media to comment on current events. In December 2020, she was appointed to the French National Order of Merit.



## Niels-Christian Bilenberg

Center for Digital Youth Care, Denmark

Niels-Christian Bilenberg is a specialist consultant with the Center for Digital Youth Care (Denmark), with responsibility for the centre's digital counselling of youths, on the online platforms [cyberhus.dk](https://cyberhus.dk) and [netstof.dk](https://netstof.dk), with more than 17 years of experience. He also works as an external consultant, offering training of staff and ongoing sparring to municipal, governmental and non-governmental organisations on various aspects of online counselling, and vulnerable online communities.



## Nel Broothaerts

Child Focus, Belgium

Nel Broothaerts graduated as Master in Pedagogical Sciences at the University of Ghent. In 2002, she was responsible for the development of an educational programme for young children in Guatemala. After her return to Belgium, she worked within the education system for children with special needs, where she was responsible for the development of pedagogical tools for teachers.

Between 2005 and 2007, Nel worked within the Youth Service as a home counsellor/parenting advisor for families in problematic parenting situations. In May 2007, she joined Child Focus and, as project manager, was responsible for the policy and development of prevention initiatives around e-safety. In September 2013, she became coordinator of the project team. In October 2017, she became Chief Prevention and Development Officer, responsible for all prevention initiatives, through tools, materials, education or training, and new developments in the Foundation. Since October 2022, she has combined this position with the role of Deputy CEO of Child Focus. On 1 September 2024, she became CEO of Child Focus.



## Andy Burrows

Molly Rose Foundation, United Kingdom

Andy Burrows is Chief Executive of the [Molly Rose Foundation](https://mollyrosefoundation.org), a tech accountability and suicide prevention charity founded following the death of 14-year-old Molly Russell in November 2017. At Molly's inquest, a coroner ruled that harmful content on social media played a 'not insignificant' contributory role in her death. Andy has an extensive background in online child safety and tech regulation issues, having previously been Head of Online Safety at the NSPCC where he secured the UK Government's commitment to introduce the Online Safety Act. Before that, he worked across a range of regulated markets and sectors, with a specialism in representing the interests of vulnerable consumers and service users.





## Sharone Franco

Yubo, France

Sharone Franco is Yubo's Head of Legal and Public Policy. After a career in corporate law specialising in the technology sector, Sharone joined Yubo to oversee all legal matters and drive the platform's commitment to building a safer internet for its users through meaningful policy-oriented initiatives. Sharone develops strategic relationships and partnerships with leading organisations and public institutions worldwide on behalf of Yubo.



## Katie Freeman-Tayler

Internet Matters, United Kingdom

Katie Freeman-Tayler is the Head of Research and Policy at Internet Matters, a UK non-profit dedicated to supporting families in navigating the digital world safely and confidently. With over a decade of experience in research and policy roles in the third and public sectors, Katie leads research initiatives that ensure the voices of parents, children and young people drive the organisation's work. Passionate about reducing inequality and fostering safer online environments, Katie regularly collaborates with industry, government and academic partners to influence forward-thinking digital policy.



## Gabrielle Gane

Paris Psychology Centre, France

Gabrielle Gane is a child and adolescent therapist working at Paris Psychology Centre, France, where she provides integrative and holistic therapeutic support for families and children in the English-speaking community in Paris. She also assists the practice's neuropsychologist with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and ASD (autism spectrum disorder) assessments for children and adolescents. She holds a Master's of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology from Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and holds a Graduate Membership of the British Psychological Society. Coming from a background in psychology, Gabrielle is passionate about supporting young individuals struggling with emotional, behavioural, academic, and social-cultural difficulties and creating safer environments for children to thrive.

Gabrielle recently published a research article, "Blurring the lines: The vague boundary between mainstream and deviant internet pornography tags for at-risk viewers" in the Journal of Sexual Aggression alongside researchers Dr Paul Watters, Richard Wortley, and Jeremy Prichard. This study explores the potential risk that pornography may have on the healthy psychosexual development of vulnerable users – specifically adolescents and adults at risk of progressing to more deviant and illegal forms of pornography, such as child sexual exploitation material (CSEM). She virtually co-presented the preliminary findings of this study at the Australian Institute of Criminology Conference in 2022.



## Professor Debbie Ging

**Dublin City University, Ireland**

Debbie Ging is Professor of Digital Media and Gender in the School of Communications at Dublin City University and Director of the DCU Institute for Research on Genders and Sexualities. She teaches and researches on gender, sexuality and digital media, with a focus on digital hate, online anti-feminist men's rights politics, the incel subculture, and radicalisation of boys and men into male supremacist ideologies. Debbie's research also addresses youth experiences of gender-based and sexual abuse online and educational interventions to tackle this issue. She sits on the government-commissioned Online Health Taskforce in Ireland and has acted as expert advisor to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education + Skills, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) of the European Commission, Meta, Scotland Police and the ISPCC, among others. Debbie is Ireland's Corresponding Editor of the journal *Men and Masculinities* and is a member of the editorial boards of *New Media and Society* and *Feminist Media Studies*.



## Constantin Gissler

**DOT Europe, Belgium**

Constantin Gissler is the Director General of DOT Europe, bringing over 15 years of experience in EU affairs, with a strong focus on tech policy. His career began at the global law firm Mayer Brown, followed by his role as a Parliamentary Assistant to a Member of the European Parliament. He then led the EU Office at Bitkom, the German tech association, before joining Amazon as a Senior Manager of EU Public Policy, where he specialised in economic and digital policy, particularly online platform regulation. Before joining DOT Europe, Constantin oversaw government affairs across Europe for mobility tech company Via Transportation. He holds a Bachelor of Laws from the Universities of Oldenburg and Bremen, and a Master's in EU Political and Administrative Studies from the College of Europe in Bruges.



## Manon Gonnin

**Association e-Enfance/3018, France**

Manon Gonnin is a legal expert who graduated in minor's rights in 2018; she started to work for Association e-Enfance/3018 as a phone counsellor the same year. She counsels minor victims of cyberbullying/bullying at school and also takes action with social media by sending reports as part of trusted flaggers schemes. Since 2022, she has led European projects and collaborated with BIK.





## Laura Higgins

**Roblox, United Kingdom**

Laura Higgins is the Senior Director of Community Safety and Civility at Roblox with years of experience building safeguarding, online safety and civility programmes. Roblox's digital civility initiative is focused on providing the community with the skills needed to create positive online experiences, working with the world's leading safety and industry organisations. In her previous role as part of the UK Safer Internet Centre, Laura founded several award-winning helpline services, and worked with the biggest names in tech. She has spoken on digital safety topics across the globe and regularly appears in the media sharing her expertise with industry experts, parents and kids.



## Dr Zoe Hilton

**Praesidio Safeguarding, United Kingdom**

Dr Zoe Hilton is the Founder and Director of Praesidio Safeguarding. As a Director, Zoe combines her operational and strategic work in child protection with her research experience in the online space to lead research and insight projects on behalf of Praesidio. Before founding Praesidio, Zoe was the Head of Safeguarding and Child Protection at the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Command between 2009-2017, where she managed a range of high-profile complex abuse investigations as well as CEOP's day-to-day public reporting function. In addition, Zoe led CEOP's national research panel and chaired the National Crime Agency's Protect Board, which sought to reduce the threat posed to children from child sexual exploitation by leading a collaboration effort across industry, policing, education, and the voluntary sector. Previously, Zoe served as the lead policy adviser for online safety at the NSPCC. Dr Zoe Hilton holds a PhD in Criminology.



## Maria João Horta

**Directorate-General for Education, Portugal**

Maria João Horta is a science and ICT teacher and a guest professor at the Universidade Lusófona for the initial training of teachers. She holds a PhD in ICT and Education from the Institute of Education of the University of Lisbon and a Master's in Science Education from the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon. She is currently the Deputy Director-General for Education at the Ministry of Education in Portugal. She is also a Commissioner in the Coordination of the National Early Childhood Intervention System and the National Coordinator for Autonomy and Curriculum Flexibility. Additionally, she is the National Coordinator of the Support Programme for Schools in Priority Intervention Territories - TEIP.

Maria João is the Portuguese national representative in the European Commission's Working Group on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (DELTA). She represents Portugal in the Working Group on Digital Citizenship at European Schoolnet, and is a member of the Board of Directors of European Schoolnet. She is also a member of the Steering Committee and the General Assembly of EUN. She is

Portugal's representative in the OECD project *Education for Inclusive Societies* and a member of the Board of Representatives of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education for Portugal.



## Martijn Huigsloot

**NICAM, The Netherlands**

Martijn Huigsloot is Manager Strategy and Innovation at NICAM (the Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audiovisual Media, [www.nicam.nl](http://www.nicam.nl)). He graduated from the University of Amsterdam with a MSc in Communication. He has been working on the protection of minors from potentially harmful media content since 2007 and has done so in various positions at NICAM. In his current position, he is working on strategy and managing international affairs and innovation, focussing on how (new) technology can contribute to the protection of minors (online).



## Věra Jourová

**European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency**

- European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency (2019 – present)
- European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality (2014–2019)
- Minister for Regional Development (2014)
- Trainee solicitor, Bezděk & Partners law firm (2012–2013)
- Managing Director, Primavera Consulting Ltd. – EU funds consultant (2006–2013)
- Degree in Law (Mgr.) from the Charles University, Prague (2012)
- Consultancy activities in the Western Balkans relating to EU accession (2006–2011)
- Deputy Minister for Regional Development (2003–2006)
- Head of the Department of Regional Development of the Vysočina Region (2001–2003)
- Secretary and Spokesperson of the Třebíč Municipal Office (1995–2000)
- Master's degree (Mgr.) in theory of culture, Charles University, Prague (1991)
- Further information can be found on the [European Commission website](https://ec.europa.eu/justice/index_en.htm).



## Irene López Medina

**ALMMA (Mobile-Free Adolescence Association of Madrid), Spain**

Irene López Medina grew up in Madrid, Spain, and at 17 moved to Atlanta, USA, where she improved her English and learned independence. Returning to Spain, she studied Dentistry at the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), representing her peers on the Faculty Board, founding the UCMadrid Dental Students Association, and serving as the European representative for the National Association of Dental Students. Her mission was to improve conditions for dental students across Spain. Following further studies and specialisation, Irene now operates her own dental practice in Madrid, focusing on personalised patient care to enhance oral health, function, and aesthetics.

She believes in an ethical approach centered on patient perspectives, valuing a love for quality in her work.

She is also a dedicated mother to a 15-year-old daughter and a 13-year-old son. Passionate about responsible parenting, she has attended courses and read extensively to better understand children's needs and development. In recent years, her interest in child screen use led her to recognise technology's potential harm to minors, despite its benefits for adults. After sharing these concerns with other families in Spain, she joined the viral "Parents Concerned About Screens" movement, which led to the formation of ALMMA (Mobile-Free Adolescence Association of Madrid), where she serves on the board. In this role, she collaborates with experts, organisations, and families to address screen use in children and support healthier development.



## June Lowery-Kingston

### DG CONNECT, European Commission

June Lowery-Kingston is Head of Unit Accessibility, Multilingualism & Safer Internet, and Deputy to the Director for Data at the European Commission's Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CONNECT). She has worked for the EU institutions in Luxembourg for over 25 years in a wide variety of fields including publications, finance, logistics, and digital inclusion. Her current responsibilities include web accessibility, language technology, and online safety for children. Her work aims to promote a better internet for children by protecting and empowering children online, under the BIK+ strategy. As Equality Coordinator in DG CONNECT, she also maintains an overview of the implementation of the Union of Equality within the DG. She is passionate about her job, and about making the digital world safer for children, and more accessible, inclusive and multilingual for all.



## Emil Ludvigsen

### Centre for Digital Youth Care, Denmark

As an expert in gaming and online communities, Emil Ludvigsen is involved in many different projects at the Centre for Digital Youth Care in Denmark. He delivers talks about the digital lives of young people in general while also researching and documenting the darker parts of the internet, where misogyny, hate speech and racism take the stage. Emil spends a lot of time looking into malicious subcommunities online, where vulnerable young men gather to discuss the role of marginalised groups in their suffering. At the same time, he teaches youth workers and authorities how to spot problematic internet use.



## Karen McAuley

### Coimisiún na Meán, Ireland

Karen McAuley is Director of Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults in Coimisiún na Meán, Ireland's agency for developing and regulating a thriving, diverse, creative, safe, and trusted media landscape. Karen has worked in the field of children's rights for over

20 years, most recently as Head of Policy with Ireland's Ombudsman for Children's Office (2017-2023). Her career has included a focus on children's participation, human rights education, and child rights-based approaches to developments in law and public policy. Karen holds a BA in English and German from Trinity College Dublin, and an MA in European Literature and a DPhil from the University of Cambridge.



## Rachel Madden

### Coimisiún na Meán, Ireland

Rachel Madden is the Assistant Director of Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults at Coimisiún na Meán, Ireland's agency for developing and regulating a thriving, diverse, creative, safe, and trusted media landscape. With over a decade of experience in online and child safety, Rachel has focused her career on developing protections and maximising positive outcomes for younger audiences. Before joining Coimisiún na Meán, Rachel spent 12 years at Google and YouTube in roles spanning Trust and Safety and Government Affairs. Her work involved policy development, age-appropriate design, parental tools, child sexual exploitation prevention, and media literacy and well-being initiatives. She recently returned to Ireland after eight years in the U.S., applying her global insights to the Irish regulatory landscape.



## Dr Chelly Maes

### University of Antwerp, Belgium

Chelly Maes is a Guest Professor in Communication Sciences at the University of Antwerp's Department of Communication Studies in Belgium and a postdoctoral researcher at the Winston National Center on Technology Use, Brain, and Psychological Development at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is also affiliated with the Media Psychology Lab at KU Leuven. She serves on the editorial board of the Q1-ranked journal Archives of Sexual Behavior and was the Student and Early Career Representative for the Children, Adolescents, and Media Division of the International Communication Association from 2022 to 2024.

Her research focuses on how digital experiences relate to critical developmental tasks such as body image, sexuality, and identity development, as well as mental health. This includes the development of theoretical frameworks grounded in communication science and psychology, and the uses of multimethod approaches (e.g., focus groups, experimental studies, daily diaries, longitudinal studies).

Chelly's research is supported by competitive grants, including BOF and FWO funds, and she recently secured funding as a co-principal investigator from the prestigious Horizon Europe Framework Programme to develop personalised intervention and prevention programmes for children with visual impairments. In this project, she will investigate the impact of digital media on identity development in visually impaired youth.

Her work has been published extensively in Q1-ranked journals across five domains defined by ISI-WOS, and she has authored eight book chapters on digital media and

youth development. She has presented her research more than 20 times at major international conferences in communication and psychology. Her contributions were recently recognized with a Best Published Article award from the Children, Adolescents, and Media (CAM) Division of the ICA.

Additionally, Chelly is frequently invited to speak at academic and public events (e.g., Eetexpert, 2020; Apenstaartjaren, 2024) and has been featured in various media outlets, including Journaal Laat, Jong Talent in Knack, De Morgen, De Standaard, and the docuseries Chasing Beauty.



## Manuela Martra

### DG CONNECT, European Commission

Manuela Martra is Deputy Head of Unit Accessibility, Multilingualism & Safer Internet, in the Directorate for Data at the European Commission's Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CONNECT). She has worked for the EU institutions in Luxembourg for over 20 years, most of them devoted to support a safer and better internet for children. She is very committed to ensuring, through a multi-stakeholder approach, that citizens, in particular the most vulnerable ones, can benefit in full from the digital transformation.



## Prof.ssa Ersilia Menesini (PhD)

### University of Florence, Italy

Professor Ersilia Menesini is currently a full professor of Developmental Psychology at the University of Florence (Italy) – Department of Education, Languages, Intercultures, Literatures, and Psychology, and vice-president of the University of Florence for teaching and students' guidance. She has been involved in several European projects on bullying and cyberbullying and, more recently, on the positive use of ICT among children and adolescents. She served as Associate Editor of the European Journal of Developmental Psychology from 2012 to 2017 and as Associate Editor of the Italian Journal of Psychology from 2016 to 2023. She has been a member of the European Association of Developmental Psychology Council since 2011, and she was President of the European Association for Developmental Psychology (EADP) from 2017-2019.

Her research area is related to violence and aggressive behaviour in adolescence and childhood, specifically school bullying, peer rejection, dating aggression in romantic relationships, cyberbullying, and risky behaviour in virtual contexts. Within these areas, she has investigated the role of several individual and contextual factors (temperament, moral processes, emotional and cognitive mediators, group dynamics). Another important direction of investigation has been related to translational research in developmental psychology, designing and evaluating school interventions against bullying and cyberbullying in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Education, local school networks, and international research networks.





## Roberta Mestichella

### Italian National Police, Italy

Roberta Mestichella is Head of External Relations and Communication of the Postal Police and Coordinator of Studies, Legal Affairs and International Relations within the First Division of the Postal Police HQ. Roberta graduated in Law at LUISS Guido Carli University, gained a second Level Master's degree in Security Sciences at La Sapienza University. She has been an Officer of the Italian National Police since 2011, following a long-time experience as Head of the Judiciary Police Section at the Public Prosecutor's Office in Florence. She has worked at the Postal Police Service in Rome since 2022, following the many activities of international strategic cooperation that see the specialty as a key player. She is responsible for all the activities of external, public, and institutional relations of the Postal Police.



## Davinia Marie Muscat

### BeSmartOnline, Malta

Davinia Marie Muscat is a passionate Safer Internet Centre Officer with BeSmartOnline, where she plays a key role in raising awareness about online safety. She engages in public speaking, delivers sessions in schools to both children and parents, and holds training workshops for professionals, empowering them to address and prevent online risks. As a Helpline Officer, Davinia Marie offers vital support to individuals affected by cyberbullying, online abuse, and digital well-being challenges. In her role as a Hotline Analyst, she also intervenes in cases related to child sexual abuse material (CSAM), contributing to the ongoing fight against online exploitation.



## Renate Nikolay

### DG CONNECT, European Commission

Renate Nikolay is Deputy Director General in DG CONNECT. From November 2014 to November 2022, she served as Head of Cabinet of Věra Jourová, now Vice-President for Values and Transparency and before Commissioner for Justice and Consumers. Renate Nikolay has been working on matters such as rule of law, media freedom or disinformation. She also played a key role in the adoption of the data protection reform, the negotiations on an EU-US data transfer arrangement, the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor and the Code of Conduct with platforms on online hate speech.

Between 2011 and 2014, she led the Unit of interinstitutional and international relations in DG Justice dealing with legislative files and international negotiations such as the ones with the US on data protection in law enforcement. Prior to that, she was advisor in the Cabinet of the first High Representative/Vice President Cathy Ashton where she led on the relations with the European Parliament in setting up the European External Action Service and on relations with Asia, in particular China.

From 2004–2009 she was member of the Cabinet of the Trade Commissioners Peter Mandelson and Baroness Cathy Ashton where she was part of the negotiating team in

the trade talks in the multilateral trade round of the World Trade Organisation (the Doha Round) and the EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement which was finalised in 2009. She started her career in the European Commission in the Directorate General for Trade in November 2003 dealing with the accession negotiations of Vietnam to the World Trade Organisation and the Trade Policy Committee with the Member States. Prior to that she was a diplomat in the German Permanent Representation in Brussels and worked as private Secretary to the German G7 Sherpa in the German Ministry of Economics. She holds a law degree (Erstes und Zweites Staatsexamen) from the Free University in Berlin and a Master's as a Fulbright Scholar in Washington DC. She was also an Erasmus Scholar in France/Grenoble.



## Prof. dr. Jessica Piotrowski

University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Jessica Piotrowski is a Professor at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR) at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), where she holds the Chair of *Communication in the Digital Society*. She is the Director of the [Center for research on Children, Adolescents, and the Media \(CcaM\)](#), the Director of the [Graduate School of Communication](#), co-Director of the [Faculty Teaching & Learning Center](#), the faculty lead for the national Human Factor in New Technologies Netherlands sector; and the co-principal investigator of the [Youth Digitality Research Priority Area](#) at the University of Amsterdam. Jessica firmly believes in the power of [translation](#), which includes frequent engagement with stakeholders such as the European Commission, Google, Meta, YouTube, NASA, and the European Insafe network. She also sits on numerous (inter)national boards, including the ODISSEI Management Board, the [Wetenschappelijke Raad van het Netwerk Mediawijsheid](#), and the [YouTube Youth and Families Advisory Committee](#).



## Carolina Soares

APAV - Portuguese Association for Victim Support, Portugal

Carolina Soares has been actively engaged in the fields of victim support, cybercrime and digital violence for several years. Since 2017, Carolina has served as a Victim Support Officer at APAV - Portuguese Association for Victim Support. She is now the operational manager of both the helpline and hotline of Linha Internet Segura (the Portuguese Safer Internet Helpline). She is also a Content Assessment Specialist as a member of INHOPE, and the chairperson of the Helpline Standards working group Victim Support Europe. Carolina has undergone comprehensive human rights training with Amnesty International and received specific training in supporting victims of crime and cybercrime. Her expertise is further reinforced by the content assessment training received from the Crimes Against Children Unit of Interpol. Additionally, she possesses expertise in OSINT (Open-Source Intelligence). Academically, she holds a Master's degree in History, specialising in the history of international relations. Currently, she is pursuing her PhD at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, New University of Lisbon. Her doctoral project was funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology, and she had the privilege of conducting research in London during its development.



## Maria Thell

ECPAT, Sweden

Maria Thell is a senior advisor at ECPAT Sweden. She is a social worker with expertise in children's rights and previously worked in the academic sector researching topics related to children's health and development, online and offline. Maria is responsible for ECPAT Sweden's research activities and co-creative processes with children and has written several of ECPAT Sweden's reports.





# Safer Internet Day 2025

Tuesday  
11 February

Together for a better internet

[better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/saferinternetday](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/saferinternetday)



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