

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

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 [German country profile online](#) on the BIK Knowledge hub.

## Introduction

Due to German federalism, there is more than one policy which addresses the topic of children and the digital environment. At the federal level, it is the [Youth Protection Act](#) (Jugendschutzgesetz - JuSchG), the Länder (federal states) have concluded the [Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media](#) (Jugendmedienschutz- Staatsvertrag, JMStV), and at EU level, the Digital Services Act also addresses the protection of children in the digital environment.

## 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.

- There are **separate, dedicated policies** that address children and the digital environment (protection, empowerment, and participation).
- **The BIK+ strategy is an important influence on policy development** on children and the digital environment which informs and guides national policies even if they do not directly refer to BIK+.
- **National/regional policies and policy documents explicitly recognise** 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 are:**

- The **Youth Protection Act** (Jugendschutzgesetz - JuSchG) was amended in 2021. It is central to the protection of children and young people and is based on the three principles of protection, empowerment and participation.
- The obligation under section 24a of the **Youth Protection Act** has been fully integrated into **Article 28 of the Digital Services Act (DSA)**. To that end, section 24a of the Youth Protection Act (JuschG) was amended in May 2024. The obligation for online platforms to take risk mitigation measures now arises directly from Article 28 DSA.
- The **Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media** (The Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Human Dignity and the Protection of Minors in Broadcasting and in Telemedia, Jugendmedienschutz- Staatsvertrag – JMStV), which is currently being amended, sets rules for broadcasting and online services, aims at protecting minors from harmful content online and

providing age-appropriate media access. It takes into consideration the three BIK+ pillars of safe digital experiences, digital empowerment and active participation. The amendment also further aligns the regulation with the Youth Protection Act (JuschG).

- With regard to children's rights, [General Comment No. 25](#) was published nearly at the same time as the amendment of the Youth Protection Act. Therefore, there is no explicit reference in the Youth Protection Act, but the [Council of Europe Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment](#) are mentioned in the explanatory memorandum of the [Youth Protection Act](#) (Jugendschutzgesetz - JuSchG).

## 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.

- 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. These include measures of children's experiences of risks, harms and digital well-being.
- **A range of systems are in place at the government level** to inform policy development on this topic.
- **Existing national research funding is available** for research on children and the digital environment but this is not explicitly specified.
- **Policies undergo systematic and regular monitoring and evaluation** to assess the effectiveness of actions in different contexts and to take account of new technologies or emergent risks.

	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:**

- **JIM Study:** Since 1998, this has been conducted annually as a basic study on the media consumption of 12- to 19-year-olds.
- **KIM Study:** Since 1999, a baseline study has also been conducted on the significance of media in the everyday lives of children aged 6 to 13.
- The **Youth Media Protection Index** (Jugendmedienschutzindex) examines how the protection of children and young people from negative online experiences is reflected in the concerns, attitudes, skills and actions of parents and children and young people themselves.
- In 2023, the Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues (Unabhängige Beauftragte für Fragen des sexuellen Kindesmissbrauchs – UBSKM) and the Federal Agency on Child and Youth Protection in the Media (BzKJ) launched the Alliance against child sexual abuse online. Its aim is to promote knowledge on emerging trends and phenomena in the digital world and develop solutions for existing challenges in the fight against child sexual abuse online.
- Research on children and young people in the digital world can be funded through various programmes such as the Federal Child and Youth Services Plan (**Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes – KJP**). This is a federal funding pot that is explicitly intended to promote child and youth services in Germany. Research and regular scientific exchange on the current issues of media usage in the family, media education in practice or child protection in the digital world are also to be funded.
- Regarding evaluation, an evaluation of the **Youth Protection Act** (Jugendschutzgesetz - JuSchG) is planned five years after it enters into force

to monitor the changes the DSA has brought to the system of the Youth Protection Act. The Federal Government (Bundesregierung) will report to the German Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag) on the results of this evaluation.

## 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.

- **Policy development sits across a range of ministries, and there is no single lead overall** responsible for developing government policies, guidelines and programmes relating to children and the digital environment.
- **Coordination happens more informally across the different departments and entities** that contribute to government policies, guidelines, and programmes regarding children and the digital environment.
- **One or more programmes of action 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).

	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*

- Due to the system of federalism, there are more than one responsible ministry. Responsibility in the area of youth media protection is exercised by both federal and Länder authorities. The **Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth** (BMFSFJ) has the lead at federal level on

policies regarding the protection of children. But there also some policies initiated by the Federal Ministry of Justice (BMJ), the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG).

- The work of all ministries responsible for children and families at the state level is coordinated by the Conference of Youth and Family Ministries of the Länder ([Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz der Länder – JFMK](#)).
- The Broadcasting Commission of the Federal States ([Rundfunkkommission der Länder](#)) coordinates the work of the Länder with regard to the Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media (JMStV) and the protection of minors in media. The governments of all the Länder are represented in the Broadcasting commission.
- At Länder level, the Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media ([Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz – KJM](#)) acts as the central supervisory authority for the protection of minors online and in private broadcasting. Its task is to protect children and young people. The KJM engages in dialogue on their behalf. As a body of the independent media authorities, the KJM examines whether the provisions of the JMStV have been violated and decides on the corresponding consequences for non-compliant providers. The KJM regularly sends reports to the Länder.

### 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.

- **Various ad hoc multistakeholder groups exist** across different branches of government, in which stakeholders may contribute to policy deliberation and development.
- **Members of the public are regularly and routinely consulted** as part of the policy development for BIK topics.

- **Children are listened to directly in the policy development process** (e.g., through hearings, consultations, specific surveys) but are not formally involved in decision-making.

	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*

- The **Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media (BzKJ)** coordinates an overall strategy to achieve the protection goals of the Youth Protection Act and further develop the protection of children and young people in the media. This strategy is implemented in collaboration with the community responsible for the protection of children and young people in the media, which consists of politicians, civil society, and providers.
- NGOs or other organisations are regularly consulted during the legislative process. The lead federal ministry sends the draft to the Länder (federal states), the umbrella organisations and other organisations involved and asks for their comments. This process is also known as 'state and association participation'.
- A good example for the involvement of young people is the Advisory Board at the Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media (BzKJ). It supports the Federal Agency in further developing the protection of children and young people in the media. The Advisory Board also includes two members who are no more than 17 years old at the time of their appointment. [Quality standards on digital child and youth participation](#) have also been issued.

## 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*

- Germany has implemented the requirements of the Digital Services Act through the [Digitale-Dienste-Gesetz \(DDG\)](#) and the 5. [Medienänderungsstaatsvertrag](#), which incorporated relevant changes to the [Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media \(JMStV\)](#). Under section 12 (2) of the DDG, the [Federal Agency for Children and Youth Protection in the Media \(BzKJ\)](#) is the competent authority for the enforcement of Article 14 (3) and for the enforcement of structural precautionary measures pursuant to Article 28 (1) of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065, insofar as these do not concern measures under the Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media (JMStV) in the version dated 14 December 2021.
- The authorities responsible for these measures and for specific individual measures under the JMStV are the independent media authorities. The [Federal Office for the Enforcement of Children's Rights in Digital Services \(KidD\)](#) serves as the national authority for the enforcement of Article 28 (1) and Article 14 (3) of the DSA for child protection requirements, i. e. systemic protection on online platforms. The KidD-office is already operational and is conducting a large number of administrative offence proceedings. The interpretation of the requirements from the Digital Services Act is based on child rights standards; testing criteria have been developed to ensure an appropriate level of security.



### ***Harmful online content***

- In Germany, many different laws regulate illegal content. However, these are not always aimed at online content. Overall, the regulations range from market surveillance regarding illegal or dangerous products to specific regulations on protecting young people in the media to criminal law regulations.
- Under the conditions of the [Youth Protection Act](#) (JuSchG), media that are harmful to minors can be indexed. There are also several legal remedies that are under the supervision of the states and are set out in the [Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media](#) (Jugendmedienschutz-Staatsvertrag, JMStV).
- There are several ways to report harmful online content to the various authorities. Article 16 of the DSA opens up the possibility of reporting the content to the relevant platform provider. There is a complaint form via the Website of [the digital service coordinator](#). Complaints may also be submitted to the independent media authorities.

### ***Harmful online conduct***

- Children and young people are protected from intimate image abuse through various criminal law provisions in the German Criminal Code. Pursuant to section 184 (Dissemination of pornographic content) of the German Criminal Code, anyone who offers, supplies or makes pornographic content available to a person under the age of eighteen is liable to prosecution.
- There are no laws, regulations or policies that specifically and exclusively address cyberbullying. However, according to the [Youth Protection Act](#) (JuSchG) and now the Digital Services Act, providers must introduce risk mitigation measures to better protect children and young people, including from cyberbullying.
- The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth promotes [JUUPORT](#), a nationwide online counselling platform for young people who encounter problems online. Volunteer teenagers and young adults

from all over Germany, the JUUUPORT scouts, confidentially help their peers with online problems such as cyberbullying and much more.

### Age verification

- According to the [Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media](#) (Jugendmedienschutz- Staatsvertrag, JMStV), pornographic offers in telemedia are prohibited if the provider does not ensure that children and young people cannot access these offers. However, age verification systems can be used to ensure that children and young people do not consume this content. The [Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media](#) (Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz, KJM) evaluates and reviews age verification systems.
- Age verification is also a possible measure to better protect children and young people under the Digital Services Act. The [Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media](#) (Bundeszentrale für Kinder- und Jugendmedienschutz, BzKJ) checks whether providers have taken suitable measures in this respect. In addition, the [Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth](#) is working on a data-saving method for age verification.
- German nationals under the age of 16 receive their national ID card ([Personalausweis](#)) with the eID function switched off. Once they are 16, they can choose to have it switched on by the competent authority (free of charge). Citizens of the European Union and the European Economic Area who are at least 16 years old can apply for an eID Card (includes eID function intended only for use of digital services).

### Commercial content

- National regulations on advertising and labelling are contained in the Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media (JMStV), the Interstate Media Treaty (MStV), and the Act Against Unfair Competition (Gesetz gegen den unlauteren Wettbewerb – UWG).

- There is a [guideline](#) published by the state media authorities on the handling of labelling obligations, which deals in particular with advertising on social media. There are also the [general behavioural rules](#) of the Advertising Council (advertising code), which are less about the labelling of advertising and more about rules for the presentation of advertising content.
- To protect children online from addictive features and unfair commercial practices in digital services, applicable European law (e.g. UCPD, DSA) is enforced. The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) supports the following projects, that are (also) aimed at minors and that address dark patterns, addictive features and unfair commercial practices in digital services: 'Dark Pattern Detection Project'; the 'Consumer protection for young people in rural regions' ('[Verbraucherschutz in ländlichen Regionen für junge Menschen](#)' – Verbraucherzentrale Bayern e. V.), 'Consumercheck' ('[Verbraucherchecker](#)'); and the follow-up project 'Peer-education among young consumers' ('[Peer-Education mit jungen Verbraucher\\_innen](#)')

## Mental health and well-being

- The Federal Institute of Public Health ([Bundesinstitut für Öffentliche Gesundheit – BIÖG](#)) has been pursuing the goal of preventing health risks and encouraging health-promoting lifestyles, especially for children. This also includes internet-related disorders. The BZgA offers comprehensive information via the website [www.ins-netz-gehen.de](http://www.ins-netz-gehen.de). Digital counselling services for young people seeking help are also offered. 'Mental health coaches' support students, among other aspects, to maintain their mental health online.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not in place
Codes of practice	X			
DSC implemented	X			

Definition of harmful content	<b>X</b>
Bodies can order content removal	<b>X</b>
Children's complaints mechanism	<b>X</b>
Intimate image abuse laws	<b>X</b>
Cyberbullying laws	<b>X</b>
Age verification requirements	<b>X</b>
Digital identity systems (EUDI)	<b>X</b>
Consumer codes of practice	<b>X</b>
Mental health measures	<b>X</b>
Addressing unfair commercial practices	<b>X</b>

*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*

- The requirements for dealing with online safety are a matter for the states. The states base their requirements on the 'Education in the Digital World' strategy agreed in December 2016 and the additional recommendation 'Teaching and Learning in the Digital World', particularly choosing a pedagogical approach. The teaching design should not only inform students about the dangers of the Internet, but also develop skills for the safe use of the internet. Within the framework of cultural sovereignty, the states implement the strategy on their own responsibility through appropriate curriculum requirements, and their scope varies.
- The [Association for Media Education and Communication Culture \(GMK\)](#) is a nationwide professional association for education, culture, and media. It

promotes media education and media literacy, brings together interested and engaged people from research and practice, and ensures the exchange of information.

- The media guide "[SCHAU HIN! Was Dein Kind mit Medien macht.](#)" ("[LOOK! How your child uses media](#)")' supports parents and guardians with age-appropriate, up-to-date recommendations for children's media use that are suitable for everyday use. 'SCHAU HIN' provides information about information and entertainment options as well as the risks of media use. Parents and guardians can attend media courses to learn how to deal with digital media and support children and young people.
- [JUUPORT](#) is a nationwide peer-to-peer-based online counselling service for young people, specifically for internet-based problems such as cyberbullying. Volunteer teenagers and young adults, the JUUPORT scouts, advise their peers on online problems.

### ***Digital literacy skills to empower young people***

- Many of the projects funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth provide tips and instructions on how to use digital media safely. A good example is '[Gutes Aufwachsen mit Medien](#)' ('Growing up well with media'). This initiative supports and pools the activities of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in the area of protecting children and young people in the media to strengthen the media skills of children, young people, parents and professionals. The initiative is a nationwide association of various players and is supported by an initiative office
- Since 2015, with the federal programme '[Live Democracy!](#)', the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) has been facilitating measures at the local, state and federal level to develop new and innovative approaches to promoting democracy, shaping diversity and preventing extremism.

- The **Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth** (BMFSFJ) provides funding to a variety of projects and initiatives to promote media literacy and media education, and protect children and young people online. The 'Growing up well with media' initiative ('**Gutes Aufwachsen mit Medien – GAmM**'), supports and pools the Federal Ministry's activities in the field of child and youth protection in media to promote media literacy among children, adolescents, parents and professionals. The initiative is a nationwide alliance of various stakeholders and is supported by an initiative office.
- At Länder level, all 16 Länder pursue their own initiatives for promoting children's critical media literacy and combating disinformation. The individual strategies are similar in that they are designed to address all age groups, supported by government agencies and media authorities.

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

**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

- **Quality standards for child and youth participation** where the German Federal Youth Council (DBJR) and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) outline standards of quality of participation of children and youth with a view to varying areas of growing up. The topic is also addressed in the [National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation](#).
- Since 2016, **TINCON** (Teenage Internetwork Conference) has been designing event and content formats with and for young people between the ages of 13 and 25. The target group is closely involved in the planning, conception and implementation. The central task is the organisation and implementation of nationwide youth conferences, in particular for young people to discuss the diverse topics of digital youth culture.
- At the national level, the Advisory Board at the [Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media](#) is the first higher federal authority to implement child and youth participation in its Advisory Board in accordance with the Youth Protection Act. Regulations exist at the regional level. In some federal states, the participation of children and young people is regulated in local constitutions.

#### Supporting children’s rights

- The guiding principle of protecting children and young people in media in Germany follows the basic idea of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of children’s rights to protection, empowerment and participation. The initiative ‘Growing up well with Media’ ([‘Gutes Aufwachsen mit Medien – GAmM’](#)) brings together various projects to raise awareness in this area. The project [‘children’s-rights.digital’](#) analyses the effects of digitalisation on the

everyday lives of children and young people and develops strategies for child and youth policy measures in international cooperation. The objectives are to implement children's rights in all areas of life as well as the protection and empowerment of children to exercise their rights and to protect themselves.

- A [website](#) set up by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), which provides child-friendly information about policies that are relevant to children, though it is not a governmental system.

## Digital inclusion

- Participation processes at regional and national levels ensure that the diversity of children and young people is included. This is also a specific focus of the [National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation](#).
- Participation processes at regional and national levels ensure that the diversity of children and young people is taken into account. This is also a special focus of the [National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation](#).

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

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



## Best practices

### Example 1

The 'Growing up well with media' initiative supports and pools the activities of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in the area of protecting children and young people in media to strengthen the media skills of children, young people, parents and professionals. The initiative is a nationwide association of various players and is supported by an initiative office. The website provides a wealth of information on media education and media literacy in an easy-to-understand format.

### Example 2

The media guide 'SCHAU HIN! What your child does with media' supports parents and guardians with age-appropriate, up-to-date recommendations for children's media use that are suitable for everyday use. 'SCHAU HIN' provides information and entertainment options and the risks of media use. Parents and guardians can attend media courses to learn how to deal with digital media and support children and young people.

### Example 3

JUUUUPPORT is an online counselling platform founded in 2010 that offers peer-to-peer support for young people experiencing online problems. Teenage and young adult volunteers from all over Germany, so-called JUUUPORT scouts, confidentially help their peers with problems such as cyberbullying, media addiction or sexual harassment. The advice is free of charge.

## BIK+ index 2025: Germany

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 Germany compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.

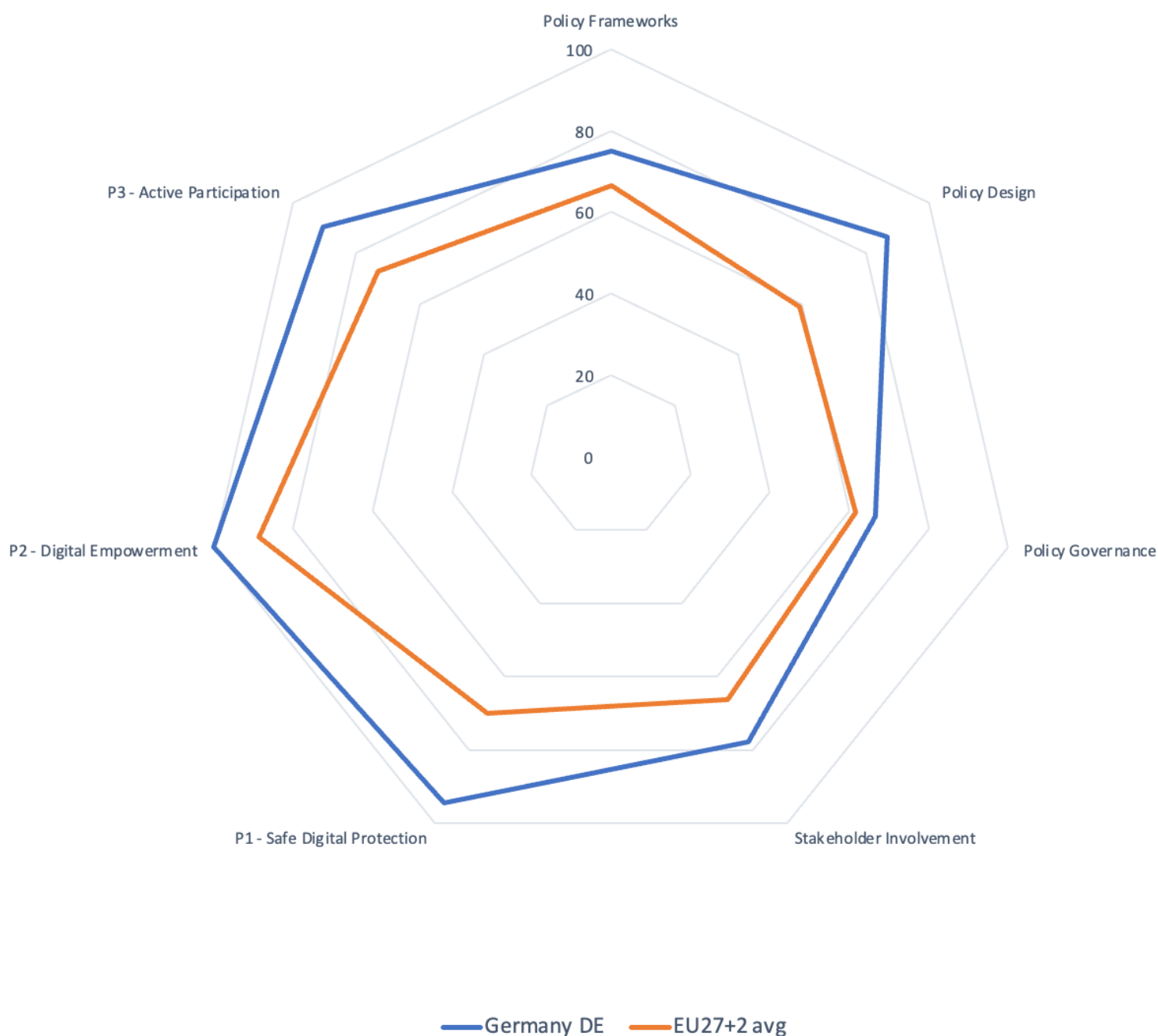


Figure 1: BIK+ index 2025: Germany - EU27+2 average comparison



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