

# Better Internet for Kids

Review 20  
of the year 24



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## CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION	4
BACKGROUND TO BETTER INTERNET FOR KIDS	6
What is a Safer Internet Centre?	6
Safer Internet Centre support for the implementation of the Digital Services Act	8
2024 IN REVIEW	10
Safer Internet Day 2024 (February 2024)	11
AdwiseOnline: raising awareness of manipulative marketing practices online (February 2024 onwards)	15
MediaSmartOnline: spotlighting media literacy initiatives across Europe (March 2024 onwards)	17
Raising awareness of age assurance (April 2024 onwards)	18
Active participation in Europe Youth Week and beyond (April 2024 onwards)	20
Second anniversary of the European strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) (May 2024)	22
Creating Ally: Co-creation with youth (September 2024 onwards)	24
Launch of the new BIK platform (October 2024)	26
Safer Internet Forum 2024 – a youth-led event (November 2024)	28
New European Commission (December 2024)	33
Internet Governance Forum (IGF) (December 2024)	34
The BIK bulletin	35
2024 IN FIGURES	36
WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2025?	37



## FOREWORD by the European Commission



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In 2024, we made significant progress in online safety and digital empowerment for youth. Under the Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) strategy, the Commission co-funds Safer Internet Centres (SICs) in Member States. These centres reach more than 30 million EU citizens annually, together with the [BIK platform](#), which has been [fully revamped](#) and features a new structure, new pages and a brand-new section, the [BIK Knowledge hub](#).

The BIK+ strategy continues to support and complement the enforcement of the Digital

Services Act (DSA), now running at full speed, particularly with respect to its provisions related to protection of minors online. We have initiated **formal proceedings** against TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram, as we suspect that some of their default account settings do not provide the high-level protection required under the DSA. But our major concern is that their algorithms amplify inappropriate content, create harmful “rabbit holes,” and encourage addictive behaviours, endangering young users’ physical and mental well-being.

After our second investigation into *TikTok Lite*’s addictive design, TikTok suspended its *Task and Reward* programme in Spain and France and committed not to reintroduce it within the EU.

*Now that’s a DSA win!*

In 2024, we also welcomed the **first trusted flaggers** under the DSA appointed in some Member States. They will play a crucial role in identifying and reporting illegal and harmful content directly to the platforms for immediate action, ensuring that our digital spaces remain safe and secure for all users.

To protect children from inappropriate content online, the Commission and the Member States are working on an EU-wide, interoperable, and privacy-preserving short-term **age verification solution** before the European Union Digital Identity (EUDI) wallet becomes available in 2026.

**Youth participation** remains at the heart of our initiatives, so the BIK Youth Ambassadors were consulted in the summer for the first **evaluation of the BIK+ strategy** to help assess its impact on their online life. Young people also led the organisation and execution of the **Safer Internet Forum** in November, bringing together different stakeholders to discuss about cyberbullying.

Involving young people in these discussions empowers them and ensures their voices shape policies affecting their online experiences. This is why they are also involved in the preparation of the **DSA guidelines under Article 28**, to be adopted in 2025, which will outline recommendations for online platforms to ensure privacy, safety, and security for minors.

Following the European Parliament elections and the establishment of a [new College of Commissioners](#), we have started to work under



the leadership of Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, Ms. [Henna Virkkunen](#).

The new Commission will continue the work to ensure a better internet for children, with an EU-wide inquiry on the broader **impact of social media** on well-being, a close attention to **addictive design** of platforms, and an **action plan on cyberbullying**.

In this context, the role of the BIK+ strategy and the Safer Internet Centres network, particularly the helplines, will be reinforced to assist and advise children, carers and educators.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our network of

**Safer Internet Centres** for their unwavering commitment to the implementation of the BIK+ strategy and of the DSA on the ground, advancing our mission and amplifying our impact. And it makes me proud to see this network gain more recognition across Europe and beyond, with new Safer Internet Centres opening in candidate countries such as Albania and North Macedonia.

I am filled with optimism and gratitude as we enter this new year. Together, we will continue to build a better internet for our children, fostering a digital environment that is safe, inclusive, and empowering for all.



## BACKGROUND TO BETTER INTERNET FOR KIDS

**Building on a succession of Safer Internet programmes, Better Internet for Kids (BIK) is a European Commission initiative which aims to create a better internet for Europe's children and youth, funded under the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL). This report provides insight into some of the key achievements and areas of focus during 2024.**

The Better Internet for Kids platform and related activities are managed on behalf of the European Commission by European Schoolnet (EUN), which coordinates the Insafe network of awareness centres, helplines and youth participation actions, in partnership with INHOPE (the International Association of Internet Hotlines), dedicated to the removal of illegal online content. These combined strands are commonly referred to as *Safer Internet Centres (SICs)*, typically operating in the EU Member States, plus Albania, Iceland, North Macedonia and Norway, in the drive to keep children and young people safe online.

**16.63 MILLION EURO  
IN 2024**

With EU (co-)funding<sup>1</sup> to the level of 16.63 million euro in 2024 for this programme of work – representing a service contract (for coordination of BIK services) and grant agreements with currently co-funded Safer Internet Centres on a pro-rata basis – this work is of strategic importance to the European Commission.

<sup>1</sup> Safer Internet Centres in 24 Member States currently receive EU co-funding.

Find out more about the work of European Safer Internet Centres on the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) platform at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/sic](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/sic).

### What is a Safer Internet Centre?

Insafe and INHOPE work together through a network of Safer Internet Centres across Europe, typically comprising an awareness centre, helpline, hotline and youth participation actions.



**National awareness centres** focus on raising awareness and understanding of safer internet issues and emerging trends. They run campaigns to empower children, young people, parents, caregivers, teachers and other educators with the skills, knowledge and strategies to stay safe online and take advantage of the opportunities that the internet and mobile technologies provide.



**Helplines** provide information, advice and assistance to children, young people, and those who care for them on how to deal with harmful content (such as graphic, pornographic, or age-inappropriate content), contact (such as grooming), conduct (such as cyberbullying or sexting) and contract issues (where the child is a consumer in the online space). Helplines can be accessed via various means, such as by telephone, email, app, web forms, and online chat services.



**Hotlines** allow people to report illegal content anonymously. Reports are then passed on to the appropriate body for action (for example, an internet service provider (ISP), law enforcement agency (LEA) in the country, or the corresponding INHOPE hotline).



**Youth participation activities** allow young people to express their views and exchange knowledge and experiences concerning their use of online technologies, as well as tips on how to stay safe. They provide input on internet safety and empowerment strategies, help design innovative resources, and disseminate online safety messages to their peers and others.



Jointly, European Schoolnet and INHOPE support Safer Internet Centres in responding to the latest online issues, helping to promote the many opportunities the online world offers, while also addressing the challenges. And while Europe's children and youth are the main benefactors of this work, the Better Internet for Kids initiative also reaches out to – and collaborates with – a range of other stakeholders, including parents and caregivers, teachers and educators, researchers, industry, civil society, policy- and decision-makers, and law enforcement, reflecting the fact that we all have a role to play in creating a safer and better internet.

Additionally, the actions conducted in the framework of Better Internet for Kids frequently reach beyond Europe, impacting safer and better internet approaches right across the globe.

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*Discover more about some highlights of the year in the interactive timeline and articles which follow.*





### Safer Internet Centre support for the implementation of the Digital Services Act

The *Digital Services Act (DSA)* has rapidly become a game changer for the protection of minors online as it obliges online platforms to comply with requirements in the DSA aimed to protect children online. The DSA is an EU law that regulates online intermediaries and platforms such as marketplaces, social networks, content-sharing platforms, app stores, and online travel and accommodation platforms. The DSA entered into force in November 2022 and is directly applicable across the EU, applying to all regulated entities from February 2024 onwards. Very large online platforms and search engines have to assess and mitigate risks to the rights of the child and the well-being of the user. Online platforms have to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security for minors on their service.

European Safer Internet Centres are providing valuable information to public authorities enforcing the DSA regarding risks to children and young people. Children and young people (and their parents and caregivers) will often turn to their national centre to report potential harms, to make complaints, and to access resources on internet safety. Utilising this feedback loop, Safer Internet Centres can therefore support the enforcement of the DSA as a gateway to EU children and youth in direct connection with their day-to-day experiences and concerns.

To give a few examples:

- ▶ Helplines, hotlines and awareness centres provide regular updates on the latest trends and issues that young people are encountering when using very large online platforms (VLOPs) and very large online search engines (VLOSEs), as regulated under the DSA. Drawing on the knowledge and capacity-building aspects of the Insafe and INHOPE networks, Safer Internet Centre representatives, from across all strands, also meet regularly to provide an ‘early warning meeting’ to discuss emerging issues.
- ▶ In addition, where possible, helplines are now tracking various data to support DSA enforcement, including recording on which of the VLOPs problems occurred. This recording only started in quarter 4 of 2024, but 73% of issues in this quarter took place on social media platforms, with 17% on messaging services. Equally, Safer Internet Centres are encouraged to share national research into children and young people’s use of technology, including social media, as and when it is published.
- ▶ Some helplines and hotlines have applied to become trusted flaggers under the DSA. Some have already been approved, while others are waiting for their applications to be assessed and processed. Those confirmed so far include Rat auf Draht and OIAT in [Austria](#), e-Enfance (3018) in [France](#), and SafeLine.gr in [Greece](#). A [regularly updated list of trusted flaggers](#) is available on the EC website.



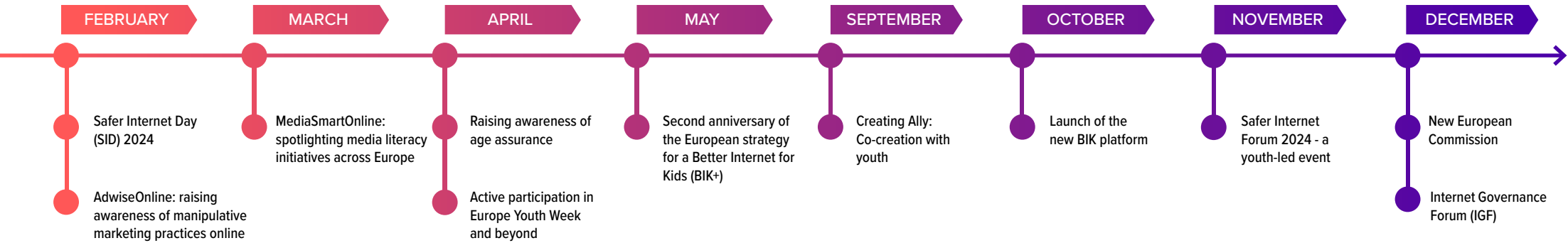


- ▶ Under the DSA, trusted flaggers are certified by Digital Services Coordinators based on requirements of their independence, expertise and diligence in reporting illegal online content. Their reports have to be reviewed with priority by digital platforms, including social networks and search engines, allowing for faster removal of such material from the internet. The recognition of Safer Internet Centres as trusted flaggers will allow them to act more effectively on behalf of their service users, enhancing user protection and ensuring service provider compliance with DSA rules.
- ▶ Digital Services Coordinators help the European Commission monitor and enforce obligations in the DSA at Member State level. Find out more about the work of [Digital Services Coordinators on the European Commission website](#).
- ▶ During 2024, [Safer Internet Centres took part in a SID event](#) and a number of smaller ad hoc meetings to discuss the work they are doing (or can do in future) in bringing the DSA closer to schools.

This critical area of activity on supporting the implementation of the DSA is expected to continue and grow into 2025 and beyond, with Safer Internet Centres contributing to the growing evidence base on its impact.



### 2024 IN REVIEW



## Safer Internet Day 2024 (February 2024)

On Tuesday, 6 February 2024, the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of Safer Internet Day (SID) took place under the continuing campaign slogan of Together for a better internet. This annual celebration aims to raise awareness of the importance of both a safer and a better internet, where everyone is empowered to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively.



*The 21st edition of Safer Internet Day was celebrated on Tuesday, 6 February 2024 in almost 190 countries and territories around the world*

Through a diverse array of actions, across Europe and the globe, the campaign reached a wide range of benefactors and stakeholders – children and young people, parents and carers, teachers, educators and social workers, as well as industry, decision-makers and politicians – with a call to action to encourage everyone to play their part in creating a better internet. Organised within the framework of Better Internet for Kids activities by the Insafe network and INHOPE, on behalf of the European Commission<sup>2</sup>, Safer Internet Day 2024 was celebrated in almost **190 countries and territories worldwide**.

Through a distributed model – including Safer Internet Centres in Europe, Safer Internet Day Committees across the globe, and many international organisational and industry supporters – a range of exciting events, activities and resources were delivered to promote the safe and positive use of digital technologies. The topics and issues covered by national and localised campaigns were wide-ranging and diverse. Key issues covered included **mental health online** and **digital well-being**, tackling new and emerging issues such as those presented by **artificial intelligence (AI)** and **generative AI**, along with those issues that threaten to impact democracy and participation, such as **disinformation** and **fake news**. To mitigate some of the concerns, many campaigns focused on empowering children and young people (and the adults supporting them) through **media literacy education** and the development of **digital skills**.

Over the coming pages, you will find a few of the highlights of the Safer Internet Day celebrations in 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Safer Internet Day would not be possible without the support of the European Commission (EC), which has been providing financial and logistical support for the campaign since the very first edition as part of a range of wider initiatives, currently delivered under the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) initiative. As such, the EC also co-funds the joint Insafe-INHOPE network of Safer Internet Centres in Europe (typically comprising awareness raising, helpline, youth participation and hotline functions). Currently, funding is provided through the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL). Find out more about the EC's European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+) on the [European Commission website](#).



## The Digital Services Act (DSA) explained: Measures to protect children and young people online

To support public awareness of the DSA, a user-friendly booklet was published to summarise the main content of the legislative articles, focusing specifically on the provisions for the protection of children and young people online. On the occasion of Safer Internet Day 2024, it was made available via the [website of the Publications Office of the European Union in all EU languages](#).

*Throughout 2024, the BIK+ strategy has continued to drive forward the ambition of creating high-quality online content, services, and experiences for all children and young people. Publications such as the DSA explained – in national languages – are critical in helping stakeholders to understand their rights and provisions when using online platforms and services.*

## The DSA in schools

During SID 2024 celebrations, a focus group meeting was organised with young people, teachers, school administrators, Digital Service Coordinators and Safer Internet Centres, representing 14 European countries. The focus group aimed to identify the needs of young people and how DSCs and SICs can support schools through resources, training and advice on child online safety issues.

Participants in the session stressed the need for a point of contact within the school setting for counselling and support with online issues, although this was not something that always existed. There is a clear need for schools to build capacity around these types of requests. The



The Digital Services Act explained booklet is now available in all EU languages

DSA should also be a more central topic in formal and non-formal education settings, and training sessions for both adults and young people should be provided to raise awareness of the protections provided by the DSA, reporting routes, and the potential consequences for service providers. The focus group provided a fruitful discussion, signifying the start of an ongoing dialogue between the various stakeholder groups, especially as Digital Services Coordinators scale up their actions across Europe.

## Exploring virtual worlds

Virtual reality is popular with children and young people, and their online experiences are becoming increasingly immersive. On Safer Internet Day, a spotlight was placed on the [EU initiative on Web 4.0 and](#)



*virtual worlds*. The *BIK platform* and *BIK bulletin* subsequently provided a *reflection on the opportunities and challenges for children and young people in virtual worlds*, along with a mapping of relevant resources from European Safer Internet Centres.

### Spotlighting topical issues on Safer Internet Day... and beyond

Every year, the network of Safer Internet Centres across Europe celebrates Safer Internet Day in many ways, raising awareness on various topics which impact children and young people when they connect online. Network celebrations were vibrant and diverse, with many aligning with the pillars of the BIK+ strategy:

- ▶ In line with **pillar 1** and creating a safe internet, many campaigns focused on key issues and harms, such as cyberbullying, disinformation, pornography, and new and emerging risks posed by developments in artificial intelligence (AI). Examples include:
  - The *German* awareness-raising centre, klicksafe, put the often-taboo topic of pornography in the spotlight. Together with numerous partners throughout Germany, klicksafe organised extensive campaigns and activities on online sexual education for young people, parents, and educational professionals under the motto *Let's talk about porn!*
  - In *Hungary*, an event raised awareness about phishing, online harassment, and AI. Children participated in interactive games and presentations, while parents, educators and professionals were also invited to awareness-raising presentations by experts. Various topics were covered, including child protection issues in media regulation, AI cybercrime risks for young people, first-device use, and tips on cyberbullying, data protection, online scams, and

internet addiction.

- ▶ Upholding the aims of **pillar 2**, many Safer Internet Centre campaigns focused on media and digital literacy, helping to ensure that children and young people feel comfortable when using the internet and can utilise the many opportunities it offers:
  - A conference in *Cyprus* placed a spotlight on the importance of empowering teachers, children and parents on the safe use of the internet and the development of digital skills.
  - In *Estonia*, a Safer Internet Day conference featured eight workshops to introduce new tools and methods that could be used in classrooms with children and young people. Examples included *ySKILLS educational materials* promoting the digital skills of young people, and learning about cybersecurity via the *Spoofy game*.
- ▶ Finally, reflecting the aims of **pillar 3**, many celebrations focused on youth actions, with several examples of youth panellists being involved in the planning and delivery of events, or challenging stakeholders in panel discussions. Examples include:
  - *France* promoted young people's voices, including youth panels, and educational workshops in schools. Under the slogan *Connected, engaged... and you?*, the campaign encouraged internet users to engage and act to be more responsible online with a particular focus on taming algorithms, and combatting cyberbullying and online hate.
  - *Ireland* witnessed an unprecedented turnout, with over 200,000 people involved in the celebrations. Under a theme of *Tech in our world*, young people shared their views on new and emerging technology, and the changes they want to see online.

Celebrations beyond the EU, facilitated by Safer Internet Day Committees



and other supporters worldwide, were equally vibrant and varied, again amplifying the voices of youth and showcasing the excellent work in this field. To give just a few examples, Albania focused on violence, bullying, abuse and crimes online, Colombia focused on determining the appropriate timing and manner for introducing a child to their first electronic device with a particular focus on child rights, while celebrations in Türkiye championed positive content creation.

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Discover more about [Safer Internet Day celebrations over the years](#), and learn more about Safer Internet Day at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/saferinternetday](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/saferinternetday), including contact information for SID committees and supporters worldwide.

Connect with your national Safer Internet Centre (in Europe) at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/sic](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/sic).



### AdwiseOnline: raising awareness of manipulative marketing practices online (February 2024 onwards)



The rapid growth of digital technologies and the increased significance of online platforms have led to amplified concerns regarding child and youth consumer protection in the digital environment. The BIK+ strategy recognises the importance of safeguarding children from consumer and contract risks when they engage online. During 2024, a new action line within the BIK initiative focused on this issue, seeking to analyse current and emerging marketing practices targeting children and youth. Targeted awareness-raising campaigns were subsequently developed based on evidence-based approaches.

To kick off this activity, research was initiated to learn more about *manipulative digital practices targeted at children and youth online, alongside rights and responsibilities under the existing EU legal framework*. The resulting report outlines the research findings of a literature review and doctrinal research focused on important developments in, and the

(potential) impact of, marketing practices targeting children within the digital environment. Moreover, it seeks to:

- ▶ identify specific marketing practices that warrant attention in future awareness-raising activities.
- ▶ clarify children's rights in this specific context.
- ▶ delineate obligations for commercial actors that target or facilitate the targeting of marketing practices to young audiences in the digital environment at the EU level.

Building on the findings from the research report, in early 2024, a first AdWiseOnline\* campaign was scoped and piloted to spotlight the importance of child and youth consumer protection in digital environments while raising awareness about manipulative digital marketing practices. A key objective was to enhance young people's understanding of digital marketing and online advertising, empower them with knowledge about their online rights as young consumers, and provide support to those who support them in their daily lives (such as parents, caregivers and teachers).

At the time of writing, a second edition of the AdWiseOnline is in progress (in early 2025), spotlighting in-game marketing. More specifically, it delves into critical issues such as persuasive design, dark patterns, loot boxes, pay-to-win mechanisms, FOMO (fear of missing out) tactics, and excessive microtransactions.





A range of supporting AdWiseOnline materials have been designed to simplify the complex terminology of digital marketing and the legal framework of consumer rights. Resources include an [interactive guide to outsmart online ads and traps](#) (available in all EU languages) and a *Game of terms video resource* featuring BIK Youth Ambassadors outlining key terms in their own words. [Podcasts explore the psychology behind in-game marketing and the regulatory measures surrounding marketing practices](#), while a range of additional resources and webinars outline the practical steps that parents, caregivers and educators can take to support children in online gaming activities.

Discover more about AdWiseOnline at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/adwiseonline](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/adwiseonline).

*Under the BIK+ strategy, work has progressed on placing a spotlight on child and youth consumer protection in digital markets throughout 2024.*

\* The AdWiseOnline campaign is a partnership between the European Commission's DG CONNECT and DG JUST supported by the network of European Safer Internet Centres and [European Consumer Centres \(ECC-Net\)](#) within the framework of the Better Internet for Kids initiative.



### MediaSmartOnline: spotlighting media literacy initiatives across Europe (March 2024 onwards)

**Empowering children with the skills and knowledge they need when they go online is a key priority of pillar 2 of the [BIK+ strategy](#). In the strategy, the European Commission seeks actions to improve educational opportunities and media literacy for children and young people, allowing them to become more critical users of online content and services.**

The BIK+ strategy calls for dedicated campaigns, specifically designed to raise awareness of key issues such as disinformation and misinformation, and generally to enhance media literacy skills among children and young people, while also better upskilling those who support them (such as parents, caregivers and teachers).

In response to this important strategic requirement, a new [MediaSmartOnline campaign](#) was developed and launched in 2024, with the support of the Insafe network of Safer Internet Centres in Europe. In brief, the campaign aims to spotlight existing media literacy initiatives, programmes, resources and actions available in Europe, building on the networking resources and efforts of the Insafe network and a range of media literacy experts and stakeholders. By showcasing the existing flourishing activity in the field, it also aims to build synergies and opportunities for collaboration.

The campaign was *first pilot-tested in a small number of European countries* (Czech Republic, Ireland, Poland) in March-April 2024, and a Media Literacy Campaign Working Group was subsequently set up to contribute to the planning and delivery of the first, full EU-wide roll-out of the campaign.

The full campaign subsequently took place between October and December 2024, and included the launch of various new assets, such as a [MediaSmartOnline Instagram account](#), the involvement of BIK Youth panellists in scoping campaign activities, and a [Be MediaSmartOnline guide](#), collecting 120+ resources and actions tagged by country, language and target audience.



## Raising awareness of age assurance (April 2024 onwards)

**The internet offers children and young people many opportunities for growth and empowerment. However, alongside these benefits come risks, including exposure to age-inappropriate content, conduct, contact, and consumer practices. Age assurance is one of the solutions to protect children online, as mentioned in the Digital Services Act (DSA), the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), and the Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) strategy.**

Within the framework of the BIK+ strategy, a study was commissioned to outline the legal and practical aspects of age assurance, detailing its necessity, methods, and associated challenges. The resulting report, titled [Mapping age assurance typologies and requirements](#), was published in April 2024.

Age assurance refers to the methods used to determine an individual's age with different levels of confidence or certainty. They can be grouped into three main categories: age estimation, age verification, and self-declaration.

Digital service providers bear the primary responsibility for ensuring proportionate age assurance. Age verification, which offers the most certainty, is necessary when age-related eligibility is crucial to protect the child from significant potential harm, such as exposure to adult or violent content at a young age.

The report considers ten main methods of age assurance and their respective advantages and disadvantages, ranging from self-declaration to facial age estimation, to behavioural profiling, among others.

In addition, the report also examines ten key requirements of age assurance tools: proportionality, privacy, security, accuracy, functionality, inclusivity, participation, transparency, notification mechanisms, and considering the child's perspective.

*Age assurance is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but it is an important tool for safeguarding.*

Building on the study, a BIK age assurance self-assessment tool<sup>3</sup> (and a corresponding questionnaire) was subsequently developed, helping digital service providers to critically reflect on their digital services and how these may intersect with the protection of children and young people online.

It offers practical guidance to digital services providers throughout the self-assessment process, providing relevant questions about age assurance to attain a robust and critically reflected decision-making process regarding the protection of minors online. Download the [self-assessment tool manual](#) and [questionnaire](#) here.

<sup>3</sup> The self-assessment tool is provided as guidance and not as a legal compliance mechanism, including compliance under the AVMSD, DSA, or GDPR. It should be used in a context-specific way in relation to the particularities associated with a given digital service. Digital service providers are strongly advised to complement this self-assessment tool with other assessments, and in connection with their own legal assessment of compliance with their various (legal) obligations in this context.



Following the *redevelopment and launch of the BIK platform later in 2024*, these resources were supplemented with other materials in a new *Guide to age assurance section*. Joining the report and self-assessment tools, are a series of easy-to-read explainers to help raise awareness in educational and family settings, covering a number of pertinent topics, including:

- ▶ *What is age assurance?*
- ▶ *How can age assurance protect children from harmful experiences?*
- ▶ *Does age assurance impact privacy?*
- ▶ *How does age assurance relate to children's rights?*
- ▶ *Can children influence age assurance?*

For ease of use, these family-friendly resources can also be *downloaded in a handy toolkit resource*.

*Work on age assurance will continue into 2025 and beyond within the framework of Better Internet for Kids and other EC initiatives.*



### Active participation in Europe Youth Week and beyond (April 2024 onwards)

**Europe's children and youth are at the heart of the work delivered under the Better Internet for Kids initiative, and while they are ultimately the main benefactors, they also have an active role to play in shaping the policy landscape. Indeed, pillar 3 of the BIK+ strategy promotes active participation, recognising that children and young people must be respected by giving them a say in the digital environment, with more child-led activities to foster innovative and creative safe digital experiences. As such, European youth are actively engaged across many activity lines.**

To give one such example, European Youth Week is an event organised every second year by the European Commission to celebrate and promote youth engagement, participation and active citizenship all over Europe and beyond. For the 2024 edition, a kick-off event was held on 12 April 2024 at the European Parliament. Together with the European Commission's DG CONNECT and the Publications Office of the EU, Better Internet for Kids co-hosted a session called *Check your facts! The power of digital skills, critical thinking and open data*. The session focused on the pressing issue of misinformation and disinformation in the digital age, particularly within the context of the, then upcoming, European elections.

Various experts in media literacy and open data led the session, challenging young participants to “get hands-on” by testing their skills and understanding of the challenges of identifying the accuracy of information. Team-based activities encouraged debate and collaboration, combined with a commitment to achieving the best results, and there

was clear enthusiasm for learning more. Could the youth participants distinguish real news from fake news? Could they identify AI-generated images? Did they have what it takes to be true fact-checkers?

Throughout the session, participants reflected on the challenges faced in navigating the vast amount of information available online, from traditional news to social media posts. The emphasis was on the critical need for media and data literacy to make informed decisions, to protect privacy, and to support meaningful engagement online, particularly in the context of voting and combating disinformation.

BIK Youth Ambassadors Joana, from Portugal, and Diya, from Finland, co-chaired the session. Reflecting on her participation, Joana commented:

*“In this session, I witnessed first-hand that we, as young people, are countering this trend. I saw concerns expressed through questions, doubts, and opinions, and heard meaningful and engaged debate. This event is all about empowering young people, and they demonstrated their commitment to shaping the future with knowledge, skills, and a unique and increasingly vital passion.”*

Diya added:

*“I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to such a vital conversation. The commitment ... to empowering youth in media literacy and digital citizenship is incredible and shows that, in today's digital age, equipping young people with the skills to navigate online information responsibly is more crucial than ever.”*



Several other examples of active youth participation and youth-led initiatives are included throughout this report. Learn more about BIK Youth more generally at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-youth](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-youth).



*BIK Youth Ambassadors Joana and Diya co-chaired a session on digital skills at the European Youth Week kick-off event in the European Parliament*





## Second anniversary of the European strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) (May 2024)

**The European Commission adopted a new [European strategy for a better internet for kids](#) in May 2022. Known as the BIK+ strategy, it aims to improve age-appropriate digital services and ensure every child is protected, empowered, and respected online.**

The strategy was developed following extensive consultation with children and young people, complemented by targeted consultations with parents, teachers, Member States, technology and media industries, civil society, academics, and international organisations. Moreover, the BIK+ strategy aims to complement and support the practical implementation of existing legal frameworks such as the DSA and measures to protect children online, develop children's skills, and empower them to enjoy and shape their lives online safely.

### BIK Policy monitor

In May 2024, alongside the second anniversary of the launch of the BIK+ strategy, a new edition of a key policy report was published. The *Better Internet for Kids Policy monitor* (previously the *BIK Policy map*) has been tracking how European countries support children's and young people's digital experiences since 2014. Since its launch a decade ago, the main objective of this series has been to compare and exchange knowledge on policies and actions that promote children's safety and well-being in the digital environment based on the recommended measures of the original BIK strategy.

In the 2024 edition, the *BIK Policy monitor report* assesses the state of digital policies against the background of significant changes in the legislative and regulatory landscape. The report highlights progress as well as gaps in BIK+ policies, details actions taken under the [BIK+ framework](#), and showcases the BIK+ strategy in practice across all 27 EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway. In doing so, this high-level comparative report constitutes one of the four annually updated key features informing the policy work at the EU and national levels contributing to the development of a new [Better Internet for Kids Knowledge hub](#) (which subsequently launched in October 2024 as part of the [new BIK platform](#)). All of these outputs process and make available the contributions and data collected with the support of a network of national contacts, comprising representatives of the [Expert Group on Safer Internet for Children](#) and [Safer Internet Centres in the Member States](#).

Two years after the adoption of the BIK+ strategy, fostering a better and safer internet for children has become an important policy priority in nearly all European countries. National legislation and policies have been found to extensively address online safety and digital protection, digital empowerment, and active participation – the priority pillars of the BIK+ strategy. The 2024 report also found that national policy priorities and initiatives underway align well with the BIK+ strategy. It also provides evidence of significant policy development in tandem with new EU laws, such as the [Digital Services Act](#), governing the digital environment.





At the same time, gaps were identified in relation to the governance and design of BIK-related policies. Policy leadership has been found to frequently lack centralised coordination or action plans with clear timelines and clear measures to evaluate initiatives, such as key performance indicators (KPIs). The availability of research and evidence to support BIK-related policies and topics is fragmented and inconsistent. While stakeholder engagement in developing and delivering policy solutions is recognised as important, consistent mechanisms for collaboration and stakeholder involvement are infrequent. Children's direct policy involvement was also found to be limited.

### Evaluating the BIK+ strategy

Upon the publication of the BIK+ strategy in 2022, one of its key commitments was to organise a child-led evaluation of the strategy every two years. As such, the *first of these periodic reviews was launched in 2024*.

The primary objective of the evaluation is to review and assess the progress and success of the BIK+ strategy since its adoption, identify emerging risks and new challenges, and propose actionable recommendations for improvement. The consultation protocol was designed and developed, adopting a qualitative approach based on focus group methodologies. The methodology was youth-centred and rights-based, ensuring inclusivity, transparency, and a safe environment for participants to share their perspectives. Consultations with expert stakeholders complemented this approach to provide a holistic review and evaluation of the strategy.

While the work is ongoing at the time of writing, the first findings from

this exercise will be launched to coincide with Safer Internet Day 2025. A *preliminary report* summarises the views of 759 children and young people from across Europe, alongside input from 59 expert stakeholders from academia, civil society, industry, and policy across Europe. The report paints a detailed picture of the strategy's achievements and sheds light on evolving needs. The voices of children and young people, including those from vulnerable backgrounds, were instrumental in shaping the findings, ensuring a youth-centred and inclusive approach.

The report will be further supplemented in spring 2025 to include the outcomes from consultations with European parents, caregivers, teachers and educators.



### Creating Ally: Co-creation with youth (September 2024 onwards)

As outlined above, [Safer Internet Day](#) is a landmark awareness-raising campaign for online safety, celebrated annually for more than 20 years. However, feedback from young people revealed that the Safer Internet Day mascot had become outdated and no longer resonated with its intended audience. In response, in the autumn of 2024, a full youth-led redesign project was launched, engaging 15 young people aged 14 to 18 from 11 different countries. The aim was to create a new mascot that felt protective, positive, and relatable to young people.

During an exploration phase, feedback was gathered through open discussions and various forms of input, including written and visual responses, as well as voting on different mascot options. This helped shape the initial concepts and direction. In the refinement phase, the ideas were honed and developed further. It started with a co-creation panel, followed by live drawing sessions with a professional design agency that brought the initial mascot concepts to life.



*Live drawing sessions with youth brought the new SID mascot to life*

The result is Ally, a bird-like robot mascot designed to protect young people from online risks and inspire confidence. Every detail of the new design emerged from careful discussions, feedback, and creative input. Multiple gender-neutral name options were considered in bringing a fast, brave, well-equipped, and reliable companion for internet safety to life. Final adjustments to the design included refining its appearance and ensuring it remained inclusive, relatable, and confident.

The feedback from young people involved in this process was overwhelmingly positive, with many appreciating the inclusive, gender-neutral approach, making the mascot more relatable to a broad audience. The redesign process underscored the importance of involving youth participation in shaping a mascot that truly resonates with its intended users.

This co-creation process was hugely successful, resulting in Ally, a mascot that embodies internet safety while reflecting the perspectives and values of young people. The initiative highlighted the value of involving youth in such projects, ensuring the new mascot is both engaging and relevant for today's audience.

Ally leads the Safer Internet Day celebrations from 2025 and beyond.





Meet Ally, the new SID mascot for 2025 and beyond!

Learn more about Safer Internet Day celebrations at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/saferinternetday](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/saferinternetday).

Learn more about BIK Youth more generally at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-youth](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-youth).



### Launch of the new BIK platform (October 2024)

**A new and improved Better Internet for Kids platform was launched in October 2024, and is now an official EU website.**

The BIK platform provides information, guidance and resources on better internet issues from the joint [Insafe-INHOPE network](#) of Safer Internet Centres in Europe and other key stakeholders for all those who support or educate children and young people in their online lives.

In addition to ‘old favourites’, like [news](#), [events](#) and [campaigns](#) from European Safer Internet Centres and beyond, and links to the [national awareness raising, helpline and hotline services](#), the site also provides:

- ▶ Various guides about current online challenges and ways to empower young people online.

For example, the [resources directory](#) provides access to a range of resources created by Safer Internet Centres in national languages, targeted to age, topic, or type of resource.

A new [guide to age assurance](#) offers practical guidance to digital services providers throughout a self-assessment process. It also provides relevant questions about age assurance to attain a robust and critically reflected decision-making process regarding the protection of minors online. Additional toolkit materials help parents and families learn more about this important topic.

- ▶ Joining the popular [Teacher and educator corner](#) is a new [Parent and caregiver corner](#), designed to support parents, caregivers, and generally any guardian-type figure to help children and young people navigate the digital world. Sections are dedicated to some

of the most topical concerns for parents, such as parental controls, gaming, and managing screen time. In addition, a range of learning modules and deep dive articles are provided to ensure parents and caregivers have the knowledge required to understand the risks and opportunities that accompany the digital experiences of youth, and help develop the skills to support them to manage and benefit from these experiences.

- ▶ An upgraded [BIK Youth corner](#) highlights the importance of involving young people in discussions concerning a safer and better internet. It spotlights the BIK Youth Programme, which offers various avenues for young individuals to share their ideas, viewpoints, and experiences aligned with the three pillars of the BIK+ strategy to protect, respect and empower children and young people online. It also informs young people on how they can get involved in their national youth activities.

The shining star of the new platform is the new [BIK Knowledge hub](#): a key access point for information, evidence, policy and practice insights. It evidences the impact of digital transformation on the lives of children and young people in the EU, Iceland, and Norway (EU 27+2). Its heart and soul is a [BIK Policy monitor](#), a key feature that provides a comprehensive review of the state of implementation of the [BIK+ strategy](#) across Member States, Iceland and Norway. It presents annually updated data in the form of the annual [BIK Policy monitor report](#), and includes an interactive Policy map and Policy index, supplemented by individual country profiles.

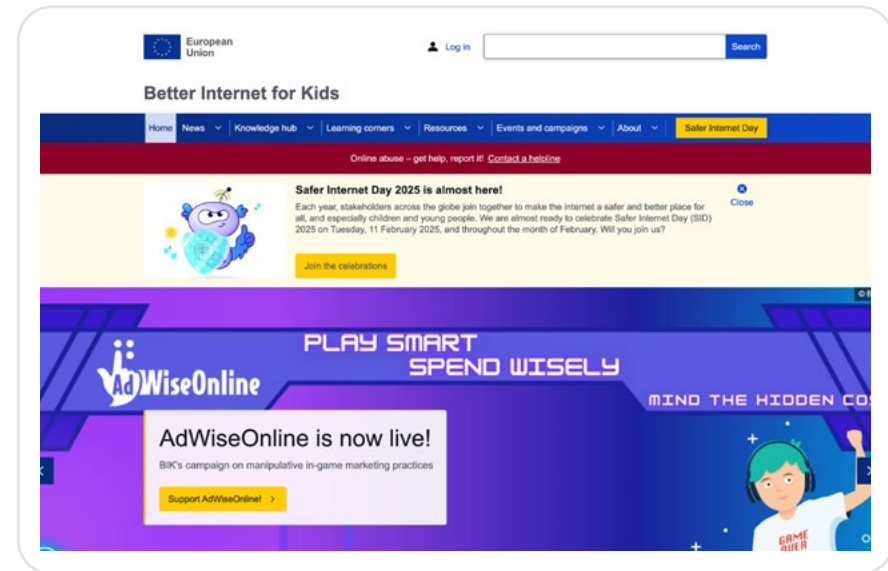


The Knowledge hub is complemented by two directories: the [Rules and guidelines directory](#) provides an overview of relevant policies, strategies, and governmental initiatives for implementing the BIK+ strategy, while the [Research and reports directory](#) collates timely and relevant research and evidence informing the implementation of the BIK+ strategy.

A new “[Get help](#)” page – accessible from a banner on every page – provides information in all EU languages on how to contact the helpline services available across Europe.

Moreover, the entire platform is designed to be more user-friendly and accessible, with improved search functions across the site.

Explore the new BIK platform at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu).



### Safer Internet Forum 2024 – a youth-led event (November 2024)

The Safer Internet Forum (SIF) is a key annual international conference in Europe where policymakers, researchers, law enforcement bodies, youth, parents and caregivers, 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 on 21 November 2024 with a theme of *Where's the harm? Protecting children and young people against inappropriate content and bullying online*.

The event was organised in a youth-led manner, with young people playing an active role in planning, preparing and delivering the Forum through the Safer Internet Forum Youth Advisory Group, the BIK Youth Panel, and – new for 2024 – an International Youth Panel. A total of 48 young people from 28 countries gathered in Brussels and online to ensure their voices were heard. Over 200 participants joined the event in person, and more than 450 people participated online, jointly representing 50 countries across the world.

Safer Internet Forum 2024 placed a particular focus on pillar 1 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 took stock of the new DSA rules and their implementation, discussed the risks of exposure to potentially harmful online content and behaviour, including cyberbullying, and explored the tools and strategies currently available or needed to mitigate these risks.

The agenda included a *keynote session by Professor Debbie Ging, from Dublin University*, which considered young people's exposure to harmful content and behaviour online. This was followed by a *multistakeholder panel discussion* on online harms, and especially finding the balance between protection and empowerment. Panellists included a Member of the European Parliament (MEP), European Commission representatives, and Safer Internet Centre representatives. New for this edition, BIK Youth representatives then led their own series of interactive workshops covering topics such as misinformation, body image, and sexualisation of the internet.



Safer Internet Forum 2024 focused on protecting children and young people from online harms





In the afternoon, deep dive sessions encouraged fruitful discussions focused on young people's harmful experiences online. Topics covered included exposure to violent and aggressive content online, alongside the impact of cyberbullying and the reluctance to report. A [closing keynote by Prof. dr. Jessica Piotrowski \(University of Amsterdam\)](#), and [panel discussions](#) explored how to foster children's and young people's mental health and well-being online and act against cyberbullying.

Find further information about [Safer Internet Forum 2024](#) on the Better Internet for Kids platform, including presentations and recordings of the sessions.

### SIF Youth Advisory Group

The SIF Youth Advisory Group (SIF YAG) is a group of young people who take the driving seat in the organisation of the annual Safer Internet Forum. Each year, a new SIF YAG is convened from existing BIK Youth Ambassadors who have shown active participation at national and European levels, ensuring a spread of gender, age, and geographical balance between participants. Accordingly, to support the organisation of SIF 2024, a group of six ambassadors was formed.

Starting in July 2024, the SIF YAG members joined the BIK Coordination Team for nine online preparatory meetings leading up to SIF 2024. During these meetings, the SIF YAG contributed to the creation of the event from its inception by voicing their opinions and recommendations on the title, through to developing the agenda, including the structure of the interventions within the various sessions. As the agenda took shape, the SIF YAG also decided on their own roles as moderators and co-hosts during SIF 2024 and worked in pairs or individually to adapt their sessions with their inputs and questions.







*SIF Youth Advisory Group members Dónal (Ireland) and Sanya (Italy) opened the proceedings at Safer Internet Forum 2024*



*SIF Youth Advisory Group members João (Portugal) and Diya (Finland) chaired a high-level panel at Safer Internet Forum 2024*

Moreover, SIF YAG members were involved in facilitating two out of the seven deep dive sessions at the SIF, with a particular focus on cyberbullying and screen time.

### BIK Youth Panel

Within the framework of the Better Internet for Kids initiative, a BIK Youth Panel is convened for each edition of the Safer Internet Forum. This initiative empowers a group of young panellists to articulate not only their individual perspectives and concerns on internet safety and required improvements, but also to advocate for the views of their peers on a European scale.

In the 2024 edition of the Forum, in addition to the traditional BIK Youth Panel formed of youth representatives from EU co-funded Safer Internet Centres, a new International Youth Panel was convened, including young people from Armenia, Brazil, Ghana, Ukraine, and Türkiye (all representing the SIC+ programme). Additionally, five young people from Australia collaborated remotely with the BIK Youth Panel and joined the SIF online.

During online preparatory sessions in the months preceding SIF, the young people got acquainted with topics related to internet safety and privacy, determined the focus topics and key messages for their youth-led workshops, and devised a dramatic intervention for the plenary session.



A “behind the scenes” video gives a flavour of the extensive youth participation which contributed to the success of Safer Internet Forum 2024.



*Youth voices took centre stage at Safer Internet Forum 2024  
Watch the video on YouTube to see their preparations and hear directly from the young changemakers*

Find out more about the BIK Youth programme generally at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-youth](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-youth).

*The implementation of the BIK+ strategy places an expanding focus on BIK Youth Ambassadors and BIK Youth Panels to support peer-to-peer activities at national, regional and local levels.  
Accordingly, the first child-led evaluation of the BIK+ strategy took place in 2024. The first findings will be published on Safer Internet Day 2025*



### Safer Internet Centre+ programme: sharing good practice beyond Europe

The Safer Internet Centre+ (SIC+) programme is a collaboration between the European network of Safer Internet Centres and like-minded organisations around the world focused on keeping children and young people safe online. It takes the form of a scheme offering opportunities to a number of organisations from neighbouring and/or third countries to take part in European safer and better internet activities, complemented by a range of online meetings and webinars to support capacity building and exchange of ideas and experiences.

Overall, the programme has three objectives:

- ▶ To foster knowledge sharing and capacity building on successful initiatives on online safety for children and young people.
- ▶ To promote the development and implementation of innovative actions to increase the participation of third-country organisations in online safety initiatives and best practices.
- ▶ To address common challenges in the field of online safety for children and young people by promoting cooperation with the Insafe-INHOPE network.

The initial piloting phase of the SIC+ programme (2020-21) included organisations from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Serbia and Ukraine. Following the success of the pilot phase, the SIC+ programme was extended during a second phase (2022-23), with additional members from Albania, Ghana, the Republic of Moldova, Pakistan, South Africa and Türkiye joining the programme. A further phase was subsequently initiated to support SIC+ members working in small clusters in tackling the digital safety issues most pertinent to them, with representatives from Kosovo and Montenegro also joining the programme.

Throughout 2024, SIC+ members have collaborated with colleagues in the European network of Safer Internet Centres to benefit from their experiences. A small delegation travelled to Belgium in November 2024 to participate in the SIF and other capacity-building actions in person.

.....  
*Discover more about the SIC+ programme and its participants – on the [Better Internet for Kids platform](#).*



## New European Commission (December 2024)

**Five years after first taking office as President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen was re-elected for a second mandate in July 2024 to lead a new College of Commissioners to deliver the 2024-2029 work programme. The new European Commission subsequently took office on 1 December 2024.**

While the EC's focus is far-ranging across many different topics that affect Europeans at large, there is a definite focus on the safety and empowerment of young people online. Among the digital priorities set in the 2024-2029 work programme are measures against cyberbullying, research into the impacts of social media on well-being, combatting unethical techniques online, such as the addictive design of some online services, disinformation, and protecting the mental health of children and young people – particularly online.

President von der Leyen also wants *“to make sure that young people can use their voice – their own voice – to help shape our future”*.

She further commented:

*“The early and teenage years are critical for brain and personality development – and are also times of vulnerability to harms from social media and excessive screen time. We must have an open and evidence-based debate on this issue. This is why we will launch an EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media on well-being. We will tackle unethical techniques used by online platforms by taking action on the addictive design of online services, such as infinite scroll, default auto play or constant push. We will also firmly combat the growing trend of abusive behaviour online with an action plan against cyberbullying.”*

Young people are among the most vulnerable in society, and as frequent and early users of technology, they are even more so in the digital space. They are at risk of exploitation in various forms, be it from predators online, dark algorithms built to keep them zoned into their screens for unhealthy periods of time or on inappropriate content, or companies who use unethical means to market their products on channels mainly designed for them.

Building on over 20 years of expertise, the BIK initiative will play an important role in responding to these very challenges. Everything BIK does revolves around making the internet a positive place for young people, where they can enjoy entertainment, friendships and a treasury of knowledge without the risk of exploitation, manipulation, danger or any kind of harm, be it mental, emotional or physical. Supported by the EC's attention to these issues, the BIK initiative will play a crucial role in driving this work forward to ensure that every child in Europe is protected, empowered and respected online.





## Internet Governance Forum (IGF) (December 2024)

The annual *Internet Governance Forum (IGF)* serves to bring people from various stakeholder groups together, as equals, in discussions on public policy issues relating to the internet. This year's edition – the 19<sup>th</sup> annual IGF meeting – was hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 15 to 19 December 2024 in Riyadh at the King Abdulaziz International Conference Center. The meeting was held under the overarching theme of *Building our multistakeholder digital future*.

As in previous years, an Insafe delegation was in attendance to promote the Better Internet for Kids initiative on behalf of the European Commission. In addition, Insafe hosted a Day 0 event on online first aid for children, highlighting the critical role of child helplines in ensuring digital safety and well-being. Representatives from the Belgian and Polish Safer Internet Centres delivered engaging presentations on topics such as combating cyberbullying, non-consensual intimate images (NCII), and sextortion, along with the challenges posed by artificial intelligence.

In line with all BIK actions, the session included an inspiring intervention by the Portuguese BIK Youth Ambassador, representing the voices of young leaders from across Europe. His perspectives underscored the importance of child-led initiatives in shaping safe and inclusive digital environments.

In addition, the Insafe delegation contributed to a joint session hosted by the Dynamic Coalition on Child Rights in the Digital Environment (DC-CRIDE) and the Dynamic Coalition on the Internet of Things (DC-IoT) focused on creating a better, safer, and more age-aware IoT ecosystem. The discussions highlighted critical steps and action points to ensure children's rights are respected within the expanding Internet of Things landscape.

This year, a key focus was promoting the upcoming Safer Internet Day (SID) 2025, celebrated annually in February. A particular highlight of the booth

was the introduction of a new SID mascot, *co-created with young people from across Europe*. Visitors were invited to meet the mascot and learn about its story, reflecting the collaborative effort of youth in shaping the initiative.



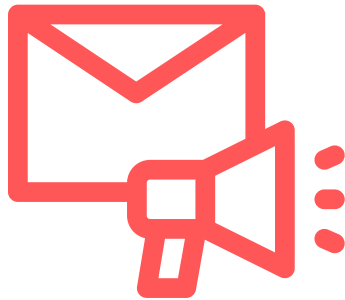
An Insafe booth at the 2024 Internet Governance Forum promoted the Better Internet for Kids initiative in Europe and the annual, global Safer Internet Day campaign

Moreover, the booth offered opportunities for stakeholders to connect and exchange ideas on advancing safer internet practices globally. It also highlighted the collective impact of Safer Internet Centres in implementing national initiatives under the BIK initiative.

Find out more about [network participation at the Internet Governance Forum on the Better Internet for Kids platform](#).



The Better Internet for Kids bulletin is a quarterly electronic newsletter which aims to keep readers informed on online safety issues and opportunities. Each edition provides a topical focus article looking at the latest trends in online life, with features from youth, industry, and the research community, along with a mix of news and resources from key stakeholders in the field, including the European network of Safer Internet Centres, operating under the banner of Insafe and INHOPE.



Read past editions of the BIK bulletin – and subscribe to receive future editions – at [better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-bulletin](https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-bulletin).

## The BIK bulletin

The **March 2024** edition placed a spotlight on **evidence-based campaigning activities** as a method for raising awareness of safer and better internet issues and empowering young people – and those who care for them – to thrive online and embrace the many benefits offered. This edition also provided news on the two new pilot campaign activities: AdWiseOnline (focusing on youth consumer protection online) and MediaSmartOnline (focusing on media literacy).

The **June 2024** edition focused on **virtual worlds**, drawing on a multistakeholder panel discussion on the same subject, providing insights from various perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of this next-generation technology. In addition, the bulletin included news from the latest round of the **BIK Policy monitor** exercise, as well as insights into considerations for **age assurance** typologies and requirements for online tools and platforms.

An **October 2024** edition of the BIK bulletin focussed on the **new Better Internet for Kids platform**, introducing readers to a range of new and improved resources designed to empower those supporting children and young people online. A particular highlight of this edition was a detailed dive into the new **BIK Knowledge Hub**, which serves as a central access point for information, evidence, and policy insights. It also invited readers to register for the 2024 edition of the Safer Internet Forum (SIF), alongside previews of the work of the **BIK Youth Panel**, **International Youth Panel**, and the **SIF Youth Advisory Group**.

The topical issue spotlighted in the **December 2024** edition of the BIK bulletin was **manipulative marketing practices in online gaming** as a preview of the latest AdWiseOnline campaign, launching early in 2025. This edition also provided an overview of the recent youth-led Safer Internet Forum, which explored **Where's the harm? Protecting children and young people against inappropriate content and bullying online**.

**The BIK+ strategy aims to ensure that all children and young people are protected, empowered and respected online, irrespective of their personal circumstances or vulnerabilities. To support ALL children, the digital environment must be diverse, inclusive, non-discriminatory and free of stereotypes.**



## 2024 IN FIGURES



### Safer Internet Day

On Safer Internet Day 2024, almost **19,000 schools** and over **17,000 other organisations** were involved in Safer Internet Centre actions across Europe alone. Many more stakeholders were reached across the globe, with almost **190 countries and territories** participating in celebrations in some way.



### BIK Youth

More than **2,100 events** involved youth participation throughout 2024.



### Resources

Throughout the year, over **35 million European citizens** were reached, providing them with more than **2,300 new resources**.

Network resources continue to respond to various online opportunities and challenges, including topics such as **algorithms, artificial intelligence, cyberbullying, online harms, media literacy, healthy screen use, and digital marketing tactics**, alongside many others.

These figures represent most Insafe network Safer Internet Centres (i.e. those operating in the EU Member States, plus Albania and Norway). Iceland and North Macedonia are not counted in these figures.



### Helplines

In 2024, Insafe helplines handled over **54,000 calls** with **cyberbullying** being the main issue discussed; 14% of contacts related to this.

Contacts relating to sexual issues (including grooming), the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and the online sexual coercion and extortion of children (sextortion) accounted for 24% of all contacts.

Teens are the group most likely to contact a helpline, and around half of all contacts come from this group.

Despite an increase in the number of helplines offering chat and other means of contact, the phone is still the most popular way for children and young people to reach out to a helpline with around 50% of contacts made this way.



### Reporting\*

In 2024, INHOPE hotlines identified and exchanged nearly **2.5 million suspected online records of CSAM**. This figure represents individual pieces of content—images and/or videos—input into ICCAM. Of these, over **920,500 were new content, meaning analysts were processing previously unseen material**.

**65% of the total records were confirmed as illegal**, and, subsequently, national law enforcement agencies (LEAs) were informed and a notice and takedown issued to the hosting provider.

\* These figures represent all INHOPE member hotlines, not just those which are EU co-funded.

\*\* ICCAM is INHOPE's secure software solution to collect, exchange and categorise reports on child sexual abuse material (CSAM), funded by the EU. ICCAM is used by INHOPE hotlines in different jurisdictions (countries) and INTERPOL. The name ICCAM is derived from the phrase "I see child abuse material".





### WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2025?

**This report is launched on Safer Internet Day 2025, when stakeholders across the globe will once again join together for a better internet. It highlights the importance of a multifaceted approach to creating a safer and better internet.**

While the annual SID celebration provides a focus point for raising awareness of our work, it also allows us to look towards the future priorities for continuing to implement the actions of the BIK+ strategy and associated measures during 2025.

For example, under the new Commission, the protection and empowerment of children will remain a priority. Efforts will include ensuring a better internet for children, with an EU-wide inquiry into the impacts of social media on well-being, an action plan on cyberbullying, and monitoring of unethical techniques by platforms, such as addictive design.

These are subjects to which the European network of Safer Internet Centres can strongly contribute, building on its extensive experience and competence. The focus on the action plan on cyberbullying will be particularly important since this issue has consistently been the main reason for children to contact Safer Internet Centre helplines in the last five years. There are already solid good practices in the network to tackle cyberbullying, which has the potential to inspire Member States and be leveraged at the EU level.

Also in 2025, the EU will continue the ongoing enforcement of the Digital Services Act and will deliver guidelines for all online platforms to ensure a high level of privacy, safety, and security for young users.

Last but not least, the Commission, along with Member States, will continue working towards a European approach to age verification, developing a secure, privacy-preserving, and interoperable age verification solution in 2025, in preparation for the EU Digital Wallet's availability by the end of 2026.

This is just a taster of what's to come for Better Internet for Kids in 2025. We hope you will join us in our continuing journey of supporting EU citizens – and especially children, young people, parents, caregivers, teachers and educators – to become empowered and responsible digital users.

We encourage you to stay tuned to the [Better Internet for Kids platform](#), the [quarterly BIK bulletin](#), and our [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) and [LinkedIn](#) profiles for the latest news and developments across all our areas of activity, and for opportunities to get involved.



# Better Internet for Kids



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