

Better Internet for Kids



REVIEW
OF THE YEAR
2025

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FOREWORD by the European Commission



Renate Nikolay

Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, European Commission

Ensuring a safe online space, where minors can learn, play and socialise safely, is a key priority in the EU. In 2025, we stepped up our collective efforts to ensure online safety and digital empowerment for young people in Europe.

In October, under the Danish Presidency of the Council, 25 Member States plus Iceland and Norway agreed on *The Jutland Declaration: Shaping a Safe Online World for Minors*, emphasising the need for effective age

verification online. November saw the European Parliament adopting, with an overwhelming majority, a *Resolution on the protection of minors online*.

Under the **Digital Services Act (DSA)**, the Commission published in July important *Guidelines on the protection of minors* to help online platforms enhance privacy, safety, and security for children. Autumn saw the launch of the *DSA for YOUTH campaign*, designed to engage the public, also with a *family-friendly booklet*, available in all EU languages, simplifying the guidelines for families and young people.

Formal proceedings against adult-content platforms marked the ongoing enforcement of the DSA, addressing risks associated with inadequate age-verification measures.

In July, we also released the *blueprint for an EU age-verification app*, developed in close collaboration with the Member States. The blueprint is now being pilot-tested with Member States, online platforms, end-users and other stakeholders, heralding a promising development in youth protection from harmful and age-inappropriate content.

Tackling abusive and toxic behaviours like **cyberbullying** was another cornerstone of our efforts. Following consultations with over 400 stakeholders, including 120 young people, and after two online consultations – including a child-friendly version that received more than 6,000 replies – the Commission worked on preparing an **Action plan against cyberbullying**, set for adoption and implementation in early 2026.

In 2025, the first *evaluation of the 2022 BIK+ strategy* was published, drawing insights from extensive consultations with children, young people, expert stakeholders, teachers, and parents. The evaluation highlighted the importance of integrating children's and parents' perspectives to craft policies that truly address their needs.

Youth participation remains central to our initiatives. Each Commissioner organised a *Youth Dialogue* during their first 100 days, and President von Der Leyen held, in December, the first meeting with the newly formed *Youth Advisory Board* to discuss the impact of EU policy on young generations.



Young people were actively involved in organising the **Safer Internet Forum** (SIF) in December, bringing together diverse voices to discuss age-appropriate online experiences. They engaged in an open dialogue with Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, **Henna Virkkunen**, regarding the needs of young people's online lives and heard directly from the Australian eSafety Commissioner on their *new social media age regulation*. Young people were also pivotal in the first review of the BIK strategy, and contributed to the ongoing discussions on a possible social media "majority age" in the EU. In this regard, President von der Leyen is seeking advice from high-level experts on the best approach for Europe to protect children online and is potentially considering social media age restrictions.

Looking ahead, the Commission will continue striving for a better internet for children, with the launch of the Action plan against cyberbullying this February and a comprehensive inquiry on the impact of social media on well-being and mental health.

The *BIK+ strategy* and the *Safer Internet Centres network* continue to play a crucial role in assisting and advising children, carers and educators, and supporting the implementation of legal and policy frameworks with data, insights and youth participation. Alongside the growing *BIK platform*, offering new resources annually in all European languages, they reached in 2025 over 46 million people across Europe and beyond.

I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to our network of **Safer Internet Centres** for their unwavering commitment to our objectives, notably to implementing the BIK+ strategy and the DSA, and their invaluable contributions in preparing the Action plan against cyberbullying throughout 2025.

As we embrace this new year, I'm proud of the progress we've made and the heightened importance of online protection for young people in society and in politics. Let's all together continue building a better internet for our children, fostering a digital environment that is safe, inclusive, empowering and...free from cyberbullying!



BACKGROUND TO BETTER INTERNET FOR KIDS

Building on a succession of Safer Internet programmes, Better Internet for Kids (BIK) is a European Commission initiative which aims to create a better internet for Europe's children and youth, funded under the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL). This report provides insight into key achievements and areas of focus in 2025.

The Better Internet for Kids platform and related activities are implemented on behalf of the European Commission by European Schoolnet (EUN). Under this contract, EUN also coordinates the *Insafe network* of awareness centres, helplines and youth participation actions, in partnership with *INHOPE* (a global network of hotlines), dedicated to the removal of illegal online content (including child sexual abuse material (CSAM)). These combined strands are commonly referred to as *Safer Internet Centres (SICs)*, typically operating in the EU Member States, plus Albania, Iceland, North Macedonia and Norway, in the drive to keep children and young people safe online^{1,2}.

What is a Safer Internet Centre?

Across Europe, Safer Internet Centres collaborate to enhance online safety. Insafe and INHOPE work together to ensure these efforts are coordinated and effective.

Each Safer Internet Centre typically includes:



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



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



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



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

1 Safer Internet Centres in 24 Member States currently receive EU co-funding.

2 In 2025, EU (co-)funding of 13.71 million euros was provided for this programme of work, representing a service contract (for coordination of BIK services) and grant agreements with currently co-funded Safer Internet Centres on a pro-rata basis.

Find out more about the Safer Internet Centre in your country at better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/sic.



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

The [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#) started applying fully less than two years ago and is widely recognised for its key role in the protection of minors online. In 2025, the European Commission published [guidelines on the protection of minors](#), aimed at ensuring a safe online experience for children and young people. The guidelines recommend the use of effective age assurance methods (provided that they are accurate, reliable, robust, non-intrusive and non-discriminatory), and many other safety-by-design measures, including making account settings, interface design and recommender systems more empowering and less addictive for children, as well as improving safety with better reporting and moderation. Specifically, age verification is recommended to restrict access to content that poses a high risk to minors, such as pornography, alcohol and tobacco, gambling, or other platforms restricted to under 18s. This also applies in case national or EU laws set a minimum age for accessing specific services, like some defined categories of social media. To raise awareness, a dedicated campaign - [DSA for YOUTH](#) - was launched in the autumn of 2025, to explain the guidelines to young people, parents and caregivers, and teachers and educators.

European Safer Internet Centres play a vital role in supporting the implementation of the DSA at the national level. They typically work closely with both the Digital Services Coordinator and other competent authorities in their respective countries. In addition, several Safer Internet Centres are now recognised as "[trusted flaggers](#) under the DSA".

The European Safer Internet Centres provide valuable information to Digital Services Coordinators about risks to children and young people to support their enforcement of the DSA. Children, young people, and their parents and caregivers will often turn to their national centre to report potential harms, lodge complaints, and access resources on internet safety. By leveraging this feedback loop, Safer Internet Centres can support the enforcement of the DSA, acting as a direct link to EU children and youth, closely connected with everyday experiences and concerns.

To give a few examples:

- ▶ Helplines and awareness centres meet every six weeks to discuss emerging trends observed in their work. These meetings help highlight concerns and, in particular, the challenges that children and young people are facing online, and how platforms are tackling these issues. Updates from these **discussions** are then shared with the European Commission.
- ▶ Helplines collect data that can support the enforcement of the DSA. For example, in their quarterly reports, they identify (where possible) the platforms where problems occurred. In the period July-September 2025, the collected data revealed that 44 per cent of cases took place on messaging apps and 29 per cent on social media platforms, indicating a shift from the previous year's report, where social media was the most common setting for problems. This change might signify that more helplines are now able to collect this



data, or that “Very Large Online Platforms” (VLOPs) are more aware of their responsibilities and taking steps to mitigate the problems.

- ▶ Additionally, some Safer Internet Centres are also conducting their own research, offering valuable insights into how children and young people are using technology, often including questions about the DSA. For example, the Finnish Safer Internet Centre conducted a survey with sixth graders on young people’s media usage. This included information about the DSA and asked young people about their experiences and reports on social media platforms. The [report can be found here](#).
- ▶ Safer Internet Centres also carry out various awareness-raising activities to bring the DSA closer to children and young people and their parents, caregivers, and educators. For example:
 - The Greek Safer Internet Centre has created an online reporting portal aimed at children and young people. It has been designed to facilitate child-friendly reporting and to highlight their rights under the DSA. A key feature is its direct connection to the national helpline, allowing children to speak with specialised psychologists. This service fully aligns with the DSA’s aim of offering tangible support mechanisms to underage users.
 - The Irish Safer Internet Centre supported the development of new educational materials for schools on young people’s rights under Ireland’s [Online Safety Framework](#), including the DSA.

..... Delve deeper

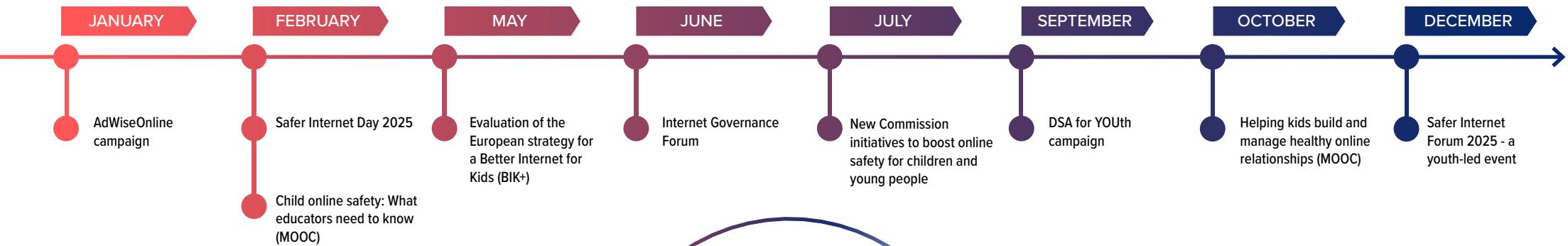
Explore more on the [Digital Services Act on the Better Internet for Kids portal](#), including a series of [articles on how European Safer Internet Centres are supporting the implementation of the DSA](#).

Explore the family-friendly booklet, **[The Digital Services Act \(DSA\) explained: Measures to protect children and young people online](#)**, available to [download in all EU languages from the Publications Office of the European Union website](#). To get printed copies, please contact the [Safer Internet Centre, Commission Representation](#), or [Europe Direct Centre](#) in your country.

A regularly updated [list of trusted flaggers](#) is available on the European Commission website.



2025 IN REVIEW



AdWiseOnline campaign (January 2025)

The 2025 edition of the AdWiseOnline campaign focused on potential issues in in-game marketing within the broader context of child and youth consumer protection in digital environments. Specifically, it explored critical aspects sometimes present in online games, such as persuasive design, dark patterns, loot boxes, pay-to-win mechanisms, FOMO (fear of missing out) tactics, and excessive microtransactions.

Throughout the AdWiseOnline campaign, various materials were designed and published to simplify the complex terminology of digital marketing and the legal framework governing consumer rights. Resources included an *interactive guide to outsmart online ads and traps* (available in all EU languages) and a *Game of terms* video resource featuring BIK Youth Ambassadors outlining key terms in their own words. A *podcast explored the psychology behind in-game marketing and the regulatory measures surrounding marketing practices*, while a range of additional resources and webinars outlined practical steps that parents, caregivers, and educators can take to support children in their online gaming activities.

Delve deeper

Discover more about AdWiseOnline at better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/adwiseonline.

Read the article [How to build critical thinking skills in your classroom: ideas for teachers to discuss in-game marketing manipulation](#)

Discover more about all [BIK campaigns](#) on the BIK portal.



The 2025 edition of the AdWiseOnline campaign raised awareness of the issue of manipulative in-game marketing

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



Focus on cyberbullying #1

Among the various categories of risks and harms that children experience in their use of digital technologies, **cyberbullying** remains one of the most persistent and insidious. As reported by [UNICEF](#), more than a third of young people globally have reported being a victim of cyberbullying.

[Key pan-European studies](#) have found that nearly a quarter of children surveyed had been a victim of bullying, either offline or online. A fifth of those victims reported intense harm because of bullying. Despite numerous initiatives to address this challenge, cyberbullying remains the most reported issue to Safer Internet Centre helplines over the last decade. The [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#) plays a crucial role in tackling cyberbullying by establishing new standards for online platforms to be more accountable for the content shared and to enhance content moderation and reporting tools. Moreover, tackling cyberbullying was identified as one of the key priorities in the European Commission's [Political Guidelines 2024-2029](#), with the aim of launching an action plan to address it.

As highlighted in this report, preparatory work to develop an EU action plan against cyberbullying has been a recurring theme of activities throughout 2025.



#2 >



Safer Internet Day 2025 (February 2025)

In February 2025, for the 22nd edition of Safer Internet Day (SID), several events and activities took place worldwide. Under the slogan of “Together for a better internet”, the campaign called on all stakeholders to join forces to make the internet a safer and better place for all, especially for children and young people. For the first time, events and activities spanned the full month of February, with a global day of focus on Tuesday, 11 February 2025.

As in previous years, this edition was packed with new initiatives and activities. Significantly, this edition featured a new look as part of the wider redevelopment of the *Better Internet for Kids (BIK) platform* with a new home for *Safer Internet Day* and, importantly, a new SID mascot: **Ally!** Created via a youth-led design process, Ally is a true companion for young people in the digital world: fast, brave, well-equipped, and tech-savvy. Meet Ally in this video:



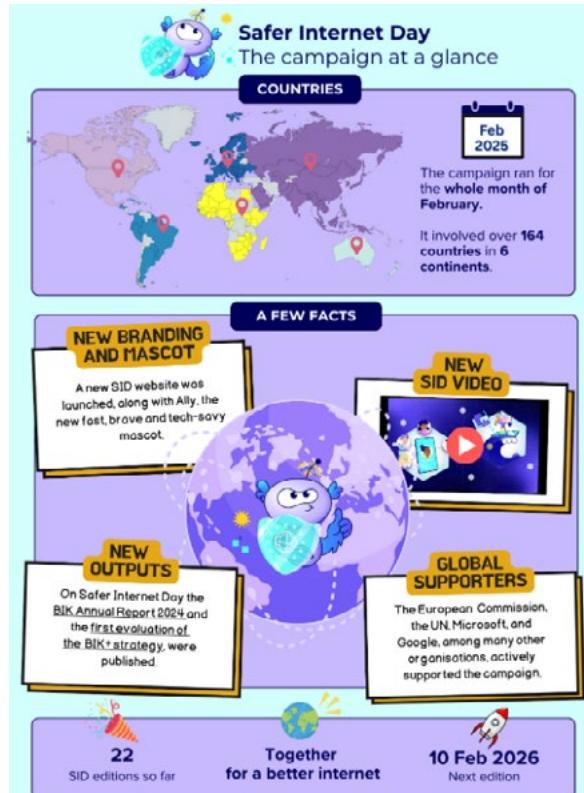
As the 2025 campaign rolled out, Ally captured the interest and imagination of Safer Internet Day stakeholders far and wide, being the focal point across global celebrations (for example, in Cambodia, Moldova, and Nigeria), in industry actions, and in children’s classroom activities (for example, in a school in Ireland).



Ally captured the imagination of young internet users and SID supporters worldwide

Through a distributed model – including Safer Internet Centres in Europe, Safer Internet Day Committees across the globe, and many international organisational and industry supporters – a range of events, activities and resources were delivered to promote the safe and positive use of digital technologies.





The 22nd edition of Safer Internet Day was celebrated in February 2025 in over 160 countries and territories around the world

Celebrations around Safer Internet Day

The European Commission and EU institutions marked Safer Internet Day through various channels, including a [press release](#), a dedicated [video message](#) from Executive Vice-President Henna Virkkunen for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, a [video Q&A by Renate Nikolay](#), Deputy Director-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, and a feature on the [EU Learning Corner](#).

The European Commission also continued its enforcement of the [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#), taking significant steps to safeguard minors online. A [family-friendly booklet](#) explaining how the DSA is making the internet a better, safer place for all its users was also published in all EU languages.

Youth dialogue on cyberbullying

As part of the month-long celebrations for Safer Internet Day, a multistakeholder online discussion was organised to focus on cyberbullying. The event brought together 13 children and young people (aged 12 to 17), as well as 45 representatives of Digital Services Coordinators (DSCs) and competent authorities from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. The main objective of this activity was to identify the needs and the challenges children and young people face when reporting cyberbullying on online platforms and how to make actions against cyberbullying more effective.

The event also provided additional awareness and understanding of the Digital Services Act (DSA) among the children and young people participating, including its impact to date and the roles of Digital Services Coordinators and competent authorities in ensuring transparency, accountability, and the responsible operation of digital services.

Following policy updates from the European Commission, two BIK Youth Ambassadors shared their perspectives on cyberbullying, including current trends, challenges, and related issues, particularly regarding reporting on online platforms. Following this scene setter, breakout rooms facilitated more direct exchanges between the youth representatives and the policymakers present.

As conversations unfolded, it became clear that many of the challenges



young people face are deeply interconnected. Cyberbullying, in particular, was described as something that has become a normal part of everyday life for too many young people, both online and offline. Harmful behaviour is often brushed off or minimised, making it harder to challenge and allowing it to continue. Discussions also highlighted how difficult it remains for young people to speak up. Reporting tools are often slow, complicated, and not designed with children and young people in mind, so many choose not to report at all. Fear of peer pressure or potential backlash plays a big role here, alongside concerns about making things worse. These issues are further compounded by weak age verification on many platforms, exposing young people to content they may not be ready to handle. Throughout the discussions, there was a strong sense that more practical education and training are needed – not just for young people, but for adults too – to better understand cyberbullying, its impact, and how to respond when it happens.

Attention then turned to practical steps for moving forward. Participants agreed that reporting cyberbullying needs to be simpler and more user-friendly, with clearer guidance from online platforms. They also emphasised the importance of building a better understanding of cyberbullying among both young people and adults, particularly teachers and parents, so that harm can be recognised and prevented earlier. Stronger age-verification and content-moderation measures were seen as another priority, alongside closer cooperation between policymakers, Digital Services Coordinators, industry, and other stakeholders. Just as importantly, participants stressed that young people themselves should be involved in developing solutions, recognising their role as active contributors to safer and more respectful online spaces, and as future digital leaders.

Delve deeper

Several other examples of active youth participation and youth-led initiatives are included throughout this report. Learn more about the important work of the BIK Youth programme more generally at better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-youth.

Discover more about Safer Internet Day, and its various celebrations over the years, at better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/saferinternetday. You'll also find contact information for SID committees and supporters worldwide to help you get involved in future celebrations.

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



Focus on cyberbullying #2

Cyberbullying is growing fast across Europe, but policymakers still lack a shared definition to track and tackle it effectively. The European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) published a policy brief in August 2025, [Cyberbullying: Considerations towards a common definition](#), analysing existing definitions and key elements of cyberbullying across academic literature and policy documents.



Building on this brief, a full report was published in December 2025, [Cyberbullying: Insights from science, policy and legislation](#), that analysed how countries across the EU define and fight cyberbullying, identifying key elements of this phenomenon, as well as risk and protective factors. The study, based on a review of scientific literature, policies, and national laws, finds that a common definition and aligned intervention programmes and legal instruments could help create a safer digital environment for children and adolescents.

According to the literature reviewed in the study, the key elements underpinning established definitions of cyberbullying include:

- **repeated exposure** to harm, which may persist even after a viral one-time action;
- a **power imbalance** between the perpetrator and the victim – it can result from digital competence, and is not necessarily driven by physical strength or social influence;
- hostile behaviour **mediated through digital technologies**;
- **selective targeting** of specific individuals or groups of people.

The recommendations from this work have informed the design of the new EU action plan against cyberbullying, as part of the European Commission's broader efforts to create a better, safer online world for children and young people.

Learn more about the [Joint Research Centre of the European Commission](#).

< #1 | #3 >



Evaluation of the European strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) (May 2025)

In May 2025, a first comprehensive evaluation of the *European strategy for a better internet for kids* was published, marking a landmark moment in understanding how Europe is progressing toward a safer, more empowering, and inclusive digital environment for children and young people.

Adopted by the European Commission in May 2022, the BIK+ strategy builds on two decades of EU leadership in online child safety. It was developed following extensive consultation with children and young people, complemented by targeted consultations with parents, teachers, Member States, technology and media industries, civil society, academics, and international organisations, with the aim of complementing and supporting the practical implementation of measures to protect children online. Its launch included a commitment to regularly review progress against the strategy.

This first evaluation drew on direct input from more than 750 children and young people – including those from vulnerable backgrounds – and consultations with more than 360 adult stakeholders, including educators, parents, representatives, and experts from civil society, academia, industry, and policymaking. Together, their voices provide a 360-degree view of the strategy's successes and the ongoing challenges.

In their feedback, **children and young people** welcomed efforts to create safer online spaces but flagged persistent issues such as exposure to harmful content, online scams, and privacy breaches. Many called for clearer, more accessible reporting tools and simpler privacy policies,

especially for younger users and those with disabilities. The evaluation also found a strong appetite among young people to be more involved in shaping digital environments, from platform design to policymaking at national and EU levels. Digital empowerment emerged as a key priority. Young participants voiced a need for more hands-on, age-appropriate education, including lessons on media literacy, privacy management, and responsible use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).

Educators and parents echoed many of the concerns raised by children, while also acknowledging their own need for greater support in navigating digital risks. Many of the consulted adults expressed a desire for improved digital literacy training, clearer guidance on emerging tech such as AI, and better tools to support their roles as digital mentors.

Expert stakeholders identified systemic gaps that must be addressed, including the need for longitudinal research into children's digital experiences, improved regulatory consistency across Member States, and stronger cross-sector partnerships.

Recommendations for future action

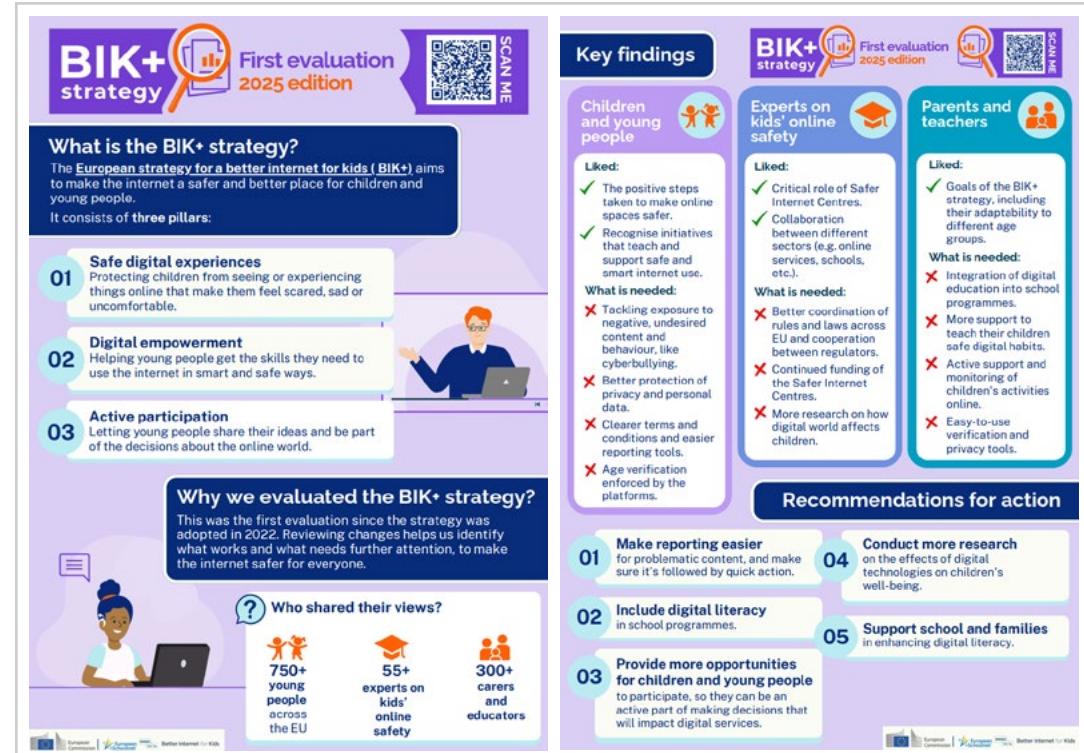
The evaluation exercise identified several actionable recommendations for implementation by the European Commission, Member States and industry. These included:

- ▶ **Simplify reporting mechanisms:** ensure child- and parent-friendly design of reporting tools across platforms, with clear instructions and follow-up.



- ▶ **Enhance digital education:** integrate media literacy, AI education, and digital resilience into core school curricula; ensure state-supported teacher training and accessible resources for parents.
- ▶ **Foster youth participation:** establish structured, ongoing opportunities for children to contribute to digital service development and policymaking, such as youth advisory boards and regional forums.
- ▶ **Support families and educators:** promote peer-to-peer and cross-generational learning models, raise awareness of national Safer Internet Centres, and ensure more inclusive communication on platform safety features.
- ▶ **Bridge policy and practice:** align national and EU-level strategies more closely, and act on expert advice to harmonise regulation and strengthen accountability across sectors.
- ▶ **Address expert-identified gaps:** act on the recommendations from expert stakeholders to strengthen the strategy's impact. For example, invest in longer-term research studies to better understand the effects of digital engagement on children (including trends and patterns), harmonise regulatory frameworks across the EU to simplify industry compliance, and promote cross-sector partnerships to develop innovative solutions for online safety and inclusivity.
- ▶ **Increase support for European Safer Internet Centres:** efforts should focus on raising awareness about national Safer Internet Centres and the support they offer, particularly among parents.

This first evaluation confirmed that BIK+ has already made a meaningful impact, but also underscored the need for sustained action in an increasingly complex digital world. Several of the initiatives described in this annual review further contribute to this approach.



The key findings from the first BIK+ strategy evaluation are available in an infographic
(click the image to view the infographic online)

Delve deeper

Discover more about the BIK+ strategy evaluation process at better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik/bik-plus-strategy/evaluation.

Read the full [first BIK+ strategy evaluation report](#).

The evaluation report is also available in a family-friendly [booklet format](#), designed to make key insights accessible to young people, parents, and educators.



Focus on cyberbullying #3

In September 2025, the European Commission's Directorate General for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture, and Sport hosted a *youth policy dialogue on cyberbullying* to exchange views and hear the perspectives and priorities of young people on how the European Union can develop an action plan against cyberbullying. Participants addressed key issues and provided recommendations to help the European Union tackle cyberbullying.

Commissioner Glenn Micallef initiated the policy dialogue, emphasising both the opportunities provided by connectivity and the risks of excessive online exposure, stressing that cyberbullying remains a major challenge in protecting children and young people online. Participants in the policy dialogue included six BIK Youth Ambassadors who highlighted the need for stronger age verification and easier reporting mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators hiding behind anonymity are held accountable for their online actions. They also discussed the serious impact of cyberbullying on mental health as well as the need for a coordinated approach from professionals, educators, and parents to create safer spaces in class and at home. Participants agreed that a common definition of cyberbullying is key to developing measures and training for parents and professionals to identify it and to support children and young people in addressing it.

This policy dialogue provided an important opportunity for the European Commission to gain insights from young people who witness the devastating effects of cyberbullying, while also giving them the chance to learn about the measures the European Union is taking to address and combat it.

“The conversation gave us young people the sense that our voices truly matter in shaping future policies and legislation. It was inspiring to collaborate on such an important issue and to leave with the feeling that together we can make a real difference for the future.”

Aisling, 18, Ireland

“I shared my perspective on how online harassment affects young people and the need for stronger measures to ensure safety in digital spaces. The meeting gave me valuable insight into how European institutions address such challenges, and it was inspiring to see how youth voices can contribute to shaping policies that promote a safer and more inclusive online environment.”

Ivita, 16, Lithuania

“It was wonderful to see such collaboration with young people on a topic as diverse and complex as cyberbullying, ensuring that the Commission's EU-wide action plan against cyberbullying is as effective as it could possibly be. I truly enjoyed hearing the other participant's suggestions and truly believe that our input was heard and action is being taken on what was discussed.”

George, 18, Malta

BIK Youth Ambassadors shared their insights on participating in the cyberbullying policy dialogue

< #2 | #4 >



BIK Policy monitor (May 2025)

The **Better Internet for Kids Policy monitor** (previously the **BIK Policy map**) has been tracking how European countries support children's and young people's digital experiences since 2014. Since its launch over a decade ago, this series has sought to compare and exchange knowledge on policies and actions that promote children's safety and well-being in the digital environment, based on the recommended measures of the original BIK strategy.

The findings of the [2025 BIK Policy monitor report](#) reflect a growing national commitment to protecting, empowering, and respecting children online. All participating countries reported prioritising these issues in national strategies and legislation. Many countries show particularly strong engagement in digital empowerment, such as integrating online safety into education systems, promoting media literacy, and encouraging digital creativity among young people.

At the same time, the report identifies several areas where further progress is needed. These include establishing more integrated national policy frameworks, improving data collection and evidence-based approaches, enhancing governance and cross-sector coordination, and expanding youth participation in digital policymaking. Notably, while 28 of 29 countries consider BIK-related issues a policy priority, only a minority have comprehensive or centralised policy frameworks in place.

Significantly, however, positive trends were found across all three pillars of the BIK+ strategy:

▶ **Safe digital experiences:** many countries reported introducing new or strengthened legislative measures, including protective actions

under the Digital Services Act (DSA), age verification mechanisms, and national codes of practice. Safeguarding children's mental health and tackling harmful content were identified as top priorities.

- ▶ **Digital empowerment:** almost all countries now embed online safety into school curricula, supported by teacher training and informal learning initiatives. Artificial intelligence (AI) literacy and combating disinformation are growing priorities.
- ▶ **Active participation:** although youth involvement in policymaking remains limited, several countries are developing new structures to foster more meaningful child participation. Awareness of children's digital rights is rising, and more governments are working toward providing child-friendly policy documents.

As countries continue to advance the BIK+ vision, the 2025 Policy monitor report highlighted the need for balanced progress across all three pillars, underscoring the importance of integrated strategies, stronger monitoring, and greater inclusion of children's voices.

Delve deeper

The [full 2025 BIK Policy monitor report](#) and its accompanying [country profiles](#), an [interactive map-based data explorer](#) and [at-a-glance index charts](#) are available through the [Better Internet for Kids Knowledge hub](#).

The [2026 BIK Policy monitor report](#) is currently being compiled and will be published in **May 2026**.



Internet Governance Forum (June 2025)

The annual *Internet Governance Forum (IGF)* bring together people from various stakeholder groups, as equals, to discuss public policy issues relating to the internet. At the 20th annual IGF, held in Lillestrøm, Norway, in June 2025, the Insafe network of European Safer Internet Centres hosted a dynamic and welcoming space within the IGF Village, drawing in participants from across the globe to explore, discuss, and engage with the mission of creating a safer and better internet for children and young people.



An Insafe booth at the 2025 Internet Governance Forum promoted the Better Internet for Kids initiative in Europe and the annual, global Safer Internet Day campaign

Amid a wide range of exhibitors in the IGF Village, the Insafe booth offered a vibrant, hands-on experience for visitors. The space invited participants to explore:

- ▶ the Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) strategy, the European Commission's comprehensive plan for fostering child-friendly digital ecosystems.
- ▶ a curated set of resources for educators, parents, and policymakers, addressing topics from media literacy and online safety to digital rights and inclusion.
- ▶ insights from European Safer Internet Centres, highlighting national efforts that contribute to the global effort for safer online experiences.

In addition to the booth, the Insafe delegation co-hosted a *workshop* in collaboration with the Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT), addressing one of the most pressing global challenges in child online safety: combating online sexual exploitation of children (CSEA). The workshop offered a deeper understanding of the intersection of livestreaming, digital platforms, and child sexual abuse material (CSAM) through a global, culturally inclusive lens, considering how children from specific communities are affected and how to promote equitable protection for all. With a focus on technology, policy, and prevention, participants acquired practical knowledge of current technologies and their impact on privacy, safety, and children's rights, alongside insights into emerging trends such as self-generated content and sextortion. The workshop also explored approaches to integrating digital literacy and online safety into national curricula and parenting resources. Moreover, by fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration and sharing expertise, the



workshop aimed to advance global efforts towards a safer, more resilient digital world where children can thrive. The focus on technology, policy, and prevention, coupled with a rights-respecting approach, offered a promising path forward in protecting the most vulnerable users online.

Throughout the IGF, the Insafe delegation connected with international stakeholders, shared best practices, and explored new opportunities for collaboration. The IGF's multistakeholder format provided fertile ground for exchanging ideas on digital literacy, online safety technologies, policy frameworks, and children's digital rights.

Delve deeper

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

Read more about the IGF workshop: [Protecting children online: a deep dive into technology, policy, and prevention against child online sexual exploitation](#).

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



Focus on cyberbullying #4

Continuing the work to inform the development of the EU action plan against cyberbullying, and following a public consultation and a range of targeted consultation activities that concluded in September 2025, a multistakeholder focus group was convened in October 2025 to further refine the findings. Involving BIK Youth representatives from European Safer Internet Centres, as well as parents and caregivers, teachers and educators, academics, and representatives of vulnerable groups, the focus group allowed participants to take a deep dive into a number of proposed measures to tackle cyberbullying under consideration for the action plan.

Academic participants largely focused on the definition of cyberbullying in their discussions, stating that power imbalance is central to understanding cyberbullying and should be explicitly integrated into any definition. Their discussions further highlighted challenges in applying a single definition across contexts such as awareness-raising, research, and policymaking. Academics emphasised that overly complex definitions may hinder public understanding and reliable data collection, advocating for simpler, purpose-specific definitions, particularly for research and monitoring.

In their discussions, **children and young people** responded positively to the idea of an EU-wide reporting app, valuing features such as accessibility, ease of use, live chat, secure evidence storage, and self-assessment tools. They stressed that such an app should be inclusive and adaptable, with accessible functionalities for young people with disabilities, age-appropriate interfaces, and personalised guidance

based on users' reasons for reporting. A unified EU-wide approach was seen as particularly beneficial to ensure consistency, visibility, and better information exchange.

Also on the topic of an EU-wide cyberbullying reporting app, **teachers and educators** regarded it as potentially valuable, provided it is simple, child-friendly, and appealing to young people. They highlighted the importance of features such as voice messages, alerts to trusted adults, integrated counselling options, and reflective tools to support healthier online choices. Participants stressed that the app should complement—not replace—strong digital literacy and ICT skills among both teachers and parents/caregivers, which were seen as essential for effective implementation and follow-up. More broadly, educators emphasised prevention through education, empathy-building, and peer-led initiatives embedded in everyday school life.

While also supporting the idea of an app, **parents and caregivers** emphasised the need for strong emotional and mental health support for both victims and perpetrators, alongside networks of parents, workshops, and safety training focused on empathetic listening and early detection. They highlighted the importance of sustained education throughout schooling, closer cooperation between families and schools, and age- and culture-sensitive approaches.



< #3 | #5 >



New Commission initiatives to boost online safety for children and young people (July 2025)

In July 2025, the European Commission launched guidelines on the protection of minors under the DSA, along with a prototype of an age-verification app. Together, these measures aim to ensure that children and young people can enjoy the opportunities that the online world offers, such as learning, creativity and communication, as well as minimising the risks they face online, including exposure to harmful content and behaviours.

In brief, the **guidelines on the protection of minors under the DSA** (DSA Article 28) have been developed to provide practical guidance on what platforms can do to ensure a high level of privacy, safety, and security for children and young people online.

The guidelines provide a number of recommendations, including:

- ▶ Setting minors' accounts to **private by default**.
- ▶ Modifying **recommender systems** to lower the risk of children encountering harmful content or getting stuck in rabbit holes of specific content.
- ▶ Giving children the **possibility to block and mute any user**.
- ▶ **Prohibiting the download or screenshots** of content posted by minors.
- ▶ Disabling features that can contribute to **excessive use**.
- ▶ **Protecting children from commercial risks**.
- ▶ **Improving moderation and reporting** processes.

- ▶ Providing **effective age assurance** methods.

The guidelines were developed following an inclusive and extensive consultation period, including input from young people.

BIK Youth consultation on the DSA guidelines

To inform this important area of work, in June 2025, BIK Youth Ambassadors participated in a multistakeholder consultation on Article 28 of the Digital Services Act:

- Read insights from Gabriele (Italy):
My voice in Brussels: how youth participation is forging a safer Digital Services Act
- Read insights from Zuzanna (Poland):
Youth at the digital frontline: what I learned at the Article 28 event in Brussels
- Read insights from Mae (Ireland):
Working together for online safety: my role during the DSA Article 28 event

Delve deeper

Read more about the *guidelines on the protection of minors on the European Commission website*.

Read more about the awareness-raising campaign on the guidelines, **DSA for YOUTH**, in the *next section*.



The release of the first version of the [EU age-verification blueprint](#) coincided with the publication of the guidelines. This blueprint provides a solution, using open-source code, that is designed to be free to implement, secure, user-friendly and privacy-preserving, while also being interoperable with future European Digital Identity (EUDI) Wallets (due to be rolled out by the end of 2026).

In brief, the blueprint provides a way for users to prove that they are over 18 (or another age), for example, when accessing adult content (such as online pornography) without revealing any other personal information. Correspondingly, the issuer of the proof of age will not be able to track, see, or reconstruct the content individual users consult when using the app.

The release of the blueprint marked the start of a pilot phase during which the solution is being further tested and adapted in collaboration with Member States, online platforms and end-users. Technically, it will be possible to extend the age verification solution to other age limits or other use-cases (such as purchasing alcohol), depending on Member State implementation and local legislation. The solution will be a “compliance example” and set a “reference standard” in online age verification, marking a significant step in supporting the implementation of the [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#).

A second version of the blueprint was released in October 2025, offering onboarding using passports and ID cards, as well as support for the Digital Credentials API. A third version, to include Zero Knowledge Proof, is expected in early 2026.

The testing and customisation work will continue in 2026.

Delve deeper

Read more about the [EU approach to age verification](#), including a [factsheet](#) and a [press release](#) from the European Commission.

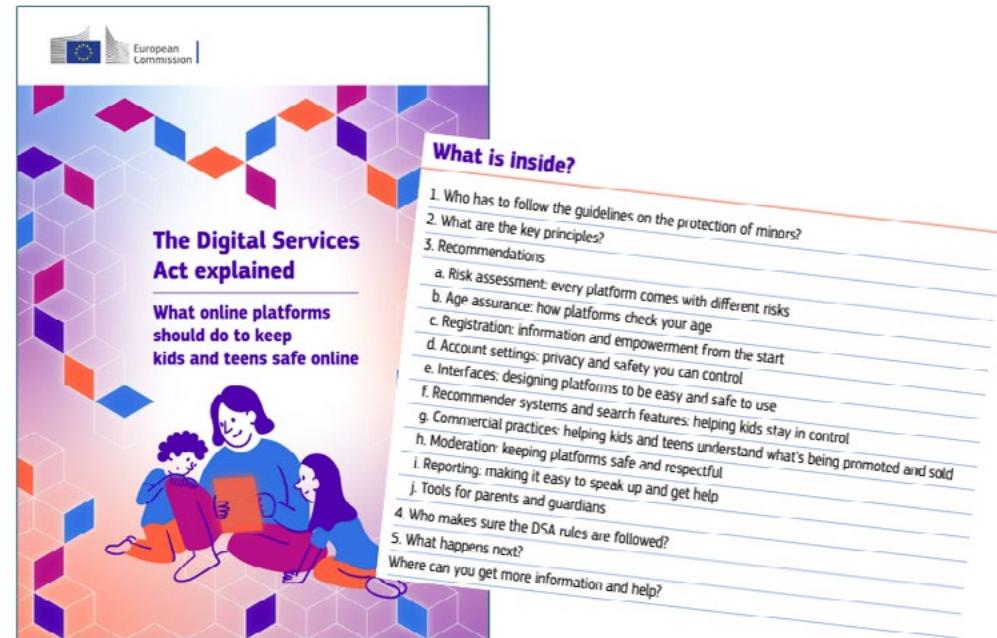
Several European Safer Internet Centres are supporting the user testing of the app. Discover more about your [national Safer Internet Centre, and the various services provided, here](#).



DSA for YOuth campaign (September to November 2025)

Following on from the launch of the European Commission's guidelines on the protection of minors under the Digital Services Act over the summer of 2025 (see above), the *DSA for YOuth campaign* was launched to raise public awareness and understanding of the guidelines, with emphasis on age verification and age assurance. The key aim of the campaign was to make complex legal provisions accessible to families, educators, and young people, with a focus on platform obligations and empowering tools for safer online experiences. Rolled out in two phases across the autumn of 2025, the campaign combined online, educational, and outreach activities.

At the core of the campaign activities were a *DSA for YOuth online toolkit* with explainers, a glossary, and links to relevant resources, along with a *family-friendly booklet* explaining the guidelines in clear language. This resource was co-created with BIK Youth Ambassadors and has been *translated into all EU languages*. *Parents*, *teachers*, and *professionals* were further supported to understand the key provisions through webinars and a LinkedIn Live event. Other campaign resources included an *interactive quiz* on DSA protections for minors and *youth-led videos* amplifying young people's voices, while a series of *Safer Internet Centre articles* showcased national good practices in education and awareness raising about the DSA.



Developed as part of the DSA for YOuth campaign, a new family-friendly booklet explains what online platforms should do to keep kids and teens safe online, in clear language – it can be downloaded, in all EU languages plus Norwegian, from the [Publications Office of the European Union website](#).

Why not [explore the campaign materials](#) now!



BIK MOOCs: providing online professional development opportunities for educators

Recognising the importance of professional development opportunities on online safety topics for teachers and educators, Better Internet for Kids created and delivered two MOOCs³ in 2025.

Child online safety: What educators need to know (February 2025)

Nowadays, it's hard to separate everyday life from digital technology. Children and young people use the internet for learning, entertainment, socialising, and pretty much everything in between. And while being online brings plenty of opportunities, it also comes with challenges that can be difficult to spot or manage, especially for younger users. For many young people, schools are where they really begin to discuss what it means to be online and how to handle difficult situations. Topics such as **mental health**, **cyberbullying**, **persuasive design**, and **protecting young people as consumers** are important at the European level and so formed the focus for this BIK MOOC.

A total of **1,402 teachers and educators** from **83 countries** registered to take part in the MOOC.

Helping kids build and manage healthy online relationships (October 2025)

Many children and young people use technology to make new friends and stay in touch with people they already know offline, moving easily

between different platforms and services as part of their everyday social lives. At the same time, these spaces don't just bring opportunities for connection. They can also expose young people to real risks, including cyberbullying, grooming, radicalisation, and harmful gender stereotypes, among others, which can be difficult to recognise and address without the right support.

Against this background, this BIK MOOC focused on the most common risks and challenges associated with young people's online interactions and relationships. It covered everything from the basics of **online communication** and what **healthy relationships** look like to recognising and responding to **unhealthy or harmful relationships**. The course also explored practical ways for teachers to support their students in developing **positive and responsible online behaviours**.

A total of **930 teachers and educators** from **54 countries** registered to take part in the MOOC.

Delve deeper

The next BIK MOOC will take place in **2026** with a focus on **cyberbullying**.

³ MOOCs – massive open online courses – is the term used to describe a course of study, provided online, and available without charge to a large number of people. This type of professional development encourages the creation of learning communities where teachers reflect, share their expertise, and interact with peers.



Focus on cyberbullying #5

Over the past five years, cyberbullying has consistently been the main reason for young people to contact the *Safer Internet Centres' helplines*. In a recent survey at EU-level, a quarter of 12-17-year-olds reported that they have experienced cyberbullying, eroding their trust and self-esteem.

In response to this growing epidemic, the Commission has adopted an **Action plan against cyberbullying on 10 February 2026, on Safer Internet Day**.

The action plan, as announced in President von der Leyen's *Political Guidelines 2024-2029*, empowers children, parents, carers and educators with the tools they need to report and combat cyberbullying.

Moreover, it identifies ways we can strengthen our approach to tackling cyberbullying at EU-level, affirming that our Union stands together for the mental well-being, equal treatment, rights and dignity of all children and young people, as well as that of the entire EU population.

It builds on the already strong framework the Commission has put in place for the protection and empowerment of children and young people online, with the DSA and its guidelines and the Better Internet for Kids strategy at its core.

< #4



Safer Internet Forum 2025 – a youth-led event (December 2025)

The Safer Internet Forum (SIF) is a key annual international conference organised by the European Commission where policymakers, researchers, law enforcement bodies, youth, parents and caregivers, teachers, NGOs, industry representatives, experts and other relevant actors come together to discuss the latest trends, opportunities, risks, and solutions related to child online safety and making the internet a better place. The 2025 edition took place on Thursday, 4 December, with a theme of *Why age matters: Protecting and empowering youth in the digital age*.

More specifically, the 2025 Forum considered how to ensure age-appropriate online experiences through a proportionate and children's rights-centric approach. The discussion included age assurance methods, as well as other complementary tools, to support parents in making responsible choices, with some focus on video games. The discussions contributed to the priority of the European Commission, as expressed by President von der Leyen in her *State of the Union 2025 address*, to further strengthen the protection of minors online. As always, SIF brought together a variety of public and private stakeholders to discuss the current state of play across and beyond the European Union, and look forward to future developments.

As in previous editions, SIF enjoyed a youth-led format: the event was organised with the support of a *Youth Advisory Group (YAG)*, which worked alongside EUN's BIK Coordination Team and the European Commission to prepare the SIF programme, and the role of children and young people in particular. During the Forum, sessions were animated by the *BIK Youth Panel*, composed of young people from the national youth panels of European Safer Internet Centres and children from the *EU Children's Participation Platform*. Young people expressed their views and shared their positive experiences online, as well as their challenges, when using digital services with stakeholders, including policymakers, industry, civil society, academics, parents and educators.



Safer Internet Forum 2025 focused on why age matters in the digital world



High-level opening

The 2025 Safer Internet Forum kicked off with a conversational dialogue, combining policy with youth perspectives directly to a senior EU policymaker. Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, was joined by Erik, Gabriele and Marta from the SIF Youth Advisory Group to discuss key issues, such as what the EU is doing to help young people feel safer online, the role of parents and caregivers, and where the responsibility for online safety lies.

Why age matters – Keynote by Julie Inman Grant

Australia's eSafety Commissioner set the stage for the day by exploring the benefits and risks of online content and services for children. The keynote highlighted the developmental, social, and emotional impacts of digital environments, stressing the importance of age-aware design, platform responsibility, and supportive policies.

Supporting parents – Panel discussions

Panels brought together policymakers, civil society representatives, and industry experts to discuss practical ways to help parents guide their children online with confidence. Topics included parental control tools, digital literacy, risk awareness, and collaborative approaches between families, schools, and platforms to foster safe, empowering online experiences for young users.

Responsible gaming – Youth-led workshop

Young participants led sessions on video game age ratings and parental tools, sharing their personal experiences alongside parents and experts.

Discussions explored strategies for healthy gaming habits, transparency in in-game purchases, and collaboration between industry and families to ensure games are safe, enjoyable, and age-appropriate.

Age-appropriate design and social media – Roundtable and breakouts

Interactive sessions examined how social media can balance safety with children's rights and inclusion. Young people shared firsthand perspectives on platform design, highlighting features that support privacy, moderation, and accessibility.

More than 200 people participated in the 2025 Safer Internet Forum in person, and more than 600 joined online, representing in total more than 65 countries across the globe.



The 2025 Safer Internet Forum kicked off with a conversational dialogue, combining policy with youth perspectives





Youth voices took centre stage at Safer Internet Forum 2025
(click on the image to watch the video on YouTube)





levels, while also ensuring a balance in gender, age, and geography. Six YAG members contributed to SIF 2025, representing Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal. All members were aged 16-18.

Starting in September 2025, the SIF YAG members joined the BIK Coordination Team for five online preparatory meetings leading up to SIF 2025. During these meetings, the SIF YAG helped shape the event's content by voicing their opinions and developing the agenda, including structuring their interventions across the various sessions. As the agenda evolved, the SIF YAG also decided on their roles as moderators and co-hosts for SIF 2025, and worked in groups or individually to tailor their sessions with their own inputs and questions.

The **SIF Youth Advisory Group (SIF YAG)** is a group of young people who lead the organisation of the Safer Internet Forum. Each year, a new SIF YAG is formed from existing BIK Youth Ambassadors, chosen for their active participation at both national and European



A **BIK Youth Panel** is also convened for each edition of the Safer Internet Forum. This initiative empowers a group of young panellists to express their individual perspectives and concerns on internet safety and necessary improvements, and to advocate for the views of their peers on a European scale. For SIF 2025, the panel was formed of 33 youth representatives, aged 13-18, from EU co-funded Safer Internet Centres, along with a youth representative from North Macedonia, and five youth representatives from the *EU Children's Participation Platform*. Together, they represented 25 countries.

During their online preparatory sessions, the youth panellists became familiar with topics such as the video game environment, age ratings, parental control tools, and age-appropriate online experiences. As a result of their preparations, they identified the focus topics and key messages they wanted to present at the forum, including a theatrical performance.

Delve deeper

Find further information about *Safer Internet Forum 2025* on the Better Internet for Kids platform, including recordings of the sessions.

Find out more about the BIK Youth programme generally at better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-youth.



Safer Internet Centre+ programme: sharing good practice beyond Europe

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

The initial piloting phase of the SIC+ programme was launched with a number of country contacts, typically established through the Safer Internet Day line of work. The programme has subsequently been extended over time and to include members from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Kosovo, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Pakistan, Serbia, South Africa, Türkiye, and Ukraine. The programme was further expanded during 2025 with the inclusion of participants from Kenya and Morocco.

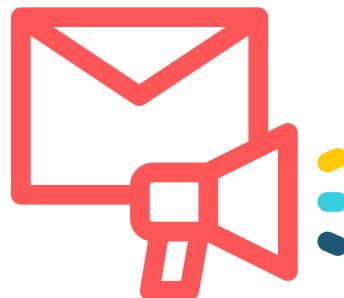
Through regular online meetings, SIC+ programme participants exchange knowledge and expertise on national online safety initiatives for children and young people, strengthening capacity through peer learning and the shared tackling of common challenges. Over the course of 2025, SIC+ members regularly engaged with colleagues across Europe, participating in online meetings and training activities to share their experiences and best practices.

SIC+ activities will continue throughout 2026 with a series of webinars and cluster meetings. Activities will also focus on forming an international youth panel to actively participate in Safer Internet Day 2027 celebrations.

Discover more about the SIC+ programme and its participants on the Better Internet for Kids platform.



An important aspect of the outreach work under BIK is raising awareness of the latest news and developments in the online safety ecosystem. Alongside regular articles and social media activity, the quarterly Better Internet for Kids bulletin also plays an important role. Each edition provides a topical focus article looking at the latest trends in online life, with features from youth, industry, and the research community, along with a mix of news and resources from key stakeholders in the field, including the European network of Safer Internet Centres.



The BIK bulletin

The **March 2025** edition focused on the findings from the *first evaluation of the BIK+ strategy*, in which emerging risks and new challenges were identified, and actionable recommendations for improvements were proposed. A newly-launched *Knowledge hub insight series* delved into commercial exploitation through addictive design, building on the *AdWiseOnline campaign*.

Building on the first findings from the BIK+ strategy evaluation as covered in the March 2025 edition, the **June 2025** edition delved deeper into the findings. Furthermore, it spotlighted the 2025 edition of the *BIK Policy monitor report*, highlighting the importance of monitoring and evaluation to ensure sound policy development, promote accountability, and build trust in governance.

The **September 2025** edition of the BIK bulletin highlighted *new European Commission initiatives*, including guidelines under the Digital Services Act (DSA) to better protect minors online and the launch of the *DSA for YOuth* campaign with family-friendly resources and activities. It also explored the EU's age-verification blueprint.

The **December 2025** edition placed a spotlight on **Why age matters: Protecting and empowering youth in the digital age**, mirroring the topic of this year's *Safer Internet Forum*, including a deep dive into the implementation of a social media age restriction in Australia.

You can read all editions of the BIK bulletin and subscribe to receive it in your inbox at better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/bik-bulletin.



2025 IN FIGURES

Safer Internet Day



On Safer Internet Day 2025, over **32,000 schools** and almost **1,500 other organisations** were involved in Safer Internet Centre actions across Europe alone. It generated **more than 700,000 social media impressions** through BIK channels and **over 107,000 engagements with resources via the main SID platform**. Worldwide, over **160 countries and territories** participated in the celebrations.

Other BIK campaigns

Other **BIK campaigns** in 2025 generated **more than 2 million social media impressions** and **over 20,000 engagements with dedicated campaign resources**.

Two BIK campaigns were conducted in 2025:

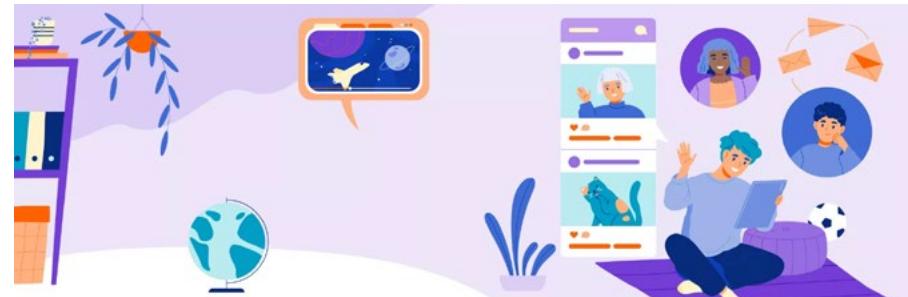


AdWiseOnline: Protecting YOU(th) against digital marketing practices raised awareness about practices targeting youth, with a particular focus on in-game marketing. Specifically, it explored critical aspects sometimes present in online games, such as persuasive design, dark patterns, loot boxes, pay-to-win mechanisms, FOMO (fear of missing out) tactics, and excessive microtransactions.



DSA for YOUTH - Protecting minors by design focused on DSA guidelines for the protection of minors, including age verification and age-appropriate measures.

BIK platform



Throughout 2025, the **BIK platform** recorded more than **267,000 visitors**, over **410,000 sessions**, and over **1 million page views**. In terms of geographical scope, the platform reached more than **230 countries and territories worldwide**.

Safer Internet Centre resources



Over **46.4 million European citizens** were reached by **European Safer Internet Centre resources** during 2025.

Also in 2025, **European Safer Internet Centres** produced over **1,900 new resources**.



Events and activities

More than **700 youth panel activities** were organised by **European Safer Internet Centres** in 2025. In addition, almost **1,800 other youth participation activities** were organised by these Centres. Furthermore, more than **8,500 additional youth participation activities involved vulnerable young people**.

More than **480,000 people were reached through events and trainings** hosted (or co-hosted) by Safer Internet Centres in 2025. Centres additionally organised over **448,000 school visits and trainings** in 2025.

Helplines



In 2025, **Unsafe helplines** handled over **57,000 contacts**, with **cyberbullying** being the main issue discussed; **15% of contacts** related to this. **Love, relationships and sexuality** (online), **non-consensual sharing of intimate images** (NCSI), and **online sexual coercion and extortion of children** accounted for around **23% of all contacts**.

There was a steady increase in **contacts from teens**, who remain **the largest users of the helpline network**; around **78% of all contacts came from children of all ages**.

The **phone** remained the most common way to reach a helpline in 2025, accounting for around **50% of all contacts**. There was also an increase in contacts via chat-based services during 2025, accounting for **22% of all contacts**.



Hotlines



In **2025**, a total of **4,780,000*** content URLs were processed in **ICCAM**** by all **INHOPE hotlines**, from which **71% were seen for the first time**, meaning **analysts were processing previously unseen material**. More than **85%** of this volume (i.e., **over 4 million**) was reported by **EC co-funded hotlines**.

Of all reported content URLs, **67% were deemed to be illegal**. Subsequently, national law enforcement agencies were informed, and a **notice and takedown***** was issued to the hosting internet service provider.

*These figures represent all INHOPE member hotlines.

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

*** Notice and takedown refers to the established process by which INHOPE-affiliated hotlines identify, verify, and order the removal of illegal child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from the internet.



WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2026?

This report is launched on Safer Internet Day 2026, when people across the globe will join together for a better internet, once again highlighting the importance of a multifaceted, multistakeholder approach to creating a safer and better internet.

While the annual SID celebration serves as a focal point for raising awareness of the important work conducted within the framework of Better Internet for Kids, it also allows us to look ahead to future priorities for continuing to implement the actions of the BIK+ strategy and associated measures in 2026.

In 2026, the European Commission's work on protecting minors online will see the launch of an Action plan against cyberbullying, aimed

at providing comprehensive strategies and tools to combat online harassment. Additionally, the Commission will continue to support Member States and platforms to make available privacy-preserving and user-friendly age verification solutions, based on the EU age verification blueprint which was first released in summer 2025 and will be finalised in spring 2026. Furthermore, a study will be conducted to investigate the impact of social media on mental health, offering valuable insights into how digital interactions affect psychological well-being.

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



Better Internet for Kids

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