

Youth Participation Working Group

Date: 25 June 2026 | **Time:** 11:00 – 12:00 CET | **Location:** online

Participants

Borjana Dine (AL), Iris Strasser (SIC AT), Anna Tsiarta (SIC CY), Katja Meyer (SIC DE), Signe Sandfeld Hansen (SIC DK), Kaisa Onlen (SIC FI), Tea Čičić (SIC HR), Liudas Mikalkevičius (SIC LT), Ilda Sukurica (SIC LU), Kristin Kjønnoy Slettvåg (SIC NO), Natalia Wójcicka (SIC PL), Ruth Ferrony (SIC PT), Liv Agdalen (SIC SE), Lea Vaupotič (SIC SI), Ema Ištvánfyová (SIC SK), Carolina Fruscione (EUN), Chiara Antonelli (EUN).

Recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

Objective

The objective of the meeting was for Youth Coordinators to exchange best practices on supporting youth wellbeing during participation in national events.

Minutes – background information

Safer Internet Centres are strongly committed to meaningful youth participation. Youth Coordinators support children and young people in preparing for their participation in national events. In this context, young people play an important role in voicing their perspectives and contributing to making the internet a safer environment for themselves and their peers. However, when preparing for their intervention, young people may experience anxiety and low self-confidence which can affect their wellbeing and prevent them from fully enjoying their experience.

This session invited Youth Coordinators to exchange best practices when supporting youth participation and wellbeing in national events.

Youth Coordinators were presented with two real – life scenarios were asked to reflect on how they would handle each situation and what wellbeing considerations they

would need to take into account. The session continued with Youth Coordinators responding to the following guiding questions:

- How do you help young people to speak in an event?
- What wellbeing practices have worked particularly well in your SIC?

Real – life scenario 1

Sofia is part of your youth panel and has been invited to speak at your national Safer Internet Day event. She has known about the opportunity for several weeks, but due to school commitments, she couldn't prepare her speech as much as she wanted to. The evening before the event she informs you that she doesn't feel prepared enough and is considering to drop her participation to the event. How would you handle the situation as youth coordinator?

SIC DK shared that they would have proactively contacted Sofia before the event and offered opportunities to practise together. If Sofia felt overwhelmed by delivering a presentation, SIC DK would have suggested changing the format from a presentation to a dialogue. If Sofia remained too stressed to participate, SIC DK would not pressure her and would leave the final decision to her.

SIC FI emphasised the importance of providing support during the early stages of the preparation process to reduce anxiety closer to the event. They highlighted that offering to review and practise the speech with Sofia beforehand could help increase her confidence.

SIC PL stated that they would reassure Sofia by emphasising that the purpose of her participation is to share her personal views and experiences, rather than to be an expert on the topic being discussed.

SIC PT explained that, in addition to providing support throughout the preparation phase, they would offer practical guidance on how to structure the speech. This approach would help Sofia organise her ideas and strengthen her confidence ahead of the event.

SIC DE indicated that they would first contact Sofia to better understand the reasons behind her decision. They would assess whether her concerns stem from anxiety or from a genuine inability to participate. If anxiety appeared to be light, SIC DE would focus on reassuring and supporting Sofia before the event.

SIC LT shared that they would call Sofia to better understand the circumstances that led her to consider withdrawing from the event. They noted that a phone call would be more effective than text messages in understanding Sofia's perspective and assessing how best to support her. This approach would help ensure that any decisions made are in Sofia's best interests.

Real – life scenario 2

Michel is an active member of your youth panel. Although you believe he has a strong potential to speak at a high- level event, he is initially reluctant to participate because he worries that people may judge his accent and communication style. Thanks to your encouragements, Michel applies and is selected as a speaker for the event. During the preparation meetings he contributes actively, but as the event approaches he becomes quieter and tells you he wishes to drop out. What wellbeing considerations are important in this situation?

SIC NO highlighted the importance of understanding the reasons behind Michel's decision to withdraw. They would consider whether Michel may have experienced bullying or whether his reaction could be linked to increased stress levels as the event approaches.

SIC FI emphasised the need to assess whether Michel may have felt isolated, excluded or bullied during the preparation process. They noted that understanding his experience within the group would be an important factor in determining how best to support him.

SIC DK stated that they would reflect on their own role in the situation and consider whether they may have unintentionally placed too much pressure on Michel to participate. They would assess whether this could have contributed to his wish to withdraw from the event or even from the youth panel itself.

SIC LU shared a similar perspective, explaining that they would reflect on whether they may have overlooked any warning signs during the early stages of the preparation process. They would also consider whether they had unintentionally placed excessive pressure on Michel as highlighted by SIC DK.

SIC PT stressed the importance of respecting Michel's decision and avoiding any pressure to participate in an activity he no longer feels comfortable with. Instead, they would focus on supporting him in the future, ensuring that he remains engaged with the youth panel and feels better prepared and more confident to take part in future opportunities.

How do you help young people to prepare to speak in an event?

SIC CY shared that they encourage young people to prepare key points and concepts they wish to communicate rather than writing a full script. They offer rehearsal sessions to help young people feel well prepared and reduce stress levels. During these rehearsals, young people are encouraged to practise maintaining eye contact with the audience. Following the event, SIC CY provides feedback on their participation. They also organise online seminars with professionals to help young people strengthen their public speaking skills.

SIC DK explained that young people participating in events are always assigned a contact person who supports them throughout the preparation process. They also organise meetings between young people and event speakers prior to the event, allowing participants to become familiar with the speakers and engage with them in advance.

SIC SK shared that they organise an annual digital camp in August aimed at building young people's resilience and confidence. As part of the programme, participants attend a two-hour session with a psychologist focusing on speaking in front of audiences. When young people agree to participate as speakers at an event, SIC SK also asks whether they would prefer to speak alone or together with a friend.

SIC NO highlighted the importance of having open conversations with young people about the support they need in order to prepare for an event. They also discuss the possibility of receiving attention on social media and help young people prepare for

potential comments or reactions. In addition, SIC NO encourages young people not to answer questions that make them feel uncomfortable.

What wellbeing practices have worked particularly well in your SIC?

SIC PT highlighted the importance of ensuring that young people feel in control of their participation and empowered to express their views with confidence. They emphasised that creating opportunities for meaningful involvement helps young people feel valued and more comfortable when speaking at events.

SIC PL shared that they occasionally organise mindfulness sessions with young people before events to help them relax and feel more at ease ahead of their participation.

Additional Information

The next YPWG meeting will take place on Thursday, 17 July 2026 at 11.00 CEST.

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