

# LSE Research Online

## Ana Jorge, Daniel Cardoso, Cristina Ponte and Leslie Haddon Stakeholders' forum general report

### Report

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# **Stakeholders' Forum**

## **General report**

June 2010

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## **The process of consultation**

The EU Kids Online II stakeholders' forum was conducted for several reasons. One was to obtain guidance for the data analysis process (What issues do they think are important? What do anticipate the results will be for our questions about risk?). Another was to help EU Kids Online to produce policy recommendations of national relevance. A third consideration was dissemination – holding the forum was a way to ensure that key national stakeholders (from governments, child welfare agencies, safety advisors, educators, industry, parent groups, etc.) are aware of the project. The consultation took place between March 15<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>, through face-to-face meetings or online/telephone contacts.

This general report is based on national reports from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom (21 countries). It also takes into account reports from the consultation with Insafe members that took place in Lisbon in March, involving the EU Kids Online dissemination team, and from a consultation meeting with European Union institutions' representatives, organized by the Belgian team. We did not receive reports from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania or Sweden.

Overall, there were some 230 participants involved in this consultation organized by EU Kids Online II members, from different backgrounds and from almost all the countries. It may appear for some countries that participation was relatively low; however, it should be noted that several countries reported that they had collected contributions from key stakeholders representing whole sectors, including government.

The online consultation process attracted more participation than face-to-face meetings. There were some countries (Ireland, the Netherlands) where EU Kids Online members presented the questionnaire in stakeholders meetings and asked participants to complete the consultation online. National teams that are not based in the capitals of their respective countries had greater difficulties in promoting stakeholder meetings, as in Austria, Italia and Germany, and hence conducted consultations via email and the telephone. Other teams promoted the online consultation as a priority since they considered it better to save the opportunity to hold a stakeholder meeting until after the publication of the first results.

For new countries in EU Kids Online this was also an opportunity to get into contact with stakeholders and introduce the project, preparing for future phases of communication, as described by the Hungarian team. For older members this was an opportunity to deepen relationships with stakeholders (as reported in the Spanish report). Generally, teams sensed a curiosity among stakeholders regarding the results of the project, and most of the stakeholders want to receive further communications about the results.

## Stakeholder Forum

The table below shows the details of those known to have participated – the actual figure is larger since the details of participants were not always reported

Country	Acad.	Ind.	Govt	NGO	Charity	Other	d.k.	Participants TOTAL
Austria	1		1	1		1		4
Belgium			6	1			11	18
Bulgaria	1							1
Estonia	1		5	1		1		8
Finland		2		5		1		8
France	1		4	5				10
Germany			1	2				2
Greece								
Hungary	2	2	1	7				12
Ireland	2	1	1		1			5
Italy	12	3	6	6				27
Netherlands	2		1			4	6	13
Norway	3	1	4	2		2		12
Poland		1		1		1		3
Portugal	12	1	2	6		2		23
Romania	2		1	1		2		6
Slovenia	2		2	2		3		9
Spain		1	5	3		2		11
Sweden				2				2
Turkey	5					1		6
UK	30		11	1	1	4	8	55
<b>NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS</b>								<b>235</b>
Other countries	1							1
Insafe								22
European Union								4
<b>TOTAL</b>								<b>262</b>

Acad. = Academic

Ind. = Industry

Govt = Government

d.k. = don't know (not classified)

## Responses to each question

### *In your country what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?*

The stakeholders consulted by the EU Kids Online teams noted children's limited internet literacy, both in terms of what they could achieve functionally and in terms of their limited critical abilities. This was especially the case regarding privacy (personal data and privacy settings), children's ability to assess the reliability of information and their willingness to infringe copyright, without realizing the possible risks. But it was also true as regards their difficulty in assessing contents suitable for their age, skills that are in fact lacking in some countries (e.g. Estonia, Poland), and in dealing with inappropriate contents, such as contents for adults. As regards specific risks, bullying and cyberbullying are the main concerns of parents, but also worry that their children might be ripped-off online, become addicted to the internet, be involved in sexting and experience online grooming – although paedophilia dangers were mentioned less. The huge popularity of social networking sites poses great difficulties to safe use of the internet as children are unaware of risks and over rely on other children, as when uploading intimate contents.

The fact that parents sometimes do not assist to their children's online experiences was also raised by stakeholders, sometimes due to being unfamiliar with technologies (noted by Belgian, France Hungarian, Romanian, Slovenia and EU stakeholders), which accentuates the (mis)perception that children are very savvy. Parents' intervention is sometimes restricted to controlling the amount of time that their children spend online (e.g. Ireland) and they are not aware of or else underestimate risks. Also the fact that there is a generational gap (noted in Italy) and differences in competence makes it difficult for parents to act as effective advisers. In some countries this seems to constitute the main factor behind children's lack of safety on the internet (e.g. Romania). There were also questions about the exact role of parents, asking about appropriate forms of mediation (France).

In a related way, various stakeholders pointed out that teachers are also in need of support that would enable them to guide students so that they use this new medium in a safe and reflexive way. In fact, a greater emphasis on coordinating home-school awareness was called for (e.g. in the UK). The lack of awareness of copyright issues was a recurrent theme (e.g. Portugal) and the lack of safe sites with educational contents/edutainment was also mentioned (e.g. Greece, Poland, Romania). With regard to schools, it was pointed out that there is also a need for more technological support through technicians (e.g. Austria), and supervision of security software and updates (e.g. Finland, the UK).

All this points to a consensus around the need for media education, both for children and parents, at homes and schools, around the social aspects of safety online. This includes raising awareness of various dangers, developing coping strategies and the promoting children's ability to recognise the signs of risks. There is also a need for more promotion of internet safety information among children (noted in Germany) that empowers rather than restricts them (noted by EU and Insafe stakeholders). These efforts, however, should not dramatise the risks and should promote the benefits of the internet as well (noted in the UK), as well as promoting media production. Even in Ireland, where there is a well established internet safety education programme available in schools, the take up and opportunities for learning responsible online behaviour from a very young age remain an important national issue. Furthermore, media education programmes should be take a child-centred perspective and respect children's rights (noted in Belgium and Finland), trying to reach social equality.

The role of the industry was referred to less (only in Finland, Hungary and Italy), with stakeholders pointing out the lack of self-regulation, or more restrictive regulations (noted by EU stakeholders). As for policy making and regulation, some participants stressed the need for the involvement of policy makers and other stakeholders in order to define a stronger normative control over the internet.

***In your country what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?***

Some countries reported that more lively discussions were taking place in their country (e.g. Estonia, Hungary) compared to others (e.g. Portugal, Romania), and some focused on more extreme risks whereas others debated general problems and solutions. In Greece the issue was raised that policies to improve internet take up and use needed to be cautious if basic safety awareness was not in place.

Privacy issues seem to be a much discussed topic among policy makers and stakeholders, across countries, especially in relation to SNS and identity theft. Other risks, like violence, cyberbullying, grooming, children abuse/child pornography, paedophilia, are being discussed in several countries (noted by Insafe). The fight to stop illegal content is discussed in some countries (e.g. Poland, Ireland). Addiction or the amount of time spent on the internet and gaming was sometimes a topic (e.g. in Cyprus, France, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, the UK), while viruses and the effects of social networking sites seem to be often discussed as well. In Cyprus there was a discussion of freedom of speech during blogging, and in Greece a more general discussion of personal freedom and rights (an issue also noted in Bulgaria). The use of mobile devices to access the internet seems to be a great topic of discussion in the Netherlands but was not referred to elsewhere. In Italy, Finland and Norway, for instance, all these risks raise the question around the need to balance protection from harm and commercial exploitation with children's freedom. At a European level, the contact risks and data protection has led to calls for protective and educative measures.

The use of the internet in the school context seems to be a major part of discussions in some countries (e.g. Austria, Estonia, Portugal, Romania). Some stakeholders highlighted the potential for participation through schools (Finland, the UK).

The discussion of programmes to promote media literacy is taking place in many countries, but is at different stages of development. In Belgium it is lead by the government in relation to the school curriculum, addressed to both for children and educators, and supporting organizations. In Finland the discussion is of the need for media education in homes, schools and day care. In Germany there has been a clear identification of the need for improvement in this field, involving delegation and the organisation of responsibilities for furthering media literacy (also true in Finland). In Poland media education has been made obligatory in school (also true in Estonia and the Netherlands). But media literacy programmes are absent in some other countries (e.g. Portugal, Hungary). Several countries see the need to educate both children and parents, as well as teachers (e.g. Ireland, the UK,)

At the awareness level, Spanish stakeholders reported discussions about policies to raise awareness of safety and privacy issues among children and parents, also discussions of developing training materials and introducing a law on data protection. Others highlight the responsibilities of industry (the UK), the importance of NGOs in risk prevention (Hungary), or the importance of having self-regulation alongside regulation (Ireland, the EU).

***Which national policies or initiatives in your country should we know about as relevant to our findings?***

The answers to this question are of course very country-specific. Government action can be directed at internet safety, media education, or the distribution of internet access. Or it can more broadly concern children/youth/family plans, or social programmes. Some national stakeholders reported changes in the law. Those from Romania and Turkey reported that there was no real national policy on internet safety, whereas the ones from the UK reported several initiatives on internet safety. Some mentioned NGO's initiatives, as regards media and consumption literacy, privacy awareness, and the protection of children. Initiatives by companies were less frequently mentioned, but the Google/YouTube policy for combating child pornography was noted. At the European level, the Safer Internet programme is probably the best known "initiative" from EU stakeholders.

***What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in your country?***

Some stakeholders responded to this question by noting how children's use was distinctive in relation to parents, whereas others made the comparison to children in other countries.

There seems to be "a shared and transnational youth culture, in which SNS have a great part" (noted in Italy and by the EU stakeholders), but also IM is important, although the popularity of specific networks may be different depending on the country (Hi5 in Romania, Tuenti in Spain, etc). Children seem to be using the internet earlier and earlier (noted in Estonia, Poland and Slovenia), and more intensively (noted in Germany). As part of this culture, Insafe stakeholders mentioned the need for personal expression and risk in order to have fun. However, children's limited critical skills lead them to underestimate the risks involved in peer-to-peer communication and harmful activities such as cyberbullying, and there is concern over self-generated sexual content/sexting (noted in Norway – in this respect, Estonia reported some tolerance towards nude images because of its sauna culture). UK stakeholders suspected that SNS could mean new risks for those children who otherwise do not engage in risky behaviour, while in Greece a concern was raised about children thinking they can do whatever they like with impunity of SNS. . In Cyprus there is a particular discussion of the PEGI rating system and children playing games that are not meant for their age. In Slovenia there had been a recent increase in hate speech in various forums.

Although there are learning and participation opportunities, children are not aware of or they do not respect copyright (Belgium, Turkey), as shown in peer-to-peer sharing (Slovenia) and illegal downloading (Greece) reflecting insufficient information/ media literacy.

On the other hand, there are countries whose stakeholders focus on the digital divide between children and parents (e.g. Italy, Portugal), which leads to weak parental mediation and media panics. This can result in different reactions. In Belgian parents and teachers are said to often act restrictively, whereas in Estonia there is little control by parents. Spain also reports "an excess of permissiveness regarding the use of technology by children, characterised by the limited use of filtering or monitoring tools, and limited awareness of the risks that may be involved in the use of the internet by minors".

Some countries reported a divide among the children of the country, between rural and urban areas (Hungary, Romania), because of social conditions (Belgium), or by genders (NB in some parts of Turkey, girls are not allowed to use the internet or internet cafes).

Some countries which had experienced more recent adoption of the internet (e.g. Turkey) were contrasted with other countries, like the Netherlands, which had a relatively "long" tradition of



young people's home internet access and a very high percentage of broadband connections, or Norway, where access is universal. Mobile communication is also growing in some countries (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal).

There are differences between countries in regard to education: stakeholders from the Netherlands and the UK reported a greater effort to improve education. The UK ones also noted the large size of the NGO sector as a distinctive national trait.

There are specific features that affect children's safety online. In the UK, there could be more risks associated with online buying and other commercial risks, due to it being one of the largest markets in the world for value advertising. On the other hand, Hungarian children are more tolerant towards abusive content (pornography, hateful content, etc.), and abusive behaviour (bullying, lying, etc.) online than their peers in western countries. In the Netherlands, attention was called to the fact that school librarians, where children can access the internet, do not have educational qualifications.

EU stakeholders reflected upon the differences between European and non-European children. For instance, in developing countries such as India, the main way to access the internet is via the mobile phones rather than through the PC. Australian children spend less time online because they are engaged in more outdoor activities. And African children are quite behind in terms of internet access.

***What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?***

Stakeholders thought that the most common risk would be cyberbullying (e.g. Ireland), believing it extends the scope bullying offline (Estonia). Sexual risks are probably overestimated, but are also the most dangerous ones. Pornographic contents, unwanted contacts/ grooming (as noted in Italy, Poland) will probably prove to be common, and hate contents, more rare (noted in Estonia). They expect to encounter evidence of commercial risks, identity theft and the misuse of personal information. They are anxious to really know about the risks related to SNS, in relation to content, contact and conduct. There was a concern that in answering the survey, children might be influenced by what they have seen and read, not merely replying about their own experiences (Slovenia).

They expect to find different risk vulnerability and perceptions according to the cultural background of the countries, the level of penetration of the internet and the level of digital literacy of parents. Stakeholders from some countries anticipate low levels of awareness of risk among children and parents (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia). In contrast, others think most children are aware of the dangers (e.g. Norway). There will probably be especially limited awareness about issues relating to the uploading of contents and private data, whereas more extreme risks will be more known about (Estonia, the UK). There are doubts regarding children's capacity to cope with risks, and some stakeholders relate the vulnerability of children to family cohesion (the Netherlands, Portugal) and SES (Turkey). The UK stakeholders are curious about the perception of risk of those children who are already involved in risky activities. There might be differences in perception between children and adults: adults are expected by some to perceive grooming/abuse as being the largest risk while children are expected to perceive cyberbullying as the main risk (UK, EU). The levels of parental mediation will probably be different across the countries (low in Germany, Portugal, Belgium; or insufficient, Poland). But we will probably find a sense of the need of more information (Estonia), especially to counter the media panics (Italy). There will cultural factors relating to parenting that affect the way children avoid danger or cope with it without resorting to parents (Poland).

Overall, there is a sense we will find that children both know about some risks and are unaware of others, and that some are involved intentionally in risks whereas others act unconsciously. EU stakeholders had the idea that these findings should be important, but they will not go deep enough into important issues such as children's critical thinking and how this should be supported in order to develop critical children able to make decisions about their online behaviour.

### ***What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?***

Some participants noted that ensuring children's internet safety is a complex and dynamic issue, so it is a task that involves all stakeholders, with distributed responsibility and cooperation (Hungary, Netherlands, Estonia). The fragmentation of awareness initiatives and lack of a coordinating body (Italy) is an obstacle to ensuring a safe online experience for children.

There is a general lack of awareness, knowledge or understanding among parents, teachers, policy makers, about the online culture for children (Ireland, Italy), and a need for media and technology education programmes for children, teachers and parents (Poland, Portugal, Estonia).

In fact, stakeholders considered that there is a gap between parents' and children's digital literacy (Poland), sometimes due to an over-reliance on children's capacities with the ICTs, resulting in a lack of parental mediation (Hungary). But they also acknowledged that parents lack the relevant information and education to support their children's internet safety. This could also be related to changes in parenting style, leading to a lack of communication with the child (noted in Romania).

Most stakeholders reported a digital divide between teachers and pupils (e.g. Finland), and the need for these agents to also receive education on this topic. The adoption of internet safety education programmes in schools was noted by many (e.g. Ireland, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Romania). There were also calls for more adequate tools, ranging from hardware to efficient networks, in schools (Finland). However, in the UK, where e-safety education has been implemented, stakeholders noted the gap still remaining in terms of children's actual behaviour and questioned its effectiveness.

There is a need to raise awareness among those children who are more vulnerable (Norway, the Netherlands), adapt awareness programs to children's age (the UK, the Netherlands), to cultural backgrounds (Belgium), and reach children whose parents have lower educational levels (Estonia). The tone of the campaigns should be thought through (Italy, Finland) and more investment should be put into the funding of awareness initiatives in the long run (Norway, Finland).

Many stakeholders denounced the problems and gaps in legislation (e.g. Belgium), that sometimes does not keep up with the pace of criminal practices (noted in Hungary). There is a need for efficient and viable legal standards and procedures in different countries, for real experts to guide regulation (Germany, Estonia). Others stress the lack of resources for law enforcement (Portugal, the Netherlands). At the European level, stakeholders recognised that EU institutions do not do as much lobbying of the internet industry, as they do with television or advertising aimed at children. In fact, some say that there should be a more consistent policy of incentives for industry in order to produce good contents (Belgium, Estonia). ISPs do not have sufficient responsibility (Poland).

## Annex I: National reports

### Austria

#### The process of consultation

We had already organised a panel discussion regarding internet risks in February, where some of our stakeholders participated or listened. It was therefore not possible to organise another stakeholder conference in Salzburg as most of our main stakeholders are from Vienna (apart from the issue of willingness to come to Salzburg, there were some other factors that made a personal meeting not feasible - such as paying for the journey, etc.). So we decided to conduct our consultation via e-mail and ask them to contact us via the telephone or fill in the online questionnaire. In addition to our email, Barbara from saferinternet.at sent the email to all of their contacts and also mentioned it at the meeting of the saferinternet.at's advisory board (at the end of March).

However, the response rate was still small: only two persons contacted us via telephone, two filled in the questionnaire. This fact might be a result of an annoying discussion about the Google supported questionnaire: as soon as we sent out the mail and the link, one of our stakeholders replied to all in the mailing list that they *should not fill in the form as this was Google supported and therefore not secure* (especially regarding their names, etc.). Even though we reacted with an appropriate e-mail, clarifying the use of Google-software and explained the questionnaire in more detail, almost nobody answered. At the end of the day we can only say what a shame this contact did not work out successfully.

#### Main outcomes

It seems that the overall awareness of children, parents and teachers in Austria is questionable. We asked how ICT and media competency can be implemented in schools to assure everybody is getting taught in these subjects. Regarding internet competency our stakeholders asked if young people have a different understanding of public and private, if they know what is good or bad online. The important aspects identified were data protection, cyberbullying and child pornography.

#### In Austria what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?

- Data Protection
- Cyberbullying
- Online rip-offs
- Media competency (especially evaluating the trustfulness of webpages)
- Internet addiction
- Inappropriate contents
- Apart from children, parents and schools/teachers should be aware of online risks (especially concerning data protection – what should be private, what public?)

#### In Austria what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?

- Violence

## Stakeholder Forum

- Children abuse/child pornography
- Data protection
- Grooming
- Internet/ICTs in schools

**Which national policies or initiatives in Austria should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

- Saferinternet.at (Advisory board of Saferinternet.at)
- State education authority (Landesschulrat)
- Federal Ministry for education and research (BMBF)
- BuPP is a part of the Federal Ministry of the Economy, Family and Youth

**What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

- Children are not aware of risks

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

- Research on what private and public means to young people
- How can young people/parents be best reached?
- All stakeholders have to feel responsible for assuring internet safety
- Children have to act as adults (responsibility), and be aware of risks – they have to think before they act
- They do not learn enough at school about media competency
- Are adults (especially parents, teachers) aware of the risks and so able to tell the kids?

**If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them here**

- Cyberbullying (University of Vienna): Grading, P., Strohmeier, D. & Spiel, C. (in press). Underlying motives for bullying others in cyberspace: A study on bullies and bully-victims in Austria. In Q. Li, D. Cross, & P. Smith (Eds.), *Bullying goes to the cyber playground: Research on cyberbullying from an international perspective*.
- Saferinternet: Study about the Usage of Online Communities among Austrian Teenagers:  
[http://www.saferinternet.at/fileadmin/files/Online\\_Communities\\_Studie/Ergebnisse\\_Safer\\_Internet\\_Quantitativ\\_Ultimativ.pdf](http://www.saferinternet.at/fileadmin/files/Online_Communities_Studie/Ergebnisse_Safer_Internet_Quantitativ_Ultimativ.pdf);  
[http://www.saferinternet.at/fileadmin/files/Online\\_Communities\\_Studie/Bericht\\_Safer\\_Internet\\_qualitativ\\_Online\\_Version.pdf](http://www.saferinternet.at/fileadmin/files/Online_Communities_Studie/Bericht_Safer_Internet_qualitativ_Online_Version.pdf)

**Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with**

- Herbert Rosenstingl (BuPP is a part of the Federal Ministry of economy, family and youth, [herbert.rosenstingl@bupp.at](mailto:herbert.rosenstingl@bupp.at));
- Whole Advisory board of saferinternet

**Is there anything else you wish to add, to guide our work?**

- What questions do parents/children/teachers have regarding safer internet use?
- What support do they need, what support do they use?

## Stakeholder Forum

- In which situations do children use support?
- What about media competency as a compulsory subject in schools?
- What are the really upsetting things experienced online?

### List of stakeholders consulted

- Bernhard Jungwirth (Director of saferinternet.at; jungwirth@oiat.at)
- Christian Swertz (Professor Media Education at the University of Vienna)
- Barbara Schlossbauer (chairperson of the advisory board of Stopline)
- Thomas Goiser (Senior Consultant of Pleon Publico (Public Relations & Lobbying) E-Mail: [thomas.goiser@pleon-publico.at](mailto:thomas.goiser@pleon-publico.at))

## Belgium

### **In Belgium what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's online safety**

#### *Limited internet literacy*

Children and adolescents may seem to be very confident and skilled computer users, but this is a misperception. They can generally perform simple tasks, but they often struggle with more complex ones and they have a limited knowledge of how applications actually work and how to efficiently use them. Examples are reliability assessment, search strategies, management of personal data and privacy settings, etc.

Youngsters have insufficient skills to reflect upon online content and communication and, especially, to critically evaluate information. Also they often do not have the ability to assess the impact and consequences of their own online behaviour.

#### *Privacy issues*

Children often do not realise what the impact might be of publishing personal data or using a webcam. Especially in the field of e-commerce, better protection of the personal data of under-aged persons is needed. Although young people can behave naively when it comes to personal information, they nevertheless are concerned about their personal data. Generally they realise it is important to be careful, but they have difficulties assessing which situations/applications involve risks. Children should learn (from an early age on) how to act responsibly on the internet. But it is difficult to explain the potential risks without causing panic.

#### *Parental mediation and communication*

Communication about online experiences between children and their educators (parents, teachers) should be stimulated. At the moment, parents often have no idea about their children's online activities and they are insufficiently aware of the potential risks, or the opportunities. Sometimes they do not have the necessary digital skills themselves. This unfamiliarity with ICT can lead to a restrictive attitude towards the internet. As the internet is still seen as something new, many parents struggle to find out how to regulate it and mediate their children's internet use.

#### *Overprotection and dramatisation*

Many studies and policy initiatives approach these issues from an adult perspective. We should avoid overprotection and dramatisation; computers are not necessarily dangerous, but the internet is also an interesting place where children can learn many things. Online opportunities deserve more attention, as the focus is too often on online risks. We should find a better balance between protection and education. A more child-centred view is needed, in which we pay attention to how children think about online risks (e.g. what do they perceive as risks/opportunities, how do they feel about parental mediation).

**In Belgium what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers and stakeholders**

*Media literacy and digital exclusion among young people*

Ingrid Lieten (Minister of Innovation and Media) encourages the implementation of 'media literacy' in the school curriculum and will establish a centre for media literacy. Both children and their educators (also youth movement staff, social workers, etc), should develop the necessary digital skills, information and guidance about ICTs. Currently, there is a concern about the level of digital skills of people working with children and adolescents.

Organisations developing initiatives related to media literacy or digital exclusion should receive more (governmental) support. For example, this includes organisations which develop 'positive online content' (interesting and reliable content for children)

*Focus on risk and protection*

Public opinion and policy makers seem to focus too much on risks and protection (e.g. risks related to meeting with online contacts and SNS risks). Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the opportunities of the internet and to respect rights, privacy and the freedoms of young people (e.g. playing games). Young people learn from their experiences, including from the negative ones. As they want to protect their children and because (sometimes) they are unfamiliar with ICTs, parents often tend to react restrictively. Yet, we should avoid restrictive measures and focus on coping strategies (see below).

*Coping strategies*

Exposure to online risks is inevitable, so both children and adults better learn how to cope with them. Acquiring coping strategies is part of becoming media literate. Instead of using restrictive measures and technical tools to control the online behaviour of their children, parents should invest in a qualitative relationship, confidence and good communication with their children, as this supports them in developing the skills and strategies they need to cope with online risks.

*Privacy*

Although children's freedoms should be respected, it is important to protect them from serious harm related to their privacy and personal information. Privacy issues related to commercial practices (e-commerce, digital publicity) deserve more attention. Children have to learn how to properly manage their personal data.

**Which national policies or initiatives in Belgium should we know about as relevant to our findings**

Website gaming (department CJSJ)

Activities:

- Information about game platforms
- History of gaming
- Genres in gaming
- Age classifications
- Impact of games on an individual's health
- Information about jobs in gaming

## Stakeholder Forum

Target group: parents, educators and gamers

### Apestaartjaren (Jeugdwerknet)

Activities:

- Education/training (workshops, practical and technical guidance)
- Bi-annual conference day
- Development of a database with practical information for social/youth workers

Target groups: People working with children and adolescents (social workers, youth movement workers, etc), children/adolescents (workshop: developing digital skills while having fun)

### Ketnet website (public television channel for children)

Activities:

- Moderated chat sessions with (famous) people (children have to register and to submit their questions in advance)
- Moderated guest book
- Safe website with positive content and without adverts (also with tips about safer internet use)
- Online platform for children below the age of six, where they can take their first steps on the internet and where their parents can find information about the website and tips for guiding their children
- Drawing attention to safer internet issues on television (Ketnet):
- Broadcast documentaries and news topics, especially around Safer Internet Day (ex: topic about the 'the right click', a game about safer internet use that children can play at school)

Target group: children until 12-14 years old

### Conducting research (OIVO)

- young people and e-commerce
- young people and the internet
- young people and mobile phones

### Privacycommissie

Activities:

- [www.ikbeslis.be](http://www.ikbeslis.be)
- Think privacy
- Publication of advice concerning privacy and the internet (2002)

### INgeBEELD (CANON cultuurcel)

Activities:

- Website where teachers can find information and tools about how to teach 'media literacy' (how to implement media education in their curriculum)

### Participation in advisory boards

- SARC, Kinderrechtencommissariaat (Childrens' Rights Commission), Steunpunt Jeugd

### Child Focus

Activities:

- Active lobbying and sensitising policy makers
- Dissemination of prevention material and educational tools about themes such as cyberbullying and safer internet



Target groups: young children, adolescents, parents, teachers

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Belgium?**

#### *Limited information literacy (media literacy)*

Children can rely on basic (technical) skills, but often have insufficient capacities for searching, selecting, processing and creating information and they also tend to lack the necessary skills for critical reflection.

Some groups of children participate less in online activities (e.g. SNS), thus missing out on opportunities. The digital divide is also a social divide.

#### *Children are naive (need to develop critical skills)*

Children do not always realise that not everyone online has good intentions and that publishing personal information online may have a serious impact. Children underestimate the long-term consequences of (risky) peer-to-peer communication and harmful activities such as cyberbullying. Children are not aware of the importance of copyright.

#### *New situations and new environment for parents and teachers*

Parents and teachers often experience difficulties in how to guide and manage children's online activities. They do not know how to react in new situations, such as the use of the mobile internet in classrooms, webcams, SNS, etc. Nevertheless, parents and teachers play an important role in teaching children how to behave responsibly online. Parents and teachers should be open-minded to having discussion about new rules and regulations in new situations and environments. Often they act restrictively, which seems the easiest option. A better option would be to stimulate young people to talk with adults about what they see and do online (both positive and negative experiences).

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

#### *Expected results: (note: comparable data are very interesting)*

- The importance of parent-child communication
- The risks of SNS and sharing personal information
- Young people do not realise potential dangers/risks
- Some young people are not aware of the consequences of sharing personal data (privacy-issues)
- Cyberbullying remains a problem

#### *Interesting aspects to investigate further*

- Parental guidance and mediation (how do children perceive this mediation)
- Role of teachers and the education system
- Consequences for psychological well-being
- media literacy
- Communication with parents and teachers - how to stimulate open communication (child should not worry about restrictive measures)

## Stakeholder Forum

- Privacy (privacy rights of children)
- Values, risks (study of online forums, where young people discuss sensitive subjects)
- Commercial risks
- Relation between offline and online risks
- Online activities that adults consider as risky, which young people consider as an opportunity
- Longitudinal research

### *Suggestions for research validation*

- Practical guidelines for everyone who creates positive content for children
- Information/guidelines for parents
- Educational material for teachers
- Code of conduct for websites that target children
- Campaign to create awareness among adults about the vulnerability of children online

## **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

### *Difficulties at the level of policy making*

- Insufficient research data
- Problems/gaps in legislation (e.g., publishing pictures on SNS profile)
- Limited budget: the target group approach is expensive (e.g. developing a website guaranteeing children's safety)
- Cultural and political differences between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking parts of Belgium (need to develop different campaigns)
- The shared responsibility of all stakeholders (parents, teachers, government, companies, etc.)

### *Difficulties at the level of implementation in the field*

- Employees in the field of youth services tend to frequently change jobs. People are continuously leaving and other people are joining. Often the same problems and issues arise, and every time we have to provide the same solutions for the same problems.
- In addition, many ICT initiatives come to a dead end (especially at the local level).
- Increasing safety goes along with repressive and restrictive measures; this should be avoided because these measures could provoke an opposite reaction and could limit young people's online opportunities
- Initiatives need to be relevant for young people's daily routines in order to become successful
- Teach parents and teachers how to use tools/packages promoting young people's media literacy

## **List of stakeholders consulted**

- Nel Broothaerts, Child Focus
- Lieze Lingier, Vlaams Informatiepunt Jeugd, Steunpunt Jeugd
- Sebastiaan De Coninck, Steunpunt Jeugd
- Peter Van Den Eynde, Privacycommissie
- Stefaan Hendrickx, OIVO
- Lieven De Rycke, Kinderrechtencommissariaat

## Stakeholder Forum

- Johan Meire, Kind & Samenleving
- Catherine Castille, Ketnet (VRT)
- Kristof d'Hanens, Jeugdwerknet
- Christine Debaene, CJSM
- David Stevens, SARC, sectorraad Media
- Dirk Terryn, CANON cultuurcel
- Marc Chatelet, VRM
- Annemie Drieskens, Gezinsbond
- Helen Van De Wiele, Provinciaal Onderwijs Vlaanderen vzw

## **Bulgaria**

Despite contacting and asking various stakeholders to fill in the online form only one did so – an academic from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky". However, the responses were quite informative.

### **In Bulgaria what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

Online dating and "erotic socialising" sites, including explicit ads online and offline. Some of the web-sites are full of explicit content - photos, dialogue, forums, and even video-chats. Prostitutes have popped in these sites, but for a minor it might seem that explicit offerings and casual sex for one night stands is the norm, cool, etc. By having a lot of paid or fake profiles there is an open invitation for "naive" minors to publish nude, erotic home photos themselves. Sometimes, by the information they provide (town, village) and photos (say window-view available) even the location of home is recognisable. By putting together different pieces of information (including photos) from different sites also reconstruction is possible. Then, some parties are organized where even minors participate in "sex simulation with dolls", erotic shows, etc.

### **In Bulgaria what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

Data retention issues topped the public discussion in the last 9 months (involving the Ministry of the Interior and various civil society groups). Second was the aggression shown kids at school and homes and its relation with internet and online activities (discussed by media, parents' organisations, think-tanks). Quite often filtering issues dominate the education-related discussions (computers in schools, parents association, various software companies, including Microsoft, the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth). It is important that the data retention directive is re-defined in a way that will respond to EU-wide criticism about not protecting human rights and giving too much power to the police and other authorities under no (or too expensive) control. The data retention directive in its current form will not serve to deliver effective internet safety.

### **Which national policies or initiatives in Bulgaria should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

The SafenetBG and BG Hotline consortia managed to get onboard mobile operators who extensively promote the risks associated with internet usage, especially as regards uploading information. As recently major incidents involving aggression, including with sexual context, by minors at schools have been taped and distributed by mobile phones, the active cooperation with the operators seems to have an impact in the future.

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Bulgaria?**

Children's use in Bulgaria is not different or distinctive from other countries. Gaming is probably the most popular activity, at least it has been for years. Gaming and movies actually drove PC penetration into homes. Social networking is on the rise and might be engaged with the same intensity. The normal local social networking sites somehow lost the interest of children (and adults) who have moved to Facebook, Linked In and Twitter, thus leaving only hard-core local "socialising sites". These have about 5,000 to 10,000 users in any moment, but it is hard to estimate the share of minors involved.

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

The balance between the freedom and control and the balance between human rights and investigation needs. Lastly there are prevention issues. Arguably internet safety risks come as a response to family problems. It is harder to control the symptoms (kids trying to find love online because they are not finding it at home, aggression of kids to other kids as a response to the aggression of parents to kids themselves or the aggression of fathers to their mothers say. And even sometimes as a response to sexual experiences. For instance in the Roma population there is quite often is incestual sex, non-consensual, etc. Home physical abuse is quite common. So all these problems could not be resolved by internet safety only.

**List of stakeholders consulted**

Todor Yalamov, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky"

## Cyprus

### Process of consultation

The consultation took place in two phases: first by email where the link to the Google questionnaire was promoted and second by a face to face meeting. Due to the fact that we could not see any participation taking place through the online link we deemed it necessary to have a face to face meeting.

During phase one of the online consultation we sent the Cyprus Safer Internet Center Steering Committee members an email with links to the project summary and the overview of the questionnaires as well as the link to the online questionnaire and urged them to complete it and also to promote it and forward it to other relevant stakeholders. During phase two and during the Steering Committee meeting a variety of questions were discussed

### Main outcomes

One of the most discussed issues was the PEGI system for video games. It has been noticed that the PEGI system has not been recognised or understood yet by the Cyprus public or buyers, with resulting in children playing games that are not meant for their age.

Further market research will be conducted and online and media campaign is being planned in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to promote awareness of this issue. In addition, our representative at the Ministry of Education is planning to change the law regarding the promotion and sale of video games in the Cyprus market.

### In Cyprus what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?

- Parental ignorance
- Illegal activities become norm or in fashion by the young (ex. Sexting)
- Gaming addiction
- Undefined policy

### In Cyprus what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?

- Freedom of speech during blogging
- PEGI system
- Internet addiction

### What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Cyprus?

- PEGI issue
- Internet addiction
- Ignorance of Internet dangers from parents
- Videos with inappropriate content

### What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?

- Parents ignorance and lack of interest
- The media are interested only when something bad happens

## Stakeholder Forum

- Young people do not understand the seriousness of certain dangers
- Education

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

Participants and members of the Cyprus Safer Internet Center Steering Committee come from many different backgrounds, organisations, ministries and businesses.

- Joseph Joseph, University of Cyprus
- Andreas Christodoulou, Ministry of the Interior
- George Karkas, Police Department - Special cyber crime unit
- Loucas Aristodemou, Cyprus Consumers Union & Quality of Life
- Anastasia Economou, Ministry of Education
- Pantelis Makris, Ministry of Education
- Nicos Vitsaides/Stefanos Stefanou, Pancyprian Parents and Guardians Association
- Devrim Hayat,
- Selen Mesutoglou, Cyprus Neuroscience & Technology Institute
- Agis Piperides, Cyprus Telecommunications Authority
- Nicol Christodoulidou, Cyprus Telecommunications Authority
- Alexandros Alexandrou, Cyprus Telecommunications Authority
- Nineta Kazantzi, Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- Skevi Koukouma, Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- Takis Konis, Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children

## **Estonia**

### **Process of consultation**

Realising the difficulties in organising a face-to-face meeting with Estonian stakeholders, all of them overloaded with various duties (and wishing to save this opportunity for presenting the results of the survey), we decided to contact the stakeholders by e-mail and ask them to fill in the online form. We contacted 13 people representing governmental bodies, universities, NGOs and industry. Overall 8 stakeholder representatives answered the online survey: five from different governmental bodies, one academic, one NGO and one other.

### **In Estonia what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

The most general issues our respondents outlined are the lack of family policy in general, leading to a lack of appropriate channels of communication and discussion in relation to changes in society. Estonia is facing decreasing contact between generations and there exists a generational digital divide.

Several respondents perceived children as having superior technical knowledge, but lacking social understanding. Therefore, the important issues regarding children's internet safety are related to education (both of children and parents, but also other adults working with children). The educational needs of children are primarily related to the social aspects of safety online. Adults need a different form of education, wider in range, starting from various dangers, coping strategies and the ability to recognise the signs of risks. According to the respondent from the Police, the key dangers young Estonians face online are:

- Sexual harassment (not very common, but most harmful)
- Identity thefts (including issues related to the cyberbullying)
- A variety of paid services and crimes related to these

The representative of the Ministry of Education and Science also highlighted the lack of age-appropriate content online and a need for educational technologists in schools. One of the experts stressed that not all EU regulations take into account culture-specific aspects, and different internet safety regulations should be more strongly rooted in particular cultural contexts.

### **In Estonia what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

The topics more discussed by the experts were:

- Cyberbullying, including a suicide case of a young boy in Estonia, which was related to harassment on the internet
- Paedophilia, child pornography, sexual abuse of children (also the issue of legal age)
- Filtering (the possibility of it in the context of the Estonian language and wider cultural context)
- Parental education as regards internet issues
- Teacher training
- E-learning and study programmes, ICT in school
- Media literacy: functional reading and critical thinking

The experts outlined many topics, claiming that there is not even a common discussion agenda. At the same time, the expert from Police pointed out that political actions are not always in



accordance with everyday realities and possibilities, and stressed the importance of education over regulation (prohibiting).

### **Which national policies or initiatives in your country should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

- The Estonian Informatics Centre has regular campaigns related to internet safety in general.
- On April 1, 2010 the Government of the Republic of Estonia approved the “Violence Reduction Action Plan for Years 2010–2014”, which focuses on prevention and reducing violence against children, youth violence and crime, domestic violence and human trafficking. To prevent violence against children, the primary focus will be on the following topics:
  - Bullying and violence at schools
  - Violence in juvenile institutions
  - Child abuse on the internet
  - Sexual offences committed against children.
- In the action plan, attention is paid to the question how to ensure that these issues are detected effectively and child victims assisted and protected.
- Recently the Punishment Act has been amended, related to grooming and the abuse of personal information and privacy.
- The internet in schools and teacher education is supported by the Tiger Leap Foundation financed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The same Ministry, in cooperation with European Social Fund, carries out activities concerning ICT skills (including safety issues, teacher training, etc.). From autumn 2010, hopefully, there will also be an Internet Safety Node in Estonia. There is a working group focusing on online risks at the Ministry of Economy and Communication and a non-official group interested in child safety.

However, there was one expert who claimed not to be aware of any initiatives at all. The representative of the Arvutikaitse (Computer Safety) NGO was critical regarding political initiatives and claimed that each regulation attempt has only made things worse.

### **What would you say is distinctive about children’s internet use in Estonia?**

- Estonian children start using the internet very early; internet use is very high even among pre-teens
- There is limited control and supervision by parents; also parents do not support the idea of age limits
- The wide distribution of computers, mobile internet and WiFi makes filtering ineffective as there is always access to computers without filters
- Any prohibiting and censorship actions are considered ineffective in Estonia due to the related negative experiences of the past Communist regime
- Internet use is high and the sense of danger is low (as it is everywhere else, according to one expert)
- There is a high degree of self-protection – children can block nasty approaches in most cases
- Sexuality in general is very present in the public; children upload sexual (and other inappropriate) images of themselves online; some (non-sexual) aspects of nudity are relatively accepted (e.g. Sauna culture)
- Children do not share their problems very openly with grown-ups
- Teens command English relatively well

- Copyright-related issues are against common practice, so there are no moral considerations about breaking them

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

Expectations are divided into two categories – one in terms of the potential results (what will be in the data) and the other in terms of interpreting the results and policy implications (what will be done with the data that has been collected).

#### **1. Data-related results:**

- Children are aware of the most well known and discussed risks and thus do not need help or supervision regarding those risks
- Children do not realise the dangers regarding self-representation online (blogging, uploading pictures)
- The experience of risks among Estonian children is above the EU average;
- Children have good ICT skills
- There is not much age-appropriate content that children can focus on in their internet use
- Coping mechanisms might not keep children always safe
- There are dangers on the internet that children can see but adults are not aware of
- Grown-ups perceive the need to have more information in order to keep their children safe
- There is a lack of parental control, especially in terms of filtering, which might not only be the result of a lack of knowledge, but also the result of realising that these mechanisms do not work
- Encountering pornographic materials is fairly common
- There will be minimal contact with the materials related to violence or self-harm
- There will be almost no contact with hate materials
- About 1/3 of children have encountered unwanted contacts
- Almost everyone has encountered ideas related to identity theft or related abuse
- Those children bullied in real life are also bullied on the internet

#### **2. Outcome-related results:**

- Better prevention and information related policies
- Better knowledge about online activities and online risks
- There will be lack of consideration of the cultural differences in interpreting the results
- Balanced and comparable information on the related practices

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

- There is a widespread view (including among the experts) that in relation to the ICTs, children are cleverer than their parents, which results in lack of parental supervision
- Political initiatives are superficial, shallow and based on general statements, not on actual research or analysis
- There is a lack of financial resources
- There is a lack of people with the necessary knowledge and experience in this field who could create appropriate and motivating content for children
- There is a need for more co-operation between policy makers and researchers, teacher trainers, etc., in this field

## Stakeholder Forum

- There might not be enough inclusion of young people in prevention work; the messages of prevention work might not be sufficiently understood or accepted
- People who prepare legislation might not understand the internet and internet usage; what is not understood is too easily prohibited. Prohibiting things might result in attracting young people, which is the opposite of the desired effect (the “forbidden fruit effect”)
- There is limited knowledge about mechanisms of internet violence
- Too often children differentiate unnecessarily between the risks associated with the internet and the risks that can be faced in daily life (going out with strangers, abuse of privacy)
- The focus should be on education. In reality, it is not easy to find good lecturers with both a knowledge of the technical aspects and how to teach them and an ability to comment on complex topics, for example sex education. When educating children or adults in relation to child safety online, there are two conditions to be fulfilled before a child is allowed to access the internet
- Resilience against basic attempts at social engineering, which also means that the teacher has to be aware of those
- Sex education has to be offered; if not, this blank will be filled in by random people on the internet
- It is important to educating parents and convince them that they have important social insights regarding children’s safety, even if their technical knowledge is not so good
- It is especially difficult to reach children whose parents have a lower educational level

### **Is there anything else you wish to add, to guide our work?**

It is important that there is also a focus on the differences among the EU countries in general as the filtering and prohibiting strategies might not work in Estonia. In addition, it would be important to take into account the cultural and historical background of the countries. It would be also interesting to know how effective children themselves consider the filters, and what would be the things to focus on in order to make prevention-related work most effective.

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

Katrin Pärgrmäe, Riigi Infosüsteemide Arenduskeskus (Government)  
Anu Baum, Police and Board Guard Board  
Mare Ainsaar, University of Tartu  
Anto Veldre, CERT-EE (Government)  
Siiri Lepasaar, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research  
Kalev Pihl, Kodanik  
Kaire Tamm, Estonian Ministry of Justice  
Aare Kirna, MTÜ Arvutikaitse (NGO)

## Finland

### **In Finland what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

- Children have to practise to use the Internet
- Children's own competencies and skills
- Parents have to become more interested in children's online life
- Children need advices how to recognise authentic net pages: we need age limits and warnings related to web pages
- Images have to be checked before publishing if a web page is for children
- There has to be control of, and ways to inform children about, harmful materials
- Online bullying
- Media education is needed
- Security software, operating systems and programs have to be updated at homes and schools, etc.
- Taking children's rights into consideration
- Ethical and safety media skills that enhance creativity, critical understanding, producing and participation
- Responsibility of the Internet service providers, self regulation
- Policymakers and stakeholders awareness of the meaning, need for and methods used in media education
- Policymakers' and stakeholders' awareness of online risks, prevention, interventions and possibilities to help children
- Media education for adults who have educational responsibilities, updating education in schools and day care
- Dissemination of research outcomes
- Social equality: adequate skills and competencies for all
- To raise knowledge about online risks at homes and among educators
- Freedom of speech
- Supporting children and young people to make their own media productions at school and in the field youth work to help them understand the safety issues when they distribute audiovisual content
- How to get information early enough about interesting/challenging phenomena/impulses, so that there is current information in use during decision making processes

There is the issue of how to promote the internet as a valuable and useful "tool", and at the same time teach parents and children to be aware of all risks. There should be signs about what to avoid, where not to go. These areas vary from age group to age group.

### **In Finland what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

- They look too much at the problems, not to the possibilities
- The internet as a space and a tool for youth work and social work
- How the internet enhances children's participation and is a tool for education about democracy
- How to report problems and harmful materials on the internet to the police or other officials
- How long it is safe to be online

- Age limits
- Chargeable services for underage users
- Media education 2.0
- Children need more media competencies and skills
- Media education at homes, schools and day care
- A need for and methods involved in media protection in relation to media education
- Online bullying, copyright
- How to increase knowledge at home
- Harmful contents
- Online bullying
- Privacy
- Parents' ignorance
- Protection and the lack of protection
- Policymakers are not able to control international content online
- Possibilities for learning on the net
- Who has responsibility for media protection and media literacy in Finland? The distribution of different tasks is challenging
- Who helps children that have problems online: for example heavy online players?
- How to make children and young people to realise the thin line between public and private information?
- The contradiction between freedom of speech and protection

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Finland?**

- Patterns and tools for children's possibilities to participate and be active citizens
- Social networking sites are popular
- Chatting with friends, for example by using MSN
- The internet as a source of learning material
- Parent's responsibility has been understood in Finland
- Children's online life is social, unprejudiced and interactive. The same phenomena that exist in real life also exist online: bullying, social networking and dating
- Children do not understand the difference between private and public, they do not respect copyright
- Parents are not present in online life and do not care about children's online life until something bad happens
- Sociability and entertainment are important for children but they do not produce media content and do not have very good skills compared to children in other parts of Europe. Participating is important for children and they take part in the online surveys and discussions on the Internet
- It is children who have higher risks (grooming, abuse, etc.)
- It is challenging to speak about online risks
- Comparing Finnish young people with those in southern Europe the Finns spend more time online. On average time spent online is 2-2.5 hours a day

We had a strong national web service IRC-Galleria ([www.irc.fi](http://www.irc.fi)) that gathered 75% of all youngsters in the age group 15-24 year old. This service is still quite strong, but it seems that young people are now choosing to join more global networks. This changes the situation of online youth work that has been done in IRC-Galleria and Habbo Hotel. Finland's Ministry of Transport and Communications and Ministry of Education are making financial preparations for expanding youth work carried out online.

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

- A digital divide between teachers and pupils
- It is not possible to watch the whole internet but there has to be some control and ways to inform children about harmful materials
- How to identify children's age on the internet
- Internet safety is not a topic at schools
- Children do not understand the difference between reality and online life: for example they are not afraid of strange people on the internet
- Children are forerunners (digital natives) and adults are "digital immigrants" who are not able to advise and help their children, and keep an eye on what is happening
- Proper ways to teach safe internet use
- To create contacts to parents so that they will understand online risks
- Resources: short projects
- The contradiction between children's safety and rights on the Internet
- International and global content is beyond national control
- Parents' attitudes
- Lack of resources
- Lack of knowledge of age limits
- It is hard to teach media literacy without the tools: we need more hardware and efficient networks to every school

**List of stakeholders consulted**

- Finnish Society on Media Education (NGO)
- MTV MEDIA (Industry)
- Finnish Periodical Publishers' Association (Industry)
- Office of the Ombudsman for Children in Finland (GO)
- The Finnish Children's Parliament (NGO)
- Sulake Corporation (Industry)
- Save the Children Finland (NGO)
- Finnish Board of Film Classification (GO)

## France

It was difficult to organise a meeting of stakeholders not only because of volcanic ash stopping flights but also because of a French rail strike during the consultation period. However, some stakeholders filled in the online survey and we interviewed others by telephone.

### **In France what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

Different stakeholders referred to different issues. The list below is a compilation of their comments.

- The isolation of children when using the internet
- Difficulties related to parental control: parents lacking knowledge, unable to keep up with the speed of developments
- The place and role of parents? What type of support should they receive?
- Difficulties in using parental control software
- How to know what children do on the internet?
- What is the nature of the relationships formed via the internet (blogs, social networking sites, etc.)?
- The influence of risky contents: on health, on the behaviour of children and adolescents
- Risks of bad encounters: paedophiles and other predators
- Confusion between the real and virtual
- Split personality
- Addictive behaviour: playing for money and playing online games
- Disguised marketing and other forms of advertisement manipulation - targeted adverts
- What capacity do children have to make discerning judgements?
- What awareness do they have of their responsibility?
- Education in the use of new technologies
- Problems of security connected to paedophiles and pornographic images on social networking sites
- Copyright, intellectual property rights

However, the tensions between the views of different stakeholders is summed up in quotes below:

*Le débat est double... associations et des personnes qui s'inquiètent des risques d'Internet en supposant que c'est une entrée de tous les vices et de tous les maux. Elles pensent donc qu'il faut prévenir ces risques en filtrant et en protégeant les enfants sur Internet... Point de vue qui suppose plutôt qu'Internet est un outil, que la prise de risque vient des adolescents eux-même....Internet est un outil fantastique (réseaux sociaux, google, etc.). Donc il y a certes des risques, mais pas seulement de pédophilie, il existe aussi des risques liés au marketing.... These two currents sit badly side by side. For example, in schools they block everything on the internet, and so you can't get any educational benefit...Il est plus facile d'avoir un discours sur les dangers d'Internet, car il apparaît plus important de s'attaquer aux risques.*

*(There are two parts to the debate....associations and people that worry about internet risks, assuming the this is a route into all possible vices and bad things. Therefore they think that it is necessary to prevent these risks by filtering and protecting children on the internet. Another point of view assumes instead that the internet is a tool, that taking risks comes naturally to adolescents..... The internet is a fantastic tool (social networking sites, Google, etc). Therefore there are certainly risks, but not only from paedophiles – there are also the risks of commercialisation... These two currents sit badly side by side. For*

*example, in schools they block everything on the internet, and so you can't get any educational benefit.... It is easier to have a discourse about the dangers of the internet, since it appears more important to attack these risks.)*

And

*Il y a soit une approche totalement sécuritaire (sécurité passive : protection par des filtres), soit une approche d'éducation à la responsabilité (sécurité active).  
These is either an approach emphasising total security (passive security, protection by filters), or an approach teaching responsible usage (active security).*

### **In France what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

- The dangers relating to child pornography
- Helping to create parental control software
- Protection of privacy and the right to forget
- The problems related to harassment and acts of intimidation
- The responsibility of ISAs
- How does one support youth if there are no multimedia practices in the family?

*Les principaux sujets de discussion sont les compétences partagées, les partenariats (partager les rôles entre collectivités et familles ; les services de l'État s'intéressent plutôt à la protection des mineurs, des données personnelles, à l'éducation à la responsabilité). On est parfois trop dans le sécuritaire, mais souvent on a des entrées plus équilibrées  
(The main subjects discussed are the division of competencies, partnerships .the division of responsibilities between the various bodies and families: State services are more interested in the protection of minors, personal information and teaching responsible usage. Sometimes these emphasis security too much, but often one has more balanced actions.)*

### **Which national policies or initiatives in your country should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

- The experimental programmes of Fréquence Écoles (workshops with parents)
- The 'socle commun des connaissances et compétences' (the social base of awareness and competence), which is compulsory in schools
- Le b2i (brevet informatique et Internet)
- The Hadopi law
- Pédagojeux : [www.pedagojeux.fr](http://www.pedagojeux.fr) (pour l'aspect jeux en ligne)
- Vinz et lou : <http://www.vinzetlou.net/> (sensibilisation des parents et mineurs aux risques du web).
- Action innocence:  
[http://www.actioninnocence.org/france/web/Dignite\\_et\\_integrite\\_des\\_enfants\\_sur\\_Inter\\_net\\_126\\_.html](http://www.actioninnocence.org/france/web/Dignite_et_integrite_des_enfants_sur_Inter_net_126_.html)

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in France?**

- No distrust, no awareness of danger
- Absence of traces left behind
- Inability to prioritise information supplied by the internet and inability to check its validity
- Activities related to social networking sites, exchanging things, chats and blogs
- More and more, they are not only using the PC in the home or class, but also various mobile platforms



## Stakeholder Forum

- It is especially practices relating to communication rather than the use of information, using it for social purposes rather than looking for documents
- Young people lack a critical perspective, an ability to defend themselves - an adult has the ability to reflect and then decide - it is very different for a young child

Apart from these points, some stakeholders thought we should think about the perspective of young people themselves:

*Je pense qu'ils sont de plus en plus prévenus des risques d'Internet. On pense qu'ils sont imprudents sur Internet alors qu'en fait ils savent à quoi faire attention; mais du fait qu'ils sont jeunes, ils prennent forcément des risques, car quand on est jeune, on veut tester plein de choses. Avant Internet, les jeunes faisaient d'autres choses qui pouvaient être dangereuses.*

*(I think that they are increasingly aware of online risks. It was thought that they were impudent about the internet in terms of knowing what to pay attention to; but the fact that they are young means they take many risks, since when you are young you want to test out many things. Before the internet, young people did other things that could have been dangerous)*

In a similar spirit, others were critical of how adults saw young people:

*Ce qui est particulier en France, c'est que l'on considère qu'Internet n'est pas une pratique culturelle. C'est « l'élitisme à la française ». Ce climat laisse à penser que ces activités sont un peu du temps perdu. Les adolescents le sentent et le savent, ils vont considérer qu'Internet est leur domaine. Ils ont alors une activité plus réduite et de loisir car cette activité est dévalorisée, donc c'est leur activité d'adolescent. Par exemple, la vidéo sur youtube n'est pas considérée comme étant de la culture (comme les séries américaines par exemple), alors qu'on y découvre des contenus intéressants pour l'apprentissage de la vie si on nous a appris à prendre de la distance vis à vis de ce que l'on regarde.*

*(What is particular to France is that the internet is not considered to be a cultural practice. This is 'French elitism'. This climate leads us to think that these activities are a waste of time. Adolescents sense this and know it, and they consider the internet to be their domain. Therefore they have a limited use, one based in leisure, since this activity is devalued, thus it is their adolescent activity. For example, YouTube videos are not considered to be part of culture (like American TV series, for example), but one can discover interesting content for learning about life if one stands back to look at it.)*

**What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

- This research will bring to the association a better knowledge of the real practices of children on the internet.
- This knowledge will allow parents to assume their role more easily
- Representatives of civil society will be able to suggest appropriate actions to politicians and professionals in order to improve the protection and education of their children
- It will encourage politicians to become more orientated towards education
- To know what risks are most important, to know what to attack first - often one thinks of paedophiles, but that is not the case - to know the risks in order to best be able to address them

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

- Difficulties in accessing relevant information
- Difficulties relating to fast changing technology: sometimes insufficient knowledge and mastery of those technologies
- Not enough knowledge of uses and behaviour that flows from them

Some stakeholders pointed to the dilemmas of prevention:

*...; c'est le Conseil général qui installe les filtres. Les élèves ne peuvent rien faire car ces filtres sont très puissants, ils ferment parfois trop. Il y a donc très peu de risque pour les jeunes qui vont sur Internet au collège. Mais ça n'est pas une bonne formation pour eux car à la maison ils n'ont pas ce filtre.*

*(...the general advice is to install filters. But the schoolchildren can't achieve anything because the filters are too strong, they sometimes shut out too many things. There is therefore very little risk young people who go online at college. But it is not good training for them because at home there are no filters.)*

### **Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with**

Each association members could reply to this enquiry. Contact Nicole Alpha : [nalpha@unaf.fr](mailto:nalpha@unaf.fr)

### **If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them**

- *Que pensent les parents des logiciels de contrôle parental?* CIEM – 25 septembre 2007
- *Comprendre le comportement des adolescents sur Internet*, Fréquence Ecole – 2010
- Groupe de travail AFNOR avec Olivier Péraldi Délégué Interministériel à la famille

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

- Elisabeth Baton-Hervé, Patricia Toumieux, Christine Menzaghi, CIEME (Collectif Interassociatif enfance, Médias et Education) (NGO)
- Christine Hebrard, Collège Jean Charcot
- Martin Ya, Erasme (Government)
- Barbar Walter, COFRADE (Conseil Français des Associations pour les Droits de l'Enfant) NGO
- Dorie Bruyas, Fréquence Ecoles
- Claude Baudoin and Marie-Claude Bouvier, CRDP (centre régional de documentation pédagogique) de l'académie de Lyon
- Thierry Adnot, FADBEN (LycéePhilippe Lebon, Joinville)
- Caroline Mami, FADBEN
- Guillaume Armagnat, CRAJEP (comité régional des associations de jeunesse et d'éducation populaire)
- Mehdi Chebira, Conseil général de la Loire
- Claude Fouquet, e-enfance

## Germany

### The process of consultation

Within the framework of the EU Kids Online I project the German stakeholders have been involved in various respects:

- as members of the advisory board of the German EU Kids Online I project, which included representatives of ISPs, NGOs, public authorities, and research;
- as participants in the public project workshop in Hamburg on July 9, 2008;
- as participants at the presentation of the main results as well as the plans for EU Kids Online II at the large media conference in Cologne on June 24, 2009;
- as recipients of the EU Kids Online newsletter.

At the same time there is an active and well-coordinated platform for the coordination of safer internet activities in Germany, called "Safer Internet DE". The Advisory Board includes 19 representatives of the most relevant institutions involved in Safer Internet issues:

- Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
- Ministry for Education, Science, Youth, and Culture in Rhineland-Palatinate
- Ministry for the Generations, Family, Women and Integration in North Rhine-Westphalia
- Deutsche Telekom AG (ISP)
- Telefónica O2 Germany
- Microsoft Germany
- [eco](#) – Trade association of the internet industry
- *Voluntary Self-Monitoring of Multimedia Providers (FSM)*
- German Association for the protection of the child (Deutscher Kinderschutzbund)
- German Children's Fund (Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk)
- jugendschutz.net (organisation for youth protection, hotline)
- Helpline for children and young people („Nummer gegen Kummer“)
- Klicksafe (awareness campaign)
- Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media (KJM)
- The Media Authority of Rhineland-Palatinate (LMK)
- The Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia (LfM)
- Police organisation for criminal prevention (Polizeiliche Kriminalprävention der Länder und des Bundes)
- Schulen ans Netz e.V.
- Foundation Digital Opportunities ([Stiftung Digitale Chancen](#))

Due to the previous contacts that the German team has had with these stakeholders<sup>1</sup> and the well known positions of these organisations, which are documented on their website and the central website [www.klicksafe.de](http://www.klicksafe.de), no personal stakeholder meeting was organised. Instead, we had a meeting with the coordinating person for the Advisory Board of Safer Internet DE, who was ready to distribute the link to the EU Kids Online stakeholder questionnaire. Only 2 out of 19 stakeholders answered the questionnaire. This was due to the fact that the representatives

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<sup>1</sup> Amongst other projects and activities the Hans Bredow Institute has published a general evaluation of the German youth protection system, which was based on intense interviews and workshops with the respective stakeholders; see Hans-Bredow-Institut (ed.) (2007): Analysis of the System for the Protection of Minors from Harmful Media – Youth Protection Act and the Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors from Harmful Media. Final Report [in German], October 2007. Hamburg ([download as pdf-file](#)).

of these institutions assumed that after several years of collaboration the research we planned to do would be in line with the Safer Internet issues discussed in the public.

In the light of the above mentioned fact that the stakeholders did not really see that these questions, which have been discussed several times over the last years, could elicit new insights and thus were not ready to fill out the questionnaire, the very few answers can just provide a short sketch of what the stakeholders expect from the project. The results presented do not include too many surprises.

### **In Germany what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

- Consumer protection
- Protection of personal data
- Pornography
- Furthering media literacy from children's early days online, particularly in families and in school
- Parents being present while their children are using the internet
- Promoting the use of websites that provide information on safer internet use, e.g. [www.internauten.de](http://www.internauten.de)
- Providing a special space within the web, in which children can have their first experiences, e.g. [www.fragfinn.de](http://www.fragfinn.de)
- Raising parents' awareness of options for the autonomous use of filter software

### **In Germany what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

- Protection of personal data, consumer protection
- Promotion of greater awareness of options for the autonomous use of filter software
- Clear identification, delegation and organisation of responsibilities for furthering media literacy

### **Which national policies or initiatives in your country should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

- Enquete Commission of the Parliament of Rhineland-Palatinate "Responsibility in a mediated world"
- Government Programme "Medienkompetenz macht Schule" (<http://medienkompetenz.rlp.de>)

#### **Legal Framework:**

- Interstate Treaty on Youth Protection regarding television and internet (Jugendmedienschutz-Staatsvertrag - JMStV)
- Youth Protection Act (JuSchG)
- Interstate Treaty on Broadcasting and telemedia (RStV)
- Telemedia Act (TMG)
- Criminal Code (StGB)

#### **Organisations:**

- Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media (KJM)
- Working Group of Media Authorities (ALM)
- Federal Department for Media Harmful to Young Persons (BPjM)

**What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Germany?**

- The challenges of mobile communication
- Children start to use the internet earlier and earlier; and they use it more and more often
- Children are particularly looking for communication
- Online Communities are particularly attractive for children
- Children use the internet alone or with their friends, not with their parents

**What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

- Children are not sufficiently informed about risks and options to protect themselves
- Parents leave their children do what they like to do on the internet and do not even accompany them while they are taking their first steps
- Parents are not sufficiently aware of the risks and the options to protect their children
- Teaching media literacy plays only a minor role in schools

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

- Parents' lack of knowledge
- Sufficient information for and involvement of parents
- More support for media literacy in schools, implementation in the official curricula
- Efficient and viable legal standards and procedures in different countries

**Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with?**

- Klicksafe

**Planning for stakeholder presentation**

In order to follow a focused approach to the dissemination of the EU Kids Online II results we had to meetings with the coordinators of Safer Internet DE. We decided to prepare a major conference on Tuesday, December 7, 2010, in Berlin, where the results of our project will be presented and discussed by a) members of the EU Kids Online network, b) representatives of the different types of stakeholder, and c) politicians. The target group are all stakeholders in the field of safer internet issues. The Safer Internet DE partners will contact the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Funding will be provided by the Media Authority in Rhineland-Palatinate. Invitations to EU Kids Online network members will be distributed soon.

**List of stakeholders consulted**

See 'The process of consultation' above.

## Greece

### The process of consultation

After careful consideration and extensive discussion with the Head of the National Awareness Node in Greece, Ms Veronica Samara, it was decided that setting up a face to face meetings would not work in Greece for a number of reasons:

- Ms Samara has accumulated extensive relevant experience over time as regards the difficulties of convincing people to actually come to meetings and forums. Sometimes, people, although well-intentioned and positive, are either too overworked to be convinced to attend, or else cancel at the last moment. Regrettably, in her experience, there are more chances that people might attend when a whole event is set up, usually involving catering, as in the case of the forthcoming Safer Internet Advisory Board meeting coming up on 4 July. Mobilising people to attend yet another event (the Stakeholders Forum) would be difficult because participants would not consider this as something 'they have to do'.
- Having an online questionnaire would not work either- as proved in other cases by the EU Kids Online network. People tend to forget to respond to an online questionnaire, as Ms Samara has found out on a number of occasions.
- Greece is currently under extreme fiscal and financial pressure within the austerity package undertaken by the government. Hence, the timing of the Stakeholders Forum was unfortunate because it coincided with the announcement of the IMF-EU-European Central Bank measures for Greece and people would hardly consider children's online safety a top priority under these circumstances.

As a result, we opted for a targeted 'call to arms', getting in touch with specific stakeholders (identified by Ms Samara) to whom we sent the abridged questionnaire and asked for their participation. At first we turned to the members of the Greek Safer Internet Advisory Board, and following that, we turned to other stakeholders (recruited from a Safer Internet meeting in Volos).

### **In Greece what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

Responses differed according to the stakeholder's background, i.e. those who came from official members of the Advisory Board were to the point and raised policy-related issues, whereas those coming from other stakeholders (i.e. educationalists, government officials, the church) were more or less technophobic and alarmed.

The main policy issues identified were:

- Awareness raising regarding the internet as providing a new means for interacting rather than just yet another entertainment tool
- Awareness raising for educationalists, parents and children themselves
- Filtering practices
- Adoption of appropriate regulatory steps to ensure online safety for children
- The introduction of online safety as a learning tool at school
- Prevention of online addiction
- Protection of online privacy in social networking sites
- The ongoing updating of parents and children regarding the latest technological fad and the safety risks it might entail

- Appropriate internet conduct and use, especially by adults as they are role models for children

Other responses identified specific online risks such as:

- Protection from online porn
- Protection from various forms of electronic crime
- Stranger danger
- Online bullying
- Gambling
- Suicide
- Paedophiles
- Gaming

### **In Greece what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

Again awareness raising and information for parents and educationalists came on top, with attention also being paid to issues of personal freedom and rights. Some suggested the creation of action groups of teachers and children who will 'pass it on' to the rest on neighbourhood level, while others pointed to the desirability of creating appropriate content for children only and the promotion of self protection and personal responsibility. Another view was one suggesting that a unique body should take over responsibility and coordinate all online safety actions. Others suggested caution in the adoption of policy measures by the government when the latter lack a basic safety awareness, as in the case of this year's initiative of free netbooks for 13-year old school children from the Ministry of Education (young teenagers were given wireless internet connection at school on their own netbooks without having previously established that either they or their teachers were aware of how to stay safe online).

### **Which national policies or initiatives in your country should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

The majority of respondents left this unanswered, or said that they did not understand it or did not feel they were in any position to answer it. Those who did, identified the initiatives of the national awareness node ([www.saferinternet.gr](http://www.saferinternet.gr)), the Greek School Network ([www.sch.gr](http://www.sch.gr)), the Greek digital crime squad, and the Greek Digital Awareness and Response to Threats agency ([www.dart.gov.gr](http://www.dart.gov.gr)).

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Greece?**

Some argued that digital illiteracy regarding online safety and internet addiction are distinctive. Others talked about the lack of parental mediation and control, about fashionable online games that children ought not to play, the race for the highest score. the harassment and breach of online privacy that takes place in SNSs where children think they can do whatever they want with impunity, illegal downloading, peer pressure to adopt specific sites and online conduct and the fact that there was less internet use and adoption in relation to other western countries coupled with less awareness of online risks.

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

Most participants agreed that a lack of risk awareness and increased digital illiteracy on the part of adults (teachers and parents alike) will be the predominant issues. Others added the lack of

communication between parents, teachers and children, excessive use of SNSs, cyber bullying, personal grooming and online aggressiveness.

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

- Lack of appropriate content for children, and of well informed speakers to take part in online safety awareness events across the country.
- Lack of media literacy, especially in the senior grades of primary school when the foundations for proper online use are laid.
- The fact that it is difficult to strike the right balance between censorship and regulation of inappropriate content when deciding which sites to leave open for children.

One of the most important points raised was the fact that ignorance or half-literacy regarding online risks may mislead adults and children so that they either underestimate the gravity of the situation or demonise online technologies. As a result, there is either total lack of parental mediation or a 'lock down' of online technologies.

### **Is there anything else to add to guide our work?**

Very few actually understood what we were asking here, so I will focus on the most interesting suggestions.

One of the participants suggested using YouTube and Facebook groups to air children's experiences and thoughts from different countries. Others suggested collaboration with the institution of 'Schools for Parents', organised by the Ministry of Education. And others suggested providing ongoing information and updates on issues of online safety and risk through the media (using micro media as well) across the country.



## Hungary

### The process of consultation

During the weeks of the Stakeholders' Consultation we tried to reach all the relevant actors. Since Hungary is a new member in the network, we first had to map the institutional and civic environment and find those who are responsible for this field or interested in the topic. After the identification of the stakeholders we approached them by phone or in letter, introducing the research and explaining the process of the consultation. Our experiences were very positive: all of those we have contacted were very supportive, helpful and a good many of them welcomed the project as an initiative long needed in Hungary. However, most of them chose to answer our questions online with the help of the Google questionnaire we had translated into Hungarian.<sup>2</sup>

This enthusiasm is reflected in the answers too. Everybody asked for further information about the results and (except one person) everybody agreed to join to the mailing list.

The answers to the question which was asking about the possible outcomes of the survey were mixed. Half of the respondents was confused, and did not know what to answer. A few expressed a general concern about "yet another survey". Somebody considered drastic measures as the next step. Other respondents have been optimistic and looked at the survey as a good tool for different institutions – for Hungarian decision-makers, stakeholders; for the media; for parents and schools; and for NGOs and stakeholders at EU-level.

Although we are quite content with the results and the number of people we could contact we are far from the end of the process. Since we only just started contacting the stakeholders in this period we needed quite a long time to get the interviews. We still have fixed interview appointments for the next few weeks (mainly with governmental stakeholders). We will update this summary with any new information after these meetings. However, Hungary's governmental structure and actors will most probably change in a few weeks, since a new administration will start to work in the country. This means that we have to update our stakeholder contacts and approach the new people.

All in all, this consultation period was very fruitful: we contacted the most important persons in the field and let them know about the project and its future schedule. Based on the now active relationships we are planning a roundtable with the stakeholders at the end of June.

### **In Hungary what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

The answers given to the question on the main problems in online safety in Hungary could be arranged in four groups.

The notions in the first group mainly emphasised the problem of information-dissemination. It is partly an "online-problem", which means that the different services and portals do not have any signs, warning signals, etc. The offline side of the problem is the absence of solutions, or the absence of information about solutions.

The second group of answers dealt with the question of responsibility. It defined the different groups, who are accountable for the problems. This is important, because children connect "freely" to the internet, and there is no awareness of the dangers. Some respondents claimed

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<sup>2</sup> See the list of interviewees at the end of this document.

that the main place of children going online is at school, which means that there is more possibility to control the children's activities. But many stated the work done at school is not enough, and it does not begin early enough. Many of the respondents saw parents as the main actors. But according to a several participants parents are fleeing from this responsibility. Others thought that the level of trust between children and parents is not high enough to speak freely about this problem and the mediation is insufficient. Several interviewees emphasised the fact that teachers and parents do not have the necessary information. Someone mentioned that the Hungarian Ministry of Education does not care about this problem, and another respondent said that there is not enough governmental support in this field. The third responsibility-group is civil society, but it does not have enough resources. And lastly, the ISPs are unethical, unscrupulous, and adult content is too easily accessible.

The third field of problems can be summarised as the problem of content. One group of content is clearly dangerous. One recent development is that sites with hateful content are becoming more and more legitimate. Another group of content is addictive content. Additionally there are services whose main features make it hard to prevent abuse (chats, forums, etc.). A further group of content-related problems incorporates questions of privacy. And, finally, the children themselves are not aware of dangers – for instance, it is common for them to upload intimate images.

The fourth field of problems deals with regulation, law – although it was mentioned only once in a direct way.

### **In Hungary what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

The answers to the question about the most discussed topics were very diverse. Some respondents gave general answers, others mentioned concrete programmes they know or are involved in.

The specific programmes included research on sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography (an eNACSO framework), some NGOs and some business initiatives. Specific institutions were also mentioned, for the lack of programmes – the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Education, the National Radio and Television Commission.

Several answers stressed the role of NGO initiatives. These organisations are the only ones who do real work in the field of prevention, but they lack resources, more support should be allocated to them.

The problem of information-asymmetry was mentioned numerous times. The children know much more about the world of the internet. There were differences about possible solutions. One side argued that more restrictions should be made, while others said that education and information-dissemination is essential – restrictions are not good, they do not achieve anything significant.

A further structural problem is the absence of a unified strategy, or the lack of authorisation for the adequate institutions.

Some respondents mentioned that there are many discussions about negative or harmful contents, but less on possible solutions and strategies. Viruses and the effects of social networking sites seem to be an often discussed topic as well.

**Which national policies or initiatives in Hungary should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

The most commonly mentioned Hungarian initiative was the “*Biztonságos Böngészés Program*” (Safer Browsing Programme). It is followed by

- an NGO joint programme, referred to as SIP, which is part of the EU Safer Internet Programme
- “Gyermekebarát Internet Charta” (Child friendly Internet Charta).
- Other mentioned programmes include (with one mention):
- a school-programme of the Hungarian police
- “Gyermeke média Akadémia” (Childmedia Academy)
- “Barátságos Internet” NGO initiative (Friendly Internet)
- MediaSmart Program

**What would you say is distinctive about children’s internet use in Hungary?**

Regarding Hungarian children’s special patterns of internet usage, opinions varied in accordance with the respondents own experience. Respondents who participated in research or had direct contact with children in a usage-environment reported, that Hungarian children are more tolerant towards abusive content (pornography, hateful content, etc.), abusive behaviour (bullying, lying, etc.) or other online deviance than their peers in western countries. One explanation could be the big difference in knowledge between their parents’ generation and their own. But it also means that they gather more (streetwise) experience.

Other respondents held the view that Hungarian children do not differ from their peers in other countries concerning internet usage – this means, their situation is equally problematic.

One respondent mentioned the considerable differences between rural and urban areas, and another respondent mentioned the function of the internet as a “peer-substitute”.

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children’s internet safety?**

The opinions about the difficulties were once again mixed. The only recurring topic was the role of family/parents.

One opinion was that the differences between the generations pose a notable difficulty. The children have more knowledge and thus the parents are afraid to educate them. Others see it as something more general – the educational role of parents is shrinking anyway. One respondent considered the generational specialities of children. This means that children are generally “irresponsible”, less aware of dangers. As mentioned before, the educational work at schools is not enough and it begins too late.

One has to take into account the abilities of online criminals and supporters of illegal content. Most of the time they are ahead of the institutions or the forces whose task is to inhibit their activities.

A more general view noted the lack of connection between the different stakeholders – government, NGOs, parents, business players, etc. This is why there is no possibility to cooperate and to achieve self-organising initiatives.

The lack of real experts and guidance and the inappropriate regulations were also mentioned.

**List of stakeholders consulted**

**NGO**

- Alpár, Vera – Gyermekmédia Egyesület (Association of Children Media)
- Borsi, Zsuzsanna – Nemzetközi Gyermekmentő Szolgálat (International Children' Safety Service)
- Hargitai, Ferenc– Magyar Tartalomipari Szövetség (Hungarian Association of Content Industry)
- Mayer, Diána – Kék Vonal Gyermekkrízis Alapítvány (Kék Vonal Internet Helpline for Children)
- Mlinarics, József – Magyar Tartalomipari Szövetség (Hungarian Association of Content Industry)
- Körösné Mikis, Márta – Informatika és Számítástechnika Tanárok Egyesülete (Association of Teachers in Informatics and Computer Studies)
- Pócsik, Ilona – MediaSmart Hungary Oktatási Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft. (MediaSmart Hungary)

**Academic**

- Parti, Katalin – Országos Kriminológiai Intézet (National Institute of Criminology)
- Zsuzsanna, Molnár – Szociálpolitikai és Munkaügyi Intézet, Gyermek és Ifjúságkutatási Főosztály, (Institute of Social Policy and Labour, Department of Child and Youth Research)

**Business**

- Fekete, Zsombor – egyszervolt.hu (egyszervolt.hu is a safe webpage for children with contents for parents as well)
- Schiroky Vilmos – Biztonságos Böngészés Program (Safer Browsing Programme)

**Government**

- Varga, Gábor – Budapesti Rendőrfőkapitányság (Budapest Police Department)

## Ireland

### The process of consultation

Brian O'Neill gave a presentation to Ireland's Office for Internet Safety Advisory Committee at its quarterly meeting on April 28th, 2010. The Office for Internet Safety (OIS) was established in March 2008 as an Executive Office of the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform. The OIS has primary responsibility for the development and promotion of strategic actions to promote internet safety, particularly in relation to combating child pornography. The Office for Internet Safety plays a key role in ensuring a cohesive approach is being taken across Government Departments, State Agencies and other key stakeholders in addressing illegal content on the internet. The Office for Internet Safety oversees the current self-regulatory framework that is in place under the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI).

The Internet Safety Advisory Council (ISAC) comprises key stakeholders in the statutory, industry and community sectors relevant to internet use in Ireland. Its role is an advisory one and it has the responsibility to:

- Advise the OIS on all aspects of internet safety, particularly as these relate to children
- Contribute to the monitoring and implementation of EU and UN decisions relating to internet safety
- Contribute to monitoring and evaluation of the self-regulation framework to ensure a safer internet environment
- Advise on priorities for research in this field
- Advise on awareness raising in addressing illegal and harmful use of the internet
- Advise on the development of mechanisms to engage with the key players
- Examine and assess the current approaches both domestically and internationally to addressing the problem of illegal and harmful use of the internet

Membership of ISAC includes government department representatives, regulatory agencies, education, child protection, law enforcement, and NGO groups. The presentation to ISAC provided a full briefing on EU Kids Online II, the questionnaire and the impending fieldwork in Ireland. An explanation of the purpose of the stakeholder consultation was given and all members were invited to contribute to the online questionnaire.

The meeting itself generated a full discussion and a lot of interest in the project. Members of ISAC were very interested in the potential of the national dataset and a report at national level to advise policy makers.

### In Ireland what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?

The following were proposed as the key themes for internet safety in the Irish context:

- *Cyberbullying* This is the most widely articulated concern, particularly as expressed by parents.
- *Parental Awareness* There is concern at the lack of participation by parents in children's online activities or their awareness of risk issues. Regulating the amount of time children spend online is a widely reported concern expressed by parents. Parents seem to feel that the likelihood of internet grooming is relatively low, possibly to the extent that they underestimate the risk. Parents also express concern about regulating the amount of time that their children spend online.

- *How to Deal with Illegal and Harmful Content* This includes access to and the distribution of child pornography as well as concern at the easy access to adult material and inappropriate content for minors
- *Education for Children in relation to Positive Use of Internet* Ireland has a well established internet safety education programme available in schools but the take up and opportunities for learning responsible online behaviour from a very young age remain important national issues.

### **In Ireland what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

The Internet Safety Advisory Council (ISAC) is the principal national forum for the discussion of policy recommendations for internet safety and is representative of all the main stakeholders in the field. The main topics of discussion have been:

- *Combating Illegal Content* How best to do this has been an important focus for ISAC. Discussions have taken place on content filtering and blocking, and relevant international experience. Introduction of panic buttons on social networking websites, how to deal with internet piracy.
- *Public Awareness Raising* The importance of reaching a variety of audiences, i.e. children, parents, educators, general public.
- *Appropriate institutional arrangements to best achieve a safer internet for children* Self-regulation v. regulatory directives for Internet access providers

### **Which national policies or initiatives in Ireland should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

Two main elements were mentioned:

- *Work of Office for Internet Safety and Internet Safety Advisory Council* - see [www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie)
- Awareness raising work particularly through education system: see [www.ncte.ie](http://www.ncte.ie) , [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) , [www.watchyourspace.ie](http://www.watchyourspace.ie)

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Ireland?**

Children's internet use in Ireland is not thought to be particularly different from most western countries. In the absence of detailed data, the amount of time children spend online is thought to be a possible factor as is the broad adoption of social networking sites by teenagers, originally with a rapid uptake of Bebo use and more recently shifting towards Facebook.

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

It will confirm and consolidate the findings from previous research studies.

- It was thought that Cyberbullying is likely to be the most frequently encountered risk
- It was also suggested that we are unlikely to find any new information of which we were not already aware (e.g. importance of peer mediation vs. parents involvement)
- Long hours spent on internet having a detrimental effect on school work and face-to-face social relationships
- Exploratory and 'risky' behaviour online, especially among teenagers.
- The research might also show a trend towards greater awareness of online risks among kids & teenagers resulting in less 'risky' behaviour on their part

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

From the point of view of the Office of Internet Safety, the main issue is a lack of consensus at a national level on whether or not it is desirable to introduce a internet blocking/filtering system with the aim of preventing access to illegal content, i.e. child pornography.

More generally, it is also reported that the lack of parental awareness, knowledge or understanding about online culture for children is a major barrier to improving internet safety. This applies to some extent to teachers, also hampering effective uptake in schools of the internet safety education programmes. The general commercial environment and media pressure bearing on young users of internet - encouraging inappropriate and risky behaviour – is also identified as a difficulty.

**If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them**

- Ipsos MORI / National Centre for Technology in Education (2009). *2008 Survey of Children's Use of the Internet in Ireland*. Dublin, NCTE.

**Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with**

Main organisations represented within the Internet Safety Advisory Council:

- *Hotline* ([www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie)) Irish hotline for public reports of child pornography.
- *Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland* (<http://www.ispai.ie/www.ispai.ie>)
- *Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)* (<http://www.ispcc.ie/www.ispcc.ie>) Website for ISPCC who campaign and lobby for children's rights.
- *NCTE* ([www.ncte.ie](http://www.ncte.ie)) The **N**ational **C**entre for **T**echnology in **E**ducation is an Irish Government agency established to provide advice, support and information on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education.
- *Data Protection Commissioner* (<http://www.dataprotection.ie/www.dataprotection.ie>) This site gives information on individuals' rights and on organisations' responsibilities with regard to data protection.
- *Ombudsman for Children's Office* ([www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie))

## Italy

### **The process of consultation**

Due to the distribution of relevant stakeholders throughout Italy, and mainly in Rome, we faced some problems in organising a single face-to-face meeting in Milan, and so preferred to conduct an online consultation, for which we translated the questionnaire into Italian.

Of the over 70 invitation emails we sent, we had 27 responses (around one third). The respondents are unevenly distributed among different kinds of organisations, with academics (from media studies, education and psychology) prevailing (12 respondents), followed by NGOs (6 respondents), governmental institutions (from local authorities for communication and from postal police) and companies (Microsoft, Netlog and Digital PR- a web marketing company).

The majority of respondents expressed interest in the project and in being updated on our findings. So, apart from direct feedback, the consultation proved to be an efficient means of promoting the EU Kids Online network outside the immediate network of our contacts.

### **In Italy what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

These were universally recognised by all respondents and concern two main problems. One has to do with education – namely the lack of a media education in schools, a generational gap that prevents parents and teachers from sharing their children's online experiences, and the overall low digital literacy and digital penetration in Italy. The second issue concerns normative policies, that is the development of a self-regulation code and an advisory board made up of companies, NGOs and other institutions (as desired especially by the respondents from companies) and the need for a stronger normative control on the internet (expressed especially by police and institutional authorities).

### **In Italy what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

Respondents identified two problems that gain most visibility in the public space. One is paedo-pornography, and the related risks of online grooming and exposure to pornographic content. The second is the dissemination of personal information in SNS, identity theft, and other issues of privacy. Regarding the debate on online risks, academics and companies highlighted the influence of media panics on the perceptions of risks, especially as regards peado-pornography. Moreover, academics expressed the fear that institutions will adopt only restrictive policies aimed at reinforcing control and censorship over the internet, rather than enhancing an intrinsic feature of the web, that is, freedom of information and expression. They wished, therefore, to see the adoption of education policies, rather than the growth of restrictive and normative control.

### **Which national policies or initiatives in Italy should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

Respondents reported that national policies and initiatives aimed at promoting online safety are still too fragmented and isolated. Nonetheless, they identify some good examples of awareness raising and education as regards online safety that are represented by the Postal Police education initiatives in schools, the Safer Internet day and the Safer Internet node awareness campaign and a government campaign against cyberbullying. Apart from the exceptions mentioned, they lamented a lack of coherent and continuing awareness initiatives, a persisting



normative gap (norms are not updated according to the latest internet risks), a lack of knowledge of these issues on the part of politicians and members of Parliament, and a persistent moral panic combined with low expertise.

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Italy?**

Respondents were divided in relation to distinctive features of Italian children's internet uses. Some of them expressed the belief that a shared and transnational youth culture, in which SNSs have a great part, is reducing any previous gap between Italian kids and their European peers. Others, instead, noted the persistence of a digital divide in our country, expressed in terms of: lower overall penetration of broadband internet, less internet use in schools and the limited familiarity of government members and policy-makers with the internet. In particular, the divide between the digital generation and their parents' generation is deemed responsible for creating suspicion and more panic in the public debate, and also for weak parental mediation (that especially academics recognise as a key factor in promoting online safety).

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

The results they expected from our questionnaire are the following:

- A deeper and improved comprehension of the balance between online opportunities and risks, to be capitalised upon in awareness campaigns directed towards institutions themselves and in initiatives promoting prevention and safer behaviour online
- Useful knowledge from transnational comparison, which may help in homogenising policies and media education initiatives
- The discovery of varied risks perception according to cultural background and the digital literacy of parents
- The perception that sexual risks (pedopornography, grooming and meeting offline an adult met online, exposure to unwanted sexual and pornographic content) are overestimated. They are surely the most dangerous risks but not so widely diffused among children
- As regards children's uses of the internet, the main anticipated results are contradictory:
- Limited digital literacy and media education that result in children being unable to face and solve online problems
- Limited ability to protect their privacy
- Children being contacted and groomed by strangers
- Children's greater ability to protect themselves from online risks than is normally perceived ('they know they can disconnect and switch off the computer')
- A divergence between high awareness of online risks and their actual practices (that is, children know what risks to expect but not how to prevent them or react)
- Commercial risks, identity theft and misuse of personal information
- An overestimation, by children, of privacy and anonymity
- Online dating among peers
- Malware
- Cyberbullying

As far as parents' risks perceptions are concerned, respondents expressed the feeling that they may be strongly influenced by media panics and media representations of online risks.

To sum up, respondents are divided in their conclusions. Some think children are conscious of online risks and practise defensive strategies to protect themselves. Others believe children are exposed to greater risks than what they can face and solve. They are given too many complex

responsibilities as compared to previous generations, be it simply how to manage their mobile top up.

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

Respondents pointed also to some difficulties in improving children's safety online. The major difficulty is, once again, by the low rate of digital literacy among the generation of parents, teachers, institutions and policy makers. The second limitation is identified in the fragmentation of awareness initiatives and lack of a coordinating body. Finally, some point to problems in the language and tone used in awareness campaigns.

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

Alessia Mandato, Istituto Comprensivo "Falcone" (School)  
Francesca Di Massimo, Microsoft (Company)  
Vincenzo Cosenza, Digital PR (Company)  
Ivan Marino, Netlog (company)  
Maria Luisa, Sangiorgio, CORECOM (Government)  
Elena Masè, CORECOM (Government)  
Marco Cervellini, Polizia Postale  
Assunta Esposito, Polizia delle Comunicazioni  
Eleonora Panto, CSP / Dschola (NGO)  
Lucio D'Abbicco, AGESCI, Associazione Guide e Scout Cattolici Italiani (NGO)  
Franco Ferrara, CENTRO STUDI ERASMO onlus (NGO)  
Orazio Nobile, Fondazione Giovanni Paolo II onlus (NGO)  
Amelia Capobianco, Associazione Culturale No Profit MediaEducation.bo (NGO)  
Silvio Borsari, S.O.S. Il Telefono Azzurro Onlus (NGO)  
Luca Rossi, Università di Urbino "Carlo Bo"  
Giovanni Boccia Artieri, LaRiCA - Università Urbino "Carlo Bo"  
Stefano Zanero, Politecnico di Milano  
Cristiana Ottaviano, Università degli Studi di Bergamo - Facoltà di Scienze della Formazione  
Diana Salzano, Università di Salerno  
Fabio Giglietto, LaRiCA - Università di Urbino "Carlo Bo"  
Davide Borrelli, Università degli Studi del Salento  
Simona Tirocchi, DISEF - Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione e della Formazione - Università di Torino  
Davide Bennato, Università di Catania  
Angela Costabile, Università della Calabria  
Cristina Pasqualini, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano  
Carlo Galimberti, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano

## Netherlands

### The process of consultation

The management of the consultation process was discussed during an advisory board meeting, consultation took place at a larger expert meeting and effort was invested to get as many people fill out the questionnaire, unfortunately with low results.

The stakeholders' consultation in the Netherlands was held on March 5th, 2010. The consultation was part of the agenda of the joint advisory board of EU Kids Online, the insafe node (Digivaardig & Digibewust) and the inhope node (Meldpunt Kinderporno). The meeting started with a formal moment during which the first copy of the Dutch summary of EU Kids Online I was given to former Minister of Education Tineke Netelenbos. She is now the chairman of the steering committee of the programme Digivaardig & Digibewust. Including her, 10 people took part in the stakeholders' consultation.

During a larger expert meeting (approximately 40 people) organised by insafe node (Digivaardig & Digibewust) and NICAM on January 21, 2010 much the same issues around safety, skills and resilience were discussed. At this meeting Jos de Haan, representative for the Netherlands in EU Kids Online, summarised the outcomes of EU Kids Online I, as an empirical basis for further discussion. Results of this discussion are also included in this report.

Furthermore, the members of the advisory board were asked to fill out the questionnaire - a link was sent to them. This request was also sent to a wider Linked In group of those interested in media literacy. The response was low, as usual in the Netherlands. However I know that more people have filled in the questionnaire than are included in the database.

### Main outcomes

All participants considered issues on internet safety to be important, however different emphasis was placed by the different participants. Yet a number of issues stands out, repeated several time, and they are both considered most important and already subject to policy attention. These concerns include the safe use of mobile phones and other mobile devices, media literacy / information skills, cyberbullying and child pornography (illegal content). Other issues are mentioned can be found in the output per question below.

There are several ministries involved in policy issues regarding safe internet use by children, particularly the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the the Ministry of Justice. The ministries support a wide range of organisations involved in specific issues (see below for the most important ones). Furthermore there are private initiatives to improve children's safety, and major companies are also involved in discussions about improving safety.

The expectations regarding the results from the EU Kids online II work was rather general, mostly due to unfamiliarity with the questionnaire.

There was wide interest in the project, many people want to be kept informed. Yet it has to be noted that a large extent this interest is passive. We will have to bring the results to them.

### In the Netherlands what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?

Issues often mentioned included:

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- safe use of mobile phones
- media literacy
- cyberbullying

Other issues mentioned were:

- safe use of social networking sites
- privacy issues (putting personal information online) and cyberbullying;
- commercial risks, including phishing attacks,
- Abuse of digitally available personal information
- Unsolicited sexual solicitation
- Illegal and harmful content.
- Disclosing private information.
- Exploring what kinds of risks result in actual harm.
- Identifying vulnerable children. Special attention for these vulnerable children.
- Differences in perceptions between parents and children about risks (e.g. which risks parents see as a risk but children see as opportunity?)
- Multiple identities
- Games
- Infobesitas

### **In the Netherlands what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

Issues often mentioned included:

- use of mobile phones and other mobile devices,
- media literacy / information skills,
- cyberbullying
- child pornography (illegal content),

Other issues mentioned were:

- gaming-addiction,
- the lack of communication between children and parents/teachers on the (safe) use of media.
- internet pornography
- privacy issues
- pornography
- the privacy of the child.
- awareness raising.
- safety

### **Which national policies or initiatives in the Netherlands should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

- Mediawijzer, Medialiteracy by the Ministry of Culture ([www.mediawijzer.net](http://www.mediawijzer.net))
- Digivaardig/digibewust, (ECP-EPN)
- Mijn Kind Online
- Kinderconsument
- Meldpunt Kinderporno,
- Surfsafe
- Hotline for child pornography
- Academic research initiatives (University of Amsterdam, Communications section)

- Media Literacy network

**What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in the Netherlands?**

- In general 90% of the Dutch households are connected to the internet, in households with children this is even higher, reaching 100% among 15-17 year olds.
- There is a "long" tradition of young people's home internet access, ICT use very advanced
- We have a very high percentage of broadband subscribers
- 90% of all children in The Netherlands play casual games (Next Level Report --> <http://www.mijnkindonline.nl/uploads/NextLevelEnglish.pdf>).
- Social networking is very popular (Hyves) though it is unclear if this is very distinctive for The Netherlands.
- The mobile internet is going rapidly
- Education devotes much attention to internet use, and also to safety.
- In many countries school librarians are teachers. In the Netherlands school librarians have no educational qualification. In many primary schools there is no librarian at all; in many secondary schools the librarian is a volunteer.

**What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

Children are more vulnerable and know less about the internet than we think. They don't have enough skills, and it is difficult to develop those skills because few parents and teachers have enough skills and knowledge about the safe use of internet.

We think that the results will clarify that the risks are very common, and children are very often are exposed to these kinds of risks - especially those who have easy access to the internet and experience little parental control. The best solution to this is children browsers such as MyBee (<http://www.mybee.nl/general/english>).

Indirect risks are lacking: what are the long term risks for privacy (since content on internet never goes away), or risks relating to parents computers being compromised due to behaviour of kids?

Other points:

- Family relations (cohesion) are more important than parental mediation in predicting if and how children are confronted with risks and how they cope with them.
- Parents and children perceive different risks and there might be a tension between them.
- Vulnerable children especially have problems coping with risks.

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

Internet safety is not a very well defined concept. It consists of many elements and the skills it takes to behave safely on the internet are constantly changing because media are constantly evolving. As a result, nobody takes full responsibility for the safe use of internet/media. There are no clear agreements on who is responsible for what element of internet safety.

Other difficulties

- The lack of a national policy regarding making internet safety being a structural part of basic school education lessons

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- Hacker (or pervert) attacks on computers used by children are too sophisticated for children to defend against
- Lack of clear research findings
- Research is mostly outdated when published due to rapid technological changes
- There are difficulties with ISP's/ law enforcement.
- Some children are looking for risks online, just like they do offline
- The children who need protection the most are often the ones that will not be reached by policy initiatives
- It is important to promote the skills we needed by the parents. Not all parents have got the skills

### **If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them**

- [http://www.kijkwijzer.nl/upload/download\\_pc/74\\_final\\_YPRT\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.kijkwijzer.nl/upload/download_pc/74_final_YPRT_Toolkit.pdf)
- <http://www.mediawijzer.net/?q=dossiers/professionals/onderzoeken>
- <http://www.scp.nl/>

### **Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with**

- Martijn Huigsloot, Advisor Strategy and Policy, NICAM [Martijn huigsloot@nicam.cc](mailto:Martijn.huigsloot@nicam.cc)
- Tiffany van Stormbroek, Coordinator Kijkwijzer, NICAM: [strombroek@nicam.cc](mailto:strombroek@nicam.cc)
- Mary Berkhout: [m.berkhout@kennisnet.nl](mailto:m.berkhout@kennisnet.nl)

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

The participants had different background, some from academia, some from ministries or policy organisations, some from ICT companies. The members of the advisory board of EU Kids Online who were present are:

- Bekkers, W., Stichting NICAM/Kijkwijzer
- Berg, M. van den, ICT en Onderwijs
- Bonthuis-Krijger, M., ECP – EPN
- Groeneveld, C., KLPD
- Lee, R. van der, Stichting Kennisnet
- Noten, T., ECPAT Nederland
- Pekelharing, M., Meldpunt kinderporno op Internet
- Pijpers, R., KPN Internet Solutions
- Peter, J., Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA)

## Norway

### The process of consultation

The consultation was conducted extensively. While the final output in terms of number of responses might seem low (8), the responses were obtained from major key stakeholders representing whole sectors in Norway (such as the education sector, or the ICT industry as a whole). The most important outcome seemed to be increased interest in the EU Kids II project itself and its objectives. Many expressed a great interest in the dissemination of the results and wished for an extensive analysis of the data on a national as well as a European level.

The public consultation and stakeholder's forum in Norway consisted of three main parts:

- A consultation with the key stakeholders (industry, police, NGOs, research and education) represented in the advisory board of the national awareness centre on April 7th. Following an introduction of the project and the importance of the stakeholder consultation, the representatives in the advisory board members filled out the questionnaire online. For those who had not filled out within a week after the meeting, a reminding e-mail was sent.
- Key stakeholders and experts were identified and sent an invitation by e-mail to answer the stakeholder consultation. This was followed up with a reminding e-mail as well as with a recommending e-mail from the national awareness centre
- The project was presented for a wide range of stakeholders and representatives from all sectors at a national meeting hosted by the Norwegian awareness centre at the Norwegian Media Authority in Fredrikstad, May 4<sup>th</sup>. All participants were urged to answer the stakeholder consultation.

### Main outcomes

The responses were very diverse, reflecting the different roles of the stakeholders that have replied to the consultation. Key outcomes included the emphasis on the fact that the internet and mobile phones are an integrated part of Norwegian children's everyday life, a growing concern over bullying and privacy issues, and an increased understanding that children are not only victims, but also potential perpetrators online.

### In Norway what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?

The responses were very diverse, reflecting the different roles of the stakeholders that have replied to the consultation. Most mentioned cyberbullying, privacy concerns, fighting against abuse and child pornography and media literacy.

Responses also included supporting and supplying parents and teachers with the knowledge and tools to enable them to guide their children/students in terms of safe and conscious use of media, and providing a reasonable regulatory framework with responsible corporate suppliers.

### In Norway what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?

- (General) use of social media such as Facebook
- Grooming – how to stop it
- Cyberbullying
- Children's right to privacy, freedom of speech, access to the internet at schools
- How to stop teenagers from publishing embarrassing photos of themselves on the net.

- Media literacy, the lack of consistency in the level of ICT competence among teachers.
- The mobile phone as a payment device
- A code of conduct and social responsibility among service and content providers.
- How to help parents support their children.
- Children playing adult games

### **Which national policies or initiatives in Norway should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

- [www.dubestemmer.no](http://www.dubestemmer.no) – Privacy awareness
- [www.brukhue.no](http://www.brukhue.no) - anti bullying
- [www.tryggbruk.no](http://www.tryggbruk.no) – Safe use (national awareness centre)
- [www.tips.kripos.no](http://www.tips.kripos.no) – Police reporting system
- [www.barnevakten.no](http://www.barnevakten.no) – NGO supporting parents

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Norway?**

- All children (99%) are online, and most have mobile phones
- Most children have access to the internet, take part in many social communities and produce their own content
- Use of the internet in general and social media in particular is an integral part of children's everyday life
- Ever earlier users, active users, increasingly experienced users
- Self-generation of sexual content sexting

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

One result anticipated was that we would find a fair amount of digital harassment, but most children are aware of the danger. Another result would probably be that children increasingly integrate the internet into their everyday life and mode of communication. Therefore the risks that they meet online will also become increasingly common (online bullying, privacy) sometimes with somewhat different consequences for different risks (spread and scope, etc.).

As regards further research it would be interesting to know how different groups have different contact patterns online and variation among groups as to how they cope with, for example, sexting. It is also interesting to relate this to the children's life offline and see it in relation to the child's wider welfare/family situation.

Second, how can we inform people about potential abuse without creating too much fear about the internet? The children we have been in touch with underline the fact that parents fear of potential abuse can have an unintended effect - that children are not allowed to be online and take part in important social networks. Being too focused on abuse and risks can hinder a good dialogue between parents and children, which is the most important protection for children.

#### **Other suggestions:**

- It is important to get more knowledge about how children use webcams - including the risks in regard to self-generated sexual content.
- It is important to get even more knowledge about children actively taking risks online - and how this makes children vulnerable for grooming
- It is important that the work is sensitive to children's rights to use media freely.



- Be more specific about what you mean by children

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

- To reach the vulnerable with differentiated campaigns and targeted information
- Balancing risk vs. opportunities and children's need to be connected
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones and mobile cameras
- An increase in commercial sites approaching children
- Media coverage of "worst case" scenarios
- Lack of funding for awareness initiatives

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

- Torbjørn D. Moe, Norwegian Center for ICT in Education
- Kari Laumann, The Norwegian Board of Technology
- Kaja Hegg, Save the Children Norway (NGO)
- Birgit Hertzberg Kaare, Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo
- Petter Brandtzæg, SINTEF (Academic)
- Helle Jacobsen, Norwegian Media Authority
- Torgeir Waterhouse, IKT-Norge
- Øystein Samnøen, Kids and Media (NGO)
- Nina Bolgan, Oslo University College
- Fredrik Skoglunn, Kripos, NCIS Norway (Government)
- Benedikte Koldingsnes, Bipper Communication

## Poland

### The process of consultation

We e-mailed a letter with the Stakeholders Questionnaire to 25 members of “Porozumienie na rzecz bezpieczeństwa dzieci w Internecie” (‘Agreement on the Sake of Children’s Safety on Internet’, see:

<http://webhosting.pl/Porozumienie.na.rzecz.bezpieczenstwa.dzieci.w.Internecie.podpisane>).

In reply we have received one e-mail and one phone call with questions regarding the study and an invitation to meet with the representatives of the ‘Agreement’.

Finally, we met with the representatives of this agreement on April 29th, 2010. The meeting was hosted by ‘Nobody’s Children Foundation’ and lasted 2.5 hours.

The Polish representative of EU Kids Online II was invited for the next meeting of *Research and Academic Computer Network* to present the EU Kids Online 2 study (in June 2010).

### Main outcomes

Polish stakeholders underlined the discrepancies between the rapid development of new technologies and internet access by the young generation and insufficient education and internet risk awareness on the part of the parents’/teachers’ generations in Poland. The consultations with stakeholders suggested that the Polish team of EU Kids Online II should concentrate on the following research questions:

- What is understood as being an ‘internet risk’ by children and parents/teachers (when risks are so common)?
- Whether children really report their risk experiences on the internet to their parents and whether parents know about their children’s risk experience?
- How do Polish children cope with internet risks?
- Do Polish parents really mediate internet use by their children (or use limits only)?

We evaluated the Polish stakeholders’ general interest in research findings as ranging from average to low. They prefer to seek out ready-to-use tools that might be helpful for increasing children’s safety on than Internet than showing an interest in research findings. That said, the ones who did participate were interested in the findings of the EU kids Online II survey that would show directions and means for educating the younger and older generations on safer Internet use by children.

### In Poland what do you see as the most important issues regarding children’s Internet safety?

- Most safe websites/resources provide entertainment; rarely education and guidance as to social or moral values
- There is not enough high quality web content for children in the national language (Polish) to promotes values through interesting and age appropriate content
- There is still too much vulgarity, violence and aggression on the internet; as a result children, as recipients, are prone having their sensitivity blunted
- There is peer aggression on the internet, e.g. problematic use of mobile phones for making inappropriate (harmful, gruesome, violent, etc.) films and spreading them through various internet communication channels (e-mail, YouTube)

- There are internet privacy problems; insufficient education about privacy, copyright, intellectual rights on the internet
- There is limited knowledge of the legal and personal (e.g. psychological) consequences of inappropriate behaviour on the internet
- There is a lack of obligatory and/or well composed media and ICT teaching programmes in schools
- ICTs are not integrated into education as a cross-curricular subject
- There are few media and ICT teaching programmes for teachers

### **In Poland what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

One of the main topics is the legal regulations concerning the technological blocking of pornography on the internet. There is a debate about to what extent Internet Services Providers are and/or should be responsible for harmful content, especially pornography.

Another important topic is media education in schools – right now it is not obligatory.

### **Which national policies or initiatives in Poland should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

Most policy makers undertake initiatives that are in accordance, for example, with findings of EU Kids Online I.

Among the most important organisations and/or initiatives are:

- Advisory Board of the Polish Safer Internet Centre – this has an advisory role for Government, Police, Ombudsperson for Children, etc.
- Dyżurnet.pl – a hotline created by the Research and Academic Computer Network in agreement with the European Commission under the framework of the Safer Internet Action Plan
- Kidprotect.pl Foundation - a non-profit making, non-governmental organisation, the Foundation's goal is the protection of children and youth against the threats on the internet and in real world. Kidprotect.pl run the oldest hotline in Poland where people can report on situations connected with child sexual abuse and paedophilia

One important initiative is „Porozumienie na Rzecz Bezpieczeństwa Dzieci w Internecie” ('Agreement on Sake of Children's Safety on Internet') that links the efforts of the Polish companies and institutions interested in children's safer Internet use.

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Poland?**

Polish children start their web activities at a relatively young age. The 'First Holy Communion effect': Polish catholic children at the age of 8 take their First Holy Communion, which traditionally is connected with gifts for children. In recent years among most popular gifts are computers (these days usually with an internet connection). They have replaced mobile phones, photo cameras, bicycles or wrist watches. Also, a huge number of teenagers are online.

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

The respondents agreed that children are at risk when online. Inappropriate contacts and the contents they can access on the internet will be the most often reported risk.

- The most common prevention tool may be the restriction of children's access to the computer or the internet
- We expect a "third person effect" – children and adolescents are aware of risks on the internet, but they are convinced that it is "others" (friends, colleagues, strangers) who encounter these problems
- Knowing what 'a threat' is does not mean knowing what 'safety' is; there is a gap between understanding risks and safety on the web
- There is more information about risks than education about appropriate and safe behaviour on the internet
- Children are risk-takers, they are motivated by need for exploration

Thinking about cultural factors, children's fear of parental punishment is probably greater than their fear of personal consequences of risky and/or inappropriate behaviour on the internet. Polish children are taught to be obedient rather than to be prepared to cope with threat or problems, so they probably will not report on the real level of risk they experience on the internet.

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's Internet safety?**

- There is a gap between children's (declared) knowledge about risks online and their (actual) skills
- There is a gap between parent's and children's digital literacy
- There are insufficient media and technology education programmes for children, teachers and parents
- There is insufficient awareness among Internet Services Provider's about Internet risks for children - ISPs do not consider themselves responsible and/or they are not convinced about their efficacy

### **If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them**

- The Nobody's Children Foundation has conducted the following research programmes (the research reports are available in Polish - <http://www.fdn.pl/strona.php?p=30>)
- Internet threats to children (2004, 2006) (in cooperation with Gemius) (report in Polish, 27 MB)
- Children's exposure to dangerous content on the Web (2006) (in cooperation with Gemius)
- Peer bullying and electronic media (2007) (in cooperation with Gemius) (download the report in Polish, 1,06 MB)

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

- Anna Paszkowska, [anna.paszkowska@arcabit.com](mailto:anna.paszkowska@arcabit.com), ArcaBit Sp. z o.o. [www.arcabit.pl](http://www.arcabit.pl) (the company provides institutions with anti-virus computer programs)

The representatives of the 'Agreement on the Sake of Children's Safety on Internet' in Poland that we met:

- Anna Rywczyńska [Anna.Rywczynska@nask.pl](mailto:Anna.Rywczynska@nask.pl), NASK (Naukowa i Akademicka Sieć Komputerowa - *Research and Academic Computer Network*), (A consortium: NGO + Public Commercial Body and Research Unit)
- Agnieszka Wrzesień, [Agnieszka.wrzesien@fdn.pl](mailto:Agnieszka.wrzesien@fdn.pl), Nobody's Children Foundation (NGO)

## Portugal

### The process of consultation

We organised a meeting on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, in Lisbon, 2.30-5.30pm, for the national advisory board, involving specific invitees working in education, schools, on internet programmes and those generally working with children and young people. For those who could not attend this meeting and national subscribers, we invited them to answer the online consultation with translated questions<sup>3</sup>.

We gave both groups access to the main areas of the survey, and during the meeting there was time to go into further detail about the project, adapting Sonia Livingstone's presentation for this purpose.

The consultation with the Portuguese stakeholders was fruitful, not only for gathering feedback on the survey and future directions for the project, but also for providing a sense of the urgency and interest in the project's results and recommendations. We had 23 participants with different profiles but there was a consensus about the limited debate there has taken place in this country on the issue of internet safety for children and young people, obscured by the Government's desire to distribute technology and access at a very fast pace.

### Main outcomes

As we have said in the general summary, there was a consensus about the absence of a public debate on internet safety for children and young people. This was especially stressed by teachers but not only by them. The Government programmes for distributing laptop computers and internet access to children caused great changes in schools, homes and families, but there was no preparation of children/young people, parents nor teachers, or campaigns about internet safety. This led to a recognition that there was insufficient awareness among young people about internet risks, and an inadequate preparation of parents and teachers to deal with children's use of the internet in everyday and school environments.

Besides pointing to this general framework, participants also posed the question about:

- copyright and educational opportunities, as there is a perception that children use the 'copy/paste' function for schoolwork, and download music and films
- sexual risks, connected to offline meetings
- commercial risks of over-use, especially for those who do not use broadband (the access distributed by governmental programmes was mobile access but not broadband access)

### In Portugal what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?

Participants highlighted the educational risks of children not using internet search facilities and having little safety information, as well as limited awareness of copyright issues (regarding information and multimedia content) and their criminal status. But there were also the risks of forming new relations through the internet (i.e. risks related to personal data, sexual risks, offline meetings). Several participants connected this to the need to promote media literacy.

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<sup>3</sup> At <http://www2.fcsh.unl.pt/eukidsonline/consulta.html>.

**In Portugal what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

Some said that there is 'not a real debate in this area', 'it is not a priority in the political agenda', as the government stresses access to technology over programmes of prevention and preparation of teachers and parents. The governmental programmes have only been discussed from a political and economical perspective. Literacy is again absent.

Some topics were, however, mentioned as being discussed: internet consumption and dependency, safety/protection and educational uses.

**Which national policies or initiatives in Portugal should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

Participants mentioned the programmes for distributing laptops and through them internet access to students and teachers (e-Escolas, e-Escolinhas, Magalhães, Novas Oportunidades). But they also noted the absence of programmes raising awareness of safety issue or ones devoted to media education, or one aimed at stimulating content production. They drew attention to the importance of research projects.

**What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Portugal?**

People mentioned how Portuguese children and young people have can more easily see the internet compared to their parents, and how this is related to the recent penetration of the internet in the country. There is greater access through mobile internet, which was distributed through the governmental programmes, so there can be some limitations on use because of that. Young people are left 'on their own' to learn about and use the internet.

**What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

Participants stressed once again the misuse of online information, little awareness of copyright, and uncritical use of the internet. They noted the sharing of personal data and cyberbullying.

Some said young people are not even aware that their practices might be risky.

One participant anticipated how the risks will be more associated with disadvantaged young people, who lack support from their parents. Another one stressed inequalities in gender and differences in the risks they might be involved in.

A group of participants thought that the value of the family is stronger in southern Europe and that means that there is greater protection of children, but also that dynamics inside the home are changing as people are spending less time together and more on their laptops.

**What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

There was a consensus that the main difficulty for internet safety is the absence of literacy or awareness programmes for children/ young people, teachers and families, programmes that promote a critical use of the internet and raise awareness of the real risks. A group of stakeholders mentioned that this makes media coverage alarmist and frightening for families, because there is no other source of information. Some participants also stressed the lack of resources for law enforcement.

**If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them here**

**International:**

- Kaiser Family Foundation,
- Royal Pingdom, John D. and Catherine T.
- MacArthur Foundation,
- L. Allaire da Centrale des syndicats du Québec;
- H. Yasuda, Japan (cyberbullying and teacher training); M. L. Genta;
- Brighi e A. Guarini, Department of Psychology, Italy;
- P. Smith;
- F. Thompson, N. Tippet – Daphne Project, U.K.

**National:**

- Ana Nunes de Almeida, Minho University, master theses.

**Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with**

- Gender Equality Commission (Comissão para a Igualdade de Género)
- Technological Plan of Education (Plano Tecnológico de Educação)
- Other universities (Minho, Algarve, Beira Interior, Lisbon)
- National Authority for Telecommunications (ANACOM)
- Safe Internet Association/Platform (NGO)

**Is there anything else you wish to add, to guide our work?**

Suggestions were made to integrate psychologists/psychiatrists, industry, NGOs, police and lawyers in the project.

**List of stakeholders consulted**

From the group of 16 online participants, there were mainly academics (7) or school teachers (4), but also two people from NGOs working with children, two from government and one from industry.

In the stakeholders meeting, we had 7 participants, four of whom were from NGOs, two from academia and one representing the police.

Maria da Graça Caridade Barbosa Pereira, Agrupamento de Escolas de Pico de Regalados  
António Cardoso, Universidade Fernando Pessoa  
Patrícia Cipriano, Associação Portuguesa de Crianças Desaparecidas  
Henrique Caetano, Escola Secundária de Raul Proença  
Maria João Silva, ESE Politécnico do Porto  
Vitor Tomé, ESE Castelo Branco  
Luisa Agante, IPAM/FEUNL/Media Smart  
Maria José Brites, FCT/UNL  
Elsa Rebelo, Agrupamento de Escolas do Algueirão  
Manuel Pinto, Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade - Universidade do Minho  
Rui Dinis, Escolhas  
Margarida Medina Martins, Associação de Mulheres Contra a Violência (AMCV)  
António Osório, Universidade do Minho  
Rosa Martins, Rede de Bibliotecas Escolares  
Bernardo Mota, Portugal Telecom  
Jorge Duque, Polícia Judiciária  
Maria Emília Brederode dos Santos, Conselho Nacional de Educação

## Stakeholder Forum

Maria João Malho, Instituto de Apoio à Criança  
José Brito Soares, Instituto de Apoio à Criança  
Tito de Moraes, MiúdosSegurosna.Net  
Sara Simões, Plataforma Internet Segura  
Rita Espanha, Obercom



## Romania

### The process of consultation

In Romania, the stakeholder consultations were conducted online and through a meeting held in Bucharest, on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Respondents mainly addressed the issues of safety and problems in increasing it, the most common themes being the lack of knowledge/involvement of adults and lack of policies/strategies related to online safety.

### In Romania what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?

One of the major problems raised was the significant cleavage or discrepancy between Romanian children and their parents in terms of internet use and literacy, which further perpetuates extreme viewpoints and the co-existence of the myth of the expert, techno-savvy child from an adult -protective perspective. One participant brought up the issue of parents even thriving on their children's ability to use the Internet in malicious ways and taking pride in their child's "victory" over other children (e.g. being able to break into an e-mail account, steal a password, crack a code, etc.). This gap in digital literacy between children and adults (parents, teachers, caregivers, etc.) makes it difficult for adults to act as advisers and easy for children to be careless online.

All participants seemed to agree that parents are unprepared, or at least that the majority are under-prepared, to deal with issues like safety and mediation of their children's use of the internet. Two participants (one online) went as far as stating that parents seem to have traded the TV as a baby-sitter for the computer or the internet, in order to take the load of parenting off their shoulders.

*"Indiferenta mare din partea parintilor. Copii sunt lasati ore intregi fara sa fie supravegheati inca de la varste fragede. Acestia pot cadea in diferite "capcane", deoarece doresc sa socializeze tot mai mult sau sa joace tot mai multe jocuri online (multe dintre acestea promoveaza un continut violent)".*

*(Major indifference of the parents. Children are left for hours unsupervised even from a very young age. They can easily fall in all sorts of "traps", because they want to socialise more or play more online games (a lot of them promoting violent content). D.D., a young blogger.*

Some participants mentioned the use of internet and chat-rooms as being cathartic (as a substitute for 'real' communication), in line with the logic of the previous argument. Other participants argued that children are too trustful of other children and they can easily become targets for malicious activities (computer remote control, Trojans, etc.). The common ground was that vulnerabilities are general, they are not simply online or offline, and addressing them should be a continuous process (one part of the solution being raising awareness among parents and teachers and working on increasing their digital competencies).

### In Romania what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?

The topic of children's online safety is not on the public agenda, it is practically non-existent. The topic of safety is relatively new, most of the efforts focus on creating more internet access, there are no coherent strategies to address topics like safety, or measure the impact on children. The main topics refer to the school curricula and the uses of internet. It should refer to programmes to develop critical thinking and reflective when using the internet and other new media.

Many changes are happening in the education system, every 2-3 years high-school children face major changes (e.g. the bacalaureate). Much money is being pumped into developing educational portals, but none for developing information sites related to safety (this was the opinion expressed by one online participant).

There are very few sites providing edutainment (online educational software and applications that are fun and less school-like) or positive content for children. Therefore children still have a contrasting view of education (school) versus fun and relaxation (the internet).

### **Which national policies or initiatives in Romania should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

There are no policies or strategies related to children's online safety. Most of the policies simply encourage Internet use. One participant mentioned training for professors, one offered by Siveco (IT initiation), the other one offered by the Ministry of Education (Initiation in knowledge society). The only relevant approach to children's online safety mentioned was sigur.info, a project of the Insafe awareness node in Romania.

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Romania?**

It is extremely relevant that HI5, the social networking site, is also the number one site in Romania in terms of the amount of traffic. One report released by the site showed that a significant proportion of users was under the age of 12 and in the age group 13-18. In addition, even though data from the Eurobarometer 2008 showed 70% of children used the internet, according to members of NAB, due to the divide in access between urban and rural areas, the numbers are even higher for urban youth, with more than 90% being online. Almost all of them, according to NAB, use Yahoo messenger (these data were confirmed for urban youth in a study conducted in Cluj-Napoca, 2007-2008<sup>4</sup>). The appeal that these two online media have for children was explained by one of the participants with reference to the ease of sending and receiving invite lists.

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

The risks are the same in every country (due to relative homogeneity in children's profiles, regardless of SES). The context, however, differs.

Two online participants expressed the viewpoint that the results concerning Romania will probably show there is a great deal of ignorance and unawareness of the risks associated with children's computer use.

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

All participants agreed that the lack of formal education curricula addressing topics like media literacy and internet safety for children and the lack of a coherent strategy and structure among various institutions for increasing media literacy and online competencies of teachers and parents are among the major drawbacks. For example, there are no strategies for addressing the migration of school bullying to online bullying or harassment. Also, there are no governmental policies related to promoting protection software in schools, and no education initiatives related to safety.

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<sup>4</sup> Barbovski, M., & Diaconescu, M. (Eds.). (2008). Annex. In *Teenagers' actions and interactions online in Central and Eastern Europe. Potentials and empowerment, risks and victimization*. Cluj: Cluj University Press.

In addition to the lack of formal education, informal education is also underdeveloped. Parents seem to have little or no information about technological mediation (parental controls and filters) and they do not have strategies for social mediation. Teachers also fall into this category - therefore they are not able to manage informed supervision and mediation.

One crucial moment for the initiation of parents was the introduction of computerised admission to high-schools in 2001, when parents started to feel the need to be informed.

There is no clear response chain when problems appear. Children are not thought to report problems to adults or relevant institutions.

However, a recent study released by Gallup Romania revealed some unsettling aspects of parents' involvement in their children's life. The survey investigated children's relations with their parents, in connection to their communication and interaction. The results show that almost half (49%) of children spend one hour or less talking or doing things together with their parents on a regular week day<sup>5</sup> and almost one third of them (30%) spend only one hour or less talking or doing things together with their parents on a weekend day<sup>6</sup>. This problem was mentioned by six of the respondents.

*"Inconstienta si naivitatea multor dintre parinti. Internetul poate fi un refugiu pentru copii care s-au plictisit de violenta de la TV, dar pot cadea aici intr-o campana si mai mare. Putine surse de informare despre siguranta copilului pe internet, putina implicare din partea celor din jur".*

*(Unawareness and naiveté of the parents. The internet might become a refuge for children tired of the violence on TV, but here they can fall into an even bigger trap. There are very few sources about child safety online, and little involvement of those around).*

What is seen as a communication problem between child and parent in relation to the internet actually reflects a larger issue, which is a parenting style characterised by a lack of continuous communication with the child, coupled with little investment of time with the child, and limited provision of alternative activities for children (e.g. exposing them to positive content) that would engage them and keep them away from potential problematic content/contacts.

Part of the solution offered by one participant was to explain to parents the effects of a lack of parental mediation with clear and real-life examples.

Another issue that was mentioned by four participants (two in Bucharest, two online) was the superficiality of children's understanding of what they encountered online and their failure to check or verify information found online, itself a sign of a more important underlying problem, which is the underdevelopment of critical thinking.

A final problem is the lack of access for most of the children in rural areas.

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<sup>5</sup> Gallup Romania research reported on a sample of 1002 children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, a 724 taken as a national representative sample and 278 forming a separate sample for children with 'absent parents', i.e. at least one parent working abroad or children who for most of their time do not live with their parents. Field work took place in January 2010 and involved self-completion questionnaires in schools.

<sup>6</sup> 21% said that for a typical weekday, and 13% for a typical weekend day, that they spent approximately one hour doing things with parents. The respective percentages saying they spent approximately half an hour were, 17% vs. 9%, the percentage of children saying the time was several minutes was 7% vs. 4%, while 4% and 4% respectively said they spent no time at all doing things with parents.

**If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them**

- IAB Europe, MC DC - Marketers & Consumers, Digital & Connected & MC DC 2009 – UNITE Report <http://www.iabeurope.eu/research/mc-dc.aspx> and
- <http://www.iabeurope.eu/media/27285/mc-dc-2009-iab-unite-report.pdf>
- Gallup Romania (2010, January). *Children's needs for communication and interaction* [Nevoile de interactivitate și comunicare ale copiilor]. Research report. Retrieved 25 April 2010, from: [http://www.timpimpreuna.ro/upload/p00020000\\_Rezultate%20sondaj.pdf](http://www.timpimpreuna.ro/upload/p00020000_Rezultate%20sondaj.pdf)
- Studies made by National Audiovisual Board and the Institute of Educational Science.
- Bunecu, Gheorghe, Negreanu, Elisabeta (coord.)(2005). *Educația informală și mass-media*. București: Institutul de Științe ale Educației Ileana Rotaru, "Educația pentru comunicare și mass-media ", Editura Eftimie Murgu, Reșița, 2009
- BRAT/SATI traffic data.
- Sigur.info & Kaspersky Lab study (2009, April). Study on Internet use of children and adults.

**Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with**

IAB Romania and APTI showed an interest in supporting EU Kids Online by sharing best practice and information. Media and especially new media companies should also be engaged more in increasing public awareness and moving the issues up the ladder on the public agenda.

**List of stakeholders consulted**

- Ana-Maria Teodorescu, [www.comunicare-relatii publice.ro](http://www.comunicare-relatii publice.ro)
- Ecaterina Balica, lecturer University Bucharest, probation counsellor Bucharest Court of Law, previous experience at the National Institute of Criminology and Ministry of Justice
- Ileana Vasilescu, NGO, digital competencies, [www.infotricks.ro](http://www.infotricks.ro)
- Catalina Nicolai, CNFP Ministry of Education, Netiquette, online privacy, copyright
- Ileana Rotaru, lecturer University "Eftimie Murgu", Resita
- Bogdan Manolea, lawyer, [www.legi-internet.ro](http://www.legi-internet.ro)
- Cristi China-Birta, journalist, [www.chinezu.eu](http://www.chinezu.eu)
- Mihail Dumitru Sandu, journalist TvrM
- Nicoleta Fotiade, Media Active Watch
- Ionut Codreanu, Media Active Watch

## Slovenia

### Main outcomes

The main topics of discussion amongst policymakers/stakeholders in Slovenia are: privacy issues, hate speech, cyberbullying and child pornography. Other topics, seen as important by the participants, are the illegal sharing of files, internet addiction and lack of computer education. The most important challenge to improving children's Internet safety is the lack of parents' and teachers' awareness of the dangers related to children's use of internet.

In Slovenia, several initiatives are focused on different approaches to improving children's safe use of internet. These initiatives could be interested in findings of EU Kids Online II research. That same interest was expressed by all of the participants.

### In Slovenia what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?

The participants were of opinion that children lack sufficient education regarding safe use of internet and that they are not aware of the potential consequences of sharing private information (or cyberbullying) nor of the line between right and wrong. Additional important problems are the illegal sharing of files, Internet addiction, online games, etc. The participants also pointed out that parents and teachers are not aware enough of the above mentioned problems and/or do not possess required knowledge to deal with them.

### In Slovenia what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?

Most of participants shared the opinion that the main topics of discussion are privacy issues, hate speech, cyberbullying and child pornography. Along with the already listed ones, the importance of educating parents, teachers and children was also pointed out. One of the stakeholders with a media background actually claimed that there were in fact no discussions, at least not ones that would reach the wider public.

### Which national policies or initiatives in Slovenia should we know about as relevant to our findings?

The projects mentioned by the participants were:

- ProjectSafe.si (the national Internet safe use awareness node, [www.safe.si](http://www.safe.si)),
- IP-RS.si (national information commissioner, [www.ip-rs.si](http://www.ip-rs.si)),
- Spletno oko (Web Eye – a national hotline that provides means for anonymous reporting of illegal Internet contents), [www.spletno-ok.si](http://www.spletno-ok.si)),
- SI-Cert (a national Internet incident response team, [www.cert.si](http://www.cert.si))
- e-šolstvo (e-Education – a teacher training programme, supported by the Ministry of Education and Sports), [www.sio.si/index.php?id=1957](http://www.sio.si/index.php?id=1957)).

### What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Slovenia?

The things participants found distinctive about children's internet use in Slovenia, are: children start using the internet at a very early age; parents do not offer their children the necessary guidance regarding safe use of Internet; and children are not aware of privacy issues (one of the symptoms would be frequent sharing of private photographs). They also pointed out the

recent increase of hate speech in forums and other interactive online media and the high use of peer-to-peer file sharing.

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

Participants expected that the results of our research will help open up discussion about this topic and help EU countries to develop or improve mechanisms for safe use of the internet. They also pointed out the possibility that results will be influenced by things children see, hear or read in the media and schools, and will not be based on their own experiences.

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

Participants agreed that the most common problem is a lack of parents' and teachers' awareness of dangers, related to children's use of internet. Another difficulty is that children accepted privacy disclosure as something normal or even desirable.

### **If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them**

The participants did not specify any relevant research studies, but pointed out that the people at Safe.si could be contacted.

### **Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with**

There were no ideas of whom to get in touch with, the only suggestion being Juvenile Crime Section (Criminal Police Directorate, Ministry of the Interior).

### **Is there anything else you wish to add, to guide our work?**

One of the participants recommended that the gap between different generations (different levels of computer literacy, different social norms, etc.) could be a potential topic of study.

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

The participants came from various governmental and non-governmental organisations, academia and also from private and public enterprises.

- Matej Kovačič, Faculty of Social Sciences
- Borut Campelj, Ministry of Education and Sport
- Albin Poljanec, Post and Electronic Communications Agency of the Republic of Slovenia
- Maja Vreča, Arnes
- Tomi Dolenc, Arnes
- Petra Zega, Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth
- Julijana Juricic, Trnovo Primary School
- Zvezdan Martič, RTV Slovenija
- Ursa Smid Bozicevic, Slovenian Consumers Association (NGO)

## Spain

### The process of consultation

The consultation process was carried out by sending out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to a total of 25 stakeholders. Of these, 11 responded to the online questionnaire. Most responses were from NGOs or governments and public bodies related to internet security. In general, industry representatives did not respond to the questionnaire - only TUENTI, the most important Spanish social network, did so. Other telecommunications companies gave no response. Over the coming months we will seek to engage with them when presenting our first research results.

### Main outcomes

The Stakeholder Forum has improved the relationship between the team and some high profile agents regarding the safety of minors on the internet. Thus, for example, among the opinions cited in this report are those of the director of Tuenti, the largest social network in Spain, data protection associations, state and regional government agencies, and NGOs, such as the Association of Internet Users and “Pantallas amigas” a very active initiative promoting a safer internet for minors.

This consultation has also allowed us to contact new agents that are very interested in the EU Kids Online research, and which have let us know of some interesting research and initiatives in this field (see question on studies)

As a result of this consultation we would highlight the following ideas with respect to Spain:

- Concerns about minors on the Internet are similar to those of any other country: privacy, cyberbullying, grooming or exposure to inappropriate content for minors
- Nevertheless special attention is paid to problems related to privacy, particularly due the high penetration of social networking sites in Spain
- The need to promote a risk prevention culture for the internet and improve training in new technologies for children, parents and teachers

### In Spain what do you see as the most important issues regarding children’s internet safety?

Most respondents agreed on those aspects that they consider to be important in relation to the safety of minors on the internet. Thus, the problems highlighted by almost all respondents are those related to privacy, cyberbullying, grooming or exposure to inappropriate content. Among these, the issue of privacy is the one which received the most attention in the responses, some of these comments focusing on the need to educate children as regards the idea of privacy, especially because of the high penetration of social networking sites among young people in Spain.

Most responses also indicated the need to foster a culture of risk prevention in the use of information technologies through the better training of children, and both parents and teachers, in the use of these technologies.

Finally, one of the responses also placed special emphasis on the risks related to excessive commercial communication aimed at children. The participant considered the excessive use of these technologies by some children show to be a risk and also felt that excessive purchases

on the internet or excessive mobile phone use showed a lack of responsibility among many children.

### **Which national policies or initiatives in Spain should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

The respondents mentioned policies or initiatives conducted at a general level by state agencies such as [Chaval.es](http://Chaval.es), [Protegeles](http://Protegeles.com) or [INTECO](http://INTECO.es). These initiatives provide websites with resources for parents and children about a safer use of the internet. The activities of the initiative “[Pantallas Amigas](http://PantallasAmigas.com)”, very active in developing training materials on new technologies for minors, were also mentioned.

Other actions highlighted were those carried out by data protection agencies in order to raise awareness of privacy issues among children e.g. initiatives by the [Spanish agency for data protection](http://Spanish agency for data protection) and the [Basque agency data protection](http://Basque agency data protection).

Finally, from a legal perspective, the Spanish law on data protection which sets the age of fourteen as the minimum to access social networking sites was also mentioned.

### **What would you say is distinctive about children’s internet use in Spain?**

Basically, there are two ideas that were repeated as being characteristic of the problem in Spain. The first was too much permissiveness regarding the use of technology by children, as characterised by low use of filtering or monitoring tools, accompanied by a limited awareness of the risks for minors who use of Internet. The second was the high penetration of social networking sites among young Spanish people, especially Tuenti. Apart from these two ideas, the high penetration of mobile phones among young people and the usefulness of social networking sites for children’s social development and social participation were also mentioned.

### **What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

Only two suggestions were made to improve the situation. One called for greater attention in the study of the habits of the youngest children, aged 9 to 10 years. The other called for greater dissemination of research results outside of academia so that they could be applied to policies.

### **If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them**

In general, all the studies were previously known to the group. However, some regional government actions were previously unknown to us. Most of them refer only to Spain. Below are all the studies and actions referred to:

- [http://www.protegeles.com/es\\_estudios.asp](http://www.protegeles.com/es_estudios.asp)
- <http://www.hacemosuntrato.com/> (Cyberaddictions)
- <http://www.seguridadweb20.es/> (Cyberaddictions)
- <http://www.agpd.es/portalwebAGPD/canaldocumentacion/publicaciones/index-ides-idphp.php>
- La sociedad red en Catalunya, estudio publicado por el Equipo Investigador del Proyecto Internet Catalunya (PIC) del Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3) de la UOC.
- Miranda de Larra, R (2005): Los menores en la Red: comportamiento y navegación segura. Fundación Auna. Cuadernos / Sociedad de la Información.



- Dictamen 5/2009, sobre las redes sociales en línea. Grupo de Trabajo sobre Protección de Datos del Artículo 29. [http://ec.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/privacy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.eu/justice_home/fsj/privacy/index_en.htm)
- "La Telefonía Móvil en la Infancia y la Adolescencia. Usos, influencias y responsabilidades" (Estudios e Investigaciones del Defensor del Menor, 2008).
- "La Intervención del Agente Encubierto en la lucha contra la pornografía infantil" (Estudios e Investigaciones del Defensor del Menor, 2007).
- "Seguridad infantil y costumbres de los menores en el empleo de la telefonía móvil" (Estudios e Investigaciones del Defensor del Menor, 2005).
- "La protección del menor en la regulación de los videojuegos" (Estudios e Investigaciones del Defensor del Menor, 2005).
- "Apología de la anorexia y la bulimia en internet" (Estudios e Investigaciones del Defensor del Menor, 2004).
- "Cibercentros y seguridad infantil en internet" (Estudios e Investigaciones del Defensor del Menor, 2004).
- "Seguridad infantil y costumbres de los menores en Internet" (Estudios e Investigaciones del Defensor del Menor, 2002).
- El Observatorio de la SI en Asturias  
<http://www.asturiasenred.com/easturias/contenidos/es/>
- El Observatorio de la Seguridad de INTECO
- Podría indicarnos a continuación si conoce algún estudio relevante sobre el tema
- Estudio sobre la seguridad de la información y la e-confianza de los hogares españoles (INTECO)
- Estudio sobre hábitos seguros en el uso de las TIC por niños y adolescentes y e-confianza de sus padres (INTECO)
- La Generación interactiva en España. Fundación Telefónica "Estudio sobre hábitos seguros en el uso de las TIC por niños y adolescentes y e-confianza de sus padres".  
[http://www.inteco.es/Seguridad/Observatorio/Estudios\\_e\\_Informes/Estudios\\_e\\_Informes\\_1/Estudio\\_ninos](http://www.inteco.es/Seguridad/Observatorio/Estudios_e_Informes/Estudios_e_Informes_1/Estudio_ninos)
- "Estudio sobre la privacidad de los datos personales y la seguridad de la información en las redes sociales online"  
[http://www.inteco.es/Seguridad/Observatorio/Estudios\\_e\\_Informes/Estudios\\_e\\_Informes\\_1/est\\_red\\_sociales\\_es](http://www.inteco.es/Seguridad/Observatorio/Estudios_e_Informes/Estudios_e_Informes_1/est_red_sociales_es)

### List of stakeholders consulted

- Alberto Pérez Cueto, Regional Government of Asturia
- Natalia Martos, Tuenti – Social Networking Site, (Industry)
- José Luis Zatarain, Protegeles (INSAFE), (NGO)
- Jorge Flores, Pantallas Amigas, (NGO)
- Ricard Martínez, Spanish data protection agency
- Ederne Barañano, Basque data protection agency
- Javier García, Ombudsman for children (Madrid),
- Mónica García, Basque Government
- Jose María Sánchez Burson, Innovation and Participation Observatory. Regional Government of Andalusia
- Innovation and Participation Observatory. Regional Government of Andalusia,
- Fundación CTIC Sociedad de la Información (Information Society Foundation)
- Ofelia Tejerina, Asociación Internautas (Spanish Association of Internet users), (NGO)

## Turkey

### **In Turkey what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

One of the important issues our participants mentioned was that of children contacting people who they do not know before. They also believe that Social Networking Sites are addictive for children and this consequently increases internet use. They emphasised the fact that families have major role to play in controlling and preventing harm from the Internet. Cyberbullying, child abuse and scams were other issues that the stakeholders pointed out. Stakeholders thought that children can too easily access websites which are not suitable for children. They argued that filters are not enough to save children from bad content. Although people know about technologies they are not aware of internet safety issues.

### **In Turkey what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

The main topics that stakeholders discuss are the effect of internet use on children's socialising habits, the risks which are coming via the internet, including accessing untrustworthy information because of uncontrolled connections, mental and psychological effects of internet use, the need for counselling to decrease cyberbullying, the importance of the family supervision because of children's uncritical internet use, whether the internet affect perceptions of reality, and finding an effective way to mediate children's internet use instead of prohibiting it.

### **Which national policies or initiatives in Turkey should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

In Turkey there is a lack of national policies on internet safety. Therefore the stakeholders did not give much information on this issue. The Ministry of Education prevents access to specific websites in school labs. Several Internet Service Providers also offers filter programs for children safety. However the stakeholders complained that we do not have enough infrastructure and national policy in this field. The official ways to provide internet safety are to control the Internet café's and prohibit the websites from having harmful content.

### **What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in Turkey?**

In Turkey most children meet the computer and the internet relatively late in their childhood, thus they gain awareness later than the children in other countries. In some parts of Turkey girls are not allowed to use internet or visit internet cafes. However, internet use is rapidly increasing among children. Most Turkish children use the internet to play games and to chat. On the other hand, they are not skilled in finding efficient information and while they are searching information they might be exposed to risks on the Internet. In other countries cyberbullying is common among girls while in Turkey it is common among boys.

The computer hardware might be inadequate to install the required software which prevents the risks on the internet. Children might not obey the rules that their parents and teachers make for them. Stakeholders also mentioned that they have difficulties in collecting data and putting the results into practice. The main research areas of stakeholders are cyberbullying, children's internet usage habits, and Internet cafes and their effects.

The stakeholders got excited when they found out about the project and they stated that they are hopeful about the outcomes of the project. Since there are not enough studies at the

national level, this project can be helpful to see the fundamental issues about risks and safety on the internet. The results can guide parents to what they need to do to provide internet safety. The stakeholders expected different results for populations from different SES.

**What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

The stakeholders recommended that project collect data from school administrators, teachers, media associates, and web- and game developers. Some of them also suggested that we ask questions related the games played online.

**Could you also let us know who else we should be in touch with**

The stakeholders suggested we contact Arif Altun, Sadegül Akbaba Altun, Oya Yerin Güneri, Tolga Arıca and Şeref Sağıroğlu.

**List of stakeholders consulted**

3 women and 3 men participated in the questionnaire study. One of them was teacher and the others were academics.

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## UK

The national stakeholders' consultation for the UK was held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In what follows we summarise the comments and recommendations from the meeting as well as suggestions collected up to the end of April, from stakeholders who contributed to our online consultation. A full list of the stakeholders whose views are summarised in this report follows below.

### **In the UK what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

The stakeholders frequently drew attention to online grooming and cyberbullying especially but not solely on social networking websites. Some said that there is far too much emphasis on paedophiles and predators, which can often obscure some of the real issues around cyberbullying and other problems around privacy. Sexting is also a concern – one stakeholder working with schools pointed out that until very recently resources were not available and schools were not dealing with this effectively. Use of social networking sites by children under 13, parents being unaware of online risks as well as new technologies, children being unaware of the long term implications of what they post online, and an emphasis on appropriate education not driven by excessive fear and panic seemed to be some of the priorities. Stakeholders also stressed the importance of ensuring the safety of online content, ensuring that support filters down to all levels concerned, and recognising that access to the internet is possible at any time and anywhere, at a time when many younger children are able to access social networking sites. Industry responsibility for what is uploaded on their websites, unsuitable filters that pick up websites just on the basis of keywords and a greater emphasis on coordinating home-school awareness and education endeavours seemed to be important concerns. Some also drew attention to an attempt to highlight the benefits associated with internet use, the need to encourage digital citizenship and participation online, along with an awareness of the potential risks.

### **In the UK what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

A number emphasised the positive aspects of internet use, including using ICTs for schoolwork, formal education, creativity, citizenship and participation and so forth. While some emphasised the need for greater industry responsibility and encouraged the attention being paid to the 'abuse buttons' embedded on websites for instance, others felt that more research is needed on exactly what children and young people do online and so that we could target internet safety measures towards that in a more fine tuned manner. The topics that came up frequently included the grooming of children on line, cyberbullying, child access to pornography and other sites that should legally be restricted to adults, and the amount of time children spend online (with a particular focus on gaming sites). Some felt that at present policy-makers fail to address the fact that children are content generators and that often media fuels hype around high profile cases that might influence the policies designed for everyone. Some felt that at the school level there seems to be a focus on addressing e-safety using a line that is strongly shaped by CEOP resources, which is fine as long as one continues to further advance the action and measures. Other priorities include training for parents, carers and teachers, in addition to awareness raising amongst young people, and the importance of weaving a consideration of online behaviour into regular lessons.

**Which national policies or initiatives in the UK should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

Initiatives such as the risk register, which maps children at risk offline, were thought to provide useful examples when considering those potentially at risk online. Stakeholders mentioned various initiatives:

- The Anti-bullying Alliance anti-bullying week 2009 which focused on Cyberbullying in all its forms and where packs were sent to every school in the UK, and activities took place across local authorities and schools
- Beatbullying 2009, the recent software installed in all Northumberland schools that upgraded intranet protection and tracked all websites accessed
- The thinkuknow website
- E-safety day in schools
- The ICT school coordinators' conference annually with e-safety speakers and workshops offered
- Support material for teachers from the South West Grid for Learning
- The use of the 360 safe tool to help educators to plan effectively for e-safety provision,
- Resources being produced by companies such as Orange (videos)
- CEOP
- Support for Safer Internet Day
- E-safety as part of a multi-agency approach through the Local Safeguarding Children Boards
- DCSF Safe To Learn Guidance in schools
- The DCSF Safe From Bullying guidance in other settings/children's services, and
- The Equalities Act and The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters and the Staying Safe Action Plan)

**What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in the UK?**

Some were of the opinion that online buying and some commercial risks might be of a greater importance to the UK given the fact that the UK is one of the largest markets in the world for value advertising. Gambling was considered to be a risk that had by now been tackled and was no longer of high importance in this country. Some felt that while chatrooms are relevant in many countries across the continent, social networking sites deserved greater attention given their higher popularity in the UK. There was a general agreement that those at risk offline are also those at risk online. But some drew attention to the fact that in the UK, the police are often surprised at the kind of children they have to deal with in terms of online risks, and that perhaps the internet gives rise to new risks from those who otherwise do not engage in risky behaviour. Some also felt that the size of the NGO sector in the UK is large compared to other European countries, considering for instance the number of people employed by the NSPCC. Many agreed that while education and training have touched a very large proportion of children in the UK, significant roadblocks that needed to be overcome remained on matters of internet safety, unsupervised internet access in bedrooms, and a lack of parental awareness of the latest technological developments.

**What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

Stakeholders were interested in whether the survey will lead to data that reveal something about the risk perceptions of those who already take risks. Some felt that risk-taking would probably be linked to adoption rates – so if SNSs are adopted earlier in some countries the related risks associated with the sites will appear earlier and be more numerous. Some

expected a mixed response across the full spectrum from the liberal end to the censorship position. Some worried that the survey will show that children are carefree about risks and parents are possibly naive as to what is happening or that parents and teachers are not aware enough of potential problems. Adults are expected by some to perceive grooming/abuse as being the largest risk while children are expected to perceive cyberbullying as being the main risk. Some felt that awareness of the reliability problems relating to information available online, plagiarism, copyright, and the risks of sharing personal information will all be low. The focus of the survey on issues of mediation was appreciated and some anticipated that parents will feel very unsure about how to mediate appropriately. Many will not do it at all whilst others will be overbearing. It is expected by some that the results will show children to both knowingly and unknowingly put themselves at risk online when thinking that they know how to deal with these risks

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children's internet safety?**

Some noted a gap between the delivery of e-safety education and young people actually implementing this advice or cases when the delivery of the e-safety education is itself not being fully absorbed or understood. Many noted a lack of engagement and even awareness on the part of parents, or inconsistent follow-ups on esafety issues at school. Other important issues noted included targeting awareness and education according to literacy levels by age, getting through to vulnerable children who are more easily groomed online, and to those already at risk, or desperate for company and friendship.

### **If you know of relevant research studies, do please tell us about them**

- The GSM ComScore data
- Sexting <http://www.swgfl.org.uk/Staying-Safe/Sexting-Survey>
- Pew's latest research on Mobile phone use by U.S. teens, published 19.4.10
- Futurelab in Bristol work closely with Schools and Parents.
- SWGfL, ofsted report findings - <http://www.swgfl.org.uk/Staying-Safe/Content/News-Articles/E-Safety-teaching-makes-a-difference-as-does-theSWGfL>,
- Plymouth University sexting survey - <http://www.swgfl.org.uk/Staying-Safe/Sexting-Survey>
- South West Grid for Learning conducted a survey about the growth of the phenomenon of 'sexting' in school-age children
- Youthworks Cybersurveys
- Shariff on the law and cyberbullying 'Confronting Cyberbullying' and the work of Hinduja and Patchin

### **List of stakeholders consulted**

- Adrienne Katz, Youthworks Consulting Ltd
- Albin Wallace, United Church Schools Trust
- Alison Dent, Becta (Government)
- Ann Layzell, Hertfordshire LA
- Anne Burns, Stowford Primary school
- Bernadette Noon, Hexham East First School, Northumberland
- Clare Rinaldi, Mrs Ethelstons
- Dan Glentworth, Kemble Primary School
- Dave Miles, FOSI
- David Benzie, University College Plymouth St Mark & St John
- Denise Cannon, Tedburn St Mary School

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- Fraser Gill, Response
- Gary Smith, Uffculme School
- Gavin Martin, Walliscote Primary School
- Gaynor Mansell, Peterborough City Council Children's Services
- Gill Woodward, Northumberland County Council
- Graham Ritchie, CEOP (Government)
- Jane Rattue, Marwood school
- Jenni French, Parley First School
- Jo Bryce, University of Central Lancashire
- Joanne Rymell, The Sir Bernard Lovell School
- John Carr, UKCCIS (NGO)
- Karl Hopwood, Esafety Limited
- Lauren Seager, Anti-bullying Alliance (NGO)
- Leah Class, DLC
- Linda Brown, Bristol CYPS
- Luke Roberts, Croydon CYPL
- Lyndsey Garrett, St. Beads Catholic College
- Lynn Stephenson, Peterborough LA
- Martin Reynolds, Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board
- Mike Grange, Lavington School
- Mike Short, O2 (Company)
- Paul Norris, Redland Green School
- Rebecca Averu, Kent County Council
- Sally Cammann, Hele's School
- Sangeet Bhullar, Wise Kids (NGO)
- Sarah Butcher, St Andrew's Primary School, Cullompton
- Sarah Flower, Thorverton Primary School
- Sheelagh Halliford, Abbeyfields First School
- Shirley Atkinson, University of Plymouth
- Shirley Hackett, Dudley Local Authority
- Sue Burt, Carlton Lower School
- Sue McMahon, St Joseph's RC Primary School
- T Jones, Ponteland First School
- Terri Wilcox, Warminster school
- Toby Wood, Peterborough City Council Children's Services
- Trish Church, Orange-FT group (Company)
- Val Hurley, North Somerset Council
- Will Gardner, Childnet (NGO)

## Annex II: Insafe and European Commission

### Insafe Consultation

9<sup>th</sup> March 2010, Lisbon (Dissemination team)

**In your country what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's internet safety?**

*AUSTRIA:* Privacy, cyberbullying, fraudulent web services, mobile phone costs.

Privacy: only 14% of young people between the age of 11-19, who are active on communities, know a lot about privacy issues; Cyberbullying: 35% state they have been insulted in communities, 23% were "dissed"; In 2009, Saferinternet.at appointed the Institute for Youth Culture Research to conduct a representative survey of the essential facts about the situation in Austria. In personal interviews 402 young people between the age of 11 and 19, who are active in online communities, were questioned about their usage behaviour, issues and their published contents. Results in German are available at [www.saferinternet.at/studien](http://www.saferinternet.at/studien)

*BULGARIA:* Social networking sites have very low online safety standards as regards children; the Safer Internet not taught in schools; parents are unaware of risks.

*THE CZECH REPUBLIC:* Personal data protection; children's rights online, cyberbullying.

*DENMARK:* Privacy, cyberbullying (ethics, responsibility), being critical of sources, use of images, online social networking sites. Understanding the digital dimension of everyday life - immediacy, reach, publicity, searchability, mass coordination. Education of children in digital citizenship.

*FRANCE:* Leaving traces on the internet/difficult to erase personal data online, cyberbullying, Identity theft, over-consumption of the internet/time management, sexting; data protection (good passwords, confidentiality, etc.).

*GREECE:* The development of critical thinking and of understanding the risks and consequences, meeting strangers!

*HUNGARY:* Sexting, cyberbullying, online friends.

*ITALY:* Sexting, cyberbullying, data protection, eating disorders, harassment, meeting with strangers, not being emotionally prepared in particular age groups.

*LUXEMBOURG:* Private information/content disclosure.

*MALTA:* Cyberbullying is the main issue, with cyber-grooming second.

*THE NETHERLANDS:* Sharing personal information, online social life is normal social life, cyberbullying, fraud.

*POLAND:* How to balance protection with empowerment? How much space can children be given to manage the risks themselves?



*PORTUGAL:* Inappropriate content, being approached by inappropriate people, acting without manners. So the most important thing is to educate them about the net. It is all a matter of education, of rules. They are starting to use the internet before they walk alone on the street.

*SLOVAKIA:* Children are unaware of the how to deal with sexual molestation and aggression online. They take these issues as being an integral part of virtual presence. They have poor knowledge about privacy issues. Kids only think about their friends when posting online, they do not realise other people might make access to their personal information/content. Kids think that the virtual world is just for fun. They don't realise that some of the content that they create might offend or hurt someone.

*SLOVENIA:* Bullying, addiction, careless publishing of inappropriate pictures, of contact details, peer-to-peer online bullying, publishing of too much personal information online.

*SPAIN:* Posting pictures online, social networking sites, informing parents of the internet's possibilities, communications with parents, privacy, avoiding harmful contacts (netiquette), harmful content and contact.

*SWEDEN:* Communication – how to behave to be fair to yourself and other people. Normal ethics. How to behave online compared to offline.

### **In your country what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers/stakeholders?**

*AUSTRIA:* Privacy protection, cyberbullying, addiction.

*BULGARIA:* Necessary legislative measures. The need to train LEAs, prosecutors, judges.

*THE CZECH REPUBLIC:* The relationship between internet safety, corporate responsibility and marketing.

*DENMARK:* Privacy, social networking sites, self-regulation, cookies, cloud computing, Facebook, cyberbullying.

*FRANCE:* Age identification, opening of the online gaming market, data protection, geolocalisation related issues, protection of authors' rights/downloading, user general conditions

*GREECE:* The mobile internet, excessive use of the internet, privacy on the internet.

*HUNGARY:* Raising internet penetration

*ITALY:* Data protection. They are very scared about serious risks but not very focused on setting a political framework to prevent these through education. There is more of a focus on technical solutions than on education based solutions. Policy makers are concerned with grooming and paedophilia online. They are only scared about these kinds of risk (the most dangerous and physical)

*LUXEMBOURG:* Privacy.

*MALTA:* The universal presence of computers in schools and IT education means that children have access to the internet, but parents remain insensitive to the accompanying dangers.

*THE NETHERLANDS:* Merging technologies, privacy, focus on positive content, harmful vs. suitable content, e-skills and digital literacy, 'infobesitas', social pressure (for girls aged 12-15) to be online and in contact all the time, empowerment

*POLAND:* Designing campaigns, awareness-raising material.

*PORTUGAL:* Piracy, illegal downloads, online abusers - in this order. To look at this topic in a transversal way and not in isolation. Raise awareness of the problems without forgetting all the potentialities that the medium allows for.

*SLOVAKIA:* How to bring online safety into schools and build it in the curricula. The impact of social networking sites on the social lives of children (issues like rumours, cyberbullying)

*SLOVENIA:* The integration of the Information Society in schools, hate speech teaching internet safety at schools, whether to block or not, whether to filter or not.

*SPAIN:* Safe and responsible use of new technologies -include internet related issues on educational curriculum.

*SWEDEN:* This is not a main topic. Bullying is discussed and now and then grooming.

***What would you say is distinctive about children's internet use in your country?***

*AUSTRIA:* They do not think about the consequences of their actions, they act on impulse, and self-portrayal is important for them.

*BULGARIA:* Unsafe behaviour, low level of data protection.

*THE CZECH REPUBLIC:* Lack of experiences dealing with personal data online.

*DENMARK:* Well, they are children! - playful, testing borders and possibilities. They have a different sense of privacy, they do not want filters.

*FRANCE:* They have a need for personal exposure via personal publication online. The internet is a key tool for daily socialising. They multi-task when using the internet. Teenagers always have the internet turned on. The mobile internet is becoming more and more important. There is a major use of the blogs in France, but a declining use of Facebook. There are gender differences (boys – online game; girls – chats). Collecting friends on Facebook.

*GREECE:* Children not yet developed critical thinking, risk taking for fun, inability to understand the globalisation of the web - they believe it is their own small space.

*HUNGARY:* I do not think there is a difference.

*ITALY:* 92% of children (11-17) own a personal mobile phone (ISTAT 2008); 67% of children (11-17) use the internet (ISTAT 2008) (78,3% 15-17 years old). Save the Children Italy-IPSOS research in February 2010 on the internet and sexuality among children showed that 99% of children (12-19) use mobile phones; 95% of children (12-19) use mp3; 92% of children (12-19) use digital cameras; 75% of children (12-19) use webcam; 87% chat everyday; 57% are reading blogs; 34% post things online; 33% use smartphones; 76% use MSN; 76% use Facebook. They use Web 2.0 services (chat, YouTube, SNS) in order to express themselves and who they are. But they also use the to communicate with friends even if the concept of friendship has

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generally changed online. A “friend” now includes someone whom I do not know beforehand from a face-to-face meeting.

*MALTA:* There is a considerable difference in e-literacy and internet use between children and their parents, and knowledge about tools such as filtering software is low.

*THE NETHERLANDS:* Trial and error (they just click and see what happens). They are unaware if it commercial information or not

*POLAND:* The very high popularity of social networking sites (not sure if this is distinctive.), online games, frequent cyberbullying experiences.

*PORTUGAL:* Educational or playful use could be distinctive.

*SLOVAKIA:* According to our surveys there is nothing distinctive about Slovak kids’ internet use. Perhaps they start using the internet later – from 6/7 years of age and they are not involved in virtual worlds as these are not yet common in Slovakia.

*SLOVENIA:* High use, ICT adoption, every child has a mobile phone (98%). No research knowledge about what exactly they do online, what risks they encounter. Children who are too young are using SNS.

*SPAIN:* High percentage of children using mobile phones (and the possibility of accessing internet from them).

*SWEDEN:* It is nowadays an integrated part of life, they are born into a digital world. They have a digital thinking and no reference to “life before the internet”.

### **What are the main difficulties you face in improving children’s internet safety?**

*AUSTRIA:* Knowledge and understanding of privacy protection is very low. It is hard to motivate young people to care more about it.

*BULGARIA:* Reaching out to parents, convincing the Ministry of Education about the need to have safer use of internet in the curriculum, a lack of positive web content for children.

*THE CZECH REPUBLIC:* Indifference or low competence of adults: teachers and parents.

*DENMARK:* Lack of knowledge among adults, no formal requirements in the school system, lack of transparency in internet services leads to a lack of user empowerment, tackling the cultural gap in media uses, misunderstanding of meaning of media, media frenzy about the internet.

*FRANCE:* The “so what?” attitude of the children – they do not realise that e-safety issues are real issues until problems occur. They believe they know everything about online security. It will be difficult for them to project themselves in the future

*GREECE:* The State is not helping us, even if we provide a wealth of knowledge to be used. The illiteracy of the parents.

*HUNGARY:* Reaching target groups, raising awareness of internet safety in general.

*ITALY:* Have an effective influence on young people's awareness level (not only information level) in order to obtain real changes in their online behaviours. It is difficult to set up an effective assessment methodology to measure the real impact of our awareness actions in terms of effective changes in online behaviour. They are technically prepared but they under-evaluate online risks. They are sure they are prepared but they act with risky behaviour. They lack the necessary emotional preparation to deal with some situations happen online.

*LUXEMBOURG:* When raising awareness, we must remember that children have diverse experiences with IT/internet.

*MALTA:* Inadequate knowledge by parents of the dangers of internet use by minors.

*THE NETHERLANDS:* How to get the message 'through' clearly? Children know most of the time what the risks are but they do not act like they know or they do not even care (it's an experimental phase in their lives).

*POLAND:* Including parents, empowering educators – online safety is on the curriculum now, but teachers are not trained to deliver classes on internet safety.

*PORTUGAL:* The biggest difficulty or problem resides in the lack of support for parents and teachers.

*SLOVAKIA:* Regardless of their age, children think that they are old and wise enough to discover what is dangerous for them. They tend to think that it is "younger children" that are at risk and need to be addressed.; - it is difficult to make children understand that everything they post online is real and more or less permanent.

*SLOVENIA:* Teenagers are not interested in getting Information Society advice, it very hard to reach them. In addition, parents with young children are not interested in IS, which is a big shame, because young children are a very important target group and it is very important to start working with them as early as possible. Lack of real research data on the children's behaviour online – our campaigns are based on presumption rather than on real data.

*SPAIN:* Lack of internet related laws. The Ministry of Education should get involved, including online safety lessons in the curricula.

*SWEDEN:* The digital knowledge gap between generations, especially between educators and their pupils. Lack of sufficient adult presence on SNS.

### List of stakeholders consulted

- AUSTRIA: Barbara – [office@saferinternet.at](mailto:office@saferinternet.at)
- BULGARIA: Georgi Apostolov – [georgi.apostolov@online.bg](mailto:georgi.apostolov@online.bg)
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## Stakeholder Forum

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## European Union

(Author: Verónica Donoso)

### **In Europe what do you see as the most important issues regarding children's online safety?**

#### *Privacy issues*

Giving away (private) data remains an important issue for EU stakeholders. Children tend to perceive the internet as something playful and fun because most of them use the internet to play games and to keep in touch with their peers and friends. However, most children are not really aware of how the internet really works, especially when it comes to downloading things or giving away (private) information. This does not mean that other risks are unimportant. Yet, other (important) risks such as encountering strangers online seem to affect comparatively fewer children.

#### *Empowering children to become 'Safe internet surfers' vs. protecting children in a 'restrictive' way*

Another important issue mentioned by EU stakeholders was the media or digital literacy of children, but also that of parents and educators. Different stakeholders have different views on the issue, but they all coincide that the educational component is an essential one. Children and their families should be educated to learn to deal with potential online risks and schools should be able to support this task. However, there is the assumption that many parents (and teachers) still know less about the internet than their children.

There are a few differences, though, between the points of view of industry stakeholders as compared to non-industry ones, especially in terms of a child safety strategy:

For the non-industry partners it seems most important to support children so that they can become more autonomous individuals, critical thinkers with an improved capacity for decision making, meta cognition, social literacy, etc. Children need to learn these skills so that they can make better decisions regarding their online behaviour and critically filter what they find online. After all, just as with the risks encountered in their offline lives, children will inevitably be confronted by online risks, thus it is essential that children learn to deal with them in a "safe" but autonomous way.

For the only industry partner interviewed the emphasis was on more restrictive measures such as empowering parents by making available "easy to use" tools for them to "determine" what their children can see online. In this sense industry sees as important to educate families on how to stay safe online and cooperate with law enforcers and industry partners to stop illegal content and illegal activity online. However, most of the measures proposed by them have a more restrictive character supported by various technological measures such as blocking online content, providing filters to block children's access to certain types of content, providing tools for parents to monitor their children's behaviour online, etc.

### **In the EU what are the main topics of discussion among policy makers and stakeholders?**

Most stakeholders think a "hot" issue among policy makers is "protecting" children against contact risks (e.g. meeting strangers, child predators, paedophiles, etc. online). Another issue that receives considerable attention from stakeholders and people in general is the danger

associated to giving away personal and financial data such as credit card numbers, personal addresses, telephone numbers, etc.

At the EU level, safety issues and self regulatory measures such as Safer Social Networking Principles are being discussed. In the UK and Czech Republic the main "hot" topic is whether or not to have a "red button" on all internet services so that users can report it directly to the police if they encounter a problem online. Even Google is exploring a solution whereby the so-called "red button" can be downloaded and directly added to browsers.

In Germany, child privacy, the need for better media literacy training for children, and access to harmful content are the main issues observed.

In France the debate is around the LOPSSI2 law and ISP web blocking.

Some of the stakeholders interviewed criticised the fact that most stakeholders talk about the need to "protect children" as if children were passive entities in need of being protected. However, for a number the stakeholders interviewed this type of discourse is just the "easy way out". Children should not be "protected" in this restrictive sense but rather be taught how to be responsible internet users. In other words, there is a great need to "educate" children rather than to "restrict" their internet uses and practices.

### **Which policies or initiatives in Europe should we know about as relevant to our findings?**

#### *EU Safer Internet*

The Safer Internet Programme is probably the best known "initiative" among EU stakeholders. All the stakeholders interviewed were aware of various existing initiatives within this framework. In particular, they mentioned several projects that aim at creating "safer environments to protect children". However, the interviewees also expressed their doubts about the effectiveness of current and past initiatives launched within this and other frameworks. For example, one of the stakeholders mentioned a German project that aims at building a "walled garden", a sort of intranet where (supposedly) only children can navigate.

Obviously, it is important to create safe environments for children; however it is also important that children are made aware of the risks outside these "safe environments" so that they can also function "safely" in less protected environments such as the wider internet. This "walled garden" approach is a little bit like most school approaches where children are banned from using many internet applications (for example, by means of filtering software). But once outside the school walls, children can do at home all the things they were not allowed to do at school.

Concrete examples of initiatives: the case of Google and YouTube

Google (including YouTube) as well as other private industries are working with coalitions of financial and technology companies and the NCMEC to develop new solutions aimed at eradicating child pornography on the internet. For instance, YouTube "protects" kids from predators and other people looking to do them by having zero tolerance of predatory behaviour, stalking, threats, harassment, invading privacy, or revealing other members' personal information. Users caught doing these things may be permanently banned from YouTube. Google/YouTube also prohibits the uploading of videos that may be of interest to predators or contain inappropriate and provocative behaviour by children. Those videos are typically flagged through our industry-leading flagging system and promptly removed by Google/YouTube staff.

Apart from this "zero tolerance" policy, privacy options have been and are being enhanced in sites such as Google and YouTube. Users are now able to limit who can see their videos and who can interact with them through comment features. Google and other industry stakeholders also emphasise the importance of education and teaching children how to protect themselves

from predators. They have even developed “Safety Tips” websites (<http://www.youtube.com/t/safety>) where they advise kids to think twice about posting videos of themselves, their friends, or their families, and children are shown in a simple way how to make videos private. However, the efficiency of such initiatives is yet to be investigated. How many children are really aware that these pages exist? And even if they know they do, do they visit them frequently? What do they actually learn from them?

Other initiatives worth mentioning are those such as Beatbullying.org in the UK. YouTube supports this initiative by creating of a channel that raises awareness about cyberbullying ([www.youtube.com/user/beatbullying](http://www.youtube.com/user/beatbullying)).

YouTube has a strict policy that relates to uploading videos. By means of an advanced flagging system that allows users (schools, teachers, parents and kids) to flag videos and to submit privacy complaints. If repeat offenders are caught uploading videos that violate YouTube Guidelines, their accounts will be suspended. Furthermore, YouTube does not allow videos that depict dangerous or illegal acts, such as abusing drugs or making bombs. They also prohibit videos that depict violence.

Users, then, can effectively police the site and flag videos they consider inappropriate by using the flagging system. When YouTube reviewers find videos that are targeted to an adult audience, they mark them as “restricted.” Users under 18 cannot view restricted videos.

Other interesting research initiatives

The research of the following people was mentioned as interesting in the area of safety on the internet:

- Bojan Belec is carrying out research on the addiction of youngsters to social networking sites. He works at the Counselling Centre for Children, Youngsters and Parents in Ljubljana.
- Patti Valkenburg is also interesting because of her research on communication technologies.
- Dr. Artemis Tsitsika is a MD PhDa, Lecturer in Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine at Athens University. She is doing research on child development and some of the safety issues that children and adolescents encounter online.

### **What would you say is distinctive about children’s internet use in Europe?**

According to all the interviewees the great diversity among EU countries makes it almost impossible to talk about “distinctive” features of European children’s internet use. Besides, most stakeholders recognised that they did not know much or enough about internet use outside Europe. Still, some of them mentioned a few differences in relation to the use of the internet in developing countries such as India, where the main way to access the internet is via the mobile phones rather than through the PC, which is distinctive of Europe. Others mentioned some differences, for instance in relation Australian children who spend less time online because they engage in more outdoor activities, or in relation to African children who are quite behind in terms of Internet access.

Another impression some of the EU stakeholders had about children’s uses of the internet was that (at least) in some EU countries such as Italy, Spain and Belgium children’s uses of the internet does not seem to differ that much in terms of frequency and patterns of use. Children in these countries, and probably all over Europe, seem to be using the internet basically to communicate and to play, for instance to send emails to their friends, to chat online and to play online videogames and only sometimes to do homework.



**What do you anticipate the results will be for our questions about risks online and which aspects on safer internet do you think we should investigate further?**

Adults tend to think that they can control what their children do online, but this is not always the case. So, probably, one of the findings of EU Kids Online II project will be to discover that the actual activities that children participate in online are quite different to what parents think their children are doing on the internet. In this sense, EU Kids Online II findings will confirm the digital gap among parents and children. Many parents do not really know what their children are doing online.

EU Kids Online II will also probably confirm the fact that children are worried about bullying while parents are more worried about other external potential threats such as online predators. Probably another finding will be that even though many parents are worried about their children's online behaviour many parents feel somehow "lost" online and do not really know how nor where to seek support.

Finally, some more critical views were expressed. A few stakeholders believed that the survey findings will only confirm what we already know. However, they did not think that EU Kids Online II will get in-depth insights into important issues such as children's critical thinking and how this should be supported in order to develop critical children able to make better, more informed decisions about their online behaviour. In this sense they expect our findings to be relevant although not deep enough.

**What are the main difficulties EU faces in improving children's internet safety?**

All the stakeholders mentioned various types of difficulties that are obstacles to improving children's internet safety. One of them is the fact that schools are not really prepared to teach about the internet "properly". Currently, most of the information and the knowledge children have of the internet comes from their friends and peers. Another difficulty is that many families are not really aware of what their children do online. Still, determining what an "appropriate" use of the internet is remains a challenge.

Another difficulty in improving children's internet safety relates to the inconsistency between parents' discourse about the importance of their children's online safety and parents' actual behaviour on the net. Even though many parents talk about the need to protect their children online, still, many of them contribute to creating their children's online identity by posting pictures and information of their children online (e.g. on Facebook, Netlog, etc.).

A lack of meta cognition and critical thinking is a barrier to improving children's safety. More effort must be devoted to improving children's ability to surf the net safely through the development of their own cognitive and critical skills.

Finally, another difficulty is getting industry to set up some sort of efficient regulation. EU institutions do not do enough lobbying power with the industry. If the EU was really serious about the safety of children we would have to enforce more serious types of EU regulation. For instance, the EU makes the effort to control what children can watch on TV, label programmes according to appropriate ages (e.g. the Kijkwijzer), etc. However a child can still find all these programmes on YouTube. Therefore, there is the need for an improved and more efficient regulation and closer collaboration with the private sector including internet providers, search engine providers, social networking sites, etc.

**List of stakeholders consulted**

- Matteo Zachetti - Media Programme and media Literacy, European Commission. Information Society and media Directorate-General

## Stakeholder Forum

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- Sarah Greenwood - Google
- Janice Richardson - European Schoolnet