

Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy monitor country profile 2025: AUSTRIA

The [BIK Policy monitor country profiles](#) summarise findings about the implementation of the BIK+ strategy's three pillars (protection, empowerment, participation) across each of the EU's Member States as well as Iceland and Norway. Download the full [BIK Policy monitor report 2025](#) from the [BIK Policy monitor](#) on the new [BIK Knowledge hub](#) and access the [Austrian country profile online](#) on the BIK Knowledge hub.

Introduction

In Austria, there are a number of information platforms (e.g., [Onlinesicherheit.at](#), [Jugendportal.at](#), [Digital Austria](#)) and registration and advice centres (e.g., [Stopline](#), [ZARA](#), [Rat auf Draht](#), [Kija.at](#)) to provide children with access to education, information and advice in the digital space. Basic digital education has also been introduced as a school subject. Discrimination against children is to be curbed through a package of laws against online hate speech. Cybermobbing (cyberbullying) is already a criminal offence in its own right. Protection against sexual abuse is to be provided by a reform of the law in relation to the sharing of explicit images, including non-consensual sharing or so-called revenge porn.

BIK policies

Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks describe the overarching approach for a better internet and establish the underlying goals, principles and guidelines that shape individual policies within this area.

- This topic is an **important and emerging policy priority**, with children's online protection, digital empowerment, and digital participation partially covered in national/regional laws, regulations and policies.
- BIK+ is covered by **broader policies rather than in separate dedicated policies** and/or covers only one or two of the dimensions of protection, empowerment and participation.
- **The BIK+ strategy informs national policies but is not the main influence.**
- National/regional policies and policy documents **do not refer to children's rights in the digital environment.**

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Coverage of BIK+ issues in national policies		X		
Integration of policy provision			X	
Influence of BIK+ strategy			X	
Recognition of children's digital rights				X

Table 1: Topic summary - policy frameworks

Key national policy frameworks include:

- The **Austrian Youth Strategy** aims to provide young people with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital environment consciously and safely.
- The **Digital Austria Act** covers the key areas of cyber security, cyber defence, and digital skills.
- **Digital Competences Austria** implements eight strategic priorities with concrete measures to develop digital skills further.
- The **Acht-Punkte-Plan** (strategy for a digital school) is a national strategy to ensure that innovative teaching and learning formats are widely implemented in the education system.

Policy design

Policy design asks whether evidence and research support BIK-related policies and whether systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating those policies.

- Quantitative data on some aspects of children's digital activity **is collected regularly as part of broader surveys**.
- Some but not all aspects of children's experiences of risks, harms and digital well-being** are included in regular surveys.
- Systems are in place at the government level to** gather information on children and the digital environment.
- Regarding funding for research, **there are occasional special initiatives to gather evidence** about children and the digital environment.
- Policies are monitored and evaluated but not systematically.**

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Regular data collection		X		
Data on risks, harms and digital well-being		X		
Information systems	X			
National research fund			X	
Monitoring and evaluation		X		

Table 2: Topic summary - policy design

Recent national research studies include:

- Youth-Internet-Monitor** is an initiative of the **Austrian Safer Internet Centre** and presents current data on social media usage by young people in Austria
- Upper Austrian Children's Media Study**: The **Education Group** conducts regular studies on children and young people's use and media skills.
- Digital Skills Austria 2024**: The third edition of the 'Digital Skills Austria' study was conducted in 2024 and deals with developments in Austrians' ability to

orientate themselves in the digital space, to find their way around and, in particular, to shape it.

Policy governance

Policy governance examines how policies are coordinated at the governmental level, whether other implementation bodies are involved in their delivery, and whether structured mechanisms are available to guide their implementation.

- The lead ministry, public agency or regulatory authority **is an informal arrangement depending on the requirements at a particular point in time**. The Federal Chancellery, general directorate Family and Youth leads in this regard.
- **Coordination happens more informally** across the different departments and entities that contribute to government policies with Austria's **Safer Internet Advisory Board** playing a key role.
- **Government policy has yet to be developed** into an implementable action plan at this point.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Lead ministry for policy development			X	
National coordination body		X		
National action plan or strategy			X	

Table 3: Topic summary - policy governance

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement enquires how different stakeholders can participate in policy development. Children's involvement in policy-making is one such key issue. Additionally, international knowledge exchange about children's digital participation is also relevant to this topic.

- **There is a designated multi-stakeholder forum in place** which facilitates the involvement of all relevant. The **Digital Skills Office** is a national agency for education and internationalisation within Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (**OeAD**) as part of the 'Digital Competence Offensive for Austria'. It provides information and tips on dealing competently with risks and using the positive aspects of the internet, mobile phones and computers.
- **Public consultation is infrequent and irregular.**
- **Children and young people are listened to directly in the policy development process** (e.g., through hearings, consultations, specific surveys) but are not formally involved in decision-making. The Austrian Youth Strategy '**Reality Check**' is an important initiative in this area as is the **Austrian Federal Youth Council**.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Stakeholder forum	X			
Consulting the public on BIK topics			X	
Involvement of young people		X		

Table 4: Topic summary - Stakeholder involvement

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – Safe digital experiences

Safe digital experiences refer to actions taken to protect children from harmful and illegal online content, conduct, contact, and risks as young consumers and to improve their well-being online through a safe, age-appropriate digital environment created in a way that respects children's best interests.

Implementing EU laws

- Although there is no code of conduct, the [Austrian implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Act](#) (based on Art28b of the [Audiovisual Media Services Directive \(AVMSD\)](#)) regulates prohibited and harmful content for video-sharing platform providers in Section 9b.
- The law accompanying the [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#) (Austrian implementation: [DSA-Begleitgesetz](#)) was published in the Official Gazette on 30 December 2023 and entered into force on 17 February 2024.

Harmful online content

- In addition to the [Austrian implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Act \(AMD-G\)](#), regional youth protection laws try to protect children and young people from unsuitable media content, though online content is not explicitly mentioned.
- Initiatives such as the [Austrian Safer Internet Centre](#) or [Onlinesicherheit.gv.at](#) provide parents, educators, children and young people with important information and assistance in dealing with harmful internet content.
- Children and young people can contact the [Children and Youth Ombuds-Offices](#) regarding every matter of concern, including harmful online content. There are ten Children and Youth Ombuds-Offices in Austria – one in each of the nine federal states in Austria and one at the federal level.

Harmful online conduct

- Non-consensual sharing of intimate images is covered under various laws, such as protecting privacy under the General Civil Code (ABGB), the Austrian Criminal Code, and [Hate Speech Laws](#).
- Laws to protect children and young people from cyberbullying include the [Hate Speech on the Internet Act \(HiNBG\)](#), which was amended by renaming the offence to "persistent harassment using a telecommunication or computer system" (instead of "continued").

Age verification

- The [Austrian Audiovisual Media Services Act\(AMD-G\)](#), which regulates video-sharing platforms, requires that the platform provider must ensure that harmful content is restricted, for example through the use of parental control systems. This means such content should not typically be accessible to minors. Additionally, users should be able to evaluate this content through a user-friendly and easily understandable function. In any case, content that includes gratuitous violence or predominantly represents sexual acts without reflection (§ 39, paragraph 3) must be subject to effective access control through age verification.
- Persons over the age of 14 can apply for an [ID Austria](#). There is also the digital proof of age and the digital school ID card.

Commercial content

- Influencer-based marketing is subject to legal framework conditions in Austria when advertising products and brands. These include the Media Act (MedienG), the [Austrian implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Act \(AMD-G\)](#), and the [Federal Act against Unfair Competition \(UWG\)](#). The Austrian advertising industry also has a voluntary [Code of Ethics](#), which sets out fair advertising principles.

Mental health and well-being

- Mental health days and other workshops on the regional are in place to support children's mental health and well-being while online.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not in place
Codes of practice			X	
DSC implemented	X			
Definition of harmful content			X	
Bodies can order content removal		X		

Children's complaints mechanism	X
Intimate image abuse laws	X
Cyberbullying laws	X
Age verification requirements	X
Digital identity systems (EUDI)	X
Consumer codes of practice	X
Mental health measures	X
Addressing unfair commercial practices	X

Table 5: Topic summary - pillar 1: safe digital experiences

Pillar 2 – Digital empowerment

Digital empowerment incorporates actions so that all children, including those in vulnerable situations, acquire the necessary skills and competences to make sound choices and express themselves in the online environment safely and responsibly.

Supports for online safety education

- Online safety is fully incorporated into the national school curriculum. It is an integral part of the [curriculum in the primary school system](#). [Digital Basic Education](#) is also a compulsory subject in the middle and secondary school system.
- [E-Education Austria](#) and [Saferinternet.at](#) provide support for online safety policies in schools.
- Teacher education supports are included in the [8-Point Plan](#) to advance digitalisation in the school system.
- There are also various activities to reinforce informal education about online safety including at [Onlinesicherheit.at](#). The 'Digital Skills for All' initiative was launched in 2023 to promote safe internet use to all target groups who do not attend formal learning venues. The [Austrian SIC \(saferinternet.at\)](#) offers a range of workshops for various target groups outside formal education.

Digital literacy skills to empower young people

- The [Austrian Strategy for Cyber Security \(ÖSCS\)](#) is the strategic framework for increasing Austria's digital resilience and ensuring cyber security in the digital world. It supports the basic requirements for creating secure and value-adding digitalisation.
- The Ministry of Finance promotes the training and development of digital skills through the [Austrian Youth Strategy](#) and the [Digital Skills Initiative](#).
- The violence prevention program [Click & Check](#) is concerned with promoting responsible use of digital media. Particular attention is paid to developing action strategies and promoting legal certainty in the daily use of the internet, particularly in the area of social media.
- [Cyber Kids](#) is a computer course for children, parents, and educators focused on digital literacy for 8-10 and 10-to 12-year-olds.
- [ZARA: Digitale Zivilcourage](#) offers various activities that encourage bystanders to challenge online hate speech and to develop digital 'civil courage' (e.g., speaking up against a victim's bullies, perpetrators, or harassers).

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not in place
Teaching online safety	X			
Online safety policies in schools	X			
Informal education about online safety	X			
Adequate teacher training	X			
Basic digital skills training	X			
Critical media literacy	X			
Creative digital skills	X			

Table 6: Topic summary - pillar 2: digital empowerment

Pillar 3 – Active participation, respecting children’s rights

Active participation, respecting children’s rights, refers to actions which give children and young people a say in the digital environment, with more child-led activities to foster innovative and creative safe digital experiences.

Active participation

- The [Federal Youth Council](#) acts as the legally anchored representation of the interests of all children and young people. The Federal Youth Representation Act regulates its tasks, the implementation of which is the responsibility of the Federal Chancellery. Young people can actively participate in European youth policy through the [EU Youth Dialogue](#).
- The ‘[Digital Pioneers](#)’ programme aims at promoting (new) jobs for young women in the digital environment and the ‘Students contest in AI’ nourishes the interest of young people in the field of artificial intelligence and science, such as mathematics, physics and computer science and the program ‘Science Flash’.
- Youth councils (Landesjugendbeiräte, Jugendgemeinderäte) are also available among the regional and local-level youth parliaments.

Supporting children’s rights

- Activities to promote awareness of children’s rights include activities of the Austrian Federal Chancellery, which provides funding to projects that promote better awareness of children’s rights online. The UNICEF initiative [Denk Dir Die Welt – Kreativwettbewerb 2023](#) also promotes awareness of children’s rights in the digital environment.
- The Austrian Ombuds Offices for Children and Youth ([Kija.at](#)) are currently developing a digital youth rights charter.
- While there isn’t a government system in place to publish child-friendly versions of policy documents, plain language online safety guides are available at [Osterreich.gv.at](#).

Digital inclusion

- Various government initiatives exist to ensure inclusiveness regarding children's active participation, e.g., the [City of Vienna's child and youth work](#) will focus on inclusion in 2024 and 2025. A [dedicated child and youth portal](#) is in place.
- The [Federal Youth Representation](#) has initiated an [Inclusion Advisory Board](#).
- [OeAD](#), Austria's agency for education and internationalisation, also adopted inclusion and diversity as among the key priorities that Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps will address in the new programming period 2021-2027.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not in place
Promoting active participation and civic engagement	X			
Involvement in policymaking			X	
Awareness raising on children's rights	X			
Child-friendly versions of policy documents			X	
Addressing digital inequalities				X
Supports for marginalised groups	X			
Positive digital content	X			

Table 7: Topic summary - pillar 3: active participation, respecting children's rights

BIK+ index 2025: Austria

The BIK+ index has been developed to provide an aggregated at-a-glance overview of the levels of implementation across the two dimensions, BIK policies and BIK+ actions, in Austria compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.

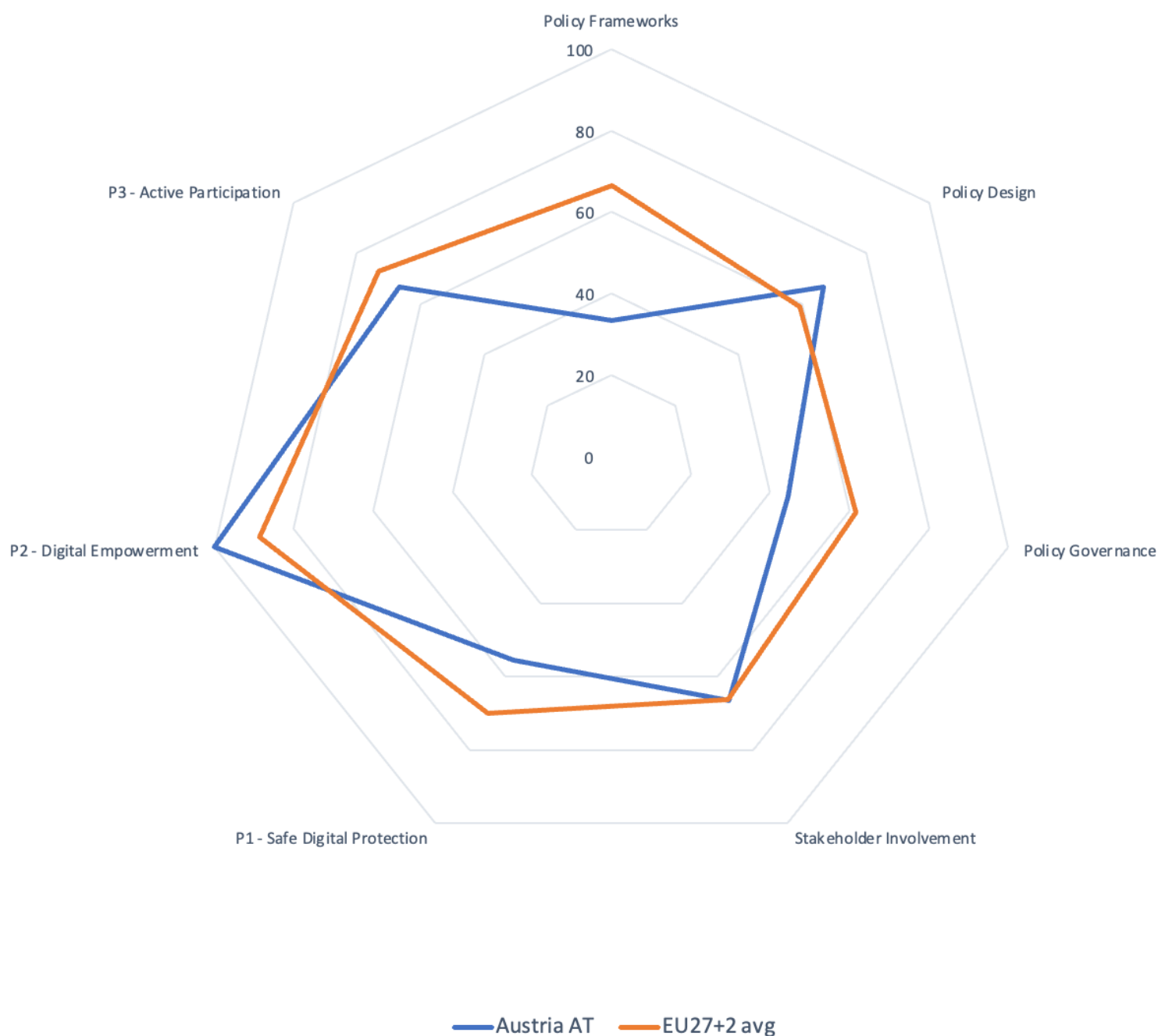


Figure 1: BIK+ index 2025: Austria - EU27+2 average comparison



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info@betterinternetforkids.eu

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