

Country profile 2026: Croatia

Introduction

According to the [Digital Decade 2025: Country reports](#), Croatia’s digital landscape is characterised by a concerted effort to accelerate public sector digitalisation and enhance business digital intensity, as outlined in the Digital Croatia Strategy 2032. While 63.5% of SMEs have basic digital intensity, the uptake of advanced technologies such as AI and cloud services remains modest and below the EU average. Despite this, the ICT sector contributes 5.3% to national gross value added and accounts for over 35% of national R&D personnel. Infrastructure progress is notable, with 5G coverage reaching 94% and fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) at 75% in 2024, although rural expansion faces mid-band spectrum bottlenecks. Digital skills are also strong; 58.9% of the population has basic digital skills – exceeding the EU average. However, stark divides persist, particularly regarding age and education, with only 17.9% of older adults possessing basic skills compared to over 86% of youth. According to the [State of the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2025](#), public perception is overwhelmingly positive, with 81% of citizens agreeing that digitalisation simplifies daily life and 84% viewing it as essential for access to public services. BIK-related topics receive high-level attention at the national level.

BIK policies

Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks describe the overarching goals that shape policies for a better internet for kids.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Policy priority	X			
Integrated policy		X		

Influence of the BIK+ strategy	X
Recognition of children's rights	X

Table 1: Policy frameworks - Croatia

- ***This topic is being comprehensively addressed*** with children's protection, empowerment and participation in the digital environment incorporated into national/regional laws, regulations and policies.
- ***There are separate, dedicated policies*** which address the topic of children and the digital environment (protection, empowerment, and participation).
- ***The BIK+ strategy has no influence on national policies.***
- ***National/regional policies and policy documents*** explicitly recognise children's rights in the digital environment.

Key developments and policy frameworks

- The National Plan for Children's Rights in the Republic of Croatia 2022-2026, which creates a policy for the protection of children's rights, provides systematic support to children in the digital environment to ensure a complete and safe digital environment. Among other things, one of the goals is systematic support for children in the digital environment, and the achievement of the goal is planned through cooperation with the Agency for Electronic Media.
- This cooperation envisages improving knowledge about media literacy in children, which will help children and young people to use the media, analyse and critically examine media content, recognise harmful content and inappropriate advertising, protect privacy, recognise and protect themselves from any form of electronic violence, and learn communication and empathy in the digital world.
- One measure to achieve this goal is to encourage preventive programmes in the education system focused on media literacy, and another is to improve the safety and protection of children on the

Internet and social networks. The Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy is responsible for implementing the Plan.

- The [Action Plan for the Development of Culture and Media for the period until 2027](#) highlights the promotion of media literacy, education and the acquisition of skills for the digital environment as one of its specific objectives.
- The Republic of Croatia is participating in the EMPACT pilot project [Help4U](#). The H4U website is intended for children and young people who are victims of crime or inappropriate and dangerous situations. The content provided is a guide and help for victims, and information on children's rights is also available. The application and the web interface are available in Croatian.

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.

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

Table 2: Policy design - Croatia

- **Surveys of children's digital activities are undertaken**, but only irregularly (for instance, the EU Kids Online survey data from 2020 is the only available source on a national level).
- **Surveys of children's experiences of risks**, harms and digital well-being are undertaken on an ad-hoc and irregular basis.

- ***There is no system in place at the government level*** to gather information on children and the digital environment.
- ***There is no funding available for research*** on children and the digital environment.
- ***There is no monitoring or evaluation of policies*** on children and the digital environment.

Key national research studies:

- The results of the EU Kids Online 2025 survey, a nationally representative study, were presented on December 19, 2025. Compared with 2017, numerous changes were observed in how children in Croatia use the internet and in the risks they are exposed to. Kids Online Croatia 2025 research conducted by the Society for Communication and Media Culture with the support of the Agency for Electronic Media.
- In addition, research on the influence and habits of children in the digital environment is conducted by the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, and later by the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb, as part of the preventive programme for children in elementary schools, Tools for the Modern Age.
- The project “The Influence of the Environment on Child Development: The Connection between the Use of Digital Technology, Family Literary Environment, and Physical Activity with the Well-Being of Children in Early School Age” (DigiLitA) is being carried out at the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences.
- The Centre for Missing and Abused Children and the Centre for a Safer Internet Croatia, in partnership with leading scientists, continue to systematically conduct research on the topic of peer relationships and violence among children in primary and secondary schools, as well as among parents. Research topics include internet usage habits, the prevalence of online violence, and children's well-being in the digital environment. However, there is still a lack of systematic research to monitor the phenomenon's occurrence. Since the last BIK Policy Monitor, the Centre for Missing and Abused Children has presented the results of

the [deSHAME III research](#), providing a detailed and comprehensive insight into patterns of violence and digital risks among children in upper elementary school.

Policy governance

Policy governance examines how policies are coordinated at the governmental level, whether other implementation bodies are involved in their delivery and coordination.

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

Table 3: Policy governance - Croatia

- **Policy development sits across different ministries** with leadership officially distributed according to the area of specialisation.
- **There is no active or planned coordination.** Policies, guidelines, and programmes related to children and the digital environment are developed and implemented independently, resulting in a disjointed or incoherent policy landscape.
- **There is no action plan available or under development.**

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement enquires how different stakeholders can participate in policy development.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Stakeholder forum			X	
Public consultation on BIK topics				X
Youth involvement in policy		X		

Table 4: Stakeholder involvement - Croatia

- **Stakeholder participation in policy discussion and development is infrequent or informal.** Opportunities to contribute exist occasionally but lack regularity, transparency, or meaningful impact on decision-making.
- **There are no formal mechanisms or practices** for consulting the public on BIK topics.
- **Children are listened to directly in the policy development process** but are not formally involved in decision-making.

Stakeholder mechanisms

- Relevant stakeholders in this area at the national level are the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy; Ministry of Justice, Administration and Digital Transformation; Ministry of Culture and Media, Ministry of Science, Education and Youth; Agency for Electronic Media, HAKOM; National CERT, Personal Data Protection Agency.
- The **Ombudsperson for Children** strongly supports the participation and inclusion of children in the creation and drafting of regulations, policies and practices and has its advisory body -the Network of Young Advisors to the Ombudsman for Children (NYA), comprising 25 children aged 12 to 18 years, who are consulted before sending recommendations and proposals of laws and programmes. The network of young advisors is also involved in developing the National Programme for Children in the Digital Environment for 2024-2026. Unfortunately, the programme was not adopted.

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – Safe digital experiences

Actions to promote a safe, age-appropriate digital environment that respects children’s best interests.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Content rating systems for online/video games				X
DSC measures protection of minors		X		
DSC-SIC working relationship				X
Definition of harmful online content			X	
Complaints handling mechanism	X			
Intimate image abuse laws	X			
Cyberbullying laws	X			
Age verification requirements				X
Digital wallet for minors		X		
EU harmonised age verification		X		
Laws on online marketing				X
Protecting mental health and well-being	X			

Table 5: Safe digital experiences - Croatia

Implementing EU laws

- The Republic of Croatia uses the [pan-European PEGI](#) game classification system.

- The Centre for a Safer Internet publication “Everything you need and want to know about video games” was nominated for the best publication (Eng. resource) in 2025.
- Taking into account the binding rules of the DSA, as well as the European Commission Article 28 Guidelines of the DSA, [HAKOM](#), as the Digital Services Coordinator (DSC), is currently preparing Recommendations for Providers of Intermediary Services, with a focus on identifying and mitigating risks for minors, aligning advertising and recommender systems, and strengthening accountability and transparency towards children, parents, and competent authorities.
- Although there is no formal cooperation, the [Safer Internet Centre](#) believes that it is very important that the Digital Services Coordinator, through partnership and expertise and the long-standing work of the [Safer Internet Centre](#), establish a clear system of cooperation regarding child protection, viewing inappropriate content and content with child sexual exploitation, given that most employees are trained by national authorities to view such content.

Addressing online harms

- While there is no definition of "harmful online content" in Croatian law, various aspects are covered by state-level laws and regulations that may penalise inappropriate behaviour.
- Article 20 of the [Electronic Media Act](#) stipulates that on-demand audiovisual media services which may seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors shall be made available only in a manner which ensures that minors will not normally hear or see such on-demand audiovisual media services. Article 30 stipulates that advertising and teleshopping directed at or using minors shall avoid anything that could harm their interests, considering their particular sensitivity and vulnerability, and shall not cause any moral or physical harm to minors.
- Also, by adopting the [Protocol on Action in Cases of Violence among Children and Young People](#), which more clearly defines what constitutes inappropriate content and digital violence among children and young people, feedback from the Safer Internet Centre shows that digital

violence as a form of peer violence is more often recognised and reported, and that people are generally more willing to seek help when they recognise themselves as victims. The Safer Internet Centre received feedback in cooperation with schools and also through calls to the Helpline call centre.

- The [AEM](#) has the power, among other things, to order the removal of online content that is potentially harmful to children. This power is limited to electronic publications. Also, HAKOM, as the national coordinator for digital services in the Republic of Croatia, monitors the implementation of the Digital Services Act (DSA). However, HAKOM does not have the authority to deal directly with illegal content, so most reports are submitted to platforms or bodies responsible for issuing orders to act against it. Depending on the type of illegal content in question, the competent authorities in the Republic of Croatia are the Ministry of the Interior and the State Prosecutor's Office, the Media Agency, the Customs Administration, the Ministry of Health and the State Inspectorate.
- In addition, illegal and inappropriate Internet content, as well as online abuse, can be reported to the police through the [Red Button application](#), which enables anonymous online reporting. The Safer Internet Centre also processes reports of illegal content via its [Hotline service](#). During 2025, 238 individual reports of illegal content were received (as of December 16, 2025).
- Additionally, in this reporting period, in collaboration with The National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), the Safer Internet Centre translated the [Take It Down platform](#) into Croatian, making it now available to minors in the Republic of Croatia, which represents a very important step in removing self-generated content with child sexual exploitation.

Age assurance

- In Croatia, there is no single national policy or law that explicitly prescribes age verification mechanisms to restrict minors' access to adult content (18+) or other restricted online services. However, the

Electronic Media Act and the [Ordinance on the Protection of Children in Electronic Media](#) prescribe age ratings that help parents and guardians choose appropriate content for children in electronic media and on-demand media services. Inappropriate content may only be shown at certain times or under certain conditions (e.g., technical protection such as PINs or codes) and must be marked with an age rating.

- Although it has not yet been discussed in the Republic of Croatia, each member state will have to implement EUDI in some way by 2026. It is possible that the age verification solution will be provided within the Digital Wallet, but a decision on this is still pending at the national level.

Supporting digital well-being

- The professional association of advertisers has launched a national informational and educational campaign, "It is important to know when you pay", as part of the [Guidelines for better influencing](#), which are based on the principles of self-regulation.
- The [GenZ Academy](#) is a collaborative initiative between MoodMedia, A1 Croatia, and the Centre for a Safer Internet. Focusing on the world of influencers and content creators, this unique educational programme aims to empower children and young people with the digital literacy skills needed to navigate the modern media landscape safely and responsibly.
- During this school year, the third generation of the GenZ Academy was implemented in 28 elementary schools throughout the Republic of Croatia. This year's programme places special emphasis on understanding marketing and the role of influencers, including a description of their work and responsibilities in the digital environment.
- In the final part of the programme, influencers, together with an expert from the Centre for a Safer Internet, use examples from real life to discuss the topics of false advertising, sexting, sextortion and phishing, with the aim of strengthening digital literacy, critical thinking and safe behaviour of children on the Internet.

Pillar 2 – Digital empowerment

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Teaching online safety	X			
Digital skills training	X			
Policies on digital use in schools			X	
Adequate teacher training	X			
Non-formal online safety education	X			
Critical media literacy	X			
Creative digital skills	X			
Supports for parents	X			

Table 6: Digital empowerment - Croatia

Digital empowerment in formal education

- Some schools have included the preventive activities of the [Centre for a Safer Internet](#) in their curriculum and regularly collaborate with our experts through workshops with children, lectures for parents, and teaching staff and professional services.
- Information literacy is one of the components of the Croatian school curriculum, implemented through the cross-curricular theme and mandatory subject Information and Digital Competences. However, this is a subject that is mandatory in only 62 out of a total of 932 primary schools that responded to the Public Call of the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth and are participating in the Experimental Programme of All-Day Schools
- In the Republic of Croatia, there is no single national or regional strategy that systematically regulates related policies on internet safety in schools, including expected online behaviour, smartphone use, or cyberbullying. However, individual schools can independently decide to

ban the use of mobile phones inside school premises. For example, the City of Zagreb has issued its own [recommendation to primary schools](#) to ban mobile phone use during classes and breaks.

- The city of Slavonski Brod has issued the same [recommendation](#), and in Split, such a decision has been in effect at several primary schools for 2 years. In the primary school in the city of Vrgorac, mobile phones and smartwatches are banned.

Digital empowerment and lifelong learning

- [Media Literacy Days](#) is a project of the Agency for Electronic Media and the UNICEF Office in Croatia, which, in cooperation with numerous partners and under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, has been implemented every year in the spring, since 2018.
- The [8th Media Literacy Days were held from 7 to 13 April 2025](#), with numerous activities in the weeks before and after. The focus was on raising awareness among children and young people about the digital footprint they create through their online and social network activities, as well as on educating them about disinformation and fact-checking. Numerous educational institutions, libraries, cinemas, media, associations and other social stakeholders joined the project, which organised lectures, workshops, round tables, film screenings and other activities.
- At the beginning of the 2025/2026 school year, the implementation of a new optional subject, "Digital Literacy", began at the I. Gymnasium Zagreb, developed in cooperation with A1 Croatia and the Centre for a Safer Internet (CSI). This is the first such programme in the Republic of Croatia to be introduced into the secondary school system as a structured optional subject. In addition to the activities listed in last year's questionnaire, the [Ministry of the Interior](#) also implements preventive programmes on children's Internet safety.
- The Ministry of Demography and Immigration conducted a call for funding for ["Civil Society Organisation Projects Focused on Parenting](#)

Support", and among other things, funds were also allocated for media literacy projects.

Pillar 3 – Active participation, respecting children’s rights

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Promoting civic engagement	X			
Promoting children’s rights	X			
Child-friendly policy documents		X		
Addressing digital inequalities		X		
Positive digital content	X			

Table 7: Active participation, respecting rights - Croatia

Active Participation

- The Network of Young Advisers of the [Ombudsperson for Children](#) (MMS) is a constant advisory and cooperation body that brings together children and young people from all over Croatia. MMS consists of 25 members, children and young people aged twelve to 18 years.
- The [Centre for a Safer Internet](#) conducts Youth Councils that include young people from 8 half-day stays, members of vulnerable groups, and volunteers. This group forms the Youth panel, through which young people actively participate in discussions about digital security, children's rights on the Internet and advocating for a safer digital environment.
- Within the Centre for a Safer Internet, a "Youth for Youth" section has been developed on the Sini.hr website, which allows young people to share their experiences and promote the safe use of digital technologies. The Youth Panel previously created a digital manual on Snapchat's terms of use. It is also planned to transfer the management of part of the social networks to the Youth Panel, which is intended to further strengthen their role in advocating for a safer digital environment and to make child-friendly

versions of documents relevant to protection in the field of digital safety more accessible to this population.

Supporting children's rights

- As part of its activities, the Ombudsperson for Children raises awareness of and promotes [children's rights in the digital environment](#) among children, educators, and other professionals who care for children through various media, including professional gatherings, roundtables, and meetings with children and experts. Each year, Safer Internet Day is celebrated by many children, educators, and other important stakeholders promoting children's rights in the digital environment.

Digital inclusion

- The [School of Responsible Influence](#) is a digital platform developed by the SIC in cooperation with its strategic partner, A1 Croatia. The goal of this online School is to make influencers and content creators aware of the importance of responsible behaviour in the online world, raise awareness of the importance of recognising and reporting inappropriate content on the Internet, as well as how to report it, and recognise the importance of creating positive online content and creating a positive impact. It is intended for influencers and content creators who are followed by children and youth, as well as for all those who are willing to hear and learn something new and be part of the change and #responsibleinfluence.
- The Safer [Internet Centre Youth Panel](#) is made up of young people from half-day stays, members of vulnerable groups, and volunteers. Through the Youth Panel, young people actively participate in discussions on digital safety, children's rights online, and advocating for a safer digital environment.

Best practices

Example 1

The portal [medijskapismenost.hr](https://www.medijskapismenost.hr)

The portal [medijskapismenost.hr](https://www.medijskapismenost.hr) is a central platform for promoting media literacy and supporting everyone involved in media education, primarily children and young people, but also adults. Therefore, the portal provides a variety of educational materials for teaching media literacy in kindergartens and schools, examples of good practice, advice and recommendations for parents and guardians, information on the impact of different types of media and media content and social networks on children and young people, internet safety, the problem of disinformation, and reports on global media and communication trends, as well as policies related to media literacy, media education, media and digital platforms.

As part of the portal's work, UNICEF and the Agency for Electronic Media organise [Media Literacy Days](#), where children learn how to use the media safely, how to think critically about media content, why some topics receive more and some less space in the news, as well as many other topics related to media literacy.

Example 2

Safer Internet Day

The Safer Internet Centre participates in numerous activities each year to mark [Safer Internet Day](#). The activities aim to educate and raise awareness among children, young people and professionals about safe and responsible behaviour in the digital world, and in 2025, they were celebrated in three cities - Zagreb, Split and Osijek.

Example 3

Digital Literacy

The optional subject "[Digital Literacy](#)" which began to be implemented at the I. Gymnasium Zagreb at the beginning of the 2025/2026 school year, was developed in cooperation with A1 Croatia and the Centre for a Safer Internet

(CSI). It is the first such programme in the Republic of Croatia to be introduced into the secondary school system as a structured optional subject.

The goal of the programme is to empower young people to use the Internet safely, responsibly and empathetically and to prepare them for the challenges of a modern digital society. The programme is implemented over a total of 35 hours per year, and the teaching content is delivered through workshops, case studies, guided discussions, creative projects, and the use of digital tools.

Students address the topics of electronic violence, hate speech, manipulative and harmful content, security settings on social networks, boundaries in online communication, as well as examples of positive practices, including the development of empathy, responsibility, and active contributions to creating a safer digital environment.

BIK+ index 2026: Croatia

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

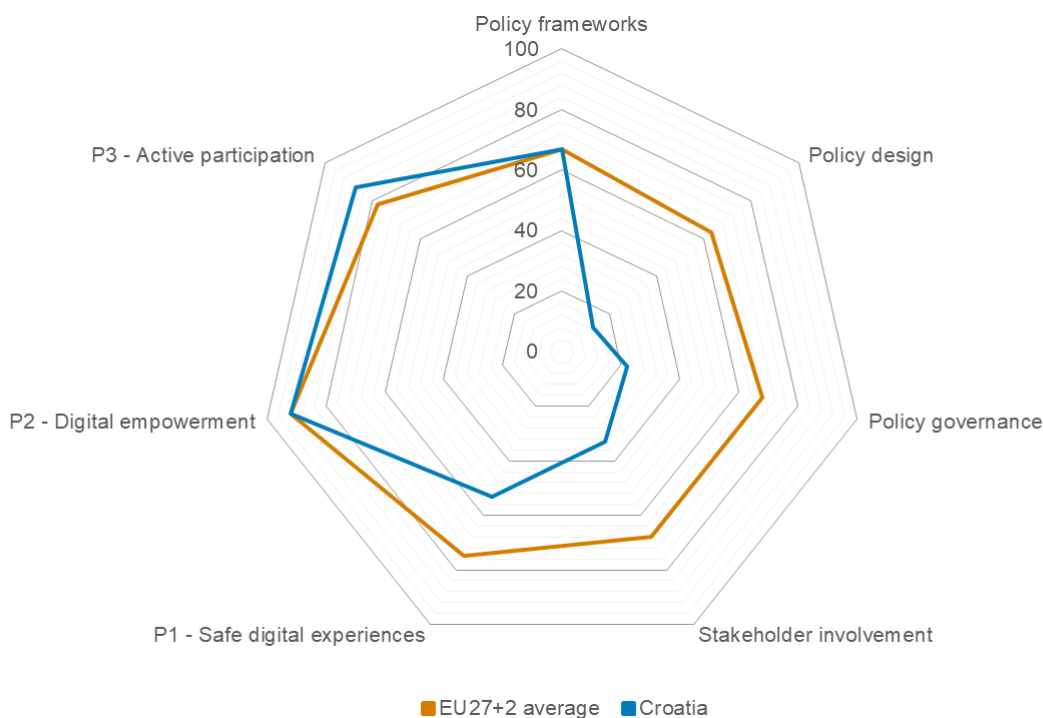


Figure 1: BIK+ index 2026: Croatia - EU27+2 average comparison