Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy Monitor Country Profile 2025: PORTUGAL

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 Portuguese country profile online on the BIK Knowledge hub.

Introduction

In Portugal, there is a convergence with the national strategies specifically addressing children in the digital environment, mainly through the participation in the Consortium for Safer Internet and the intersection of actions and activities aiming to concur to the broader policies in the youth national plans, and in programs like Navegas em Segurança, Programas Escolhas, addressing vulnerable children and young people, and with the new agenda for Youth. The BIK+ strategy is considered and referenced in the framework of the 'Safer Internet Centre Consortium' which is coordinated by the National Cyber Security Centre (CNCS) and also involves the Directorate-General for Education of the Ministry of Education, the Foundation for Science and Technology, the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth, APAV - the Portuguese Association for Victim Support, the Altice Foundation, and Microsoft Portugal.

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 being comprehensively addressed** with children's online protection, digital empowerment and digital participation incorporated into national/regional laws, regulations and policies.

- The topic is **covered by broader policies (e.g., national digital strategy) rather than in separate dedicated policies** and/or covers only one or two of the dimensions of protection, empowerment and participation.

- **The BIK+ strategy is an important influence on policy development** on children and the digital environment (i.e., it 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 the BIK+ strategy		X		
Recognition of children's rights	X			

Table 1: Topic summary - policy frameworks

Key national policy frameworks are:

- The National Strategy for Children's Rights for the period 2021-2024 (ENDC 2021-2024) was approved by Council of Ministers Resolution 112/2020 of 18 December 2020. The ENDC is structured around five priorities. The ENDC's

fourth priority, Preventing and Combating Violence Against Children and Young People, aims to implement strategic objectives in the field of preventing and combating all forms of violence in various contexts, namely at school, at home, in the different communities that children and young people attend and in the digital world.

- The National Strategy for Cyberspace Security, under its Axis 'Prevention, education and awareness-raising,' addresses the need to create instruments and reinforce measures to raise awareness among civil society about the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, with particular emphasis on the training and knowledge gained by children, adolescents, senior citizens and other at-risk groups.

- The Portuguese Charter on Human Rights in the Digital Age (Law 27/2021 of 17th of May states that "Everyone has the right to safety in cyberspace, and it is up to the state to define public policies that guarantee the protection of citizens and information networks and systems, and to create mechanisms that increase safety when using the Internet, especially for children and young people" (Art.15 Right to Cybersecurity).

- The National Strategy for Education for Citizenship encompasses a set of domains addressing themes of Digital Citizenship, including Human Rights (Hate Speech including Cyberbullying), Media (Media Literacy and Education), Health (Online Dependencies, all forms of violence including bullying), Sexuality (online risky behaviours such as sexting, sextortion, and grooming), and Security, Defence, and Peace (Cybersecurity).

- The anti-bullying and cyberbullying plan, 'School Without Bullying | School Without Violence,' aims to equip educational communities with a series of tools to help prevent and combat the phenomena of bullying and cyberbullying, especially among young people.

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.

- **Some but not all aspects of children's experiences of risks, harms and digital well-being are included in regular surveys**.

- **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.

- **Existing regular national research funding is available for** research on children and the digital environment, but this is not explicitly specified.

- **Policies are regularly monitored and evaluated but not always systematically.**

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

Table 2: Topic summary - policy design

Recent national research studies include:

- The National Statistics Institute (INE) aims to produce quality official statistical information. In this context of Eurostat, INE collects data, but not much, on children's digital activities in the survey 'ICT usage in households and by individuals', on an annual basis.

- A national survey conducted by the Portuguese Government revealed that bullying and cyberbullying are collective phenomena in schools, with students taking on roles of victims, aggressors, and witnesses. The study highlighted that cyberbullying increases with age due to greater digital exposure. It emphasized the need to reform strategies, focusing on prevention and education, and called for increased awareness and support. The lack of reports, fear of retaliation, and low trust in institutional responses underscore the need for improved strategies and active witness intervention.

- Although children are not the main target of research, the Cybersecurity Observatory from CNCS collects data on that matter, mainly by applying surveys about awareness-raising campaigns and education.

- The Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics (DGEEC) has the mission of ensuring the production and statistical analysis of education and science, providing technical support for policy formulation and strategic and operational planning, observing and evaluating the overall results obtained by the educational and scientific and technological systems, in coordination with other services in the areas of science, technology, higher education, and education governance.

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.

- There is **one central body (e.g., 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.

- A **clearly defined coordination function is in place**, involving all relevant stakeholders and encompasses the cross-cutting policy issues relating to children and the digital environment.

- **There is a defined national action plan** for children and the digital environment with 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

- The National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and Protection of Children and Young People (CNPDPCJ) is the coordinating body for the National Strategy for Children's Rights for the period 2021-2024 and the respective action plans, assisted by a technical commission for monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and an advisory commission. An inter-ministerial committee ensures the definition, articulation and execution of public policies between the various organisations responsible for implementing policy and intervention measures for the promotion of children´s and young people´s rights. Policies relating to children in a digital environment fall within the remit of CNPDPCJ together with the relevant public bodies.

- In Portugal, the Resolution of the Council of Ministers 112/2020, of 18 December, approved the National Strategy for the Promotion of the Rights of the Child for the period 2021-2024, which includes the digital environment. The strategy has defined accountabilities such as priorities, strategic and operational objectives, targets, KPIs, etc.

- The National Education Strategy for Citizenship also includes a set of domains that address Digital Citizenship dimensions. The Portuguese curriculum is based on essential learning and promotes the autonomy and curricular

flexibility that allow the interdisciplinary work of contemporary concerns, such as Digital Citizenship and Emerging Technologies.

● It should also be noted that the National Plan for the Reduction of Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies includes explicit targets and indicators focusing on young people's perceptions of risk and problematic use of the Internet.

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 stakeholder groups.

● **Members of the public are consulted only when new policies are being developed**.

● **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 national plans for Youth (from 2018 to 2024), and their current successor which is the Youth Agenda, have been built on the basis of systematic consultation with young people and other actors who are part of the Youth scenario as an area (youth workers, researchers, people working with and for

young people, youth platforms and youth organizations) covering all the cross-cutting issues and themes in the area of Youth.

- An inter-ministerial committee ensures the definition, articulation and execution of public policies between the various organisations responsible for implementing policy and intervention measures for the promotion of children's and young people's rights. In this context, children and the digital environment are included. In this inter-ministerial committee representatives of the various ministries/public entities responsible for promoting children's and young people's rights participate.

- A National Forum for Gambling and the Internet, which comprises the main partners active in the digital area, regardless of the sector they come from. From a health point of view, this forum aims to contribute to the study of good practices in the use of the Internet and to the development of prevention and supply control strategies concerning problematic use of the internet in a broad sense, including video games and gambling as well as risky digital behaviour.

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – Safe digital experiences

Safe digital experiences refers 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
- In Portugal, no legislation to give further effect to the Digital Services Act (DSA) has been published to date, except for Decree-Law no 20-B/2024, February 16th, 2024, designating the competent authorities and the coordinator of digital services.

- ANACOM (National Communications Authority) was appointed as the competent authority and coordinator of digital services in Portugal.

Harmful online content

- While there may not be a specific definition of harmful content, various laws address different forms of harmful online behaviour. Specific legal provisions aim to safeguard individuals' right to privacy and family intimacy. Additionally, there are legal measures to establish effective guarantees against abusive or undignified use of information relating to individuals and families, reinforcing the protection of privacy rights in the digital realm.

- There is a process in place for children to report about the availability of potentially harmful online content. Children can directly approach various entities responsible for handling such complaints, including the police, schools (which are then obligated to report), NGOs, and specifically the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV), which operates a hotline and has a specific protocol with the Judiciary Police for intervention in this area. Additionally, the programme Escola Segura is available for minors, their families, and schools to seek assistance.

- Administrative bodies, as per DL n.o 7/2004 (art. 13º a , 19º -A, e 19º - B), are mandated to ensure the removal or disabling of access to online content deemed potentially harmful to children. This includes obligations for intermediaries to report illicit activities promptly to the Public Prosecutor, particularly concerning content such as child pornography or sexual exploitation.

Harmful online conduct

- Article 176º of the Penal Code addresses the dissemination of intimate images involving minors, and Article 193º prohibits the dissemination of private images without consent. This includes the production, distribution, or dissemination of pornographic materials involving minors. There are also penalties for using minors in pornographic performances or enticing them for such purposes, as well as for producing, distributing, or displaying pornographic materials involving minors.

- Regarding cyberbullying, in Portugal, no specific law prohibits it. However, various actions can be punishable, such as disseminating intimate images,

publishing unauthorised information, private data, images, defamation, threats, coercion, etc.

- The Portuguese Charter on Human Rights in the Digital Age approved by law 27/2021, of 17 May, also addresses this topic and has a specific article on cyberbullying.

- The anti-bullying and cyberbullying combat plan, 'School Without Bullying | School Without Violence' aims to equip educational communities with a series of tools to help prevent and combat bullying and cyberbullying, especially among young people.

Age verification

- Portugal has regulations prohibiting the sale of adult content to minors and restricting their access to establishments selling such content. For instance, Article 46º, DL n.º 10/2015, 16 of January, prohibits the display of pornographic content in public view and prohibits minors under 18 from entering sex shops. Additionally, Article 47º prohibits the sale of pornographic or obscene products to minors.

Mental health and well-being

- Recommendations for the Promotion of Digital Well-Being in Schools were published on January 29, 2025, along with informational sheets aimed at school group directors, teachers, students, and parents. These documents were distributed to all public and private schools to reinforce the importance of fostering a healthy digital environment.

- The programme Cuida-te is a Health and well-being programme for young people that is widespread throughout the territory, and has specific measures for mental health issues and well-being. As it addresses addictive behaviours, it can have a preventive action in matters like cyberbullying or mental health regarding online and digital environments. Although mental health and well-being are the core intervention areas, and nothing specifically is aimed at online addictions, addictive behaviours and addictions are included in the intervention area. Young people can present a problem or a complaint. They

can be advised how to proceed or directly taken into account and delegated to the competent authorities or organisations in the matter.

	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
- The Curriculum Guidelines for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the first cycle define ICT as a cross-cutting area, with one of its domains being digital citizenship.

- In the Essential Learning of the ICT subject, which covers students from the fifth to the ninth grades, the domain of security, responsibility, and respect in digital environments is included.

- School libraries also collaborate with teachers from different curricular areas to teach children about online safety. The document Learning with the School Library supports this work.

- Teacher training plays a crucial role in digital empowerment in schools, helping teachers stay updated on fast changes in education. Continuous training helps teachers stay updated with the latest trends, methodologies, and educational tools. This is important to ensure that they are up-to-date and prepared to integrate new practices in the classroom. All Portuguese teachers received training in digital skills based on their proficiency levels.

- The Ministry of Education, Science, and Innovation (MECI) published recommendations on smartphone use in schools, warning of risks like concentration issues, social isolation, and mental well-being impacts. The document emphasizes the need for internal regulations in schools to balance the educational benefits of technology with the risks of uncontrolled use, suggesting practices to ensure safe and supportive environments. It also highlights the importance of monitoring the effectiveness of the measures implemented.

Informal education:
- The SeguraNet Awareness Centre promotes digital citizenship and media education in educational communities since 2004. Its action involves teacher training, awareness-raising sessions in schools, development of educational resources, promotion of campaigns, and awareness initiatives. Notable initiatives include Digital Leaders, which promotes the action of children and young people in raising awareness in educational communities; the 'SeguraNet Challenges' competition; the European eSafety Label certification; awareness campaigns such as 'Safer Internet Day in Schools' and 'Cybersecurity Month in Schools', and the most recent campaign 'Safe and Healthy Online Practices.'

- The Navegas em Segurança project, coordinated by the Portuguese Institute Youth Institute (IPDJ) aims to contribute to the development of responsible and safe internet use by organising information sessions and awareness-raising activities aimed at children, young people, parents and citizens in general. The programme also aims to develop and promote peer-to-peer training and support.

- The Digital Academy for Parents (ADP) Programme is an initiative of E-Redes, in partnership with the DGE. It gives parents and guardians of children in Primary and Secondary Education the opportunity to attend training sessions promoting digital skills. The ADP initiative was launched in 2020 based on the conviction that digital citizenship is essential for social inclusion.

Digital literacy skills to empower young people

- The National Strategy for Education for Citizenship encompasses a set of domains addressing themes of Digital Citizenship, including Human Rights (Hate Speech, including Cyberbullying), Media (Media Literacy and Education), Health (Online Dependency, all forms of violence, including bullying), Sexuality (online risky behaviours such as sexting, sextortion, and grooming), and Security, Defense, and Peace (Cybersecurity).

- IPDJ's Program Escolhas is designed to target support to children and young people in vulnerable situations, where non-formal education is a key methodology. On the other hand, Program Navegas em Segurança, that uses peer-to-peer education and youth voluntary service to promote online safety and connected issues are examples of good practices. Both programs have widespread territorial impact and availability to young people, and make interventions both at local level, as well as in school.

	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

- IPDJ promotes several initiatives for children and young people to reinforce active participation and civic engagement in the digital environment. Some examples are the 'Youth Participatory Budgeting Portugal' in which the presentation of proposals, technical analysis and the project voting process is done exclusively online. Other examples in this field are the "Youth Parliament" program and 'Euroschool' program

- The National Youth Plan (PNJ) has as one of its strategic objectives to promote active citizenship and youth participation in decision-making processes. Furthermore, it is designing a National Youth Participation Strategy to promote the participation and active involvement of children and young people in decision-making processes.

- Young people were consulted to define the Profile of the Student upon Completion of Compulsory Education, the document that serves as the basis for the Portuguese Education System. The DGE consults the youth monthly regarding their action plan.

- The Digital Leaders Programme aims to encourage peers and other educational community members to adopt a critical, reflective, and

responsible attitude in using technologies and digital environments. This initiative has had nine editions, with over 2,800 students and 110 School Groups and Non-Grouped Schools participating in the last edition. The participation of Digital Leaders in national and European events and conferences is noteworthy. These young people have the opportunity to contribute to the risks and solutions related to child protection in digital environments, always to make the internet a better place.

Supporting children's rights

- 70JÁ! is a campaign promoted by the XXII Constitutional Government and the IPDJ. The name refers to article 70 of the Constitution, which deals with the rights of young people in different areas of life, such as culture, education, access to the first job, housing, sport and leisure.

- The SeguraNet Awareness Centre for Schools plays an active role in implementing measures within schools, aligning with the European BIK+ strategy. This integration is reflected in the regular publication of news and articles about BIK+, its consistent reference in teacher training programs, and its inclusion in various national awareness initiatives, reinforcing the commitment to creating a safer and more responsible digital environment for children and young people

- There is a government system in place to publish child-friendly versions of policy documents or policy initiatives relevant to BIK+ topics. The Safer Internet Centre has developed various actions in this regard. Also, National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and Protection of Children and Young People (CNPDPCJ) translates information/documentation related to these topics in a child-friendly language.

Digital inclusion

- IPDJ's Program Escolhas is, as mentioned before, a widespread territorial program with a background of success in addressing the needs of vulnerable young people and children, and therefore, it is the main program for the

purpose of addressing, among others, those issues related to fighting exclusion in digital environments.

● Creation of a national network of ICT Resource Centres for Special Education stems from a policy of inclusion of students with long-term Special Educational Needs in regular education. The network consists of 25 Resource Centres located in School Clusters. The purpose of the ICT Resource Centres for Special Education is to assess these students for the purpose of adapting support technologies to their specific needs, and to provide information/training to teachers, professionals, educational assistants, and families regarding the issues associated with different domains of disability or impairment.

	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

Best practices

Example 1: MOOC - by the Safer Internet Centre

The Safer Internet Center, through the National Cybersecurity Center (CNCS), and in partnership with several entities, offers several courses in the e-learning format - MOOC (acronym for Massive Open Online Course). Any citizen can acquire cyber hygiene skills for free. These courses, available on the NAU platform, cover several topics such as: the main threats in cyberspace; precautions to be taken when using technology; the problem of misinformation or what to do to consume online safely; social networks, security and privacy, among others.

Example 2: Programa Escolhas (PE)

Programa Escolhas (PE) is a national government program that was created in 2001 and began its 9th generation (E9G) in October 2023, for 3 years, which was approved on June 29, 2023, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers. Council of Ministers Resolution no. 74/2023, of July 14, adopts the 9th generation of the Escolhas Program in the Diário da República, from October 2023 to September 2026.

In the current E9G, the Escolhas Program's mission is to promote social inclusion and integration, equal opportunities in education and employment, the development of skills, critical and creative thinking, valuing the educational power of the arts and sport, combating social discrimination, civic participation and strengthening social cohesion and is aimed at all children and young people, particularly those from contexts of greater socio-economic vulnerability.

Example 3: The Digital Academy for Parents (ADP)

The Digital Academy for Parents (ADP Program is an initiative of E-Redes, in partnership with the DGE, which allows parents and guardians of children in Primary and Secondary Education to attend training sessions promoting digital skills. The ADP initiative was launched in 2020, based on the conviction that digital citizenship is essential for social inclusion. Thus, this is a critical tool made available to schools, not only for the digital empowerment of families but also for their full

involvement in the Digital Transition Action Plan, contributing to the fight against socioeconomic asymmetries existing in communities and access to information. Schools recognize in this initiative a way to respond to the needs of their educational communities by involving young students as volunteers and creating channels of communication and approach between families and the school. Children and young volunteers are involved in the dynamism of training sessions, including Digital Security and Citizenship. The ADP initiative started in 2020 and is already in its 4th edition, with the participation of 226 Organic Units covering 853 schools expected. In the 3rd edition, it had 1588 volunteer trainers, of which 728 are students. In total, the 3 editions have already had more than 6000 trainees (parents/guardians). The 4th edition, which took place in the 2023 /2024 school year, involved 668 volunteer students as trainers, engaging 214 AE/Ena and 253 training classes. In this edition, 668 young volunteers participated in leading the sessions, which reached 2,992 parents.

BIK+ index 2025: Portugal

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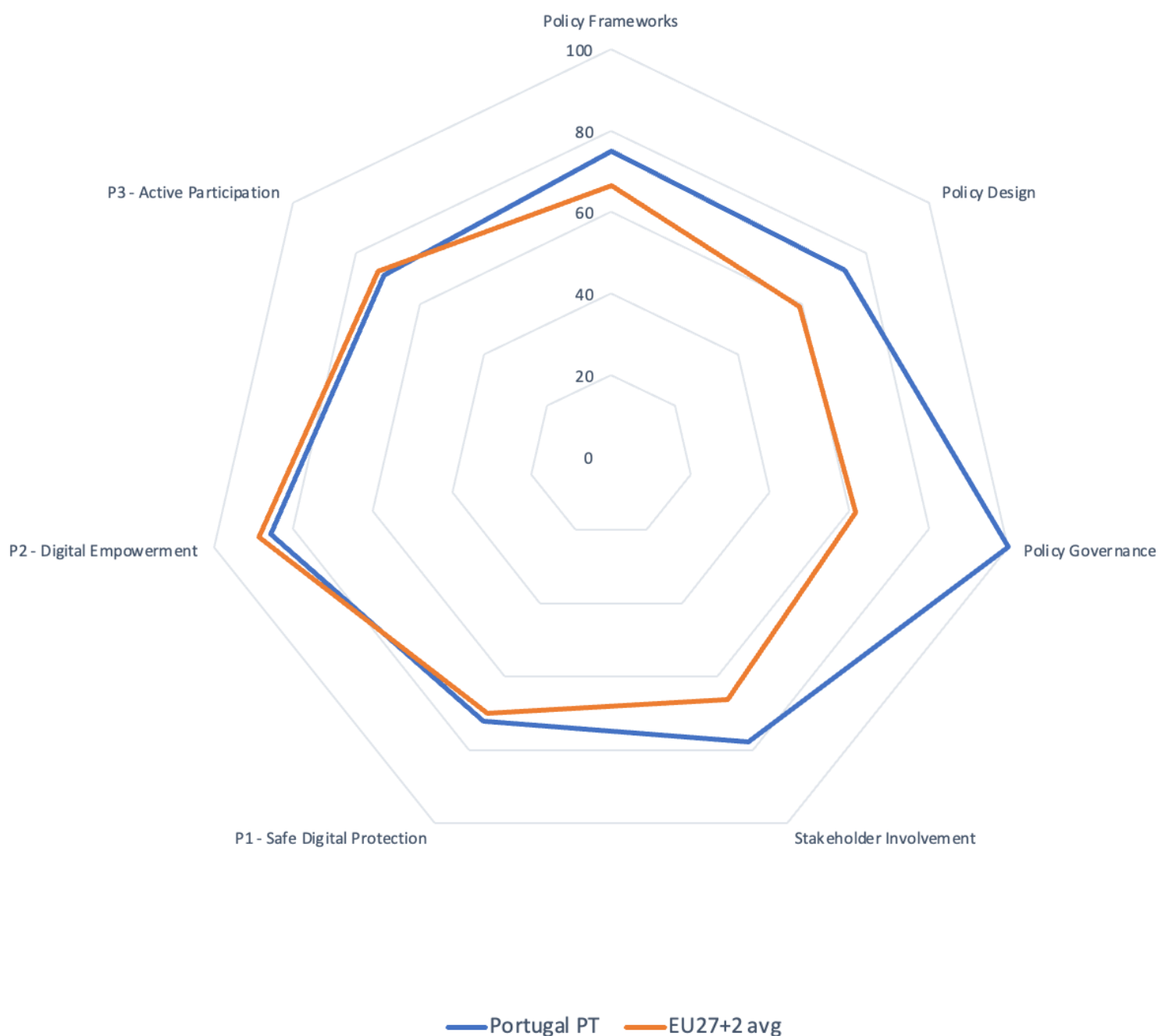cent.

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

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