



The European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+)

The European Union* (EU for short) is a group of 27 countries that work together. The European Commission* helps to create the EU's rules and laws, and this includes making new plans and policies* (which we call strategies).

As part of our plans to make Europe a great and safe place to live, including online, we've recently launched a new strategy for a better internet for kids (called BIK+). We want to make sure that **YOU** – children and young people – are **protected**, **empowered*** and **respected** whenever you go online, and that you can access and enjoy what the online world has to offer. This leaflet explains our plans.

You'll find a guide to some of the words and phrases used (marked with *) at the end of this leaflet.

Why do we need a strategy?



We first came up with a strategy to create a better internet for children back in 2012. However, online life has changed a lot since that time. For example, you are **more connected** than ever before, with **time spent online** almost doubling for many children and young people over the last 10 years. Access to technology **begins at a younger age**, and many of you use smartphones and social networking platforms daily.



Unfortunately, not everything you do or see online is positive. For example, **online bullying** continues to be a big problem for many of you. Some of you **lack confidence** when you go online, or **don't have access** to the **education, tools or internet connections** that you need. Many of the apps and services you use, for example to talk with friends or watch stuff online, are **not created with you in mind**, leaving you exposed to inappropriate* content or contacts, or other possible risks.



Our new plan wants to change this. We also want to make sure you can **play a part in decisions taken by the EU** which affect your online lives, now and in the future.



We've worked with a range of people (we call these stakeholders) **to create this strategy and plan for the future**. As part of this, we've also talked to lots of children and young people, of various ages from across Europe, to make sure this plan reflects the wishes and concerns of young people just like you.

What does the strategy cover?

Our plan is based on three main aims. We call these **pillars**:



We want a safe internet that protects you from seeing things that make you feel scared, sad or uncomfortable.

We want you to feel comfortable on the internet because you know how to use the internet safely and in a fun way.



We want you to have a say with activities for children where you can tell us what kind of safe internet you want.



1



Under Pillar 1, we want to make sure that your digital world is safe



We'll be working with **online platform providers*** (for example, Meta, Snap, TikTok, and others) to create a set of rules to make sure that online services are safe for you (we call this a code of conduct*). We want to make sure that you only see things online that are **good for your age** (together with ways to prove your age to access some online services), and that things you see or do online **don't make you feel scared, sad or uncomfortable**.



We want to make sure that the platforms you use give **easy-to-understand terms and conditions, protect your private information, respect your rights, and don't target you with adverts*** using the information you share online.



We also want to make sure that you are **protected from cyberbullying, hate speech* and harm of any kind**. Over the coming years, we'll be working to give you easy ways to get help on bullying and other online problems, no matter which country you live in.

2



Under Pillar 2, we want to make sure that you have the skills, knowledge and support you need



We want to make sure that you can **learn how to use the internet safely**, both at home and at school. You need to have the skills to know what to trust online, and to decide what's real or fake. You also need to know **where to get help with any online problems you have**.



We'll be working with the decision-makers in your country to make sure that **online safety and media literacy* is taught in schools**, and that your teachers, parents and carers can also learn how to better help you when you go online.



We also understand that you are unique and that you have different needs and situations, both online and offline. As part of this plan, we want to **help you ALL to have safe and positive online experiences. In short, no one gets left behind!**

3



Under Pillar 3, we want to make sure that you have a say



We want you to be able to use the internet to learn new things, and to be able to **share your ideas on the internet you want.**



We'll be working with you – through **BIK Youth Ambassadors*** and **BIK Youth Panels** in your country – to get regular feedback, and to plan activities and training by young people, for young people, on all sorts of online topics.



Our goal is to listen to your ideas and work with others to **make change** happen. We will **look at this plan every two years** to check that it's still working and to help fix any new online problems.

What happens next?

Like all good plans, we need to work with others (such as companies, teachers and decision-makers) to make things happen! In the coming months and years, we'll be planning and taking action, and we'll keep you up to date.



Keep an eye on the BIK Youth minisite for the latest information
www.bikyouth.eu



Contact your national Safer Internet Centre
to see how you can get involved in Youth Panel activities, and if you
need help or information on any online issues

Guide to some of the words and phrases used in this leaflet

Word or phrase

What it means

BIK Youth Ambassadors



BIK Youth Ambassadors are a group of young people who represent all European youth and who share their ideas on a safer internet experience with companies, organisations and people that work to create a Better Internet for Kids.

Code of conduct



A code of conduct is a document that shows a set of rules that make sure that online services are safe for you. For example, it might say how old you should be to be able to use a social media app like TikTok or Snapchat, or the ways in which your information will be protected.

Decision-maker



A decision-maker is a person or group of individuals who is responsible for making important decisions for a big group of people. This could be in a company or in a country, for example.

Empowering



To empower means to give someone the power and the authority to do something. It means to both make someone more confident and make sure they have the possibility to do that thing.

European Commission



The European Commission (or EC for short) helps to shape laws and policies in the European Union. For example, it makes laws on economy, the internet and security.

European Union



The European Union (or EU for short) is a group of 27 countries in Europe that work together.

Word or phrase

What it means

Hate speech



Hate speech is a form of communication that uses negative, aggressive and mean words towards an individual or group of people. It is usually focused on specific groups based on things such as the country they are from, the colour of their skin, their religion, gender or more.

Inappropriate



Inappropriate means unsuitable or something that can cause harm or will make you scared. We often talk about online content or contacts – that is, the things you see online or the people who contact you online – being inappropriate for children and young people.

Media literacy



The goal of media literacy is to help children and young people to become safe and wise users of all sorts of media including books, magazines and newspapers, TV and radio, and online content. It helps young people to think about the content they find, find trusted sources of information, and express ideas in a respectful way.

Online platform providers



Online platform providers are the companies that own the social media platforms that we are using. For example, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp are owned and managed by Meta, Snapchat is owned by Snap Inc., and TikTok is owned by ByteDance.

Policies



Policies are a set of rules, laws or plans that are chosen by governments to achieve a goal. For example, if the goal is that every child goes to school, a policy might be to build a school in every city. The European Commission helps to create laws and policies for the European Union and comes up with new plans to make the EU better.

Word or phrase

What it means

Stakeholders



A stakeholder is an individual, group of people, or an organisation that has an interest in a particular project or initiative. In this case, it means all those people interested in helping children and young people have a safer online experience, and giving them the skills and knowledge they need.

Targeted advertisements



Targeted advertisements (or targeted ads) are adverts that use the information you put online or information on the websites you visit and show you ads that it thinks you want to see. This can be a problem because these ads are trying to convince you to buy things you don't need, or they only show one side of a story.

The full name of the strategy is: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

[A Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids \(BIK+\) COM\(2022\) 212 final](#)

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