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# **The Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy Monitor Report 2025**

**Better Internet** for Kids

# The Better Internet for Kids Policy Monitor Report 2025

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## List of abbreviations

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<b>AI</b>	Artificial intelligence
<b>AVMSD</b>	Audiovisual Media Services Directive
<b>BIK</b>	Better Internet for Kids
<b>BIK+</b>	The new European strategy for a better internet for kids
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>DSA</b>	Digital Services Act
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>eID</b>	European Digital Identity Framework
<b>EUDI</b>	European Digital Identity Regulation
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>SIC</b>	Safer Internet Centre
<b>SID</b>	Safer Internet Day
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

## Executive summary

The [Better Internet for Kids \(BIK\) Policy monitor](#) has been developed to compare and exchange knowledge on different approaches to developing and implementing policies and activities promoting children's safety and well-being in the digital environment based on the recommended measures in the [European strategy for a better internet for kids \(BIK+ strategy\)](#). It builds on [previous policy mapping studies](#) and reviews the implementation of the BIK+ strategy in the EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway. It presents findings on the level of policies, examining frameworks, design and evidence-based approaches, governance, and stakeholder involvement, and on the level of implementation of actions related to the BIK+ strategy's three pillars: safe digital experiences, digital empowerment, and active participation (BIK+ actions).

The 2025 edition of the BIK Policy monitor report tracks developments in policy-making and the implementation of measures promoting children's safety, well-being, empowerment, and participation in the digital environment three years after the adoption of the BIK+ strategy. The findings presented in this report are intended to be read in conjunction with individual [BIK Policy monitor country profiles](#), which can be explored online via the [BIK Knowledge hub](#).

### Key findings

Key findings from the BIK Policy monitor 2025 indicate that the protection and empowerment of minors online are prioritised across all EU Member States and in Iceland and Norway. This is evident in both national policies and actions. The increased focus on this issue reflects not just the BIK+ strategy but also key national drivers, an extensive EU-wide legal framework, governance system, and support infrastructure dedicated to this topic. While the BIK Policy monitor finds that countries give most attention to pillar 2 - digital empowerment, it is crucial to maintain a balanced approach that ensures young people's protection, empowerment, and active online participation.

## Policies

### Policy frameworks

Overall, **almost all countries address BIK-related topics as an important policy priority** (28 of 29<sup>1</sup>). A third of countries (nine of 29<sup>2</sup>) report that these topics are comprehensively addressed in national laws, regulations, and policies. Equally, the **BIK+ strategy considerably influences national policy development** (in 19 of 29 countries<sup>3</sup>), informing and guiding policies, even if not always explicitly referenced. However, policy provision is more commonly addressed through **separate, dedicated policies** (in 21 of 29 countries<sup>4</sup>), rather than a single overarching framework (as is in place in two of 29 countries<sup>5</sup>). The **recognition of children's rights in relation to the digital environment** in national legal and policy frameworks remained stable (in comparison to the [2024 report](#)).

### Policy design

Regarding policy design, around a **third of countries have regular, dedicated data collection on children's digital activities** (10 of 29<sup>6</sup>), while many still lack systematic data. Approximately **half of the countries regularly collect data on online risks, harms, and well-being** (14 of 29<sup>7</sup>). Most countries (24 of 29<sup>8</sup>) report having some form of **information system in place to inform policy development**, though this often relies on third-party sources. The majority of countries (27 of 29<sup>9</sup>) **lack a central, long-term, government-supported research fund specifically dedicated to children and the digital environment**. A majority of countries (20 of 29<sup>10</sup>) report **regular monitoring and**

<sup>1</sup> In Bulgaria, the BIK+ strategy is described as present in national policy, though not a priority.

<sup>2</sup> CY, DK, HR, HU, IE, IT, MT, NO, PT.

<sup>3</sup> BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, IE, IS, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SK.

<sup>4</sup> BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE.

<sup>5</sup> NO, SK.

<sup>6</sup> BE, DE, HU, IS, IT, LU, NO, PT, SE, SK.

<sup>7</sup> AT, BE, DE, EE, FI, HU, IS, IT, NL, NO, MT, PT, SE, SK.

<sup>8</sup> AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK.

<sup>9</sup> Exceptions are BG and IT.

<sup>10</sup> AT, BE, CY, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK.

**evaluation of BIK-related policies**, although systematic approaches are not as widely adopted.

### *Policy governance*

Policy governance is often characterised by **distributed responsibility across multiple government ministries** (in 19 of 29 countries<sup>11</sup>). Coordination mechanisms vary, with some countries (nine of 29<sup>12</sup>) having clearly defined functions while others rely on more informal arrangements (17 of 29<sup>13</sup>). There is a **positive trend with an increasing number of countries reporting a national action plan, strategy, or equivalent in place** (in 12 of 29 countries<sup>14</sup>) to support their BIK-related policies (in comparison to the [2024 report](#) where 10 of 29 countries reported an action plan to be in place).

### *Stakeholder involvement*

Involving stakeholders in policy-making processes is recognised as vital, with various mechanisms in place, including multi-stakeholder forums (in 22 of 29 countries<sup>15</sup>). **Public consultation on digital policies is relatively common** (routinely in 10 of 29 countries<sup>16</sup>), often triggered by new policy development (in nine of 29 countries<sup>17</sup>). Levels of **youth involvement in policy design are more mixed** (youth are described as actively involved in policy design in eight of 29 countries<sup>18</sup>), but there is a positive trend in establishing specially designed processes for youth participation, as reported under BIK+ pillar 3 below.

<sup>11</sup> BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MT, NO, PT, SE, SI.

<sup>12</sup> CY, HU, IE, IS, IT, MT, NO, PT, SK.

<sup>13</sup> AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, LU, LV, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI.

<sup>14</sup> CY, ES, HU, IE, IS, IT, LV, NO, PT, RO, SI, SK.

<sup>15</sup> AT, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK.

<sup>16</sup> DE, DK, HU, IE, IS, IT, LV, MT, NO, SI.

<sup>17</sup> CY, CZ, EE, ES, FI, PL, PT, SE, SK.

<sup>18</sup> ES, IE, IT, MT, NO, PL, SI, SK.

## BIK+ actions

*Pillar 1 – safe digital experiences*

In comparison to the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), significant progress is reported in **implementing EU laws**, with Digital Services Coordinators (DSCs) taking protective measures concerning the protection of minors (in 14 of 29 countries in place, and in nine further countries, such measures are in development<sup>19</sup>). Additionally, several countries have national codes of practice (seven of 29 countries reported to have such in place, nine further ones reported such codes to be in development<sup>20</sup>). These include codes based on EU legal measures such as AVMSD (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) and national, non-binding codes.

Approaches to defining **harmful online content** vary, with many relying on existing laws (13 of 29 countries<sup>21</sup>), while a majority have bodies that can order content removal (20 of 29<sup>22</sup>). Most countries have laws addressing **harmful online conduct**, such as in relation to intimate image abuse (26 of 29 countries<sup>23</sup>) or addressing certain aspects of cyberbullying (in 18 of 29 countries<sup>24</sup>), alongside complaint mechanisms for individuals, including children (in 24 of 29 countries<sup>25</sup>).

**Age verification** is receiving considerable policy attention (reported as in place or in development in 20 countries<sup>26</sup>), with several countries developing national policies and legal frameworks, including exploring the EU Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI) for minors (in 15 of 29 countries<sup>27</sup>). **Consumer codes of practice** related to commercial content are widely available (in 19 of 29 countries<sup>28</sup>), though largely self-regulatory. **Safeguarding children's mental health and well-being online**

<sup>19</sup> In place: AT, DE, DK, EL, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, RO, SE; In development: BE, BG, CY, ES, IE, IS, LU, PL, PT.

<sup>20</sup> In place: DE, FI, IE, NL, PL, PT, SE; In development: BE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LU, MT, NO, SI.

<sup>21</sup> AT, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, HU, LU, NL, NO, SE, SK.

<sup>22</sup> BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI.

<sup>23</sup> AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IE, IS, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK.

<sup>24</sup> AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, NO, PT, RO, SE, SK.

<sup>25</sup> AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK.

<sup>26</sup> In place: BE, DE, DK, EE, EL, FR, HU, IE, LT, PT; In development: CZ, ES, IS, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL, RO, SI.

<sup>27</sup> In place: BE, DE, EL, FI, IT, LV, NL; In development: DK, ES, FR, HR, MT, NO, PL, SI.

<sup>28</sup> BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IS, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL, SE, SK.

is an emerging priority, with most countries having in place or currently implementing relevant measures (22 of 29 countries<sup>29</sup>).

## ***Pillar 2 – digital empowerment***

There are **high levels of activity reported in all aspects of incorporating online safety in schools**, including integrating online safety in national primary and secondary level curricula (in place in 24 of 29 countries<sup>30</sup>), school policies (in place in 23 of 29 countries<sup>31</sup>), informal education supports (in place in 25 of 29 countries<sup>32</sup>), and teacher training (in place in 23 of 29 countries<sup>33</sup>). **Training in basic digital skills** is considered a core part of the curriculum in many countries (17 of 29<sup>34</sup>), with increasing attention to AI literacy. **Tackling disinformation and fostering critical media literacy** is a key education priority across almost all countries (27 of 29<sup>35</sup>). Initiatives encouraging **children’s digital creativity** through formal education and extracurricular activities are also widely present (in 23 of 29 countries<sup>36</sup>).

## ***Pillar 3 – active participation, respecting children***

While many countries are placing greater emphasis on **effective youth participation** within their national youth strategies (in place in 21 countries<sup>37</sup>) and have put in place mechanisms to facilitate youth involvement in policymaking (in 17 of 29 countries<sup>38</sup>), the levels of involvement, as reported above, remain low. There are widespread activities to **promote awareness of children’s rights** in the digital environment (in place in 23 of 29 countries<sup>39</sup>). While the availability of government systems for publishing **child-friendly versions of policy documents**

<sup>29</sup> In place: BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FI, HR, IE, IS, LU, LV, MT, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE; In development: ES, SI, SK.

<sup>30</sup> AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK.

<sup>31</sup> AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO, SK.

<sup>32</sup> AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IS, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK.

<sup>33</sup> AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IS, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK.

<sup>34</sup> AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, LU, NO, RO, SE, SK.

<sup>35</sup> In place in all surveyed countries, except for DK and CY, which reported this to be in development.

<sup>36</sup> AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MT, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK.

<sup>37</sup> AT, BE, BG, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK.

<sup>38</sup> BE, BG, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, HR, IE, IS, IT, MT, NO, PL, PT, SI, SK.

<sup>39</sup> AT, BE, BG, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK.

remains uneven (in place in six countries; in development in four countries<sup>40</sup>), there has been some progress. Support for **positive digital content and services** for children is noted in many countries (16 of 29<sup>41</sup>), relying primarily on public broadcasters and Safer Internet Centres (SICs). The majority of countries are addressing **digital inclusion** through some targeted measures, though a number of countries commented in their submissions that more needs to be done on this issue.

## Recommendations

The report finds that there has been **further progress in realising the vision of the BIK+ strategy** across all EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway since its adoption in 2022. It proposes a set of recommendations to address the **challenges and areas for improvement identified**, including promoting integrated national strategies, investing in data collection, establishing robust coordination bodies, implementing systematic monitoring, strengthening youth participation, prioritising children's digital rights, supporting child-friendly documentation, and continuously monitoring emerging digital trends.

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<sup>40</sup> In place: BE, BG, ES, IT, MT, PT; In development: HR, IE, NL, SI.

<sup>41</sup> AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EL, FI, HR, IT, LT, MT, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK.



# Chapter 1: Introduction

The BIK Policy monitor report 2025 is the latest instalment in a [long-running series of policy mapping studies](#) that track developments in policy-making related to the [European strategy for a better internet for kids \(BIK+ strategy\)](#) in all EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The main objective of this series is 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 BIK+. Now part of the new [BIK Knowledge hub](#), the [Policy monitor](#) comprises various information resources which, in addition to this report, include an [interactive data portal](#), [29 individual country profiles](#) and two directories ([Rules and guidelines](#) and [Research and reports](#)) that provide a comprehensive overview of how BIK+ is being implemented across Europe.

## 1.1 About the BIK+ strategy

On 11 May 2022, the European Commission adopted the new BIK+ strategy. Building on the original [European strategy for a better internet for children](#) from 2012 and previous phases of the Safer Internet Programme, the evolution of the strategy as BIK+ continues to reflect the EU's commitment to safeguarding children online. As the digital arm of the [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#), BIK+ is Europe's comprehensive approach to ensuring that children's rights are respected online, that they enjoy safety and privacy, and that they are equipped with the necessary skills to avail of the many opportunities the online world affords.

The central vision of the BIK+ strategy is captured in the statement: "*Age-appropriate digital services, with no one left behind and with every child in Europe protected, empowered and respected online*" (BIK+, 2022, p. 9). It aims for accessible, age-appropriate and informative online content and services that are in children's best interests, building on three key pillars:

1. **Safe digital experiences** to protect children from harmful and illegal content, conduct, contact and consumer risks and to improve their well-being



online through a safe, age-appropriate digital environment, created in a way that respects children's best interests.

2. **Digital empowerment**, so children acquire the necessary skills and competencies to make sound choices and express themselves in the online environment safely and responsibly.
3. **Active participation**, respecting children by giving them a say in the digital environment, with more child-led activities to foster innovative and creative safe digital experiences.

The three pillars also form the cornerstones for the Policy monitor in its overview of the wide range of policies and actions implemented at the national and regional level, covering the many parts of this agenda.

Of course, the BIK+ strategy is not the only policy at the EU level to address children's safety and well-being online. The [European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade](#) (2022), which underpins the EU's vision for a human-centred and rights-based digital transformation, includes protecting and empowering children in the digital environment as a core tenet.

More recently, the [Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024–2029](#) reaffirm the commitment to support young people online with a focus on three key areas:

- Combating the growing trend of abusive behaviour online with an action plan against cyberbullying;
- Launching an EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media on well-being;
- Taking action on the addictive design of online services, such as infinite scroll, default auto-play, or constant push.

### 1.1.1 BIK+ in the context of European key legislative initiatives

In recent years, the European Union has brought forward several highly significant legislative and policy measures that directly address children's online protection and empowerment. These include the [Digital Services Act](#) (DSA), the revised [Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#) (AVMSD), the [CSA Directive: Child Sexual Abuse Directive](#) and its Recast, the [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR), the [AI Act](#), the [Regulation for a European Identity Framework](#) and the [Unfair Commercial Practices Directive](#). This evolving framework is also complemented by further proposed EU laws, such as the 2022 proposal for a [Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse](#) and the more recent commitment to develop a [Digital Fairness Act](#).

A [compendium of legislation](#) published by the European Commission provides a detailed guide to related laws, legislative proposals, strategies, and measures, which add context to the BIK+ strategy.

## 1.2 About the BIK Policy monitor

The BIK Policy monitor is now established as an annual survey of policy developments and concrete initiatives carried out in EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway to implement the [BIK+ strategy](#). It combines data provided by national contacts with other relevant information compiled by the BIK team. The goal is to enhance awareness and understanding of the different approaches to developing and implementing better internet policies, thereby enhancing knowledge exchange and supporting further development of this key policy priority.

The specific objectives of the policy monitor are to:

- **Compare public policies, actions, and initiatives** related to implementing the BIK+ strategy in EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway, including providing more contextual information for each country.
- **Identify trends and emerging issues** both in policy development and in implementation.

- **Share good practices** related to the BIK+ strategy under its three pillars: 1 – safe digital experiences, 2 – digital empowerment, and 3 – active participation, respecting children.

Data for the BIK Policy monitor is compiled using an annually updated, standardised [questionnaire](#) completed by national contacts in each EU Member State, Iceland, and Norway. National contacts are nominated by the national representatives to the [European Commission's Expert Group on Safer Internet for Children](#), which was created in 2019 to help improve coordination and cooperation between EU countries and propose concrete actions to protect children online. The close association between the BIK Policy monitor and the expert group's work ensures that the BIK Policy monitor receives high-level national attention and retains a clear focus on relevant BIK-related policies.

### 1.2.1 The conceptual model

The main focus of the BIK Policy monitor report is on two key aspects: a) **Policies** and **policy-making processes** at the national level, and b) **Activities, initiatives and measures** implemented in support of each of the three pillars of BIK+. These are referred to as the **Policies** and **BIK+ actions** dimensions within a larger model (Fig. 1 below), which conceptualises policy positioning regarding children and the digital environment across European countries.

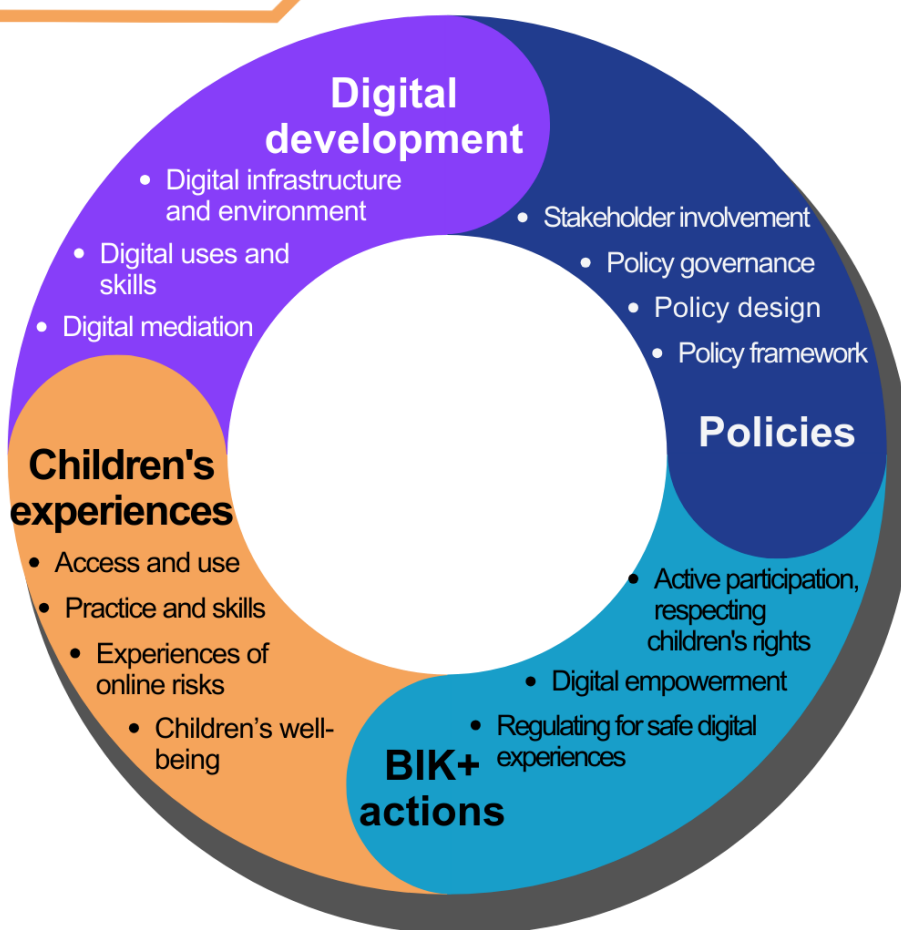


Figure 1: BIK Policy monitor model: four dimensions of the BIK environment

The hypothesis underpinning this work is that policy development (**Policies**) and the implementation of associated activities (**BIK+ actions**) take place in a specific national context shaped by infrastructure and services (**Digital development**) and by the experiences of children participating in the digital environment (**Children's experiences**). These four dimensions frame the annual BIK policy mapping exercise approach and feature prominently in BIK-related policies and policy ecosystems analysis.

### 1.2.2 The annual BIK Policy monitor survey

The annual BIK Policy monitor survey collects detailed information about policies and actions implemented in European countries related to the aims of the BIK+ strategy. This encompasses a broad range of topics, and as a result, several key areas are prioritised.

The [questionnaire of the 2024/25 data collection cycle](#), which took place between November 2024 and February 2025, was administered via [EUSurvey](#), the European Commission's online survey management system. It included a total of 41 items, each featuring a structured, closed response option regarding the level of implementation, along with open text fields to provide background and context for each item. The questionnaire was organised into two main sections as follows:

- **Policies:** 15 questions addressing policy frameworks, policy design, policy governance and stakeholder involvement.
- **BIK+ actions:** 26 questions examining the implementation of actions relevant to the BIK+ strategy's three pillars: pillar 1 – safe digital experiences, pillar 2 – digital empowerment, and pillar 3 – active participation, respecting children.

The [questionnaire of the 2024/25 data collection cycle](#) that feeds into the present report remained largely unchanged from the [2023/24 data collection cycle](#) (for further details, please refer to the [BIK Policy monitor report 2024](#)) to maintain consistency and monitor ongoing trends. However, several new items have been introduced to account for emerging developments, including actions in response to the full implementation of the Digital Services Act and the European Commission's prioritisation of actions to combat cyberbullying, addictive design in digital services, and youth mental health, as outlined in the [EC Political Guidelines 2024-2029](#).

## 1.3 Outline of the report

Following **Chapter 1**, which introduces the BIK+ strategy and the annual BIK Policy monitor exercise, the remainder of the report is organised as follows:

**Chapter 2** – BIK policies in the EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway presents findings on national-level policy-making. This section outlines how countries have incorporated children's online usage into their policies, how these policies are organised and administered, and the degree of significant stakeholder involvement.

**Chapter 3** – BIK+ actions in the EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway presents findings on actions and initiatives within the BIK+ framework and offers a key measure of implementing the three individual pillars of BIK+.

**Chapter 4** – Conclusion provides an overview of BIK-related policies and actions in EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, identifying high-level patterns and trends compared to the last [BIK Policy monitor report \(2024\)](#). The report also adds recommendations for further developing BIK+ implementation, drawing on insights from this year's BIK Policy monitor data.

The BIK Policy monitor report 2025 findings are intended to be read in conjunction with the [BIK Policy monitor country profiles](#), which add relevant detail and context for each participating country.

This year's Policy monitor data can also be explored online in the [BIK Policy map](#), an interactive data dashboard that gives access to single item-level data, and [BIK Policy index](#), which provides an at-a-glance overview of the implementation of the BIK+ strategies across Europe, both hosted on the new [BIK Knowledge hub](#).

Note that the text, charts and tables presenting the data throughout this report, and in particular, under chapters 2 and 3, follow the guidance of the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and use two-letter country codes to abbreviate ([Eurostat glossary: European Union country codes](#)).

## Chapter 2: BIK policies across Europe

Chapter 2 presents the 2025 findings on policies and policy-making in EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway related to implementing the BIK+ strategy. As the BIK+ strategy is a non-binding Communication, follow-up is voluntary in nature, and there are many possible approaches to addressing its key objectives.

Consistent with previous editions of the [BIK Policy monitor report](#), the present section addresses four main topics as follows:

- **Policy frameworks:** the BIK Policy monitor examines the availability of policy frameworks at the national level that address the topic of children and their participation in the digital environment. It also assesses the extent to which the three BIK pillars - protection, empowerment, and participation - are addressed in an integrative fashion or through separate policies ([section 2.1](#)).
- **Policy design:** furthermore, it assesses how policy-making is supported, specifically regarding the availability of evidence to inform the design of BIK-related policies, the characteristics of the research environment, and whether monitoring and evaluation are carried out ([section 2.2](#)).
- **Policy governance:** relatedly, it explores how processes of coordination and management of policies at the governmental level, and the extent to which structured mechanisms, such as a coordinating body and a national action plan, are in place to support their implementation ([section 2.3](#)).
- **Stakeholder involvement:** lastly, in this dimension, it explores opportunities at the national level for relevant stakeholders, including youth stakeholders, to engage in the policy development process ([section 2.4](#)).

These four elements represent the country-level ecosystem for policy work, developing and managing policies related to BIK+ themes and providing a comparative overview of the current situation in all EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway. This chapter presents a high-level overview of European findings with selected examples from individual countries for illustration, and a concise summary is provided in [section 2.5](#). More detailed information is available in the [individual](#)



BIK Policy monitor country profiles online, which are updated annually as part of the annual BIK Policy monitor activity.

## 2.1 Policy frameworks

Policies can take multiple forms, ranging from principles, standards and regulatory documents like acts and regulations, typically statutory in nature, to government plans of action to guide decision-making and to achieve desired outcomes. Policies can therefore be hard to define.<sup>42</sup> Public policy and public policy frameworks, in the sense in which they are presented in the BIK Policy monitor, encompass structured collections of principles, ideas, and long-term goals designed to organise and shape policies or initiatives related to children's online use.<sup>43</sup>

In this section, four key aspects of national-level BIK policies are assessed as follows: as regards how BIK-related topics are addressed in national policies (section 2.1.1), the degree to which various policies on this issue are integrated in a holistic policy framework (section 2.1.2), the influence that the EU's BIK+ strategy may have had on such policies (section 2.1.3), and how explicitly such policies recognise children's rights in the digital environment (section 2.1.4).

### 2.1.1 How a Better Internet for Kids is addressed in national policies

Country respondents were first asked to report on the nature of national policy coverage on topics related to the BIK+ strategy.

<sup>42</sup> Cairney, P. (2020). *Understanding public policy: Theories and issues* (2nd ed). Bloomsbury Academic.

<sup>43</sup> OECD. (2020). *Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance: Baseline Features of Governments that Work Well*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/c03e01b3-en>



Q2.1: Are the issues of the BIK+ strategy (children's online protection, empowerment and participation) addressed in public policy(ies) in your country?

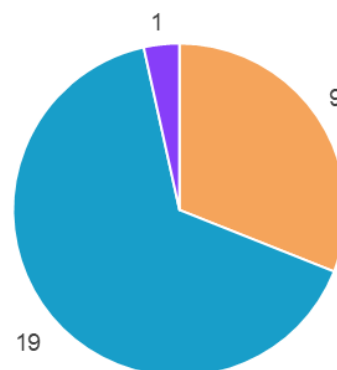


Figure 2: Issues of BIK+ as policy priority

As shown in Figure 2, the vast majority of countries reported that topics related to BIK+ are an important policy priority at the national level.

- Nine countries reported that BIK-related topics are comprehensively addressed in national laws, regulations and policies (CY, DK, HR, HU, IE, IT, MT, NO, PT).
- Nineteen countries stated that BIK-related topics are an important and emerging policy priority that is partially covered in national policies (AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IS, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK).
- In the case of one country (BG), the issues of the BIK+ strategy are described as present in national policy, though not a priority.

The profile of national policies related to BIK+ is similar to the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), noting a small increase, from seven to nine, in the number of countries reporting comprehensive coverage.

### 2.1.2 Nature of policy provision

Next, national respondents assessed the nature of policy provision for BIK-related topics in their country, specifically the extent to which the three BIK+ pillars - protection, empowerment and participation - are addressed within either a single integrated framework, or through separate policies that vary.

Q2.2: Which of the following best describes policy provision for the topic of children and the digital environment?

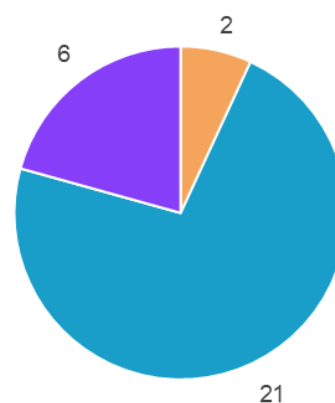


Figure 3: Policy integration

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of countries reported that the BIK+ strategy was covered by a range of separate policies at the national level.

- Just two countries (NO, SK) stated that there is one main overarching policy framework that addresses the topic of children and the digital environment (protection, empowerment, and participation).
- Twenty-one countries described their policy provision for BIK+ as taking the form of separate, dedicated policies (BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE).

- Six countries said that the topic of children and the digital environment is covered by broader policies (e.g., in a national digital strategy) rather than through dedicated policies, and may not cover all aspects of safety and digital protection, empowerment and participation (AT, BG, FI, PT, RO, SI).

Again, there is little change in the profile of policy integration compared to the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), which similarly found that the majority of countries (20) address BIK+ through a range of separate dedicated policies.

### Box 1. Examples of policy frameworks on children and the digital environment

Policy initiatives specifically focused on children and the digital environment have been a noteworthy feature of recent policy-making in European countries. Some examples include:

The **Bulgarian** government adopted the [National Programme for the Prevention of Violence and Abuse of Children 2023-2026](#), a comprehensive programme outlining strategies to combat violence against children, including online threats. It emphasises coordination among institutions and the development of integrated services for victims.

In 2023, the **Danish** government established a [Commission on Wellbeing for Children and Youth](#), which was tasked to investigate the reasons why some children and young people experience low well-being, and to make recommendations on how to contribute to greater well-being among children and young people in Denmark. The Commission published its [35 recommendations](#) in February 2025.

In **Greece**, the [National Strategy for Protecting Minors from Internet Addiction](#) was presented in December 2024, which includes details of a national [parental controls platform](#) as well as details of a Kids Wallet for age verification at the national level.

In June 2024, the **Spanish** government proposed a [Draft Organic Law for the Protection of Children in Digital Environments](#) which includes allowing courts to issue digital restraining orders against individuals posing online threats to minors; raising the minimum age requirement for opening social media accounts from 14 to 16 years; parental control tools by default in devices used by children; and implementing health screenings for teenagers to detect emotional disorders related to excessive internet use.

In **France**, [The Presidential Commission on Screens and Children](#) (January-April 2024) submitted its findings to the President of the Republic on Tuesday, April 30, 2024. The report describes the 'hyper-connectedness' children experience and its consequences for their health, development, and future, as well as for society in general. It recommends limiting screens and their use based on age, and aims to guide adults towards good practices.

The **Irish** [Online Safety and Media Regulation \(OSMR\) Act](#) (2022) established [Coimisiún na Meán](#) as an independent regulator for broadcasting, video on-demand, and online safety. It has created the position of Online Safety Commissioner and adopted An Coimisiún's first [Online Safety Code](#).

## Box 1: Examples of policy frameworks on children and the digital environment [continued]

In **Poland**, the Digitalisation Strategy of Poland until 2035, which is currently in the consultation process, includes aspects such as children's mental health and provides for the creation of a system to combat content harmful to children.

In October 2023, the **Romanian** government adopted the National strategy for the protection and promotion of children's rights Protected children, safe Romania' 2023-2027, which aims to ensure the effective realisation of the rights of all children living in the country, including the most vulnerable, in all areas of life, by ensuring adequate and equal access to quality public services.

In **Slovakia**, the National Strategy for the Protection of Children in the Digital Environment includes tasks focused on prevention, intervention, as well as subsequent care for both victims and perpetrators of criminal activity in this area.

### 2.1.3 The influence of the BIK+ strategy

Country respondents were also asked to report on whether the BIK+ strategy had been considered in any of the national policies on children and the digital environment referred to above.

Q2.3: Has the BIK+ strategy been considered in any of the national policies on children and the digital environment in your country?

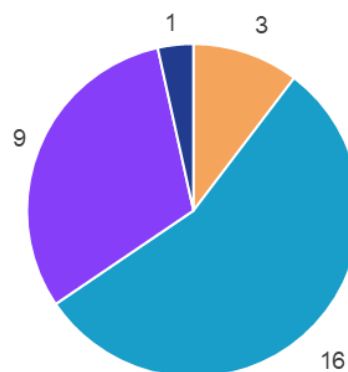


Figure 4: Influence of BIK+ strategy

As shown in Figure 4 above, most countries acknowledge the influence of the BIK+ strategy in the development of national policies.

- Nineteen countries in total reported that the BIK+ strategy influences national policies. However, just three countries (CY, ES, PL) said that it is explicitly referenced in national policies.
- Sixteen countries noted that BIK+ is an important influence that informs and guides national policies without explicit reference (BE, CZ, DE, DK, EL, IE, IS, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO, SK).
- Just over a third of countries, or nine of the 29, said that the BIK+ strategy informs national policies but was not considered the main influence (AT, BG, EE, FI, FR, HU, LT, SE, SI). One country (HR) reported that BIK+ has no influence on national policies.

Noting that the question on the influence of the BIK+ strategy is framed slightly differently in this edition of the BIK Policy monitor, more countries acknowledge the influence of BIK+ in general, while there is an increase in countries also reporting that it is not the main influence on national policy development.

#### 2.1.4 Children's rights in the digital environment

Reflecting the distinctive child rights-based approach of the BIK+ strategy, national contacts responding to the annual BIK Policy monitor survey were asked if national policies explicitly recognise children's rights in relation to the digital environment (i.e., children's digital rights) in relevant national legal and policy frameworks.

Q2.4: Do BIK-related policies explicitly recognise children's rights in relation to the digital environment (i.e., children's digital rights) in relevant national legal and policy frameworks?

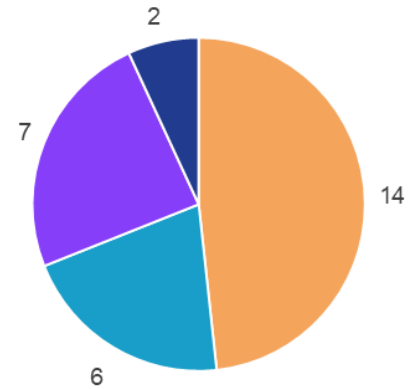


Figure 5: Children's rights in the digital environment

As Figure 5 reveals, a significant number of countries reported that children's rights are an important consideration in relevant national legal and policy frameworks.

- Fourteen countries stated that their national policies explicitly recognise children's rights in the digital environment (CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT).
- A further six countries reported that children's rights in relation to the digital environment are an important and emerging policy priority, with specific policies explicitly recognising children's digital rights in development (BE, CZ, EL, FR, IS, SI).
- Seven countries said that children's rights are implied rather than explicitly recognised in policies regarding children and the digital environment (EE, LT, LV, PL, RO, SE, SK).
- Two countries (AT, BG) stated that their national policies do not refer to children's rights in this context.

While some countries have already explicitly integrated these rights into their legal and policy frameworks, others are in the process of developing specific policies or implicitly consider these rights within broader child protection or digital safety strategies. Reference to the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General comment No. 25 \(2021\)](#) in a number of responses indicates an increasing alignment with international standards on this issue (see Box 2 below).

Findings regarding children's rights in the digital environment are broadly similar compared to the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), though notably more countries report this as an emerging priority with new policies in development.

### Box 2. Examples of children's rights in national policies

Several countries indicate that their national/regional policies and policy documents explicitly recognise children's rights in the digital environment. For example:

**Cyprus** has recognised children's rights through policies such as the [National Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids](#), Action 14 of the Cybersecurity Strategy of the Republic of Cyprus

In **Germany**, while General comment No. 25 is not explicitly referenced in the [Youth Protection Act \(JuSchG\)](#), the Council of Europe's [Guidelines on children's digital rights](#) are mentioned in its explanatory memorandum, and the [Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media \(JMStV\)](#) includes the protection of human dignity, encompassing children's rights in the digital environment.

**Denmark** has legislation stating that the [Danish Media Council](#) works with children's rights in the digital environment and has released [non-binding ethical guidelines](#) referring to these rights.

**Estonia** refers to children's rights, including in digital environments, in the [Child Protection Act](#) and the Act Amending Other Acts to Improve the Welfare of Children.

**France's** [Children's Image Rights Law](#) (February 2024) and the so-called [SREN Law](#) (July 2024) explicitly establish legal protections for children's digital rights and align with [UN General comment No. 25](#).

In **Ireland**, [Young Ireland: National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2023-2028](#) is based upon the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) and is the overarching framework to recognise and promote the rights of all children and young people up to age 24. The digital environment and improved online safety are included among its key priorities.

**Portugal's** [Charter on Human Rights in the Digital Age](#) explicitly mentions the right to cybersecurity with special attention to children and young people.



## 2.2 Policy design

The topic of policy design examines the extent to which research and evidence at the national level support the process of policy development. The survey includes questions about regular data collection on children's digital activities ([section 2.2.1](#)), data and evidence collection related to online harms ([section 2.2.2](#)), additional information resources ([section 2.2.3](#)), the landscape of research funding ([section 2.2.4](#)), and the degree to which policies are monitored and evaluated ([section 2.2.5](#)).

### 2.2.1 Regular data collection

Country respondents were asked to report on the availability of regular and systematic data collection on children's digital activities.

Q2.5: Do national statistical systems or other competent authorities systematically and regularly collect data on children's digital activities in dedicated surveys?

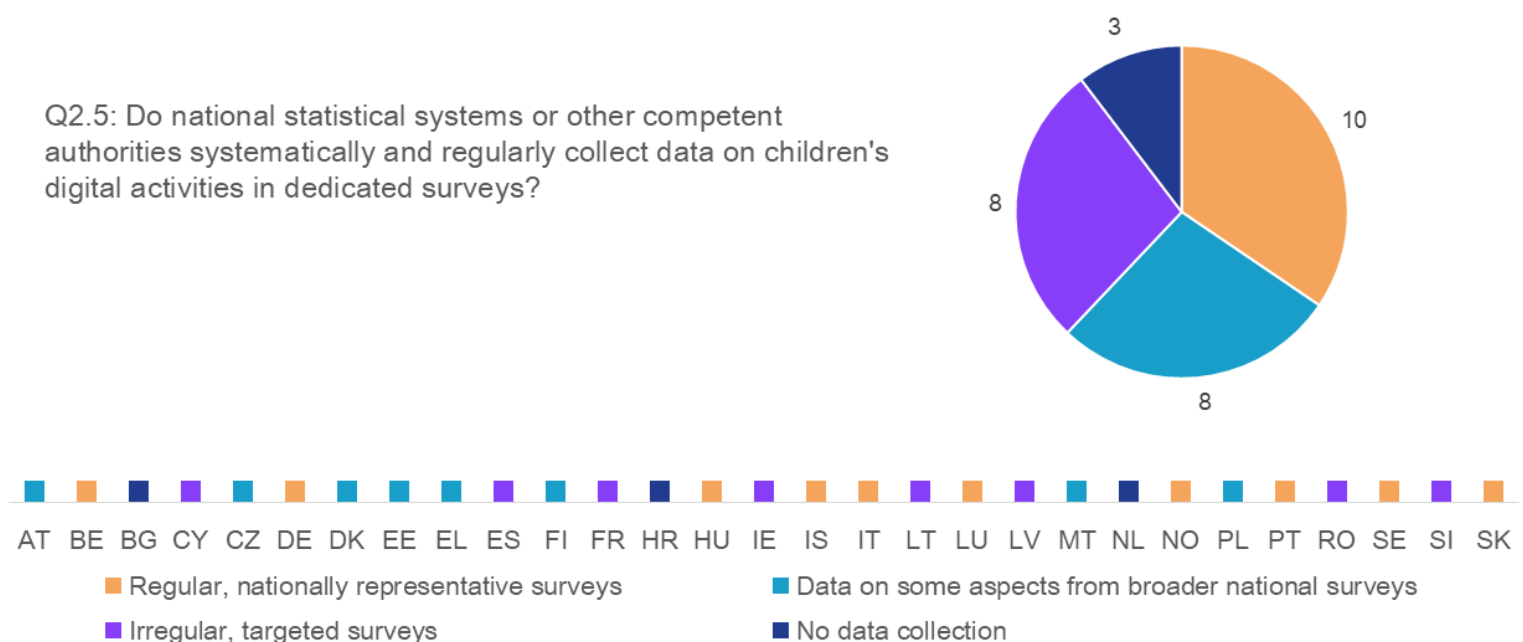


Figure 6: Collection of statistics on children's digital activity



As shown in Figure 6, approximately one third of countries state that there is regular dedicated data collection on this topic.

- Ten countries reported that there is a regular (e.g., annual or bi-annual) nationally representative survey specifically focused on children's digital activity, which informs national policies on this topic (BE, DE, HU, IS, IT, LU, NO, PT, SE, SK).
- Eight further countries stated that quantitative data on some aspects of children's digital activity is collected regularly as part of broader surveys (AT, CZ, DK, EE, EL, FI, MT, PL).
- In the case of a further eight countries, surveys of children's digital activities were reported to be undertaken only irregularly (CY, ES, FR, IE, LT, LV, RO, SI).
- Three countries (BG, HR, NL) reported that there is no regular data collection on this topic.

While a third of countries have established regular and dedicated surveys on children's digital activities, many rely on either incorporating some aspects into broader surveys or conducting surveys only irregularly. Comparing findings with the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), there has been a small increase in the overall availability of research and evidence at the national level, with the overall number of countries reporting regular data collection on some aspects of children's digital activities increasing from 15 to 17.

A significant number of countries, however, lack systematic data collection in this specific area. Some responses point to a growing recognition of the importance of this data, potentially leading to more regular and dedicated efforts in the future. The [EU Kids Online](#) survey has continued to play a significant role in providing national-level data for several countries, particularly where dedicated systems are lacking or infrequent.

## Box 3. Research and evidence on children's digital activities

Selected examples of data collection on children's digital activities in this year's Policy monitor include:

**Austria's** Youth Internet Monitor ([Jugend-Internet-Monitor](#)) is an initiative of Saferinternet.at and presents current data on social media usage among Austrian youth. The Upper Austrian Child and Youth Media Studies ([Oberösterreichische Kinder- bzw. Jugend-Medien-Studien](#)) is another regular study of youth media.

In **Belgium**, [Génération 2020](#) and [Apenstaartjaren](#) are examples of regular biannual youth digital media surveys.

**Germany's** [JIM Study](#) (Jugend, Information, Medien; Engl.: Youth, Information, Media) has been conducted annually since 1998 as a basic study on the media consumption of 12- to 19-year-olds. The [KIM Study](#) (Kindheit, Internet, Medien; Engl.: Childhood, Internet, Media) has also been an important baseline study on the significance of media in the everyday lives of children aged 6 to 13.

In **Denmark**, [reports on the Danish population's media usage](#), including internet and social media usage are published by the Danish Ministry of Culture. Children aged 16 years and older are included.

**Spain's** National Observatory of Technology and Society has published the survey [The Use of Technologies by Minors in Spain](#) (edition 2024) analysing the relationship between minors and digital technologies, considering factors such as gender, age, population density, region, and household income.

In **Hungary**, the [Digital Parenting research](#) (3rd data collection in 2025) is a large-sample national research conducted by the [National Media and Infocommunications Authority](#) (NMHH), examining the media use and online experiences of Hungarian children aged 7-16 years, as well as their parents' digital parenting strategies.

In **Iceland**, the [Icelandic Youth Study](#) collects data on the attitudes and well-being of children and young people, including their use of social and digital media.

In **Italy**, the Ministry of Education and Authority for Minors conduct surveys annually on the issues of child well-being in collaboration with the Safer Internet Centre and other research centres. [Platforma Elisa](#), for instance, monitors bullying and cyberbullying in Italian secondary schools.

**Luxembourg's** Ministry of Education funds the National report on the situation of youth in Luxembourg, which is published every five years. The next edition, which will be published in 2026, will address digitalisation and youth.

The **Norwegian** Media Authority collects data on [children's and young people's everyday media life](#) every other year. The survey also collects data on many aspects of children's experiences of risks, online harm and their well-being in relation to the digital environment.

The **Swedish** Agency for the Media monitors media usage among children and young people in three bi-annual reports titled [Småungar & medier](#) (Small Children and the Media), [Ungar & medier](#) (Kids and the Media), and [Föräldrar & medier](#) (Parents and the Media). Three new reports are planned for publication in 2025.

### 2.2.2 Data on online harms and well-being

In addition to regular surveys of children's digital activities, country respondents were also asked if data was available on children's experiences of risks, harms and their well-being in relation to the digital environment.

Q2.6: Does national research collect evidence of children's experiences of risks, harms and their well-being in relation to the digital environment?

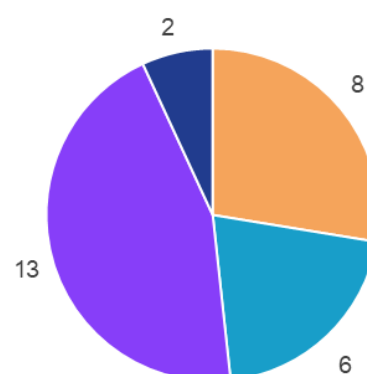


Figure 7: Data on risks, harms, and well-being

Reflecting broadly similar findings to the previous item, Figure 7 shows approximately half of all countries reported regular data collection related to risks, harms and well-being online.

- Eight countries reported that there is a regular (annual or bi-annual) survey that includes measures of children's experiences of risks, harms and digital well-being (BE, DE, HU, IS, NL, NO, SE, SK).
- Six countries stated that some but not all aspects of children's risks, harms and digital well-being are included in regular national surveys (AT, EE, FI, IT, MT, PT).

- In the case of 13 countries, surveys of children's experiences of risks, harms and digital well-being are undertaken on an ad-hoc and irregular basis (CY, CZ, DK, EL, ES, FR, HR, IE, LT, LU, PL, RO, SI).
- Two countries (BG, LV) reported that there is no research on this topic.

The findings show that many European countries are actively involved in researching children's experiences of online risks and harms. While some have established regular and comprehensive national surveys, others rely on a combination of regular surveys covering specific aspects, ad-hoc research projects, and contributions to European-level studies like [EU Kids Online](#).

## 2.2.3 Information systems

National contacts responding to the BIK Policy monitor survey were furthermore asked about the availability of dedicated information systems at the government level to inform policy development.

Q2.7: Are there dedicated systems in place at the government level to inform policy development?

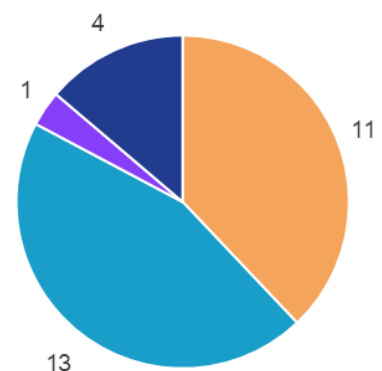


Figure 8: Dedicated systems for evidence-based policy development

As shown in Figure 8, most countries stated that there is some form of information system in place to inform policy development. This may include dedicated research units within government settings, think tanks, or commissions on topics relevant to children and the digital environment.

- Over one third, or 11 of the 29 countries, reported that there are systems in place at the government level to gather information on children and the digital environment (AT, BE, CY, DK, IE, IS, IT, MT, NO, PL, SE).
- A further 13 countries reported that information is regularly gathered to inform policies on children and the digital environment. However, this relies primarily on third-party sources, and there are limited opportunities to commission new data on children's digital activity (CZ, DE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, LU, LV, NL, PT, SI, SK).
- In the case of one country (LT), information to support policy development is said to be irregular and ad hoc, while four countries stated that there is no system in place at the government level to gather information on children and the digital environment (BG, EE, HR, RO).

Individual country responses show that governments do gather information on children and the digital environment, but this often relies heavily on third-party data, with limited capacity to commission new, targeted research. While some countries have dedicated systems or regular surveys, a significant portion relies on less systematic or externally sourced information to inform their policy development in this crucial area.

#### 2.2.4 Research funding for children online

A further aspect of the survey section focused on the national environment asked whether countries had a central research fund or research programme supported by the government dedicated to children and the digital environment.

Q2.8: Is there a central research fund or research programme supported by the government dedicated to children and the digital environment?

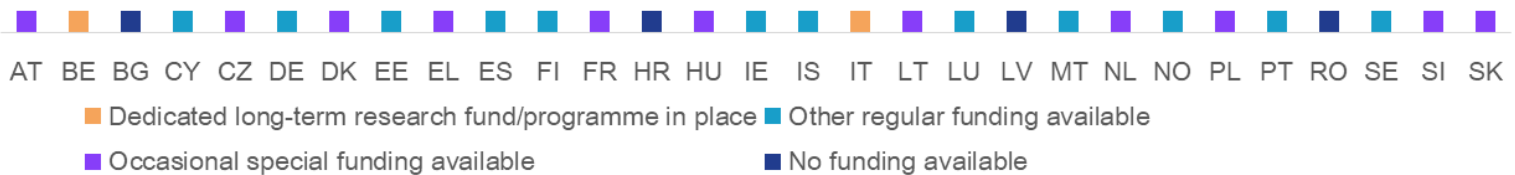
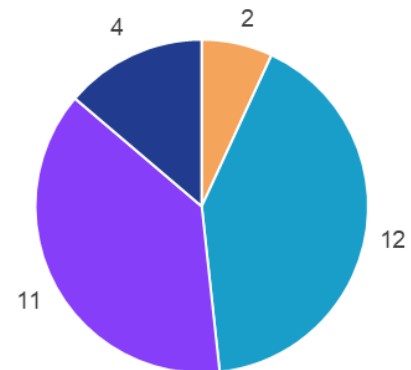


Figure 9: Research fund

As shown in Figure 9, most countries do not have a central, long-term government-supported research fund specifically dedicated to children and the digital environment.

- Just two countries (BE, IT) said there is such a research funding system in place.
- Twelve countries stated that existing regular national research funding is available for research on this topic, though this is not explicitly specified (CY, DE, EE, ES, FI, IE, IS, LU, MT, NO, PT, SE).
- Eleven countries reported that there are occasional special initiatives to gather evidence about children and the digital environment (AT, CZ, DK, EL, FR, HU, LT, NL, PL, SI, SK), while a further four countries report that there is no funding available for research on children and the digital environment (BG, HR, LV, RO).

Research in this area is more commonly supported through existing broader national research funds, occasional special initiatives, project-based grants, or through the activities of general educational and research institutions. The general lack of dedicated funding in this specific area has not changed since the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#).

## 2.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation

The final aspect of policy design refers to practices for monitoring and evaluation of BIK-related policies at the national level.

Q2.9: Is there a system in place for the monitoring and evaluation of policies relating to children and the digital environment?

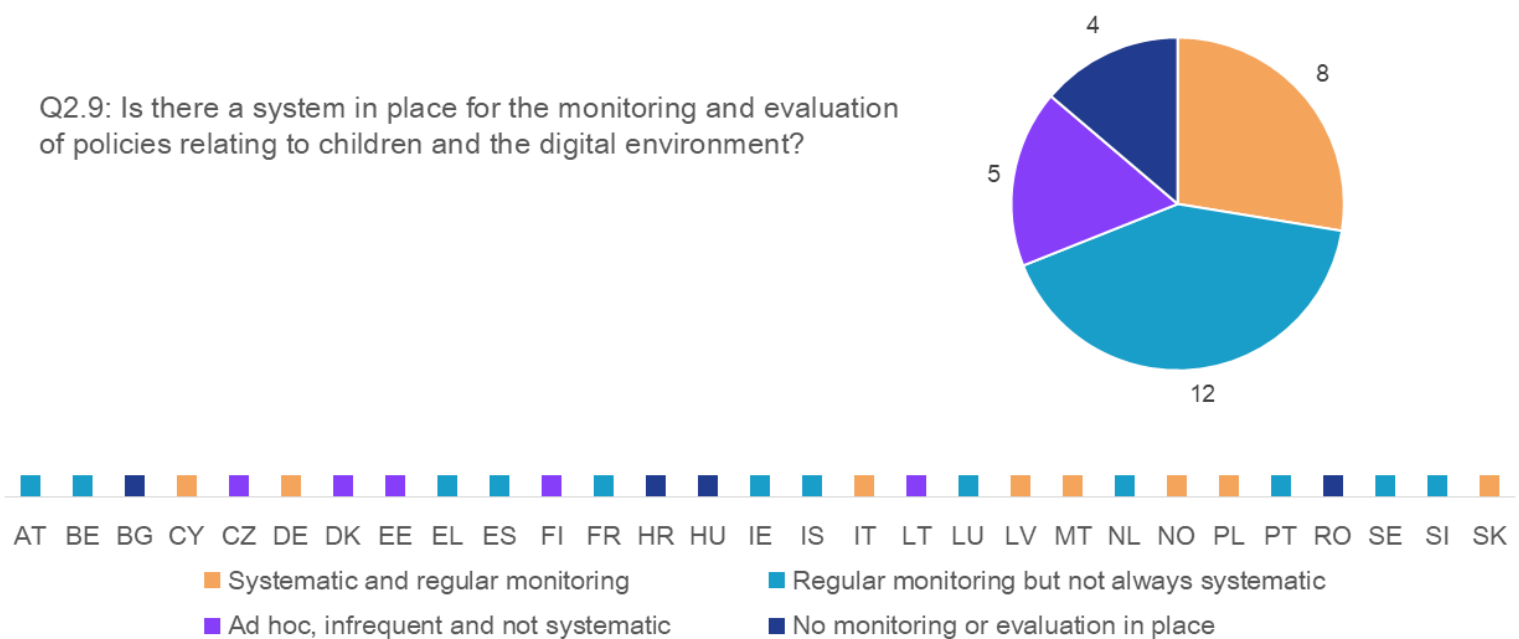


Figure 10: Monitoring and evaluation

As shown in Figure 10, a majority of countries reported that some form of regular monitoring and evaluation of policies takes place.

- In the case of eight countries, policies undergo systematic and regular monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of actions in different



contexts (e.g., to take account of new technologies or emergent risks) (CY, DE, IT, LV, MT, NL, PL, SK).

- Twelve countries reported that policies are regularly monitored and evaluated but not always systematically (AT, BE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IS, LU, NO, PT, SE, SI).
- In the case of five countries, monitoring and evaluation are reported to be ad hoc, infrequent and not systematic (CZ, DK, EE, FI, LT).
- A further four countries stated that there is no monitoring or evaluation of policies on children and the digital environment (BG, HR, HU, RO).

The majority of countries, therefore, confirm some level of monitoring and evaluation of policies related to children and the digital environment, but fully systematic and regular approaches are not widespread. Many countries rely on less formal, ad hoc evaluations, while others highlight the fragmented or inconsistent nature of current evaluation efforts in this area.

## 2.3 Policy governance

The issue of policy governance focuses on how policies are managed and coordinated at the government level among the various departments and agencies involved. Three key aspects are considered: first, whether a specific ministry or agency is assigned to lead policy development ([section 2.3.1](#)); second, if there is a national coordination body in place to oversee implementation ([section 2.3.2](#)); and third, whether a national action plan or similar framework exists to consolidate relevant initiatives and actions ([section 2.3.3](#)).

### 2.3.1 Lead ministry or agency

In relation to the nature of policy governance, country respondents were first asked to report on the way in which leadership on this policy domain was defined nationally, taking into account that responsibility for children's online safety and digital activity may sit across several government ministries or agencies.



Q2.10: Is there a designated lead ministry or agency that is mandated to lead on policy development, recognising that responsibility for children's online safety and digital activity may sit across several ministries?

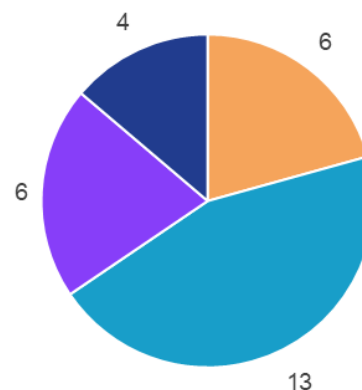


Figure 11: Lead for policy development

As shown in Figure 11, the majority of countries have defined arrangements in place for managing policies regarding children's online activities.

- Six countries stated that there is one designated central body, such as a central ministry office, public agency, or regulatory authority, that is formally mandated to lead and develop policies, guidelines, and programmes relating to children and the digital environment, if necessary, in consultation with other departments (CY, ES, IE, IT, NO, PT).
- Thirteen countries reported that policy development sits across different ministries with leadership distributed according to the area of specialisation (BE, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FR, IS, LT, LU, MT, SE, SI).
- In the case of six countries, the lead ministry, public agency or regulatory authority is an informal arrangement depending on the requirements at a particular point in time (AT, FI, HU, NL, PL, SK).

- A further four countries reported that there is no specific leadership in policy development on this topic (BG, HR, LV, RO).

The most common model, as shown above, involves distributing responsibility across multiple government ministries based on their respective areas of expertise. Countries that have established a formally mandated central body to lead policy development tend to be smaller. More complex governance systems arise in countries such as Germany, where, due to federalism, responsibility is shared between federal and 'Länder' (federal states) authorities, involving multiple federal ministries.

When comparing the findings from the [2024 cycle of the BIK Policy monitor](#), the overall profile has remained largely unchanged. However, due to the reframing of the question in this cycle, there is now more detailed information about the number of countries that have implemented a distributed model.

### 2.3.2 Coordination

A further aspect of governance included in the BIK Policy monitor concerns how countries coordinate policies, guidelines and programme implementation.

Q2.11: Is there a clearly defined national coordination body or agency (e.g., a national Child Online Safety Steering Committee or equivalent) that reports to the lead ministry and is mandated to coordinate policies, guidelines, and programme implementation relating to children and the digital environment?

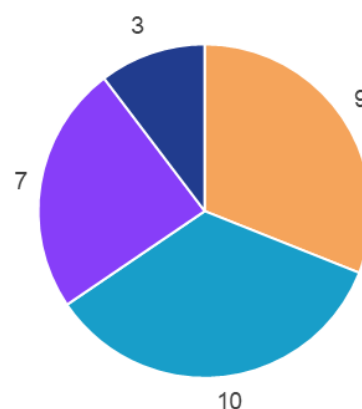


Figure 12: Lead for implementation

As shown in Figure 12, a diverse range of approaches to coordination are evident.

- Nine countries stated that a clearly defined coordination function is in place that involves all relevant stakeholders and encompasses the cross-cutting policy issues relating to children and the digital environment (CY, HU, IE, IS, IT, MT, NO, PT, SK).
- A further 10 countries reported that coordination happens more informally across the different departments and entities that contribute to government policies, guidelines and programmes on this topic (AT, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, LU, LV, SI).
- Seven countries responded that coordination of policies and their implementation is distributed across multiple entities (BE, FI, FR, NL, PL, RO, SE).
- Three countries reported that there is no coordination in place (BG, HR, LT).

While some countries have established clearly defined national coordination bodies for BIK-related policies, the more prevalent trend is coordination happening informally or being distributed across multiple government entities. This highlights the cross-cutting nature of the issues and the involvement of various ministries and agencies. There has been no major change in policy coordination in this cycle of the BIK Policy monitor, though the number of countries reporting a lack of coordination has decreased from six countries in 2024 to three in the present iteration.

### 2.3.3 National action plan

The final element of policy governance surveyed concerns the availability of a national action plan, strategy, or equivalent focused on BIK-related policies.

Q2.12: Is there a national action plan, strategy or equivalent in place that gives government policy on children and the digital environment defined timelines, assigned responsibilities and key performance indicators (KPIs)?

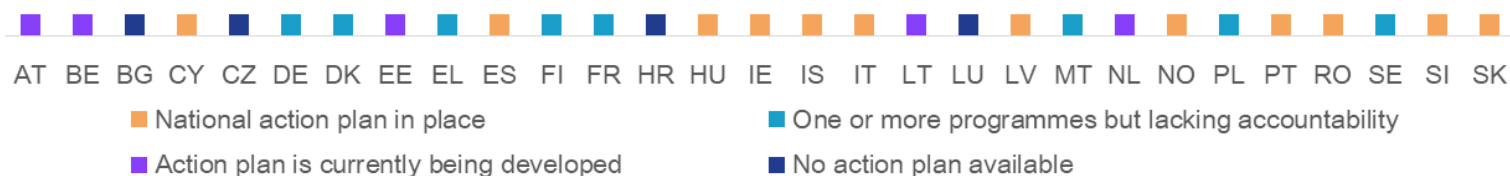
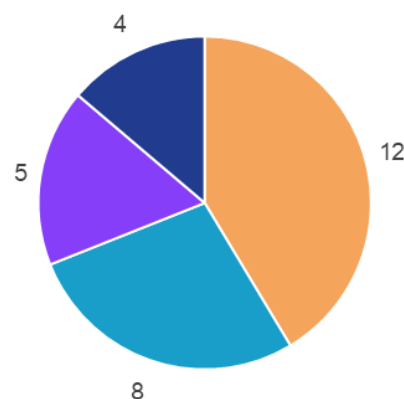


Figure 13: Availability of an action plan

As Figure 13 shows, while a significant number of countries reported that they have policies or programmes in place, a single, defined national action plan or strategy is generally lacking.

- Twelve out of the 29 countries stated that a defined national action plan on children and the digital environment is in place with accountabilities such as defined timelines, assigned responsibilities or key performance indicators (KPIs) (CY, ES, HU, IE, IS, IT, LV, NO, PT, RO, SI, SK).
- Eight countries said that one or more programmes of action is/are underway supporting children's online safety and participation in the digital environment. However, these lack accountabilities such as defined timelines, assigned responsibilities or key performance indicators (KPIs) (DE, DK, EL, FI, FR, MT, PL, SE).

- In the case of five countries, it is reported that government policy has yet to be developed into an implementable action plan at this point, but this is under development (AT, BE, EE, LT, NL).
- Four countries stated that there is currently no action plan available or under development (BG, CZ, HR, LU).

Since the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), there has been a small increase in the number of countries reporting integrated action plans and national strategies, from ten to 12. More generally, many countries report multiple programmes and initiatives underway but lack a comprehensive, formally defined national action plan or strategy. Currently, only four countries report that they do not have an action plan or strategy in place, compared to six in 2024.

## 2.4 Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement refers to the opportunities available at the national level for various interested parties, including young people, to participate in the policy-making process. This section evaluates whether there are relevant forums or mechanisms in place for this purpose (stakeholder forum, [section 2.4.1](#); and youth involvement in policy-making, [section 2.4.3](#)), and asks country respondents to report on any public consultation processes that may be available ([section 2.4.2](#)).

### 2.4.1 Stakeholder forum

Concerning stakeholder involvement in policy-making processes, country respondents were first asked about the existence of a formal mechanism, such as a government-led forum in which stakeholders could participate to contribute to policies on BIK+ topics.

Q2.13: Is there a formal, government-led forum in place for relevant stakeholders (e.g., various government departments, civil society, public agencies, law enforcement, industry, academia, etc.) to contribute to policy discussion and development regarding children and the digital environment?

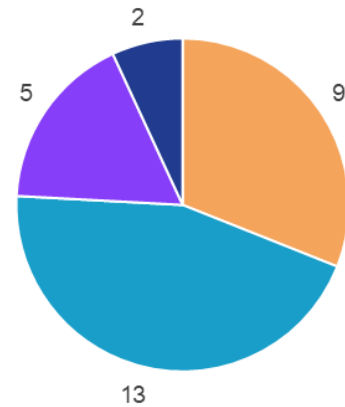


Figure 14: Consulting stakeholders on BIK topics

As shown in Figure 14, various arrangements are in place where stakeholders may contribute to policy discussion and development.

- Nine countries reported that there is a designated multi-stakeholder forum in place which facilitates the involvement of all relevant stakeholder groups (AT, ES, FR, IT, LV, MT, PT, SE, SK).
- Thirteen countries stated that a variety of different mechanisms exist across different branches of government, in which stakeholders may contribute to policy discussion and development (CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, HU, IE, IS, LT, NL, NO, PL, SI).
- In the case of five countries, there are said to be occasional opportunities for different stakeholders to participate in policy development, but this is infrequent (BE, EL, FI, HR, RO).

- Two countries stated there is no mechanism in place at the government level for stakeholder groups to contribute to policy discussion and development (BG, LU).

The most prevalent approach in country responses is that of various groups across different branches of government, suggesting that stakeholder involvement is often sector-specific and integrated within the remits of individual ministries or agencies. However, there has been a slight increase in the availability of designated multi-stakeholder forums in some countries, from seven in 2024 to nine in this cycle, indicating efforts towards more coordinated and inclusive platforms for policy discussion. Many countries also utilise additional informal mechanisms and consultation processes to engage with a wider range of stakeholders.

#### 2.4.2 Public consultation

Country respondents were also asked about general processes in place for consultation on BIK-related policies.

Q2.14: Are members of the general public consulted in the process of policy development?

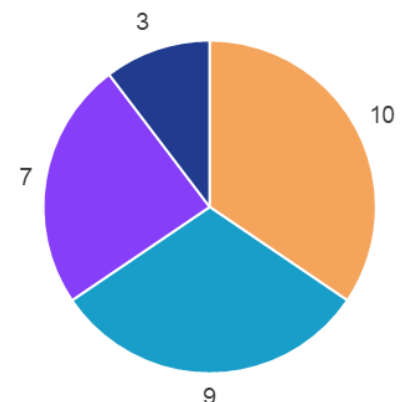


Figure 15: Consulting the public on BIK topics



As shown in Figure 15:

- Ten countries stated that members of the public are regularly and routinely consulted as part of the policy development for BIK topics (DE, DK, HU, IE, IS, IT, LV, MT, NO, SI).
- A further nine countries reported that members of the public are consulted only when new policies are being developed (CY, CZ, EE, ES, FI, PL, PT, SE, SK).
- In the case of seven countries, public consultation was said to be infrequent and irregular (AT, BE, EL, FR, LT, NL, RO) while three countries stated that there is no public consultation available on BIK-related topics (BG, HR, LU).

Fewer opportunities for public consultation are reported in this edition of the Policy Monitor compared to the last cycle. Where previously 13 countries had reported regular and routine consultation, this has fallen back to nine in this cycle, though a reframing of the question clarifies that most consultation takes place only when new policies are being developed. The predominant trend, therefore, is that public consultation on BIK topics is triggered by the development of new policies rather than being a regular and routine part of the policy process.

#### 2.4.3 Youth involvement in policy development

The importance of active youth involvement in policies shaping the online world is highlighted in the BIK+ strategy and was a central tenet to its [first evaluation](#), which took place between late 2024 and early 2025. In this context, country respondents were asked to report on the nature and extent of youth participation in the policy-making process at the national level.

Q2.15: Which of the following best describes the involvement of young people in policy-making on the topic of children's digital activity in your country?

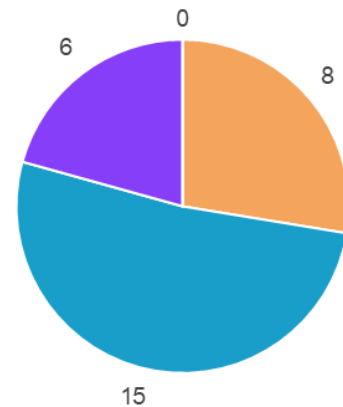


Figure 16: Children's participation in policy development

As the findings presented in Figure 16 reveal, levels of reported youth participation in policy development are mixed.

- Eight countries reported that children are actively involved in the design of policies related to their participation in the digital environment and state that there are specially designed structures in place for this purpose (ES, IE, IT, MT, NO, PL, SI, SK).
- Fifteen countries stated that children are listened to directly in the policy development process, for instance through hearings, consultations, and specific surveys, but are not formally involved in decision-making (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL, FI, HR, IS, LU, NL, PT, SE).
- The remaining six countries said that children's interests are considered indirectly, for example, through analysis of existing surveys or data collections (EE, FR, HU, LT, LV, RO).

Overall, the most common trend is that children are listened to directly but not formally involved in decision-making. While many countries utilise mechanisms to listen to and consult with young people during the policy development process, there is a growing trend and recognition of the importance of more actively involving children and young people in the actual design of policies related to their digital lives. Notably, there has been an increase in the number of countries now reporting specially designed processes for youth participation, rising from five in 2024 to eight in 2025, with a number of accounts given of new developments in this area (see Box 4 below).

#### Box 4. Forms of stakeholder involvement

Various mechanisms are identified in the BIK Policy monitor for the purpose of involving interested stakeholders.

Some countries have established a **designated multi-stakeholder forum** to facilitate the involvement of all relevant stakeholder groups on specific issues:

**Ireland's** [Media Literacy Ireland](#) is hosted by the media regulator to promote media literacy.

**Italy's** stakeholder forum on the issues of cyberbullying was established by law.

In **Denmark**, the government appointed an [Expert Group on Big Tech](#) consisting of representatives with expertise and experience related to the big tech agenda in 2022. The Danish [Center for Social Media, Tech and Democracy](#) also involves stakeholders who focus on online conditions for children and young people.

Examples of **formats for youth consultation** include:

**Bulgaria** reports the establishment of the [National Children's Council](#) in 2024, which aims to ensure youth participation in decision-making processes, suggesting a move towards more active involvement.

**Ireland's** media regulator, Coimisiún na Meán, also established a [Youth Advisory Committee](#) and plans to establish additional stakeholder advisory committees.

**Luxembourg** mentions regular updates from BEE SECURE on its initiatives and educational offers, as well as the [Bildungsdësch](#) format and consultation of youth through panels and the Youth Parliament.

In **Spain**, the [Expert Committee for Protection of Minors in Digital Environments](#) includes a working group on children's participation. The [Spanish Youth Council](#) also serves as a platform for youth organisations to participate in policy discussions, including those concerning the digital environment.

## 2.5 Summary: BIK policies

The **Policies** section of the BIK Policy monitor 2025 highlights several important trends regarding implementing the BIK+ strategy in EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway.

Overall, **the vast majority of countries recognise BIK-related topics as an important policy priority at the national level**, with a significant number having comprehensive coverage in national laws and policies. While the BIK+ strategy significantly influences national policy development in most countries, policy provision is more commonly addressed through **separate, dedicated policies rather than a single overarching framework** (as discussed in [section 2.1](#) above).

In terms of **policy design**, around a third of countries conduct regular, dedicated data collection activities on children's digital activities, and approximately half regularly collect data on online risks, harms, and well-being. Most countries have some form of information system to inform policy development, though dedicated long-term research funding for this area is not common. The majority of countries also report some level of regular monitoring and evaluation of BIK-related policies, but systematic approaches are not widespread (as detailed in [section 2.2](#) above).

Regarding **policy governance**, most countries have defined arrangements for policy leadership on children's online activities, often involving distributed responsibility across multiple ministries. Policy coordination and implementation vary, with some countries having clearly defined coordination functions while others rely on more informal or distributed approaches. The majority of countries have a national action plan, strategy, or equivalent in place to support their BIK-related policies, with an increasing trend in their availability (as outlined in [section 2.3](#) above).

Finally, concerning **stakeholder involvement**, various mechanisms exist to facilitate the participation of relevant parties, including multi-stakeholder forums. Public consultation on digital policies is also relatively common, mostly triggered by the development of new policies. However, **levels of youth involvement in**

**policy design are more mixed**, although there is a positive trend in establishing specially designed processes for youth participation (as examined in [section 2.4](#) above).

## Chapter 3: BIK+ actions in EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway

Chapter 3 presents findings on BIK-related actions and initiatives undertaken by EU Member States, Iceland and Norway as per the policies examined in chapter 2 above. It provides a comparative overview of how countries implement actions relevant to the overall themes of BIK+. The outcomes are summarised, with selected examples highlighted for illustration. Further information and details can be found in the individual [BIK Policy monitor country profiles](#) within the [BIK Knowledge hub](#).

The sections in this chapter are organised according to the three BIK+ pillars:

- **Pillar 1** – safe digital experiences ([section 3.1](#))
- **Pillar 2** – digital empowerment ([section 3.2](#))
- **Pillar 3** – active participation, respecting children ([section 3.3](#))

The closing section of this chapter ([section 3.4](#)) provides a concise, high-level overview of the overall findings regarding BIK+ actions.

### 3.1 Pillar 1 – safe digital experiences

Pillar 1 includes various actions to ensure safe digital experiences for children and young people. EU Member States, along with Iceland and Norway, undertake various initiatives and implement measures to achieve these objectives in accordance with EU laws and regulations.

The range of possible actions to ensure safe digital experiences is extensive. To focus attention on key trends, the findings for this section are organised under the following four headings:

- **Implementation of EU laws ([section 3.1.1](#)):** countries' reported progress regarding the availability of codes of practice aligned with EU laws and the

establishment of [Digital Services Coordinators](#) (DSCs) in each country required under the Digital Services Act (DSA).

- National measures to address online harms affecting children: activities at the national level regarding a) [harmful online content](#) (section 3.1.2) and b) [harmful online conduct, such as cyberbullying or intimate image abuse](#) (section 3.1.3).
- [Age verification](#) (section 3.1.4): actions taken at the national level to support age verification, including introducing digital identity systems.
- [Commercial content](#) (section 3.1.5): activities and measures to protect minors against commercial exploitation online.
- [Mental health and well-being](#) (section 3.1.6): activities undertaken nationally to promote youth mental health and well-being online.

### 3.1.1 Implementing EU laws

Two items from the [BIK Policy monitor survey questionnaire](#) are addressed regarding the national implementation of EU-level laws. Firstly, country respondents were asked to report whether they had developed national codes of practice, codes of conduct, or guidelines for digital service providers regarding children's online safety (i.e., in addition to existing EU codes and guidelines). Secondly, they were asked to report whether the Digital Services Coordinator had implemented any specific measures or taken any particular action at the national level concerning the protection of minors.



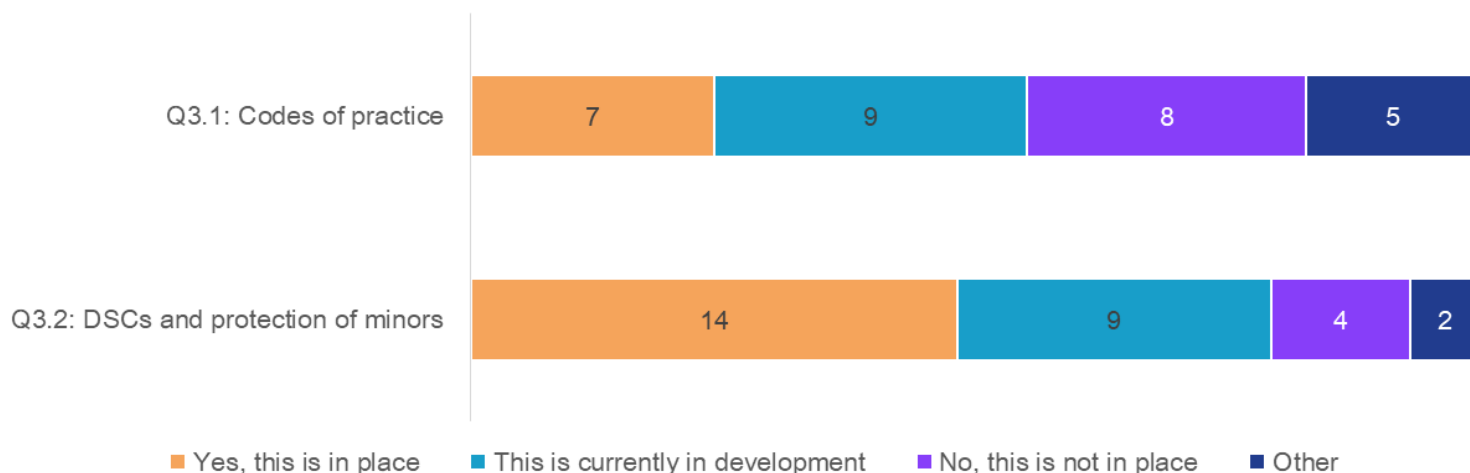


Figure 17: Implementing EU laws

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.1: National codes of practice	DE, FI, IE, NL, PL, PT, SE	BE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LU, MT, NO, SI	BG, EE, EL, HU, IS, LT, RO, SK	AT, CY, CZ, DK, LV
Q3.2: DSC measures to protect minors	AT, DE, DK, EL, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, RO, SE	BE, BG, CY, ES, IE, IS, LU, PL, PT	EE, HR, NO, SI	CZ, SK

Table 1. Implementing EU laws, country responses (as of February 2025)

Findings under both items presented in Figure 17 above reflect significant work in progress in individual countries.

- Seven countries reported that **national codes of practice**, codes of conduct, or guidelines for digital service providers have been established nationally, while nine additional countries indicated that this is in development.
- Fourteen countries reported that their DSCs have implemented national measures to support the protection of minors, while nine additional countries indicate that such measures are under development.

In this context, many countries refer to the transposition into national law of the EU [Audiovisual Media Services Act](#) (based on AVMSD Art28b), which regulates prohibited and harmful content for video-sharing platform providers.

Some countries also highlight that the European Commission, in collaboration with the [European Board for Digital Services](#), is currently developing guidelines for online platforms to ensure a high level of privacy, safety, and security for minors ([Digital Services Act](#), DSA Art28), arguing that it would be unnecessary to duplicate such guidelines at the national level.

Some examples of national measures aligned with EU laws include:

- Ireland's [Online Safety Code](#) imposes binding obligations on designated video-sharing platforms and implements the requirements of Article 28b of the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive. This code stipulates effective complaint-handling mechanisms, age-verification systems, parental control features, and content rating systems.
- Another example mentioned is the Spanish Data Protection Agency (AEPD), which published a [practical guide](#) outlining ten standards to protect minors from accessing inappropriate online content.
- In November 2023, the French Standards Association (AFNOR) [released the AFNOR SPEC 2305 guide](#) titled 'Risk Prevention and Protection of Minors on Social Media Platforms'.
- In Poland, the Association of Internet Industry Employers (IAB Poland) published a [code of good practice](#) that outlines technical safeguards and other appropriate measures to protect minors from harmful content in audiovisual media services.

### 3.1.2 Harmful online content

The second aspect of safe digital experiences involves considering national-level activities related to harmful online content. This section summarises findings on countries' approaches to defining harmful online content and whether there are

national bodies that are empowered to order the removal or disabling of content that may be harmful to children.

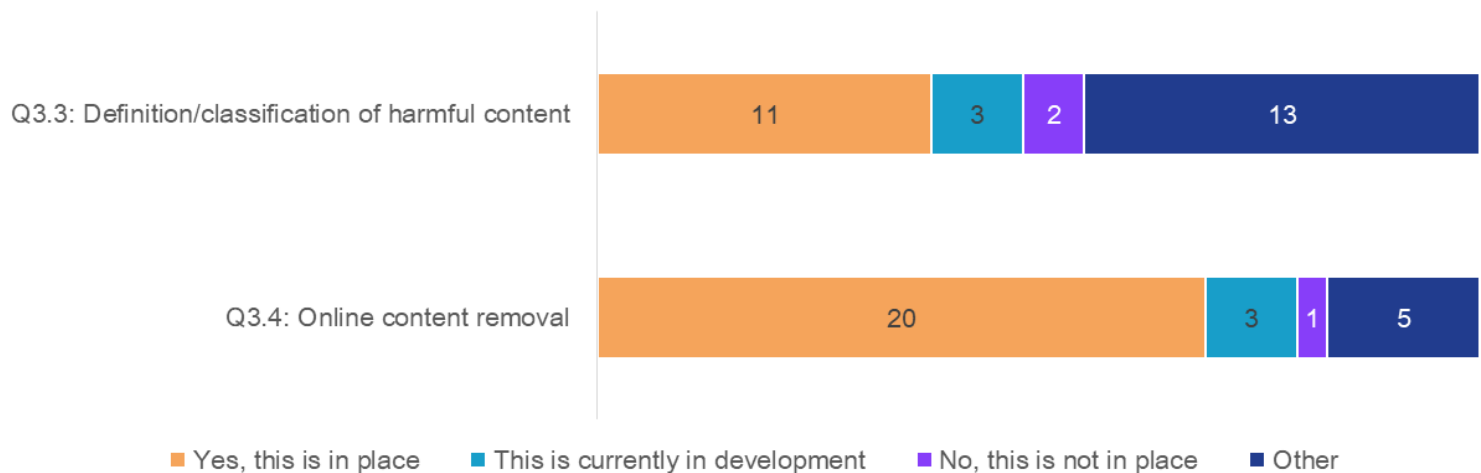


Figure 18: Harmful online content

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.3: Definition of harmful online content	BE, BG, DE, EL, IE, IS, IT, LT, LV, MT, PT	ES, HR, SI	PL, RO	AT, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, HU, LU, NL, NO, SE, SK
Q3.4 Bodies can order content removal	BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI	AT, ES, LU	NO	FI, IS, LV, RO, SK

Table 2. Harmful online content, country responses

As shown in Figure 18, countries' approaches to **defining harmful online** content in their national policies are varied.

- Eleven countries said they include a definition or classification of harmful online content in their national laws, regulations, or policies. Three countries said this is currently in development.
- Thirteen additional countries highlighted various elements of their national policies that tackle the definition of online content potentially harmful to children. Only two countries indicated that this issue has not been addressed.

In their responses, many countries indicated that they rely on existing laws related to media, child protection, or the penal code to address harmful online content rather than having a specific and comprehensive definition within their online safety policies. Some countries are in the process of developing such definitions or frameworks, often influenced by EU legal acts like the DSA. Others have specific definitions for certain types of harmful content, such as child sexual abuse material (CSAM) or cyberbullying. Country respondents also reported whether there were administrative bodies, such as government ministries or agencies, at the national level with the **authority to order the removal or disabling of access to online content** that is potentially harmful to children.

- Twenty countries confirmed that such a provision is available nationally.
- Three countries indicated this is under development, while five more countries pointed to other national arrangements on this issue.

The specific body responsible and the legal framework under which it operates vary from country to country, often involving a combination of national laws, media regulations, and the implementation of EU legal acts like the DSA and AVMSD. Responses from individual countries referred, for instance, to specialised government agencies or regulatory authorities focused on media, communications, or online safety, as well as law enforcement agencies, particularly cybercrime units, and designated Digital Services Coordinators, as mandated by the DSA, who have oversight and enforcement powers over online platforms which do not meet the criteria of very large online platforms. In some cases, courts of law also play a role in ordering the removal of illegal content.

Comparing findings to the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), there has been an increase in the number of countries reporting definitions of harmful online content in place, rising from eight countries in 2024 to 11 in 2025. In 2024, only nine countries stated that bodies were in place that could order content removal. This has risen to 20 in the 2025 report.

### 3.1.3 Harmful online conduct

Addressing online conduct that may be harmful to children is a highly challenging issue for online safety. Taking two specific aspects of this complex phenomenon, the BIK Policy monitor surveys countries about the availability of national laws or policies that address intimate image abuse and cyberbullying. Country respondents are also asked to report on whether there are processes available whereby individuals, including children, can make a complaint.

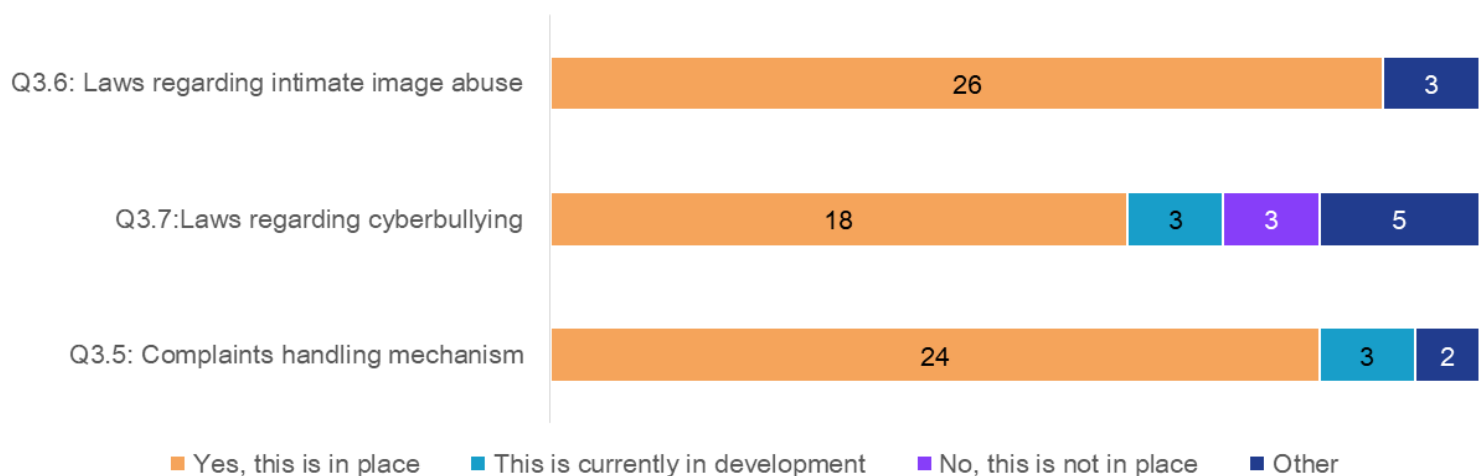


Figure 19: Harmful online conduct

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.6: Intimate image abuse laws	AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IE, IS, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK	-	-	FI, HU, LU
Q3.7: Cyberbullying laws	AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, NO, PT, RO, SE, SK	HR, MT, SI	DK, IS, NL	BG, HU, LU, LV, PL
Q3.5 Complaints bodies	AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK	IS, NL, SI	-	IE, NO

Table 3. Harmful online conduct, country responses

As illustrated in Figure 19, most countries have measures to tackle both of the surveyed types of harmful online conduct.

- Twenty-six countries reported that there are laws or regulations in place which render **intimate image abuse** illegal, while 18 countries indicated that there are equivalent measures which address **cyberbullying**. The decrease in countries reporting laws against cyberbullying fell from 20 in 2024 to 18 in 2025, due to a revision of the question specifying laws that make cyberbullying illegal.
- Twenty-four countries stated that there is a process by which individuals (including children) and/or organisations may submit a **complaint** to an administrative body (e.g., a government ministry or agency) about the

availability of potentially harmful online content, cyberbullying, or other online safety issues.

Regarding legal frameworks addressing intimate image abuse, some countries have introduced specific laws or amendments to existing legislation to deal with intimate image abuse in the digital context. For example, Ireland enacted the [Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020](#) (Coco's Law), while in May 2024, France adopted the [SREN law](#), which supplements [Article 226-8 of the French Criminal Code](#). This law explicitly prohibits nonconsensual deepfake imagery, among other provisions.

While the criminalisation approach often applies generally, there is a trend toward recognising the specific vulnerability of minors. Several countries are adopting a two-pronged strategy that combines legal repercussions with preventative measures. For example, [Bulgaria's Safer Internet Centre \(SIC\)](#) conducts a range of focused awareness campaigns and educational programmes. At the same time, Germany's independent media authorities have a [safer sexting programme](#) to raise awareness about the risks associated with sharing intimate images.

Legal frameworks addressing cyberbullying often rely on existing legislation that covers various harmful online behaviours, such as harassment, threats, defamation, and the distribution of personal information without consent. However, many countries focus on developing and implementing national or regional strategies and policies to prevent and address cyberbullying. A strong trend is emerging toward establishing online safety policies within schools to combat cyberbullying alongside broader anti-bullying frameworks at the national or regional level.



**Box 5. Measures to tackle cyberbullying**

Tackling cyberbullying is a key priority highlighted in the [EC's Political Guidelines 2024–2029](#), which commits “to combat the growing trend of abusive behaviour online with an **action plan against cyberbullying**” (2024, p. 20). As the BIK Policy monitor shows, this issue has engaged policymakers for many years.

Several countries have implemented **legal measures to address cyberbullying specifically**, particularly in its extreme forms:

In [Austria](#), for example, the criminal offence of cyberbullying was introduced in 2015 and recently updated in the [Hate on the Net Combating Act](#) (HiNBG) (Federal Law Gazette I 2020/148; in force).

[France](#) modified its law in March 2022 to include online bullying of minors.

In [Hungary](#), on 17 December 2024, the Parliament adopted Act LXXVIII of 2024 on the Suppression of Internet Aggression. The Act entered into force on 1 January 2025 and added [aggression on the internet as a criminal offence](#).

[Italy](#) enacted [Law No. 71/2017](#) 'Regulation for the safeguarding of minors and the prevention and tackling of cyberbullying' specifically to combat cyberbullying, which was later updated with [Law No. 70/2024](#).

In other countries, cyberbullying is addressed through general laws related to **harassment, defamation, threats, and online abuse**:

In [Germany](#), in addition to risk mitigation obligations under the [Youth Protection Act](#) (JuSchG) and now the Digital Services Act, cyberbullying may be punishable, inter alia, according to sections 185 (insult), 238 (stalking) or 240 (coercion) of the German Criminal Code.

In [Luxembourg](#), currently, courts can take action on cyberbullying only based on a more general provision, called 'obsessive harassment', which serves as a catch-all where cyberbullying can also be included. A legislative proposal to add a single article to the Penal Code, namely the possibility of filing a lawsuit in the event of cyberbullying, is under consideration.

In [Poland](#), most cyberbullying acts may be penalised under Article 190a par. 1 and 2 of the Criminal Code. However, there is no separate regulation dedicated to cyberbullying.

Most European countries promote **school-based policies and strategies** to address cyberbullying. These policies often cover expected online behaviour, the use of smartphones in schools, and procedures for dealing with cyberbullying incidents. Examples include [eEducation Austria](#), and [guidelines in Flanders](#) as well as those for the [French-speaking community in Belgium](#). [Ireland's](#) [Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying](#) mandates anti-bullying policies in schools that address cyberbullying.

Many countries also implement **educational and awareness-raising initiatives** to prevent cyberbullying. This includes training programmes for students, teachers, and parents (like [Bulgaria's](#) Cyberscouts Program, [Hungary's](#) NETMENTOR Peer Mentoring Program, and [Spain's](#) ADA Programme). [France's](#) [pHARe](#) programme integrates specific actions to prevent bullying and promote a positive school environment. Campaigns like [Luxembourg's](#) [sëcher digital](#) and [Portugal's](#) [School Without Bullying](#). [School Without Violence](#) aim to raise awareness and provide tools for prevention and intervention.

## 3.1.4 Age verification

The BIK Policy monitor survey questionnaire includes two items related to the key policy issue of age verification. Country respondents are asked to report on whether there is a national policy or law that requires age assurance, specifically age verification mechanisms, to prevent minors from accessing adult (over-18) online content or other restricted services. A further item enquires if there is a plan at the national level to implement the EU Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI) for minors.

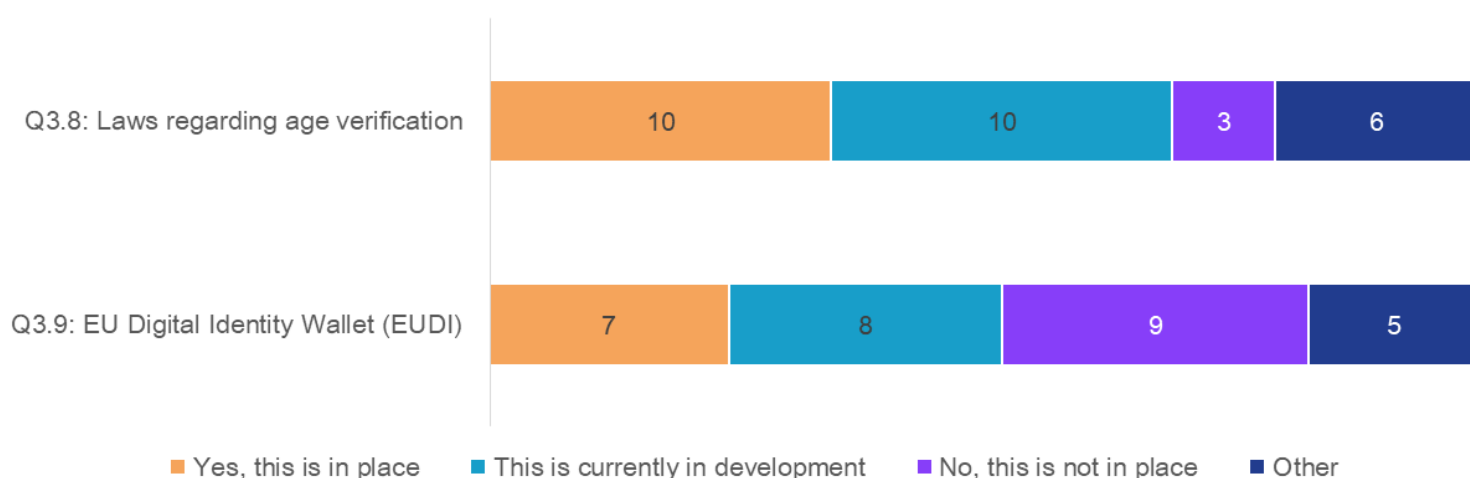


Figure 20: Age verification

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.8: Age verification laws	BE, DE, DK, EE, EL, FR, HU, IE, LT, PT	CZ, ES, IS, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL, RO, SI	AT, BG, HR	CY, FI, LU, LV, SE, SK
Q3.9: EU Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI)	BE, DE, EL, FI, IT, LV, NL	DK, ES, FR, HR, MT, NO, PL, SI	BG, CY, EE, HU, IS, PT, RO, SE, SK	AT, CZ, IE, LT, LU

Table 4. Age verification, country responses

As shown in Figure 20, age verification is a topic attracting considerable attention from policymakers.

- Ten countries reported that there are national-level policies or regulations addressing age verification requirements, and a further 10 countries said this is in development. Six countries point to other relevant activities at the national level.
- This finding indicates a significant increase compared to 2024, when only four countries reported national laws or policies mandating age verification.
- The nature of national-level policies on age verification varies significantly. In conjunction with provisions under AVMSD to ensure that minors do not normally access seriously harmful content, some countries specify that age verification systems can be used for this purpose. For example:
  - In Germany, the [Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media](#) (JMStV) prohibits electronic media classified as adult content (over-18), including pornography, unless providers ensure that minors cannot access it. Under the DSA, age verification is also a possible measure, and the [Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media](#) (BzKJ) verifies that suitable measures are in place.
  - In Ireland, Part A of the [Online Safety Code](#) imposes a general obligation on service providers to establish and operate age verification systems, as appropriate, for content that may impair minors' physical, mental, or moral development.
  - In Spain, the proposed [Law on the Protection of Minors in Digital Environments](#) mandates that companies implement reliable age verification systems to restrict minors' access to certain content or services. Furthermore, the Spanish Data Protection Agency and the Ministry of Digital Transformation are collaboratively developing a pilot system for age verification for adult content websites.

Figure 20 also highlights significant advancements in the implementation of digital wallets for minors.

- Seven countries reported having adopted plans at the national level to introduce digital wallets for minors, while eight others indicated that this initiative is in development.
- Nine countries state that this is not yet established, and five countries refer to other relevant activities.

The main trends in digital identity systems for minors focus on utilising existing national infrastructures while prioritising age verification in line with the EUDI initiative. Several countries are adapting or expanding their current national digital identity solutions for minors. For instance, Austria allows those over 14 to apply for [ID Austria](#); Belgium's [MyGov.be](#) functions as a national digital identity wallet accessible to all citizens, including minors; Lithuania emphasises [national tools](#) available for identity verification that teenagers can use with parental consent. Countries such as Spain, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Poland, and Sweden explicitly mention their participation in discussions, pilot projects, or ongoing efforts related to the EU's [EUDI Regulation](#).

### 3.1.5 Commercial content

Addressing commercial practices in the online world is another important topic both at the EU and national levels. The fifth project phase of the Better Internet for Kids portal implemented a Europe-wide awareness-raising campaign titled [AdWiseOnline](#).<sup>44</sup> It addresses child and youth consumer protection in digital environments and aims to raise awareness about manipulative digital marketing practices. The campaign's objective is to enhance young people's understanding of digital marketing and online advertising practices, including loot boxes, in-game currencies, and dark patterns, and empower them with knowledge about their online rights as young consumers.

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<sup>44</sup> The AdWiseOnline campaign is carried out in partnership between the EC's Directorate General CONNECT and JUST policy frameworks, as well as the public-facing networks of [European Safer Internet Centres \(SICs\)](#) and [European Consumer Centres \(ECC-Net\)](#) within the framework of the [Better Internet for Kids \(BIK\)](#) initiative.

This section addresses two key items in the BIK Policy monitor regarding protecting minors against commercial exploitation online: the availability of a consumer code of practice related to topics such as 'influencer marketing' and unfair commercial practices such as dark patterns and addictive features in online services.

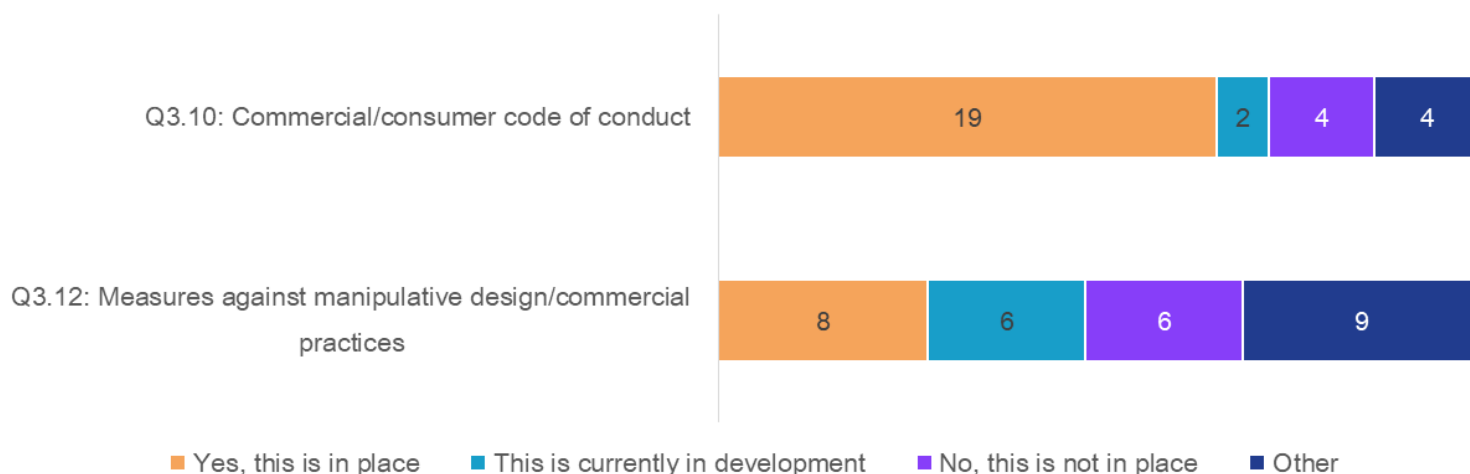


Figure 21: Commercial content

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.10: Commercial/consumer code of practice	BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IS, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL, SE, SK	CY, SI	HR, LU, LV, PT	AT, DK, LT, RO
Q3.12: Measures against manipulative design/commercial practices	BE, BG, DK, HU, IT, LV, MT, SE	EL, ES, IE, NL, NO, SI	FR, HR, IS, LT, PT, SK	AT, CY, CZ, DE, EE, FI, LU, PL, RO

Table 5. Commercial content, country responses

As illustrated in Figure 21, codes of practice concerning commercial content on digital services are reported to be widely available.

- Nineteen countries reported having national codes of conduct or **codes of practice** (i.e., a '**commercial**' or '**consumer code**') that govern online commercial content on digital services, including influencer-based marketing. Two countries also indicated that such codes are under development, while three others reported being engaged in related activities at the national level.
- Eight countries referenced measures implemented at the national or regional level to address dark patterns, addictive features, and **unfair commercial practices** in digital services. An additional six countries indicated that work is underway on these topics.

The main forms of codes of practice reported are predominantly non-statutory, self-regulatory guidelines and codes developed by industry bodies or through self-regulation. However, some countries also rely on existing statutory laws related to advertising, unfair competition, and media regulation to govern online commercial content. There are also examples of guidelines issued by regulatory authorities and industry best practice documents. As such, a mix of self-regulation and the application of existing broader legal frameworks to the online commercial space constitutes the main trend on this topic.

There are relatively few examples of explicitly stated measures dedicated to addressing dark patterns, addictive features, and unfair commercial practices in digital services.

- One notable instance is Belgium, one of the first countries to [ban loot boxes in video games](#), viewing them as a form of gambling. The Belgian Gaming Commission characterised loot boxes as addictive gambling mechanisms, particularly harmful to minors. It instituted a ban to protect children from manipulative in-game purchases and addictive gaming features.
- Poland's response also highlights an initiative from the Ombudsperson for Children regarding loot boxes in computer games, suggesting that they should be included in the Gambling Act to restrict access for minors.

With the implementation of the Digital Services Act, some countries noted that it includes measures against manipulative practices such as dark patterns, which will

provide protection, including for children. Several countries also indicated that they rely on existing consumer protection laws to address unfair commercial practices applicable to the online environment, potentially offering some protection to children and young people online.

3.1.6 Mental health and well-being

The final theme addressed under pillar 1 (safe digital experiences) focuses on mental health and well-being, one of the three priorities highlighted in the [European Commission’s Political Guidelines for 2024-2029](#). Country respondents were requested to report on any measures implemented at the national or regional level aimed at safeguarding children’s mental health and well-being while online.



Figure 22: Mental health and well-being

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.11: Mental health measures	BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FI, HR, IE, IS, LU, LV, MT, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE	ES, SI, SK	LT, NL	AT, CY, FR, HU, IT

Table 6. Mental health and well-being, country responses



As outlined in Figure 22, responses from countries show that this is a significant and emerging priority for policymakers.

- Nineteen countries reported having measures in place aimed at protecting children's mental health and well-being while online. Three countries indicated that measures are currently being developed on this topic.
- Five countries highlighted other relevant activities at the national level, including support for online mental health and well-being. Only two countries noted that no measure is currently in place.

Several countries have implemented national strategies and action plans that address children's mental health within a broader context, including online aspects (BG, ES, FR, IE, etc.).<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, Safer Internet Centres (SICs) and helplines play a crucial role in providing direct support and resources. Additionally, educational programmes and resources for schools represent another key area of intervention.

#### Box 6. Safeguarding mental health and well-being

Protecting the mental health of children and young people – especially online – is another key priority for the European Commission for the period 2024-2029 (2024, p. 20). The Policy monitor highlights a number of important policy initiatives addressing this issue.

Several countries have **incorporated 'mental health online' measures within broader national strategies:**

**Bulgaria** has the [National Strategy for Mental Health \(2021-2030\)](#), which aims to enhance mental health services, including those related to online environments.

**France** similarly adopted a [National Action Plan on Mental Health \(2023\)](#) that includes initiatives to mitigate the negative impacts of excessive screen time and online exposure.

**Sweden** presented a [new national strategy within mental health and suicide prevention \(2025-2034\)](#), which includes children and young people.

**Slovakia** approved the National Mental Health Program and Action Plan for 2024-2030, which emphasises prevention and early intervention in the online space.

**Ireland's** [Young Ireland policy framework \(2023-2028\)](#) highlights child and youth mental health and well-being with a focus on digital mental health.

<sup>45</sup> For detailed insights, please refer to the individual [BIK Policy monitor country profiles](#) within the [BIK Knowledge hub](#).

**Box 6. Safeguarding mental health and well-being [continued]**

**Providing accessible support for children facing online mental health challenges** is another key approach: In **Belgium**, Tejo offers free therapeutic support. **Estonia** offers help and advice through the child welfare service **Lasteabi**, with referrals to psychologists. **Greece** has the **Greek SIC's Helpline** and the **Centre for the Treatment of Addicted Individuals** for internet/video game addiction. **All countries covered in this report** have a **children and adolescents hotline 116 111**.

**Issuing guidance and recommendations for parents, children, and professionals** is another important area of activity.

The **Danish** Health Authority has provided guidance on supporting children with screen use recommendations.

The **Swedish** Public Health Agency published **general recommendations and guidelines** on digital media use for children and young people.

**Portugal** has issued **recommendations for promoting digital well-being in schools**.

A notable recent example is **Denmark's Commission on Well-being for Children and Youth**, established in 2023 to investigate the reasons for low well-being among children and young people. The Commission published its **35 recommendations** in February 2025. Some of the recommendations include postponing children's smartphone debut until they are 13 years old, implementing parental agreements on children's use of digital services, and establishing smartphone-free primary and secondary schools.

## 3.2 Pillar 2 – digital empowerment

Pillar 2 of the BIK+ strategy promotes digital empowerment so that “*children acquire the necessary skills and competences to make sound choices and express themselves in the online environment safely and responsibly*” (2022, p. 9). A wide range of activities is encompassed within this pillar, reflecting the significant priority given to digital skills in EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway. This section of the report focuses on two key aspects relevant to empowering children and young people in the digital environment: support for online safety education (section 3.2.1) and fostering digital literacy skills to empower young people (section 3.2.2).

### 3.2.1 Support for online safety education

Incorporating online safety education in both formal and informal settings has long been a priority of the BIK strategy. The **BIK Policy monitor survey questionnaire**

includes four relevant items in this area: a) online safety in the curriculum; b) promoting comprehensive online safety policies in schools; c) online safety in informal education; and d) the availability of support for teacher training.

## a) Online safety in primary and secondary level curricula

As in previous editions of the BIK Policy monitor, high levels of activity were reported in all aspects of incorporating online safety in schools, including integrating online safety education in national primary and secondary level curricula among EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway.

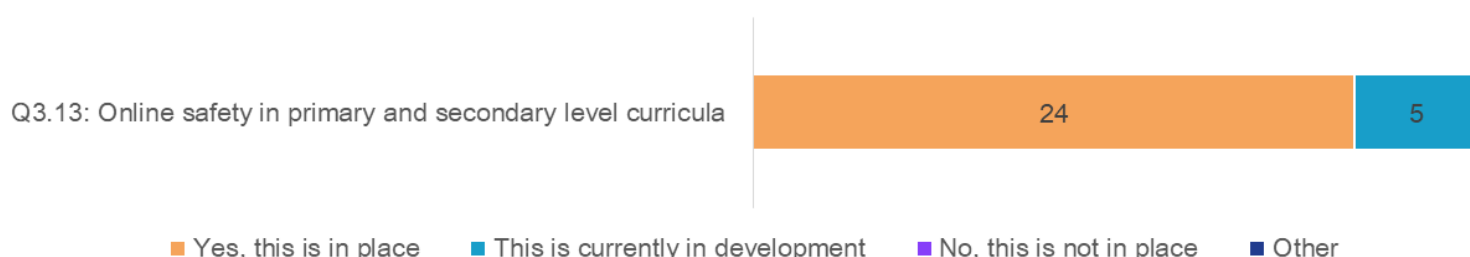


Figure 23: Online safety in primary and secondary level curricula

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.13: Online safety in primary and secondary level curricula	AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK	CZ, DK, ES, NL, SI	-	-

Table 7. Online safety in primary and secondary level curricula, country responses

All surveyed countries reported that they have either incorporated or are actively developing the integration of online safety into their national or regional school curricula at both primary and secondary levels, as shown in Figure 23. Twenty-four

countries stated that this is currently in place, while an additional five countries indicated that this is under development.

- **Formal curriculum integration:** several countries explicitly state that online safety is a formal part of the curriculum. This is often accomplished through specific subjects or as a component of broader areas such as digital literacy and digital citizenship. For instance, Bulgaria integrated online safety into the national curriculum in 2024 as part of its digital literacy and citizenship programmes. Italy has incorporated it through civic education, ICT, and media literacy programmes. Luxembourg includes internet safety training in the 'digital sciences' subject in secondary schools. In some cases, aspects related to online safety are becoming mandatory. In France, the PIX certification process, which assesses digital skills, including those related to online safety, is mandatory from year 8. Some countries use a cross-curricular approach, reinforcing online safety concepts across various subject areas. For example, in Belgium, both the Flemish and French-speaking communities integrate online safety across the curriculum. In Flanders, digital literacy, including online safety, is embedded within the ICT curriculum as a cross-curricular competence taught at both primary and secondary levels.
- **National strategies and policies:** the integration of online safety education is often guided by national digital strategies and policies. Italy's initiatives are covered by the [National Digital School Plan \(PNSD\)](#). At the same time, Norway's approach aligns with its [national strategy for a safe digital upbringing](#).
- **Updating curricula:** some countries emphasise the ongoing development and revision of national curricula. The Czech Republic noted that well-being, digital well-being, and the prevention of online risks are included in the updated [Framework Educational Programme for Primary Education](#), released in early 2025. Ireland refreshed its [Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum](#) in February 2023 with a greater emphasis on online safety. Iceland incorporated information and media literacy, as well as digital citizenship, in its most recent curriculum update.

Some countries, such as Greece, reported that teaching online safety is not directly incorporated into the national school curriculum but instead relies on supplementary educational materials and programmes provided by the [Safer Internet Centre](#) and other initiatives. Similarly, while Croatia's National Framework Curriculum mentions digital competences, it does not specifically address online safety. Slovakia indicates that online safety education is not directly in place, although training in basic digital skills, including safe online behaviour, is part of the informatics educational standard. The Netherlands also states that online safety instruction is not currently implemented in the curriculum, although further development is underway.

### ***b) Online safety policies in schools***

As Figure 24 below outlines, 23 of the 29 surveyed countries reported that they have national or regional strategies for online safety policies in schools, including guidelines on expected online behaviour, the use of smartphones in educational settings, and approaches for addressing cyberbullying incidents.



*Figure 24: Online safety policies in schools*

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.14: Online safety policies in schools	AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO, SK	LT, SI	-	CZ, LV, PL, SE

Table 8. Online safety policies in schools, country responses

Online safety policies in schools encompass a variety of approaches and topics, as illustrated in the responses across different countries:

- National-level frameworks and guidelines:** several countries cited national strategies or frameworks that support online safety policies in schools, as noted above. These frameworks typically provide guidelines and requirements for schools to develop their own specific policies. For example, Cyprus refers to national strategies that support online safety policies, which encompass expected behaviours, smartphone usage, and [cyberbullying protocols](#).
- School-level policy development:** in many cases, individual schools are encouraged to create their own policies regarding online behaviour, smartphone use, and addressing incidents of cyberbullying, often with support from national or regional authorities. In Belgium (Flanders), schools are prompted to formulate their internal policies, with [guidelines](#) provided by the Flemish government. Malta similarly [encourages schools](#) to establish their own policies concerning mobile phone use.
- Specific policy areas:** as referenced in many responses, online safety policies in schools frequently address particular areas of concern, including expected behaviour in the use of digital devices on school premises and procedures for addressing cyberbullying incidents. For example, Malta has

implemented measures to tackle cyberbullying in schools, including [guidelines](#) for managing such incidents.

- **Smartphone use:** policies addressing smartphone use in schools prominently feature among responses. Some countries or regions may have national-level guidelines, while others leave it to the discretion of individual schools:
  - In Bulgaria, smartphone use policies vary by school, adhering to Ministry of Education guidelines.
  - Croatia does not have a general ban, with individual schools determining mobile phone restrictions.
  - In Slovakia, a framework introduced in April 2024 will prohibit mobile phone use in primary grades 1-3 while allowing restricted use in grades 4-9 as needed or at the teacher's discretion, effective January 2025.
  - In Finland, the government is drafting new legislation to limit mobile phone use in schools, expected by August 2025.
  - Conversely, Hungary has already established a [nationwide policy](#) restricting the use of digital devices, including mobile phones.
  - In Poland, public debate is ongoing, and decisions are currently made at the institutional level.

### ***c) Informal education supports***

As shown in Figure 25, many countries reported having national and/or regional activities in place to reinforce informal education about digital safety. Twenty-five countries reported having national or regional measures in place for this purpose. Two countries indicate that such measures are currently under development. Another country (IE) mentioned that other activities are addressing this general field, while one country (DK) stated that there are currently no national measures in place on this topic.



Q3.15: Informal education (e.g., targeted at vulnerable/marginalised groups)



Figure 25: Informal education (e.g., targeted at vulnerable/marginalised groups)

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.15: Informal education supports	AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IS, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK	IT, SE	DK	IE

Table 9. Informal education, country responses

Some of the main trends identified in country responses include:

- **Targeting vulnerable and marginalised youth:** many initiatives specifically aim to assist vulnerable or marginalised youth lacking access to digital safety education through formal channels. For instance, the [Cyber Security Coalition](#) operates various programmes in Belgium to enhance digital safety awareness among vulnerable groups, such as marginalised youth and disadvantaged communities. The identified target groups include refugees and migrants, youth in care or facing social challenges, youth with disabilities, and at-risk adolescents.
- **Safer Internet Centres (SICs) as key actors:** [SICs](#) play a vital role in developing and delivering informal digital safety education through outreach

programmes, workshops, campaigns, and online resources. For instance, the [Bulgarian SIC](#) provides extensive informal education through its awareness campaigns and the [Cyberscouts programme](#). [Safer Internet Centre Cyprus](#) offers online resources and conducts public awareness campaigns. Malta also mentions the [Maltese SIC](#) outreach programmes that target various community groups, including vulnerable youth.

- **Public awareness:** more broadly, national and regional public awareness campaigns are often employed to engage diverse audiences through social media, television, and radio to educate children, parents, and educators about online risks. Topics covered include cyberbullying, online predators, harmful content, privacy protection, and responsible use of social media.
- **Workshops and training programmes:** workshops and training initiatives are often provided by schools, community centres, youth organisations, and NGOs, focusing on topics such as safe internet usage, privacy settings, cyberbullying prevention, and recognising online risks. In Austria, the [Digital Skills for All](#) project offers free workshops nationwide aimed at those outside formal education. Some initiatives, like the [Cyberscouts programme](#) in Bulgaria and the [Digital Pioneers program](#) in Cyprus, adopt a youth-led approach, training young people to educate their peers about digital risks.

While many countries have activities in place, the nature and scale of these initiatives can vary. Some countries reported no changes since the last submission, while others refer to more general public awareness campaigns with online resources. Ireland indicates that a national programme is currently not in place, while Italy and Sweden reported that work is currently under development.

#### ***d) Adequate teacher training***

As Figure 26 outlines, the vast majority of countries, 23 out of 29, also confirmed that there are national and regional activities to ensure adequate teacher training (pre-service or in-service) regarding online safety.

Q3.16: Adequate teacher training



Figure 26: Adequate teacher training

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.16: Adequate teacher training	AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IS, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK	DK, EL, IE	IT	MT, NO

Table 10. Adequate teacher training, country responses

These findings suggest that providing educators with the necessary skills to navigate the digital environment has received significant policy attention. Key trends in national responses include:

- **Areas of focus:** teacher training programmes typically cover essential online safety topics such as cyberbullying prevention, privacy issues, responsible online behaviour, digital citizenship, identifying online risks, and dealing with harmful content. Some training is also starting to incorporate aspects of artificial intelligence (AI) literacy and safety related to new technologies. Various training methods and resources are employed, including workshops, seminars, webinars, online courses, e-learning platforms, and the provision of teaching materials and guidelines.

- **Stakeholder involvement:** teacher training is primarily conducted under the initiative of national Ministries of Education and regional educational authorities. These entities often create strategic frameworks, fund training programmes, and collaborate with various organisations. However, teacher training initiatives frequently involve cooperation among stakeholders, including educational institutions (universities, teacher training colleges), government agencies, NGOs, and sometimes even industry partners. [Safer Internet Centres \(SICs\)](#) often play a central role in providing teachers with online safety training and resources. SICs feature prominently among national responses in offering specialised programmes, workshops, manuals, and online materials to enhance teachers' abilities to address online risks.
- **Enhancing skills:** training on online safety is often integrated within broader efforts to enhance teachers' digital competencies. Recognising that online safety is a key aspect of digital literacy, many programmes aim to develop a holistic set of digital skills for educators. Some initiatives are designed to address the specific needs of different teacher groups (e.g., primary vs. secondary school teachers) or focus on particular contexts, such as vocational training. Additionally, some programmes target educators working with vulnerable or marginalised groups.

### 3.2.2 Digital literacy skills to empower young people

Developing digital literacy skills is another aspect of digital empowerment central to the BIK+ strategy and is considered in the annual BIK Policy monitoring. This section features three aspects: [a\) an assessment of training in basic digital skills](#); [b\) activities to tackle disinformation and foster critical media literacy](#); and [c\) activities to develop children's digital creativity](#). The following sections summarise findings and illustrate some main trends identified in country responses.

#### ***a) Training in basic digital skills***

Digital literacy skills training is central to educational strategies in all EU Member States, as well as in Iceland and Norway. However, the question in this section of the [BIK Policy monitor survey questionnaire](#) was more specific. Countries were

asked to report whether training in basic digital skills - such as information and data literacy, knowledge of artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI (genAI), communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem-solving - constitutes a core part of the curriculum in their education systems.



Figure 27: Basic digital skills training

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.17: Basic skills	AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, LU, NO, RO, SE, SK	DK, EL, IE, IS, IT, MT, PL, SI	NL, PT	LT, LV

Table 11. Basic digital skills training, country responses

As shown in Figure 27 above, 17 of the 29 countries stated that training in basic digital skills is a core part of the curriculum. Eight countries indicated that this is under development, while two reported that it is currently not in place.

Key trends identified include:

- Widespread inclusion in the curriculum:** many countries reported that training in basic digital skills is already a core part of their education system's curriculum. In Austria, for example, [media literacy and computational thinking](#) are integral components in [primary school](#) and compulsory subjects

in [middle and secondary schools](#). Cyprus has introduced a [new curriculum](#) for grades five and six that focuses on computational thinking, digital skills, and digital literacy. Estonia has introduced [Information environment and media use](#) as a general competence subject in its national curricula and highlights the significance of various aspects of digital skills.

- **Ongoing development and integration:** several countries indicated that while basic digital skills training is largely established, there is a continuous effort toward further development and deeper integration, particularly concerning newer areas like AI literacy. For instance, Austria's mandatory module, [Digital Basic Education](#), is under development in teacher training. Cyprus's [new curriculum](#) aims to equip students with the competencies to engage with AI tools. Spain has launched initiatives like [Escuela 4.0](#) and programmes in Andalusia to incorporate computational thinking, programming, robotics, and AI concepts into education. Poland's National Research Institute, [NASK \(Safer Internet Centre Poland\)](#), has researched AI in education to facilitate its integration into learning.

The specific digital skills highlighted often align with frameworks such as the [European Digital Competence Framework \(DigComp\)](#), including information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem-solving, with increasing attention to AI literacy.

Digital safety also emerges as a key component within the broader basic digital skills training across numerous countries. Italy explicitly includes safe internet use, cyberbullying prevention, data privacy, misinformation awareness, and cybersecurity in its curriculum. Estonia's definition of digital competence includes awareness of online dangers and the ability to protect privacy and personal data. Media literacy and critical thinking skills are also widely referenced as basic digital competencies.

- **Teacher training as a supporting pillar:** as reported above, initiatives for teacher training in this area incorporate basic digital skills training as a core component. In Flanders (Belgium), the Flemish Education Council and the Media Literacy Knowledge Centre offer resources and training. [Germany's](#)

KMK (Kultusministerkonferenz) strategy, [Education in the Digital World](#), includes recommendations for teacher training. Estonia also mentions the provision of regular webinars for teacher development in digital competence.

- **National strategies and frameworks as drivers:** the significance of national digital strategies and competence frameworks is notable. These often define learning objectives, curriculum guidelines, and assessment methods. The Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Belgium) has established a [Digital Competence Framework](#). Bulgaria's [National Digital Decade Strategic Roadmap](#) aims to enhance digital skills. France's [Digital Strategy for Education 2023-2027](#) emphasises the development of students' digital competencies.

While many countries report incorporating these skills into their curricula, the depth and breadth of implementation can vary. For example, Lithuania states that these skills are strongly included, but would not necessarily classify them as core.

### ***b) Tackling disinformation, fostering critical media literacy***

Addressing disinformation and promoting critical media literacy is one of the topics that, according to responses, receives the highest level of support and is a key education priority across all EU Member States, as well as Iceland and Norway.



**Figure 28: Critical media literacy**



	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.18: Critical media literacy	AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK	DK, CY	-	-

*Table 12. Critical media literacy, country responses*

As shown in Figure 28, the vast majority of countries, 27 out of 29, reported that activities are in place at the national level to help young people develop skills to critically assess online information and build resilience against misinformation and disinformation. Two countries (DK, CY) indicated that this is currently being developed. There is also considerable variation in the nature and types of such activities:

- Emphasis on critical media literacy:** teaching how to identify fake news, understand media bias, verify information sources, and navigate the digital information landscape responsibly is frequently cited as a key theme. Countries such as Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Finland, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia all report initiatives in this area. Some initiatives specifically target disinformation related to particular events or topics, such as political elections (LU) or health information.
- Importance of educational resources:** many reported activities focused on developing specialised resources to support media literacy education. SICs are often at the forefront of these efforts, providing crucial support through resources, conducting training sessions for children, parents, and teachers, and running awareness campaigns on identifying and avoiding disinformation. Examples include [BEE SECURE](#) in Luxembourg, the [Icelandic Safer Internet](#)



Centre, and the [Safer Internet Centre in Latvia](#), which all have prominent activities on this topic. Finland's [Media Literacy School](#) is another example, operating as a hub for such content. Similarly, Romania's Ministry of Education partners with the [Centre for Independent Journalism](#) (CIJ) to implement media education programmes for teachers.

- **Collaboration with fact-checking organisations and other NGOs:** a significant number of countries reported working with fact-checking organisations to incorporate their expertise into educational content and teach students how to distinguish between factual reporting and manipulated content. Examples include Belgium's partnership with [FactCheck](#) and Spain's [IBERIFIER](#) project.
- **National awareness campaigns and initiatives:** many countries are conducting national awareness campaigns to highlight the dangers of disinformation and promote critical thinking. These campaigns often use online tools, social media, and traditional media to reach a wide audience, including children, parents, and educators. Hungary's [NMHH](#) (National Media and Infocommunications Authority) runs several campaigns addressing fake news, while the [Be Media Smart](#) campaign has been an important media literacy initiative in Ireland.

## c) Developing children's digital creativity

In addition to technical digital skills and media literacy, countries were asked to report on initiatives at the national or regional level that encourage children's digital creativity and promote creative uses of digital technologies. This aspect of digital empowerment has also been reported to be widely present across the responding countries.



Figure 29: Creative digital skills

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.19: Creative digital skills	AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MT, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK	-	BG, DK, FR, NL, RO	LV

Table 13. Creative digital skills, country responses

As shown in Figure 29 above, 23 out of 29 countries report that activities are present on this topic. Five countries report that this is not present.

Among the activities noted are the following:

- Integration into formal education:** many countries incorporate digital creativity into their formal education systems through specific projects, competitions, and the use of digital tools in the classroom. Initiatives like [Digisprong](#) in Flanders (Belgium) aim to integrate digital technology and creative digital activities into the curriculum. Italy's [National Digital School Plan](#) (PNSD) also emphasises developing digital skills and creativity among students. These initiatives often seek to foster skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, innovation, and collaboration through engaging creatively with technology. Italy's AI-assisted software pilot programme in classrooms aims to enhance learning experiences and promote digital creativity. The initiatives mentioned cover various creative activities, including digital content creation, coding, game design, robotics, multimedia production, digital video production, graphic design, and digital art.
- Extracurricular activities and competitions:** alongside formal education, extracurricular activities such as workshops, hackathons, and digital art festivals to encourage digital creativity outside of the regular curriculum are widely mentioned. These events are designed to allow children to apply their

skills, collaborate, and gain recognition for their creative work. Estonia's [CyberEscape Room Creativity Competition](#) is a recent example.

In some countries, specific organisations are actively involved in promoting digital creativity. For example, the [Zaffiria Centre](#) in Italy focuses on education, digital citizenship, creativity, and participation through media, offering relevant workshops and projects. In Croatia, the [Centre for Missing and Abused Children](#) (Centar za nestalu i zlostavljanu djecu) mentions training on responsible video game creation.

However, while digital creativity is widely reported in the curriculum, the levels of implementation vary significantly, often depending on special initiatives and extracurricular activities, with limited information on their uptake. Additionally, not all countries have dedicated initiatives regarding this topic.

### 3.3 Pillar 3 – active participation, respecting children

Pillar 3 of the BIK+ strategy promotes young people's active participation and respecting their rights through such themes as child-led activities to foster innovative and creative safe digital experiences and ensuring young people have a say in policies for the digital environment (2022, p. 9).

This 2025 edition of the BIK Policy monitor focuses on three aspects of this agenda. First, it highlights actions taken in EU Member States, Iceland and Norway to encourage active participation and support youth involvement in policy-making (section 3.3.1). Secondly, it examines efforts to promote children's rights through awareness-raising activities, producing child-friendly versions of policy documents, and enhancing the availability of positive digital content (section 3.3.2). Finally, the issue of digital inclusion is assessed, explicitly looking at actions to tackle digital inequalities and special initiatives to support vulnerable and marginalised groups (section 3.3.3).

### 3.3.1 Promoting active participation

Many countries have recently placed greater emphasis on effective youth participation within their national youth strategies, and there is significant overlap with relevant features of pillar 3 of the BIK+ strategy. This section assesses two main aspects: a) activities at the national level that promote active participation, youth civic engagement, and advocacy in the digital environment; as well as b) arrangements made for children to be actively involved in the development of digital policies, in addition to with the activities of the BIK Youth panels and ambassadors typically implemented by the national Safer Internet Centres as part of the European Insafe network.

#### a) Active participation

Regarding actions to encourage active participation, Figure 30 indicates that all participating countries identify several relevant activities, with some emphasising this as a new and emerging priority:

- Twenty-one countries reported having activities in place that promote active participation, youth civic engagement, and advocacy regarding the digital environment.
- Four countries indicated that this is currently under development, while four more countries pointed to other relevant activities at the national level supporting this objective.



Figure 30: Promoting participation

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.20: Activities to promote active participation	AT, BE, BG, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK	CY, CZ, HU, IS	-	DK, FR, LV, SE

Table 14. Promoting participation, country responses

Individual country responses illustrate some of the range of activities, including:

- Youth councils and panels:** several countries refer to formal or informal youth councils and representative panels that provide platforms for young people to voice their opinions on digital issues and engage with policymakers. For example, the youth council attached to the [Ombudsperson for Children](#) in Poland was mentioned, as was the youth parliament in Malta. In practice, however, many countries referred to their reliance on EC co-funded SICs, which are contractually obliged to implement and coordinate national youth panels. Examples cited include the [youth panel](#) of the [Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre](#), the [CyberSafety youth panel](#) of [Cyprus](#), the [Youth Panel of Generazioni Connesse](#) in Italy, the [BEE SECURE kids and youth panel](#) in Luxembourg, and the [youth council](#) of the [Latvian Safer Internet Centre](#).
- Integration into existing structures:** in some cases, promoting youth participation in the digital environment is integrated into broader national youth strategies and action plans, such as the [Austrian Youth Strategy](#) and Germany's [National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation](#).

Additionally, some countries, such as Sweden, have national bodies responsible for enhancing youth participation in democracy, although their mandate may not explicitly focus on the digital environment. In Slovakia, the National Coordination Centre (NCC) emphasises a participatory approach, actively involving young people in policy-making related to their digital activities. Portugal also highlights initiatives like [Youth Participatory Budgeting Portugal](#) and the [Youth Parliament](#) programme.

## b) Youth involvement in policy-making

The BIK Policy monitor survey questionnaire further examines if mechanisms are available at the national or regional level to facilitate children's involvement in policy-making regarding the digital environment beyond the activities of the BIK Youth panels and ambassadors as led by the members of the [European Insafe network of Safer Internet Centres](#).



Figure 31: Arrangements to facilitate child involvement in policy-making

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.21: Arrangements to facilitate child involvement in policy-making	BE, BG, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, HR, IE, IS, IT, MT, NO, PL, PT, SI, SK	CY	CZ, EE, FR, LT, NL, RO	AT, HU, LU, LV, SE

Table 15. Arrangements to facilitate child involvement in policy-making, country responses

As Figure 31 outlines, many countries reported having arrangements for youth involvement beyond BIK Youth panels, but the nature and formality of this involvement vary significantly.

Several countries have established formal structures, such as youth councils and parliaments at national and regional levels, to create platforms for young people to

discuss policy issues and engage with policymakers. Additionally, some countries have integrated consultation mechanisms into policy development, featuring dedicated youth panels within the main policy frameworks discussed in chapter 2 (see [section 2.4.3](#) above).

Another trend evident in country responses is the integration of these efforts into broader youth participation frameworks and general youth engagement strategies. Although several country respondents noted that the structures established for this purpose might not have a specific digital component, topics related to digitalisation inevitably emerge within youth consultations due to their significance in young people's lives.

## 3.3.2 Supporting children's rights

Pillar 3 of the BIK+ strategy is centrally concerned with respect for children's rights online. To this end, country respondents were asked, alongside relevant policy frameworks explicitly recognising children's rights in the digital environment (see [Chapter 2, section 2.1.4](#) above), about [a\) activities to promote greater public awareness of children's rights](#) when it comes to their participation in the digital environment and support for such initiatives; [b\) child-friendly versions of policy documents](#); and [c\) availability of positive digital content specially designed for children](#).

### a) Promoting awareness

Countries were first asked to report whether there were activities to promote better awareness of children's rights in relation to the digital environment.



**Figure 32: Awareness raising regarding children's rights in the digital environment.**



	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.22: Awareness raising on children's rights	AT, BE, BG, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK	CY, FR, IS, NL	CZ	RO

*Table 16. Awareness raising regarding children's rights in the digital environment, country responses*

As shown in Figure 32:

- Twenty-three countries reported that activities are underway to enhance awareness of children's rights in the digital environment.
- Four countries indicated that this is currently under development.
- One country (CZ) reported that this is not in place, while another country (RO) pointed to other civil society activities to raise awareness.

As noted in country responses, awareness-raising is being addressed through various means, including the active involvement of Safer Internet Centres and government bodies, collaborations with NGOs, and targeted campaigns on specific issues, which include integrating it into education and developing accessible educational resources.

The involvement of government bodies and agencies is noted by Austria, where the Federal Chancellery funds relevant projects, and Germany, where the Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media (BzKJ) supports the [Growing up well with Media](#) (GAmM) initiative. Other public agencies such as [Ireland's Coimisiún na Meán](#), [Denmark's Media Council](#) and [Malta's SIC](#) have actively developed educational resources on this topic. Incorporating children's rights into the school curriculum through subjects like civic education and digital literacy is mentioned by some countries (BG, CY, PT). More generally, collaboration with NGOs and other organisations is frequently cited, with SICs playing a leading role in



many countries in running campaigns and developing resources (e.g., AT, LV, MT, PT).

### **b) Child-friendly documentation**

Countries were also asked to state whether a government system was in place for publishing child-friendly versions of policy documents or policy initiatives relevant to BIK-related topics.



**Figure 33: Child-friendly documentation**

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.23: Child-friendly policy documents	BE, BG, ES, IT, MT, PT	HR, IE, NL, SI	CZ, DK, EE, EL, FI, FR, HU, IS, LT, LV, RO, SE, SK	AT, CY, DE, LU, NO, PL

**Table 17. Child-friendly documentation, country responses**

As shown in Figure 33, the availability of child-friendly documentation on this policy realm remains uneven.

- Only six countries indicate that a system is in place for this purpose, while four countries suggest that this was in development. There is some evidence of an increase since the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), where only three countries reported having systems in place.
- Six countries mention other nationally occurring activities supporting this initiative, but they do not form a formal system.

- Thirteen countries report no provision for this at the national level. In 2024, the reported figure was 14.

While some countries have established government systems for publishing child-friendly policy documents, many others either lack such a system or depend on alternative initiatives, often led by the [national SIC](#) or specific government ministries, to make relevant information accessible to children. However, there has been progress in developing such systems in certain countries.

### c) Positive content

Another objective of the BIK+ strategy is to encourage the creation and visibility of positive digital content and services for children. The [2025 BIK Policy monitor survey questionnaire](#) asked country respondents to report on any activities available nationally or regionally that support positive content tailored to children and young people.



	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.26: Quality online content	AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EL, FI, HR, IT, LT, MT, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK	DK, ES, RO	BG, EE, FR, IS, LU, LV, NL, PT	HU, IE

Table 18. Quality online content, country responses

As illustrated in Figure 34, the availability of systems to support positive quality content remains varied.

- Sixteen countries report having activities available nationally for child-oriented content and services. This represents a slight decrease from the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), where 17 countries reported initiatives.
- Three countries state that this is under development, while two countries point to other relevant national activities.
- Eight countries report that this is not implemented. This is in contrast to five countries that reported no activities in the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#).

Among individual countries' responses, public broadcasters and [SICs](#) are the most frequently mentioned organisations involved in promoting quality online content. For instance, Estonia's [Public Broadcasting Act](#) mandates that programmes meet the information needs of all population groups, including children, through their [web portal](#). Austria's national public broadcaster, ORF, also has a dedicated [children's television channel](#) which produces extensive digital content. Government initiatives involve the development of a quality label for children's content that emphasises positive values and quality under the [Danish Media Agreement](#), alongside measures supporting [child-friendly online services](#) and guidance initiatives for children and parents provided by Germany's Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media (BzKJ).

## 3.3.3 Digital inclusion

The final topic addressed in this edition of the BIK Policy monitor relating to BIK+ strategy pillar 3 concerns measures to promote digital inclusion and tackle persistent digital divides that hinder children’s active participation. The [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#) noted that while many countries advocate for digital inclusivity, this area requires more comprehensive evidence, data collection, and ongoing close evaluation (2024, p. 140). The [2025 BIK Policy monitor survey questionnaire](#) includes two items on this topic: activities aimed at addressing digital inequalities more generally and initiatives to support specific marginalised groups of children.

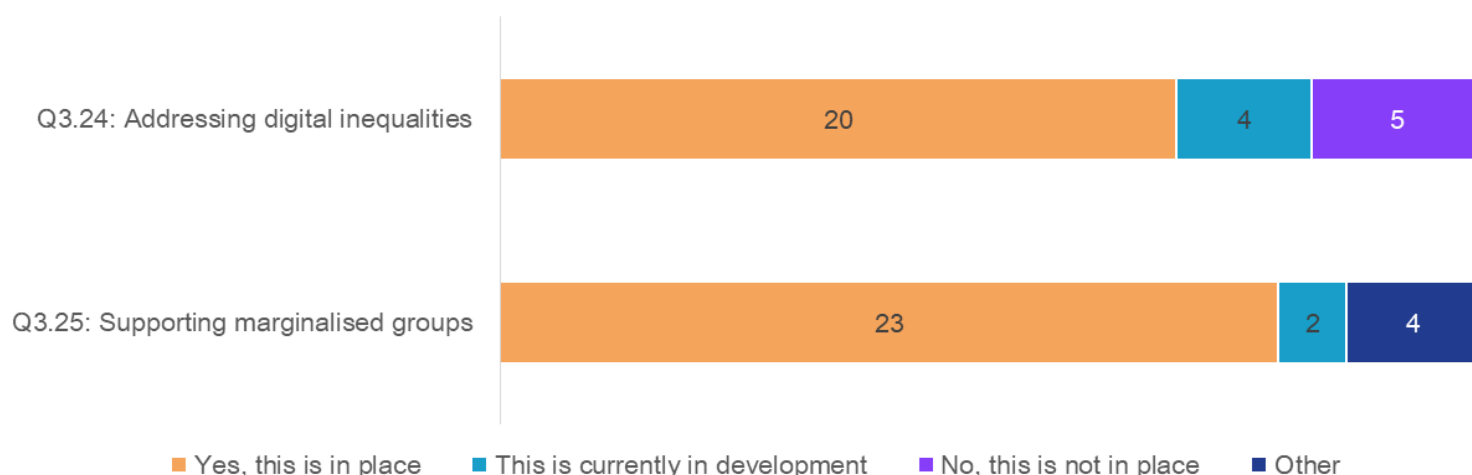


Figure 35: Digital inclusion

	In place	In development	Not in place	Other
Q3.24: Addressing digital inequalities	BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MT, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK	FR, HR, NL, RO	AT, DK, EL, LV, PT	-
Q3.25: Supporting marginalised groups	AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MT, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK	DK, ES	-	FI, LV, NL, RO

*Table 19. Digital inclusion, country responses*

Figure 35 indicates that the majority of countries have implemented targeted measures, reflecting a strong priority regarding this issue.

- Twenty countries reported having national measures to address digital inequalities, while 23 countries indicated that they have initiatives aimed at supporting marginalised groups and those at risk of digital exclusion.
- Four countries said that they are currently developing proposals to address digital inequalities, and two countries are developing initiatives to support marginalised groups.
- Five countries noted that there are currently no national activities aimed at addressing digital inequalities.

While the format of the questions was updated for this year's report, there has been no change since the [2024 BIK Policy monitor](#), in which 19 countries referred to activities to promote digital inclusion (2024, p. 123).

Among the countries with active initiatives, the primary issues being tackled include lack of access to technology, inadequate digital literacy, and the digital exclusion of marginalised groups.

- Many country respondents highlight initiatives to **improve children's digital literacy** and ensure they have the necessary technology skills. For example, Cyprus mentions educational programmes to enhance digital literacy. At the same time, Germany refers to the Länder's commitment to ensuring students acquire digital skills outlined in the [Education in the Digital World](#) strategy. France also notes its [Digital Strategy for Education \(2023-2027\)](#), designed to improve students' and educators' digital literacy.
- Programmes focused on **providing access to digital tools and resources**, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, are also cited. The Czech Republic states that through its National Recovery Plan, [schools received financial support](#) to purchase digital equipment to prevent the digital divide. Hungary reports providing laptops for students in grades 5-12, with high priority given to disadvantaged groups. Malta's [National Digital Education Strategy](#) also prioritises ensuring every student has access to digital tools and resources.
- **Targeting marginalised and at-risk groups** is another significant trend. France has a [National Plan for Digital Inclusion](#) that focuses on providing support and training in digital technologies, emphasising the need to combat the digital divide. The plan aims to support and train 1.5 million individuals in digital technologies and aspires to achieve digital inclusion for at least one-third of the French population over the next decade. Norway's [Digitisation Agency](#) similarly addresses digital inequalities and follows up with an action plan for increased inclusion. Sweden has undertaken several initiatives that focus on improving digital inclusion and ensuring equal access to digital tools, while Luxembourg also has a [National Action Plan for Digital Inclusion](#).

### 3.4 Summary: BIK+ actions

Chapter 3 examines BIK-related actions undertaken by EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway, organised under the three pillars of the [BIK+ strategy](#).

Regarding **BIK+ strategy pillar 1 – safe digital experiences**, the findings indicate significant progress in implementing EU laws, with several countries having

national codes of practice and Digital Services Coordinators taking measures to protect minors. There is a varied approach to defining harmful online content, with many countries relying on existing laws, while most have bodies that can order content removal. Most countries have laws addressing intimate image abuse and cyberbullying, alongside mechanisms for children to make complaints. Age verification is receiving considerable attention, with several countries implementing or developing national policies and exploring the EU Digital Identity Wallet for minors. Cross-cutting issues like consumer codes of practice are widely available, although these are largely self-regulatory or advisory in nature. Safeguarding children's mental health and well-being online is an emerging priority with many countries implementing relevant measures (as discussed in [section 3.1](#) above).

For **BIK+ strategy pillar 2 – digital empowerment**, there are high levels of activity reported in all aspects of teaching online safety, with many countries integrating it into their national or regional school curricula. The majority of countries have national or regional strategies for online safety policies in schools, addressing areas like cyberbullying and smartphone use. Informal education about digital safety is also widely supported through various national and regional activities targeting different groups. Furthermore, most countries confirm national and regional activities to ensure adequate teacher training regarding online safety. Training in basic digital skills is considered a core part of the curriculum in many countries, with increasing attention to topics like AI literacy. Tackling disinformation and fostering critical media literacy is a key education priority across almost all countries. Finally, initiatives encouraging children's digital creativity through formal education and extracurricular activities are also widely present (as examined in [section 3.2](#) above).

Regarding **BIK+ strategy pillar 3 – active participation, respecting children**, many countries are placing greater emphasis on youth participation in national youth strategies and have activities to promote active participation, youth civic engagement, and advocacy in the digital environment. Several countries have arrangements for children to actively participate in policy-making related to their involvement in the digital environment, including youth councils and consultation

mechanisms. There are widespread activities to promote awareness of children's rights in the digital environment, involving Safer Internet Centres, government bodies, and NGOs. While the availability of government systems for publishing child-friendly versions of policy documents remains uneven, there has been some progress. Support for positive digital content and services for children is noted in many countries, relying primarily on public broadcasters and SICs. Finally, the majority of countries practice digital inclusion through some targeted measures, though digital inequalities are acknowledged, and further support for marginalised groups of children is needed (as outlined in [section 3.3](#) above).



## Chapter 4: Conclusion

The 2025 edition of the BIK Policy monitor reflects further progress three years on from the adoption of the BIK+ strategy towards realising the vision of “Age-appropriate digital services, with no one left behind and with every child in Europe protected, empowered and respected online” (BIK+, 2022, p. 9). The 2025 BIK Policy monitor, as the latest instalment in a [long-running series of policy mapping studies](#), aims to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the current landscape of national policies and actions undertaken to promote children’s safety, well-being, and participation in the digital environment across EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway. As the second edition to adopt the updated format of data collection (annually and in full alignment with the provision of the BIK+ strategy), the [BIK Policy monitor](#) allows for a more detailed reflection on the processes of policy-making and the practical implementation of the BIK+ objectives, particularly in light of evolving technological landscapes and emerging online risks.

### 4.1 National policy frameworks on BIK-related issues

The findings presented in this edition of the BIK Policy monitor underscore a strong overarching commitment to addressing BIK-related issues at the national level. The vast majority of participating countries recognise the importance of children’s online protection, empowerment, and participation as significant policy priorities, with a notable number having comprehensively integrated these topics into their national laws, regulations, and policies (see [Chapter 2, section 2.1.1](#) above). This widespread recognition signals positive alignment with the core tenets of the BIK+ strategy and indicates that its principles are well embedded. Although it is a non-binding recommendation, the **influence of the BIK+ strategy on national policy development is considerable**. The majority of countries acknowledge that BIK+ informs and guides their national policies, even if it is not always explicitly referenced (see [Chapter 2, section 2.1.3](#) above).

However, this year’s report again highlights **wide diversity in how key tenets of BIK+ translate into concrete policy frameworks**. While a small number of

countries have adopted integrative or overarching policy frameworks specifically dedicated to children and the digital environment, the prevailing approach involves addressing BIK+ objectives through a range of separate, dedicated policies (see [Chapter 2, section 2.1.2](#) above). This approach, as noted in [previous editions of the BIK Policy monitor](#), while potentially allowing for targeted interventions in specific areas, raises the **risk of fragmentation and competing objectives at the national level**. Ensuring safe digital protection while balancing children's rights to participation and having their voices heard provides the most commonly experienced conflict in this area. However, the range of policy frameworks highlighted in the report illustrates the ever-growing range of issues vying for attention on the national stage, such as violence prevention, strategies to address internet addiction, or new legislative measures for online child protection.

A positive finding is the increasing recognition of **children's rights in the digital environment** within national legal and policy frameworks (see [Chapter 2, section 2.1.4](#) above). A considerable number of countries now explicitly recognise these rights, reflecting the child rights-based approach underpinning BIK+. This development aligns not just with the [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#) but also signals the influence and growing recognition of international standards such as the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General comment No. 25](#). The increasing number of countries reporting this as an emerging policy priority with specific policies in development further underscores a growing awareness of the unique rights and needs of children in the digital age and provides valuable insights into how these rights are being expressed in national policies, demonstrating a range of legislative and strategic approaches.

## 4.2 Policy design, governance, and stakeholder involvement

BIK-related policies' effectiveness relies heavily on robust policy design, sound governance structures, and meaningful stakeholder involvement. [Chapter 2](#) of the current report further explores these elements across participating countries.

Regarding **policy design**, the report reveals a mixed picture regarding the availability of research and evidence to inform policy-making. While approximately a third of countries have established regular, dedicated data collection on children's digital activities, most countries still lack systematic data in this specific area (see [Chapter 2, section 2.2.1](#) above). Similarly, around half of the countries regularly collect data on online risks, harms, and well-being. These data collection efforts, often supported by special initiatives, national task forces, etc., are irregular and/or focused on specific thematic topics. The [EU Kids Online survey](#) has provided an important source of data in some countries. However, its last report was published in 2020. Up-to-date research evidence is essential for understanding children's evolving digital experiences and developing evidence-based interventions. However, the gaps in systematic data collection in many countries highlight a need for further investment and coordination in this area (see [Chapter 2, section 2.2.2](#) above).

The availability of dedicated information systems at the government level to inform policy development is more widespread, with most countries reporting some form of system in place. However, most countries report that this relies primarily on third-party sources, highlighting again the limited capacity for an ongoing evidence base, commissioning targeted research and monitoring emerging trends and developments (see [Chapter 2, section 2.2.3](#) above). Furthermore, the absence, in most countries, of a central, long-term government-supported research fund specifically dedicated to children and the digital environment contributes to the narrow base of knowledge to support policy (see [Chapter 2, section 2.2.4](#) above). As argued in [previous BIK Policy monitor studies](#), the lack of dedicated arrangements hinders the development of a robust evidence base for long-term policy planning.

More positively, the majority of countries report some level of regular monitoring and evaluation of BIK-related policies, although systematic approaches are not yet universally adopted (see [Chapter 2, section 2.2.5](#) above). Strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be particularly important for assessing the

effectiveness of implemented policies, many of which are relatively new, and adapting them to emerging challenges.

**Policy governance**, as reported in this year's edition of the BIK Policy monitor, is characterised by distributed responsibility across multiple government ministries in many countries (see [Chapter 2, section 2.3.1](#) above). On the one hand, this reflects the cross-cutting nature of BIK issues and aligns with the predominance of multiple policy frameworks covering BIK-related topics. However, while effective coordination is recognised to be paramount, the report indicates that coordination mechanisms vary significantly. Some countries have introduced clearly defined coordination functions, while others rely on more informal arrangements (see [Chapter 2, section 2.3.2](#) above). It is noteworthy to see an increasing number of countries reporting the availability of a national action plan, strategy, or equivalent in place; a positive trend indicating a more structured framework for policy implementation (see [Chapter 2, section 2.3.3](#) above).

**Stakeholder involvement** is also recognised as a vital aspect of successful BIK policy development. Various mechanisms are reported to be in place to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders, including a relatively small number of multi-stakeholder forums (see [Chapter 2, section 2.4.1](#) above). Public consultation on digital policies is relatively common, although it is often triggered by the development of new policies rather than being a routine process (see [Chapter 2, section 2.4.2](#) above). The level of **youth involvement in policy design** is a particularly important consideration in line with the BIK+ principle of active participation. While the report indicates mixed levels of youth involvement (just eight countries described children as 'actively involved in the design of policies', there is a positive trend in establishing specially designed processes for this purpose with a number of examples of youth consultation mechanisms highlighting the growing recognition of the importance of incorporating children's perspectives into shaping the digital environment. Further efforts to systematically and meaningfully engage children and young people in policy-making remains an essential component of the BIK+ strategy (see [Chapter 2, section 2.4.3](#) above).

## 4.3 BIK+ actions: translating policy into practice across the three pillars

Chapter 3 provides a detailed overview of the various actions and initiatives undertaken by participating countries to implement the three pillars of the BIK+ strategy: 1 – safe digital experiences, 2 – digital empowerment, and 3 – active participation, respecting children and their rights.

**Pillar 1 – safe digital experiences** demonstrates significant activity, particularly **in response to evolving EU legislation**. The development of national codes of practice for digital service providers and the actions taken by Digital Services Coordinators (DSCs) highlight ongoing efforts at the national level accompanying the implementation of EU legal measures, such as the Digital Services Act (DSA) (see Chapter 3, section 3.1.1 above). The varied approaches to **defining harmful online content** underline the complexities of this issue, with many countries relying on existing legal frameworks while others are developing more specific definitions. The widespread availability of national bodies empowered to order content removal signifies a commitment to addressing illegal and harmful content (see Chapter 3, section 3.1.2 above).

The strong legislative focus on **harmful online conduct**, such as intimate image abuse and cyberbullying, with the majority of countries having relevant laws in place, is a positive development. The availability of mechanisms for children to make complaints is also crucial for ensuring accountability and providing avenues for redress (see Chapter 3, section 3.1.3 above). The increasing attention given to **age verification**, with several countries implementing or developing national policies and exploring the EU Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI) for minors, reflects the key policy concerns with ensuring age-appropriate access to online content and services (see Chapter 3, section 3.1.4 above). The prevalence of **consumer codes of practice** related to commercial content, although largely self-regulatory, indicates an awareness of the need to address commercial risks impacting children online (see Chapter 3, section 3.1.5 above). Finally, the emerging priority of safeguarding children's **mental health and well-being online** is evidenced by the increasing number of countries implementing relevant measures. The examples of

measures to combat cyberbullying and safeguard mental health further illustrate the interventions implemented (see [Chapter 3, section 3.1.6](#) above).

**Pillar 2 – digital empowerment** reveals a consistent and widespread commitment to equipping children with the necessary skills and competencies for the digital environment. The high levels of activity in all aspects of **online safety education**, from its integration into the school curriculum to the development of online safety policies in schools and the support for informal education, demonstrate a strong focus on preventative measures. The significant number of countries reporting activities to support teacher training in digital skills and online safety is also noteworthy and an essential contribution to effective education delivery (see [Chapter 3, section 3.2.1](#) above).

The recognition of **basic digital skills** as a core part of the curriculum in many countries also highlights the priority given to foundational digital literacy. The increasing attention to areas like AI literacy reflects the evolving nature of the digital landscape, though limited examples of curriculum resources on this topic were available. The near-universal prioritisation of **tackling disinformation and fostering critical media literacy** underlines the awareness of the challenges of misinformation and the need to equip young people with the skills to critically assess information. Finally, the widespread presence of initiatives encouraging children's **digital creativity** through both formal and informal education is a positive aspect of digital empowerment, highlighting the importance of enabling children not only to consume but also to actively and creatively engage with digital technologies (see [Chapter 3, section 3.2.2](#) above).

**Pillar 3 - active participation, respecting children** demonstrates a growing emphasis on empowering children and ensuring their voices are heard in the digital environment. The increasing focus on **youth participation** within national youth strategies and the presence of activities promoting active participation, youth civic engagement, and advocacy in the digital environment are encouraging signs. Establishing arrangements for children to actively participate in **policy-making** related to their digital lives, including youth councils and consultation mechanisms,



signifies a move towards a more inclusive and child-centred approach to digital governance (see [Chapter 3, section 3.3.1](#) above).

The widespread activities to promote **awareness of children's rights** in the digital environment, involving Safer Internet Centres (SICs), government bodies, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), reflect its increasing prominence in national policies (see [Chapter 2, section 2.1.4](#) above) and crucial for ensuring that children themselves and those who support them are knowledgeable about children's rights in digital settings. While the availability of government systems for publishing **child-friendly versions of policy documents** remains uneven, the reported progress is a positive step towards making policy information more accessible to children. The support for **positive digital content** and services for children, often driven by public broadcasters and SICs, is an important contribution to the provision of safe and enriching online experiences (see [Chapter 3, section 3.3.2](#) above).

Finally, the majority of countries are addressing **digital inclusion** through some targeted measures aimed at tackling digital inequalities and supporting marginalised groups of children. However, further comprehensive evidence and ongoing evaluation are still needed in this area (see [Chapter 3, section 3.3.3](#) above).

## 4.4 Cross-cutting themes and emerging trends

Several noteworthy trends stand out based on the findings of the 2025 BIK Policy monitor:

- **Impact of EU legislation:** the implementation of key EU legislative instruments, such as the DSA and AVMSD, is demonstrably shaping national policies and actions, particularly within pillar 1 (safe digital experiences). The establishment of DSCs and the development of various national codes of practice and child online protection-related measures may be seen as responses to these key legal frameworks. This is an evolving area of ongoing development, meriting further close scrutiny in future editions of the BIK Policy monitor.



- **Growing focus on mental health:** safeguarding children's mental health and well-being in the online environment is clearly emerging as a significant policy priority across Europe, reflected in the increasing number of countries developing special initiatives and implementing relevant measures on this topic. Further alignment with EU measures, including the [proposed EU-wide inquiry](#) on the broader impacts of social media on mental health, will be needed.
- **Evolving approaches to age verification:** the policy area of age verification is attracting considerable attention, with many countries actively exploring and implementing national-level policies and considering the potential of the [EU Digital Identity Wallet](#) for minors. This also highlights the importance of harmonised approaches and coordination to ensure cohesiveness and effectiveness.
- **Integration of AI literacy:** while still in the early stages, there is a growing recognition of the importance of equipping children with knowledge and skills related to artificial intelligence, including generative AI, within digital literacy education. Several countries have indicated new activities on this topic. Further knowledge exchange and sharing of resources in this area would be beneficial.
- **Increased focus on youth participation:** there is evidence of increasing attention to youth involvement in policy-making processes regarding digital policies, with some countries establishing dedicated structures and consultation mechanisms (see [Chapter 3, section 3.3.1 b](#)) above). A greater focus on this aspect of the BIK+ strategy is essential to respecting children's rights in relation to the digital environment.

## 4.5 Challenges and areas for improvement

Despite the progress observed in this year's iteration of the BIK Policy monitor, several challenges and areas for improvement remain crucial for advancing the vision of the BIK+ strategy:

- **Ensuring a balanced approach across the three pillars:** while all three pillars receive considerable attention, pillar 2 (digital empowerment) stands out as the aspect that receives the most consistent and high-level of response. However, ensuring a balanced and integrated approach across all three pillars – safe digital experiences, digital empowerment, and active participation – is central to BIK+ and essential for realising a holistic strategy.
- **Developing integrative policy frameworks:** while addressing specific issues, the prevalence of separate, dedicated policies may benefit from greater efforts to develop more overarching and integrative policy frameworks that foster coherence and synergy across different areas addressed by the BIK+ strategy. Importantly, these may assist in more effective policy coordination and implementation.
- **Strengthening data collection and monitoring:** as noted in [previous editions of the BIK Policy monitor](#), addressing the gaps in systematic data collection on children’s digital activities and online risks and harms is crucial for evidence-based policy-making. Furthermore, enhancing the systematic monitoring and evaluation of BIK-related policies is also necessary to assess their effectiveness and inform future adjustments.
- **Enhancing cross-sectoral coordination:** given the cross-cutting nature of BIK+ issues, strengthening coordination mechanisms across different government ministries, agencies, and other relevant stakeholders is vital for effective policy implementation.
- **Deepening meaningful youth participation:** while some progress is being made, further efforts are needed to ensure that youth participation in policy-making is not only present but also truly meaningful and impactful, leading to policies that genuinely reflect children’s perspectives and needs.
- **Keeping pace with technological advancements:** the rapid evolution of digital technologies necessitates ongoing adaptation of policies and actions to address emerging risks and leverage new opportunities for children in the digital environment, including areas like AI and immersive technologies.

## 4.6 Recommendations for future action

Based on the findings of the 2025 edition of the BIK Policy monitor, the following recommendations are offered to address the challenges noted above and further advance the implementation of the BIK+ strategy at the national level:

- **Promote the adoption of integrated national strategies** for a better internet for kids that explicitly align with the three pillars of BIK+ and ensure a coherent and balanced approach.
- **Invest in and strengthen national data collection mechanisms** to gather regular and representative data on children's digital activities, online experiences, and well-being, ensuring that this data effectively informs policy development and evaluation.
- **Foster the establishment of robust and well-resourced national coordination bodies** with clear mandates to oversee the implementation of BIK-related policies and facilitate collaboration across relevant sectors.
- **Develop and implement systematic frameworks for monitoring and evaluating** BIK-related policies, including the use of key performance indicators, to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- **Further strengthen mechanisms for meaningful and inclusive youth participation** in all stages of policy development, ensuring that children's voices are actively sought, heard, and integrated into decision-making processes.
- **Prioritise the development of national guidelines and resources** to support the explicit recognition and implementation of children's rights in the digital environment in line with international standards.
- **Encourage and support developing and disseminating child-friendly versions of key policy documents and initiatives** to enhance children's understanding and engagement with relevant policies.
- **Continuously monitor emerging digital trends, policies and actions** through the Policy monitor to inform all relevant stakeholders and ensure that

BIK-related policy implementation remains relevant and effective in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Relevant policy support measures might include additional EU-level guidance for effective and integrated policy frameworks under the umbrella of BIK+, a point highlighted also in the [first BIK+ strategy evaluation](#). Further facilitating knowledge exchange through platforms such as the [Expert Group on Safer Internet for Children](#) and the [European Board for Digital Services](#) is also vital. Investing in and strengthening data collection requires attention at both the EU and national levels and requires specific funding allocation. Regarding practical measures to advance BIK+ actions, key priorities must be advancing support for children's rights in the digital environment, as well as meaningful and inclusive youth participation as distinctive features of the BIK+ strategy.

In conclusion, the BIK Policy monitor report 2025 findings reveal progress in many areas alongside ongoing challenges and emerging priorities. Its underlying aim is to provide a wide-ranging overview of the current state of BIK+ implementation across Europe, thereby assisting efforts in sharing best practices, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange, and supporting the needs and rights of children in the digital environment and the shared vision of a better internet for children.



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