Report on the proceedings of
Safer Internet Forum 2020
(including an annex on the preceding BIK Youth Panel)

Further information from the Forum, including the full agenda, conference brochure with speaker biographies, presentations and session recordings (where available) can be found at www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif.
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**Introduction**

Building on the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children, the Safer Internet Forum (SIF) is an annual international conference delivered under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Bringing together young people, parent and teacher representatives, industry and government policymakers, technological and awareness-raising experts, and political, educational and social leaders from Europe and beyond, this event takes a multistakeholder approach to considering the impact of technology on individuals and society. Due to the ongoing restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, this year’s edition of the Safer Internet Forum took place solely online on **Wednesday, 25 and Thursday, 26 November 2020** with the theme of "**Digital (dis)advantage: creating an inclusive world for children and young people online**", with side events on the preceding and following days.

For over two decades, the European Union has played an important role in promoting a safer and better internet through a range of legal measures, funding programmes and self-regulatory initiatives. There are huge benefits to be gained from being online and the European Commission’s digital strategy is seeking to ensure that everyone is able to contribute to, and benefit from, the digital economy and society. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the view that digital technology can empower children and young people to find information, communicate, socialise, learn and play, often in ways that are not possible to the same extent in their non-digital lives. Yet there is growing awareness and concern that online tools and services are often not designed with the best interests of children and young people in mind, and those with diverse disabilities can be especially impacted.

In the keynote session titled **Digital dividends and digital disadvantage: children with disabilities’ views and experiences of the digital environment**, Professor Laura Lundy discussed the challenges and opportunities that children with diverse disabilities encounter when accessing and using the digital environment, focusing on how they experience and navigate “danger” and “disruption”. As part of this session, a number of experts and young people considered the challenges they face and suggested some actions that should be taken by different stakeholders to ensure that children with disabilities are able to access and engage in the digital environment in the same way as all other children. Importantly, this session also considered the positive role that the digital environment can play in helping children with disabilities to realise their rights.

As usual, a number of deep dive sessions complemented the main focus of the Forum. With a focus on innovative tech and educational solutions, one session considered how industry are responding to demands for increased accessibility and subsequently designing platforms with all users in mind, while another session explored some of the existing content and resources created for vulnerable groups from a broader perspective. A further session considered inclusive education, while also exploring best practices in using technology in schools to support children and young people with disabilities.
Side events on the preceding and following days complemented the main agenda of Safer Internet Forum 2020. A session on youth participation placed a particular focus on the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Youth Pledge initiative, highlighting the importance of age-appropriate design principles, while presentations from BIK Youth Panellists emphasised their priorities for a safer online world. A further side event provided a focus on the EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse and various stakeholder responses to it. The final session of the week provided an opportunity to learn more about the most recent findings from the BIK Policy Map exercise which seeks to compare and exchange knowledge on policymaking and implementation of Better Internet for Kids strategies in EU Member States.

Further information, including session recordings and presentations (where available), can be found at [www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif](http://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif).
Safer Internet Forum 2020 – the main event: Digital (dis)advantage: creating an inclusive world for children and young people online

A recording of this session and Professor Laura Lundy's presentation is available from www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif.

Karl Hopwood from European Schoolnet officially opened the Safer Internet Forum 2020 and welcomed all participants. Remarking that over 650 people from 66 countries, representing a wide range of stakeholders, had registered for the Forum, Karl Hopwood introduced this year’s central theme, stressing that while the European Digital Strategy aims to ensure that everyone can benefit from digital technologies, the online world is still not a level playing field for children with disabilities. Karl Hopwood then gave the floor to a representative of the European Commission.

Khalil Rouhana, Deputy Director-General at DG CONNECT welcomed participants and particularly thanked the organising teams for the event. He commented that the COVID-19 crisis has clearly demonstrated that digital technologies have become an essential part of our daily lives and confirmed the large potential they possess for addressing societal challenges. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted existing digital inequalities. The closure of schools around Europe brought attention to the fact that not all children have access to digital devices or the internet. Therefore, many challenges lie ahead to ensure that the digital transformation is shaped in a way that preserves Europe’s values and democratic processes.

The European Commission regards Europe’s digital transformation as a priority. Member States recently committed to invest 20 per cent of the budget dedicated to the EU into digitisation as part of the COVID-19 recovery plans.

There are around 100 million people in the European Union who have some form of disability that might prevent them from fully benefitting from digital technologies. Equally, there are approximately 15 million children living in the EU with special needs which cannot always be served through regular digital tools. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, insists that in this digital decade ahead of us, no one should be left behind, and everyone shall be able to profit from this transition.

Khalil Rouhana additionally stressed the importance of listening to children’s voices and involving them in decisions that will affect them. The current Commission aims to actively shape the digital transformation and ensure that policies fit the needs of society, including teachers, parents and children with disabilities. The Commission plans to launch a new comprehensive strategy on the rights of the child in spring 2021 which will include the issue of digital rights. In July 2020, the Commission already adopted a new strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse.
Moreover, Khalil Rouhana announced that from September 2020 onwards all websites of public agencies in the European Union have to be fully accessible to citizens with disabilities. Inclusion of persons with disabilities are enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights as well as in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Concluding, Khalil Rouhana stressed the value of cross-stakeholder cooperation and wished all participants an inspiring Safer Internet Forum 2020.

**Keynote presentation**

Laura Lundy, Professor of Education Law and Children’s Rights at Queen’s University Belfast started her keynote presentation by stressing that every child has the right not to be discriminated against and that more specific attention needs to be paid to children with disabilities. While children have been increasingly consulted in order to better understand their experiences online, children with disabilities have rarely been involved. Against this background, Laura Lundy [presented a study commissioned by the Council of Europe](https://example.com) which she co-authored in 2019.

Digital technologies have been a game changer for children. However, children with disabilities face challenges to participate in those spaces on an equal level as their peers without disabilities. The study, therefore, inquired into the online experiences of children with different disabilities.

Laura Lundy then discussed the main findings of this study. In particular, she highlighted seven key aspects:

- **Diversity:** It is important to stress that there is not one single type of disability. Different types of disabilities result in different challenges and children’s experiences in digital environments vary depending on their disability.

- **Access:** The report found inequalities across European countries in terms of access. However, lack of access is not limited to digital equipment or internet connection, but also resources. Some resources that might help children with disabilities, for example subtitles, are not always available in their first language.

- **Digital dividends:** The dividends digital technologies can offer children with disabilities also varies depending on the type of disability. For children with a physical impairment, technologies can facilitate and improve their daily lives, but children with an intellectual impairment can also profit from them as digital technologies can help them to express their identity.

- **Digital disadvantage:** Children with disabilities are to a certain degree disadvantaged in terms of being able to benefit from digital technologies. The extent and form of
these disadvantages depend, however, on the form of disability. Nevertheless, it is also noteworthy that not all of them want to use technologies.

- **Dealing with dangers:** Many of the children with disabilities taking part in the study did not perceive themselves as being exposed to more risks online than children without disabilities. In their view, the digital world poses certain risks for every child and, therefore, they did not see a need to be treated differently in this regard to their peers. However, they described that their parents are often concerned about their safety online. As a result, the children were sometimes not allowed to use digital technologies. When they were allowed, it was often not the parents who provided them with guidance but their siblings.

- **Digital disruption:** For children with disabilities it is often not possible to seamlessly move between the virtual and offline world. Instead, many of them do not have constant access to the digital technologies they require or would like to use.

- **Decision making:** While many children are involved in decision making at home where their parents discuss with them their needs and wishes, this is often not the case at school. It is also important to highlight that industries should consult with children with disabilities when developing their products.

Laura Lundy went on to report that the children with disabilities she had met with would wish to receive support from adults when accessing the digital world, but noted that the adults in their lives sometimes do not have the expertise to provide this guidance. Children with disabilities do not want to stand out from their peers. They want to be as independent as possible and realise that digital technologies could help them achieve this. However, in order for digital technologies to contribute to their independence, it is important that not only the children themselves are able to access them continually but also that people in their environment make an effort to use the technologies. Children with disabilities want to be involved. It is important that attention is paid to their opinions and experiences. As many websites and platforms remain inaccessible for them, children with disabilities face exclusion in the digital world. Thus, both digital environments and decision-making processes need to be designed in a more inclusive manner. Laura Lundy stressed that involving children with disabilities in decisions that will affect them is not a “gift” but a human rights obligation, quoting Article 7 (3) UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

It is, thus, necessary to create a safe and inclusive environment where these children can express themselves freely. They need to be informed about the processes and decisions that will impact their lives and need to receive responses to their suggestions, questions and concerns.
Laura Lundy went on to explain that “best interest” does not equate to protection from harm. Safety from harm is crucial, but it is only a part of what constitutes a child’s best interest. It is equally in a child’s best interest to enjoy all their rights including their right to seek, receive and impart information. It is in a child’s best interest (and their right) not to be discriminated against in the exercise of their other rights. Therefore, the response to a perceived danger should not be to deny them the enjoyment of another right but to create a safe environment.

Professor Lundy concluded her keynote speech by summarising that children with disabilities are entitled to be involved in decision making. Only they know what it is like for them to live as a child with disabilities in an increasingly digitised world. Therefore, they need to be asked for advice. If people are in doubt about how to approach them or how to consult them, they should just ask the children for the best way to do that.

Karl Hopwood thanked Laura Lundy for her presentation and passed the floor to June Lowery-Kingston, Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet at DG CONNECT. June Lowery-Kingston thanked Laura Lundy for her speech and assured her that the European Commission values the input and cooperation. She stressed that the current Commission is committed to creating a Europe of Equality. In the coming year, the launch of two strategies – one on disability and one on the rights of the child – will contribute to this.

Panel
Karl Hopwood then opened the panel discussion. He explained that young people with disabilities from several European countries had prepared video testimonies as a way of contributing to this session. In addition, two of them were also present as panellists.

To start off the discussion, a video testimony from Daniella was played. Daniella is 25 years old and studies digital literacy. Daniella stated that through digital technologies, she has become more comfortable communicating in groups. She has learned to use a lot of digital technologies, how to browse the internet, how to use social media, and how to attend online classes. This learning was an important improvement of her daily life.

Karl Hopwood then asked Daniella which social media platforms she uses and if she uses them frequently. Daniella replied that she sometimes uses Facebook. She usually uses it to communicate with her friends and family, and enjoys being able to see their posts and pictures in this way.

Next, the video testimony of Joao was played. Joao is 18 years old. His vision is impaired due to glaucoma. He regards technology as important for his life and education. When he first went to school, he used a magnifying glass TV for most of his schoolwork. He used this device until he was 14 years old when he started using a computer with the help of voice
software instead. He was able to develop the skills to give presentations and to do research for school. However, it took him about a year to master this technology.

Following the video intervention, Karl Hopwood referred to a previous conversation he had with Joao in which Joao said that, in his view, technology companies do not always follow the rules. Karl asked Joao to elaborate on that. Joao responded that it is sometimes very difficult for him to access websites because many websites are not designed to be used with a screen reader. He, therefore, remains excluded from parts of the online world which could be technically accessible to him.

Karl Hopwood then directed a question to Cornelia Kutterer, Senior Director of Microsoft’s Rule of Law & Responsible Tech, European Government Affairs team, asking her what Microsoft has done to create more accessible and inclusive platforms. Cornelia Kutterer thanked Daniella and Joao for sharing their experiences and stressed how important such testimonies are for enterprises to understand the needs of people. Under the leadership of the current CEO, Satya Nadella, accessibility and inclusiveness have become a key mission for Microsoft. This includes not only to build technology which is accessible for everybody, but also to have a workforce that represents society in its entirety. Thus, Microsoft learned from its own workforce and testimonies from young people like Daniella and Joao that, through technologies, a more inclusive culture can be created. Cornelia Kutterer then presented Project Tokyo. Project Tokyo uses AI (artificial intelligence) technology to help blind people and people with low vision to recognise and identify persons. Project Tokyo collaborates with a 14-year-old student; he has been part of the project team to inform the creation of scenarios in which the support of technology would be useful. The technology enables the student to identify his classmates which he described as a gamechanger for him.

Karl Hopwood thanked Cornelia Kutterer for these insights. Addressing the topic of online safety, Alessandro, a student from Italy, said that people with disabilities need assistance online and require supervision by adults. Karl Hopwood asked Joao if online safety was taught at his school and if he found this education useful. Joao answered that his teachers seemed to be very concerned about online safety and they talked a lot about it with their students. Karl inquired if Joao himself sees digital technologies as risks or if his experiences are predominantly positive. Joao responded that he usually feels safe online exactly because he has been informed by his teachers.

The discussion then moved to the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has affected young people. Maya from Austria said in a video statement that home schooling made her daily life easier because she did not need to worry about how to get to school in her wheelchair. However, she missed her friends and digital technologies helped her to stay in touch. In her opinion, inclusion gets a new dimension through digital technologies.
Robin, who is also from Austria, described in his video testimony that he felt isolated and a bit depressed because of the COVID-19 pandemic as he was not allowed to leave the house. Nevertheless, thanks to digital technologies, it was easy for him to communicate with his teachers and to spend time online with his friends.

In another video statement, Joao commented that during lockdown technologies became essential. He remarked that this transition from offline to digital learning was easy for him because technology had already been a part of his daily life. Karl Hopwood inquired if Joao wanted to add something. In response, Joao explained that he had the impression that the transition he had spoken of in his video testimonial had been easier for him than his friends without disabilities.

Karl Hopwood then introduced Amar from Austria who had prepared a video as well. He faced difficulties to follow his online classes because they did not have captions. Overall, however, technology has had a positive impact on inclusion in his view, but he also noted that some teachers do not engage much with online tools and that the Austrian school system needs to adapt.

On this basis, Karl Hopwood passed the floor to Anamarija Viček, State Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia asking her to share her view on the COVID-19 crisis and to report on what Serbia has done to support children with disabilities. Anamarija Viček explained that during the phase of school closure, TV classes as well as online classes had been provided at all levels. The Ministry of Education issued some specific guidelines for students with special educational needs. There were also special guidelines provided to teachers about the prevention and treatment of digital violence and discrimination. Schools in Serbia were partly reopened from September 2020. It became apparent, however, that the safety measures that were required, for instance the wearing of facemasks, were an extra burden for some children with disabilities. Additionally, some children with disabilities face an increased risk from COVID-19 and therefore had to continue learning online. Finally, Anamarija Viček commented that personally she regarded it as a key take-away from the previous presentations to consult more often with children.

Following this presentation, another video statement from Alessandro was played. He described that most people are presenting a highly positive image of themselves online. While he thought that this was to some extent normal as people want to leave a good impression, he believed there should be less pretence.

In another video, Sunna and Aldís from Iceland described that it can be difficult for children with disabilities to be online because people try to take advantage of them. They were also concerned about people receiving hate messages online and being humiliated in digital environments.
Following this, Karl Hopwood introduced Eke Vermeer, Vice-President for Public Policy at Liberty Global. Eke Vermeer stated that Liberty Global wants to promote the notion that digital technologies can be used for social good. For this purpose, the project Digital Imagination has been launched. As part of that, the Future Makers Awards are awarded to children who use their coding skills to develop solutions for societal challenges. For example, Timothy from Ireland has won an award for developing sensor glasses which help people with visual impairments to identify obstacles in public spaces. All solutions that have come out of the Future Makers programme have been invented by children who realised the need for these technologies themselves. Thus, Liberty Global supports young people in the definition and solution of social problems.

Karl Hopwood thanked Eke Vermeer and gave the floor to Inga Björk Margrétar Bjarnadóttir, Disability specialist at Landssamtökin Þroskahjálp, the Icelandic National Association of Intellectual Disabilities. She said that Iceland’s government has taken large steps in providing digital public services. However, some people, especially persons with disabilities, have difficulties in accessing and using these services. Therefore, if persons with disabilities are not involved in shaping the digital transformation, they will remain disadvantaged in various ways. What is needed is accessible technology and a legal system that protects the rights and privacy of people with disabilities.

Karl Hopwood then pointed towards Joao’s video testimonies for some concluding remarks, with Joao stating that technologies can level the playing field for people with disabilities. Karl Hopwood thanked Laura Lundy for her inspiring keynote speech and all panellists for sharing their expertise. In particular, he thanked the young people who gave insights into their experiences in the digital world.
Deep dive session 1: Public and private solutions

A recording of this session is available from www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif.

This session looked at how industry and non-profit organisations are developing resources and platforms to meet the needs of children with disabilities, and featured five speakers from three organisations.

David Clarke, Director of Services, RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) began the session by providing some context on his background and experience. Blind since birth, David Clarke has extensive experience in financial services. He attended specialist education before moving into mainstream higher education to study Politics and International Relations.

Since then, David Clarke thinks that we have moved on, both technologically and culturally. The discussions he has on a day-to-day basis have improved, but societal and commercial reality of sight loss has not advanced much. According to him, how all this fits with corporate strategies and product and building design (and equally, the internet) is important. In fact, the situation with COVID-19 has, in many ways, increased the issues associated with digital and internet-based information and access to products and services. In a recent survey, 66 per cent of blind people felt less independent because of COVID-19 and 50 per cent reported that they are worried about access to food. Another 25 per cent admitted they were food rationing, as essential online services such as supermarkets stopped being so accessible.

There are also positive examples – like the video game industry. For many years, these services were not accessible to blind people as the technology was not yet that advanced, thereby locking people with disabilities out. Nowadays, however, it is possible to be involved with that community through talk-back mechanisms available on PlayStation and Xbox. For children with disabilities, this means they can play, chat, set up teams and interact. David Clarke thinks that companies are finally understanding the importance of inclusivity and the need to provide a good product to a large young audience of future customers. In addition, lack of accessibility when it comes to services is associated with a negative corporate reputation. Finally, technology also brings opportunities for people with disabilities to interact in a seamless manner.

A big focus of David Clarke’s work at the RNIB is around products. One positive change he notes is that businesses are now reaching out to them to find out how they can be more inclusive towards blind people. Video games are not the only product that has improved; other examples include:

- Access to the internet and TV: the latest product range is completely accessible from a blind and partially sighted point of view. Individual applications, settings,
programme guides, and device connection functionalities are all spoken. The products are affordable and not in a special price range. According to Samsung, this approach has made customer experience better for everyone.

- The RNIB worked with Miele on a washing machine to find a solution inclusive of everybody. The washing machine, which is already on the market, is also within the normal price range and can be used easily by blind and partially sighted people.
- Other examples include a talking microwave and a robot vacuum cleaner controlled via a mobile phone.

Prior to 2009, this technology was expensive, locking blind and partially sighted people out of the market. Another watershed moment was the invention of the iPhone because, from the very beginning of the design and build process, accessibility was considered and there was overt action to develop an inclusive product. This has had a huge impact on the lives of blind and partially sighted people.

The presentation of the second speaker of the session, **Stine Storm, New Ventures Manager, The Lego Foundation** focused on two of the Foundation’s products: a digital project and a combination between analogue and digital. The first one, Lego audio instructions has been developed through co-creation with users and was developed after a request by a US citizen, who asked Lego to make building instructions accessible for the blind. There are now several easy-to-follow building instruction guides in an audio format, available on Lego’s website. The second project, the Braille System, is a six-dot system which resembles a Lego brick.

The Braille System

A combination of 6 dots in a 2 by 3 formation that correspond to a letter, number or symbol

The dots are numbered 1-6 in a set pattern allowing users to refer to a letter i.e. B (Dot 12) N (Dot 1345)

Stine Storm then played a video to illustrate how the Braille bricks work and how they are used by blind people, making literacy, calculations, and basic math easier. For younger students especially, having something tangible to rearrange makes learning fun, whether it is maths or languages or simply playing a game. With the help of organisations, this approach has been tested in several countries. One complexity, for example, is that every toolkit is
essentially different due to the differences in languages. The bricks are accompanied by an analogue toolkit, which is colourful and inclusive for sighted and blind and visually impaired children alike. All of this is accessible via www.legobraillebricks.com. What users can expect to find there is the theory and principles of learning through play, as well as activities that can help them develop skills through the Braille bricks. The website and its features are also built with accessibility in mind. The product will be available in 20 countries within the next few months, and there are plans for further expansion.

The floor was then opened to questions. Panellists were asked whether they could provide some examples of inclusive adverts, where so much depends on the awareness-raising aspect rather than technical skills. Marks and Spencer’s adverts were mentioned, along with those of brands such as John Lewis and Amazon (where a recent Alexa advert features a person with sight loss). David Clarke commented that two things changed in Christmas adverts this year in the UK: 1) many companies built in an audio description from the very start, and 2) a couple of brands actually built the advert around inclusivity, removing the need for an audio description as everything is contained within the ad. The main challenges with this are the existence of providers who are deliberately not inclusive and also a lack of awareness and know-how. One participant noted that, as part of the European Accessibility Act, all train ticket sales should be accessible by default, but expressed uncertainty as to whether the UK would implement this. David Clarke agreed and explained that very often the only way for him to purchase a ticket is to go to a counter only to find it closed. He said that he believes that the way forward to is continue explaining the commercial advantages, as there are so many, as well as the social advantages, which are gaining increased attention by business owners. In fact, the specific culture and customer base driven by inclusivity is becoming attractive to business.

When asked whether the RNIB has a youth section and what are their main concerns and wishes, David Clarke underlined that the level of support a child requires in the classroom is often a matter of quality rather than quantity. For him, the beauty of the Lego Foundation’s solution is that it is a joint effort, enabling children to learn numerical and literacy skills whether they have sight or not. Their focus now is to continue this journey in ensuring the education gap continues closing and, with it, financial and social opportunity and quality of life go up. Another participant asked Stine Storm what the main benefits of the initiative have been so far. One important aspect has been proactivity versus reactivity. She explained that the joy and pride within the Lego Group is amazing and that the initiative has not been motivated by any financial benefit. On the contrary, it has been an investment. However, in terms of results, so much has been achieved already in terms of opening doors and putting items on the agenda that are important for everyone. In addition, the initiative has opened the path to many partnerships and inspired more projects. Something they are working on at the moment is the area of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and how to use Braille bricks to learn coding skills.
The final part of the session focused on Facebook’s work in this space. Caroline Hurst, Safety Policy Programmes Manager for Europe, Middle East and Africa, Facebook, explained that one big aspect of Facebook’s work is collaborating with communities with additional needs. She introduced two projects, The STAR Toolkit, which has been developed together with the UK NGO Childnet, targeting children with autism as well as children with sight loss; and Connecting Safely Online (Internet Matters), which was launched earlier this year and represents a hub for young people with special educational needs and their parents. According to Caroline Hurst, it is a response to an identified gap in online safety provision for children with special educational needs in the UK. Another Netherlands-based initiative, LFB, includes a guide for adults with special educational needs which explains how to handle sexting and social media. For more information, including advice, tips and conversation starters, see www.facebook.com/safety.

María López-Carracelas, EU Public Policy Manager, Facebook also presented some current trends and examples to highlight Facebook’s work. She works in the Connectivity Policy Team at Facebook, specialising in audio-visual and telecommunication regulation. She also works with the Accessibility Team on policy issues and EU regulation. One of the goals shared by both teams is improving accessibility aspects allowing for user-to-user interaction so that everyone is able to enjoy an equivalent experience. Statistics show that 1 in 10 Facebook users use the zoom functionality on the desktop browser, and 1 in 5 increase the font size when they access Facebook from their mobile phones. María López-Carracelas reminded participants that Facebook’s services are used by more than 7 billion people in the world, which means hundreds of millions of people benefit or need to use the accessibility functionalities. Of course, there is no one size fits all solution as disabilities are different. This is why accessibility features in Facebook are built by design, embedded within the product lifecycle, and developed across teams (from research to engineering).

Another focus of Facebook is leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to bring innovation and build accessible tools for people with disabilities. Several Facebook features make this possible. Captioning means adding text to video content. Video creators on Facebook have been able to provide captioning manually for quite some time now, but the company is now investing in real-time and automatic captioning as live content is becoming more and more prominent on the platform. Facebook streamers can use this automated captioning now, which is one way of leveraging AI for the benefit of all. This functionality is not without its challenges: it is costly and time consuming. Captioning can also be reviewed by the creators, thereby minimising the margin for inaccurate information. It is available in multiple languages and automatic captioning has reached Instagram too.

To improve the accessibility of pictures for visually impaired people, Facebook uses technology to generate descriptions of pictures through two main tools: automatic alternative (alt) text and face recognition. The technology has been automated, enabling blind people to understand exactly what is depicted in the photo and recognise actions such
as people smiling. These features are also available on both Facebook and Instagram. For more information, please see this video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kBcj1ty1I8.

Accessibility is also built within VR (virtual reality) experiences, such as one where users can access the attic where Anne Frank hid during WWII. Throughout Facebook’s products, accessibility is built by design and co-created by people with disabilities.

The session was then opened for questions from the audience. One participant asked for more examples related to accessibility for neurodiverse people. María López-Carracelas replied that Facebook is always looking for ways of making the platform more accessible for different disabilities and that this feedback will be passed on. When asked whether Facebook has any experience around explaining terms and conditions that would make it suitable for people with disabilities, she answered that one recently improved aspect is better interaction with screen readers. Users can also complete a report form, flagging functionalities which are not accessible. Another participant questioned whether Facebook’s national projects are available in other countries. María López-Carracelas replied no, stressing that the company tries to embed aspects unique to that specific context and organises its projects in an organic way.
Deep dive session 2: Online safety resource creation

A recording of this session is available from www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif.

Karl Hopwood from European Schoolnet opened the deep dive session and introduced the three speakers, whose presentations focused on the resources they are developing to help children and young people with disabilities to stay safe online.

The first speaker of the session was Andreea Hurezeanu, Partnerships and Promotion Coordinator, Save the Children Romania (Romanian Safer Internet Centre). She presented her work with Save the Children Romania on protecting children online. Save the Children is the national coordinator of the Safer Internet Centre, promoting online safety for children, parents, and educators. Initiatives organised include a summer camp and various activities aiming to encourage children to propose innovative projects which teachers can implement. For example, one proposal related to the development of a small project for hearing impaired children in Romania. Andreea Hurezeanu explained that children are not encouraged to use sign language during class, despite it being the only language they can use. At the same time, special education institutions face a deficit of trained personnel. More specifically, children in primary school should receive eight hours of individual lessons from speech therapists and those in secondary six hours, but in reality they often benefit from less than an hour of such therapy per week. Early education of lip reading and speech is essential in terms of societal integration and can benefit children if they practice more than four hours every week.

Andreea Hurezeanu then presented the Logopedia project and its objectives:

- To improve the spoken abilities of 300 pupils over a one-year period by training teachers in speech therapy and using digital education resources, making the project and its results available to all hearing-impaired students in Romania.
- To raise public awareness of the challenges and particularities by distributing copies of a best practice guide.

Representatives of 12 special institutions in Romania took part in creating the guide, including the Ministry of Education. The project’s beneficiaries were 300 deaf and hearing-impaired children from the 12 institutions. A network of 50 teachers, including three speech therapists and a technical expert, across Romania was consulted for the project. Teachers were selected through an online recruiting campaign, targeting those with no experience in that area, and focusing on permanent staff in view of sustainability. The project was implemented in three stages:

- Phase 1: signing the agreement with the 12 special institutions, Ministry of Education and school inspectorates, and developing the training methodology. 50 volunteers
participated in the five-day training which covered basic notions and principles of working with deaf people and educational resources. The interactive training was complemented by a range of practical activities.

- Phase 2: conducting desk research on technology and resources for hearing-impaired children to increase the quality of activities and applications with already existing materials. A consultation group with speech therapists was created to ensure resources are adapted to the needs of the children. The final step was to develop the online resource.
- Phase 3: testing created resources and showing how technology and suitable applications can considerably improve the lives of hearing-impaired and deaf children.

In two years, the Logopedia platform registered more than 2,000 accounts created for specialists, parents and children that could also be used by family doctors and educators. The success of the project relied on cooperation with relevant experts based on ideas of child participation. The project responded to two identified needs: the deficit of speech therapy lessons, and the little support children receive from their families when it comes to lip reading skills training. This type of psycho-pedagogical intervention helps children to integrate into society through safe and inclusive technology means.

The floor was then opened up for questions. When asked whether feedback from children has been taken into account, Andreea Hurezeanu replied that children were involved from the project’s early stages. The idea for the project also came from the Safer Internet summer camp, and the idea of developing resources for hearing-impaired children also came from children themselves. Another participant mentioned that deaf people with native sign language often struggle to process written information, which has a massive impact on how we provide information online. Indeed, sign language is specific to certain countries, regions, or even special education institutions.

The second speaker of the session, Inne Cornu, Project Manager and Orthopedagogue, Child Focus Belgium (Belgian Safer Internet Centre), presented STAR – an online safety tool for children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), developed in collaboration with Childnet in the UK. The tool was co-created together with children and young people with autism, taking into consideration parents, caregivers, web developers and designers, and experts in the field. The STAR tool and its toolkit is meant for children with ASD aged 10-14, teachers and caregivers, and is available in both French and Dutch. Teachers’ accounts are linked to those of learners to highlight e-safety areas of focus. Students can choose from four areas: safety, critical skills, online/offline friends, and respect, and play in teams. They can also choose a coach and an avatar and have two activities to choose from: one easy and one difficult (but this is not announced). A pedagogical sheet with information, tips and tricks is available for the teacher. At the start of each activity, the personal coach introduces the aim and students can ask for further information throughout the activity. Each exercise
is also followed by the teacher’s feedback. The tools are constantly adapted to the needs of youngsters and there are plans to adapt these also for children with other disabilities. More details can be found at www.childfocus-star.be.

The floor was then opened up to questions. One participant asked about the difference between disability types when it comes to product development. Inne Cornu replied that transferability is an essential aspect: as the tool was developed through focus groups with children and teachers, it is particularly inclusive. Hence teachers can use these activities in classes with children without ASD. In reality, the tool is designed by all children for those with the disorder. She also added that children with ASD are more vulnerable to online risks as their social skills and the ability to distinguish real from fake information are also less developed compared to other children. When asked to explain more about the STAR toolkit, Inne Cornu responded that a new toolkit with different ways of teaching lessons will be launched soon. Another question related to the tool’s focus when it comes to children with mental disabilities. The idea within the organisation is to create new focus groups with youngsters with an intellectual disability. Finally, one participant asked how much work goes into rebranding towards another platform (such as moving from Facebook to Instagram). Inne explained that Child Focus reserved the rights to change the tool on their own, so they are able to do these shifts easily. However, any change is a challenge, and focus groups, day-to-day organisation, and ongoing collaboration across different stakeholder groups are all key to the initiative’s success. For more information, see the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) website.

Lotte van Aerle, Project Manager, Netwerk Mediawijsheid, Netherlands (Dutch Safer Internet Centre and centre of expertise on media literacy) focused on the topic of media literacy for people with cognitive disabilities in her presentation. Founded in 2008 by the Ministry of Education, the network encompasses 1,000+ partners. It focuses on three main programme lines: children and younger people, adults and vulnerable people (the focus of the presentation), with a more specific focus on young people and children with mild cognitive disabilities.

Lotte van Aerle explained that there are 1.2 million people in the Netherlands with a mild cognitive disability. Many of them are overrepresented as both perpetrators and victims of online harassment and grooming: they are also more susceptible to fake news. In addition, many people are not aware that they have some type of mild cognitive disability, and there is a lack of education and trained professionals when it comes to councillors and education experts. To reach people, it is therefore necessary to focus on the caregivers, rather than on the group of people with cognitive disabilities themselves. The programme’s motto is “a fun online life for all” and raising awareness of identified risks and problems is accompanied by cooking workshops and interactive activities. Other aspects serve to complement the programme: a communications campaign directed at caregivers working in health care, co-
creation of tools in conjunction with partners, and building a network of relevant partners and supporting networks. Other examples include:

- A website which aims to motivate parents with low literacy skills to talk to their children about media use in easy language (available in English, French, Arabic and Turkish) - see www.mediagesprek.nl/het-mediagesprek/.
- A blended board game, media jungle: a game requiring an iPad, created by one of the Media Literacy Networks’ partners, targeting learners with mild cognitive disabilities aged 16-17, and stimulating the dialogue between caregivers and clients on media use. The game proved to be a huge success and is now available in shops.
- The Special Media Awards (the national media awards for creators with mild cognitive disabilities) received over 100 submissions across 10 categories. Everyone nominated received an award, while the biggest winners received larger awards, made by people with cognitive disabilities from a health institution.

The focus of the Media Literacy Network for the period 2021 to 2023 is creating a manual for caregivers in collaboration with healthcare professionals, raising funds for a digital platform to gather already available information and research online on a single platform, and getting more strategic partners on board for more future impact.

When the floor was opened up to questions, participants were interested in the Special Media Awards and asked whether the organisation can see it organised within an international context. According to Lotte van Aerle, this would infer a number of difficulties that may result in less benefit to the target group. This led into the second question, which probed what feedback was received. The Special Media Awards were watched by 218 viewers on YouTube, but many groups in healthcare facilities log in through the same account, therefore this number was likely a lot higher. Feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. When asked about how successful the media literacy manifesto proved to be, Lotte van Aerle mentioned that one healthcare institution was so inspired by the manifesto that it created additional video testimonials, as a symbol of its support for it.

Another question related to the role of caregivers in the process and their skills when it comes to media literacy. Lotte commented that indeed, caregivers often exhibit shyness in this area and they have limited education when it comes to advanced media literacy skills. The network continues to work with healthcare facilities to put media literacy higher on the agenda of their education programmes. Participants also provided examples of tools that could support this approach, such as Tablexia (an application with 10 games which aims to support the development of cognitive skills for children with dyslexia in primary and secondary schools). Another tool for easy reading, supported by Horizon2020, aims to make web pages more accessible, allowing people to adjust the layout, and translate web content via symbols. It can be found at www.easyreading.eu.
Deep dive session 3: Inclusive education (hosted by COFACE Families Europe)

A recording of this session is available from www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif.

Elizabeth Gosme, Director of COFACE Families Europe, welcomed participants and provided an overview of the upcoming session.

First up was Irene Bertana, Policy and Advocacy Officer, COFACE Families Europe, who gave an overview of COFACE and its priorities with regards to inclusive education. Encompassing a membership network of 58 organisations from 23 European countries, the organisation covers a wide range of policy areas, advocating for the rights and interests of all types of families, and provides services for families with disabled family members. To put things in context, Irene stressed that children and young people with disabilities are disproportionately excluded from education. One third of school children have some type of disability. The COVID-19 crisis complicated this further as many children were excluded from education with the switch to distance teaching, due to lack of technical supplies. Many vulnerable families also have children with disabilities, thereby leading to a form of double exclusion. This also relates to the lack of accessibility with distance learning as many of the services supporting children and families stopped. There are numerous barriers to children with educational disabilities, such as:

- Lack of data collection (at every level), which is especially problematic as lack of awareness of the state of play prevents coherent policy actions.
- Lack of understanding and/or a clear definition of inclusive education.
- Lack of political will and funding combined with stigma and discrimination.
- Inaccessible schools and infrastructure, namely older buildings which cannot be accessed by children with disabilities which prevents them from taking part in education.

Despite the fact that this exclusion is a part of reality, according to the law this should not be the case. Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), relating to the realisation of the right of access to education, has been ratified by many countries but contradicts current reality. In addition, General Comment No. 4 (2016) equally stated that the right to inclusive education requires a transformation in culture, policy and practice in formal and informal educational environments in order to accommodate the different requirements of individual students and to remove barriers. Other major pieces of European legislation in this area such as the European Pillar of Social Rights (especially Articles 1 and 17) and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 4, also deal with the right to inclusive education. Even though legislation exists, there is a need to clarify the meaning of inclusive education.
Inclusive education should reduce the following risks:

1) Exclusion, which happens when children are prevented from accessing education.
2) Segregation, in the event of which children attend education but in widely different environments (special schools, classes, and so on), and as a result are excluded from their peers.
3) Integration, in which children attend mainstream education, but the curriculum, teaching methods and strategies employed do not reflect this.

Inclusion, on the other hand is a process of systemic reform, which implies changes in content, teaching methods, strategies and approaches to overcome barriers to education. For education to be inclusive it has to be:

- Available: to all pupils with a disability.
- Accessible: not just in terms of infrastructure, but also in relation to materials, technology, teaching methods, assessment, language, support devices, and curricula.
- Acceptable: inclusive education takes into account and respects the requirements and views of disabled people.
- Adaptable: a curriculum which meets (and adjusts to) the requirements of every student.

The tool Universal Design for Learning (UDL), working on an evidence-based approach and linking to accessibility, could solve some of these problems. Many prejudices come into play when it comes to inclusive education, such as the idea that other students would be slowed down if disabled children participate. This has been proven wrong by multiple studies and literature on this topic. Only through an inclusive approach can barriers to learning be identified and overcome, enabling these children to become active citizens. To achieve this, a cultural, political and practical transformation of the education system, in all its environments, has to happen so that differences among students are accommodated. There is also a need for continued political commitment, will and funding.

COFACE has recently developed a guide on inclusivity, SHIFT, built via a general approach with a focus on education and inclusive education. In Europe, many children with disabilities either do not have access to education, or they do so in special schools, and the guide puts forward some specific recommendations on how to address this.

SHIFT stands for:

- Support: the services needed by persons with disabilities to participate in society and ensuring education develops talents and effective participation for all.
• Human rights: information about the rights of persons with disabilities, including the accessibility of educational materials and new technologies, easy-to-read functionality, Braille, subtitles, and similar.

• Independence: mainstream approaches that need to change to facilitate the participation in society of people and children with disabilities and facilitate the exchange of know-how between practitioners.

• Families: the importance of parents and caregivers receiving support to accomplish their roles as caregivers and education (enabling parents to become part of their children’s education). On a national level, early intervention and complete needs assessment is paramount and, on an EU level, the need to develop a clear policy framework for inclusive education.

• Transition: the need to build a culture of diversity through information and awareness raising which highlights inclusive education as an important means for bettering society. This benefits not just people with disabilities, but society overall.

The guide also provides specific recommendations on identified gaps and solutions in both a national and European context.

The intervention by the second speaker, David Berki, was brief but targeted and providing a layer of personal context that was valuable to participants. David Berki presented the work of the Never Give Up Foundation in Hungary and put forward some recommendations on making education more inclusive from the point of view of a disabled person. He highlighted the importance of teachers including not just disabled people but also their non-disabled peers, as everyone has the same underlying priorities (how to care about other people, how to treat people with respect, and how to include disabled people in everyday activities).

In Hungary, the Foundation works to raise the spirit and confidence of people with disabilities, showing them that, despite the disability, they are strong and have abilities and skills that are not related to their disability. The Foundation sends out groups to teach workplaces and schools about this approach, which they call “the right way of living”. People with disabilities and those without are working together in a Café and this work was not stopped even during the pandemic. According to David, it is of paramount importance to show that people with disabilities are able to have jobs and maintain a normal quality of life, just as others.

The third speaker of the deep dive session, Elisabeth Lammers talked about her work with Unapei, France and her personal experience as a mother of a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). She shared some of the many challenges experienced as a mother of a child with a disability such as looking for a school near the home, the need to provide a quiet place, as well as support in terms of individual assistance.
Technology can both boost and hinder children with disabilities in specific ways. It can be a boost due to the improved ability to communicate via tablets and other devices. Writing difficulties are common when using a pen, but they barely exist when it comes to writing on a computer. People with ASD are often interested in one specific topic: technology enables them to go further and explore additional information. Finally, through technology they are able to stay connected with friends and family via tools like Zoom and Facetime. Of course, there can be downsides: for example, children and young people with disabilities are often unable to verify information and consequently less apt in handling danger on the web, such as grooming and lack of identification. Those with autism can use ICT non-stop and as computer use is associated with comfort, there is a risk of missing out on social activities. Additionally, access to online information is also not always possible.

The organisation Unapei works to address these obstacles and is made up of family associations, medical and social services, and self-representative associations. Several aspects exist to manage the barriers between technology and education:

- ETR – a tool to make reading and understanding easier: publishing books, training the government in terms of election access, programmes to put on websites and in specific cities.
- CAP FALC – a recent digital tool in the form of an automated plug in, developed by INRIA, Facebook Artificial Intelligence Research and Unapei. Its aim is to facilitate the production of texts in ETR, thanks to the transcription aid algorithm.

The last speaker of the deep dive session, Conceição Nunes from SINDEP, presented some points from her experience as a teacher in a cluster in Portugal. Conceição Nunes stated that inclusion is a big challenge facing Portuguese students and a decree law of inclusion was introduced in 2018, alongside a new legal framework for formal education and vocational education and training (VET). Clusters across Portugal only had 15 days to prepare action plans for inclusion, and since not all clusters were ready by 2018, some were postponed to 2019. With COVID-19, activities came to a halt.

The legal framework combined several previous strategies, and progress aims to foster the implementation of pedagogical action in the classroom. The framework aims to end the assumption that everything should be taught to all as if all students have an equal standing, and fosters the implementation of pedagogical action. The differentiation in the curricula allows for flexibility, which is a multi-level approach with three important elements: it is based on an action plan by clusters, a systematic assessment of aptitudes and practices, and collaborative work between teachers, parents and school staff. The framework, complemented by a Digital Toolkit, envisions three main learning support measures for all students: universal, selective and additional (which come into force only when the first two have not proven successful). Learning support measures are defined by teachers and a multi-disciplinary team for inclusive education, including a cluster psychologist. However, as
Conceição Nunes stressed, one psychologist for 300 to 500 students from all levels is far from enough.

ICT for inclusion is an important tool for supporting personalised learning needs and promoting individual learning opportunities, so as to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving skills, e-safety and digital democratic citizenship. Sufficient and sustainable public investment in ICT for education is needed, together with access to technical support for teachers and education personnel. Assistive technology tools are gaining increased attention, but more supportive measures are needed to bridge the digital divide complemented by strong policy actions. Finally, curriculum design needs to include systematic use of ICT within the learning process.

After the last presentation, participants had a chance to discuss impressions and ask questions. One participant commented that the semantics around the word “disability” highlights what people are not able to do, and it is a negative term compared to “differently capable”. When asked whether she could provide any further details on the Digital Toolkit, Conceição Nunes clarified that it encompasses both software and hardware and will be delivered to students with selective and additional needs first, and to those with universal needs last. In terms of the implementation of the new project, the speaker expressed hope that it will be used by everybody, everywhere, rather than only in education.
Side event 1: A focus on BIK Youth

A recording of this session is available from www.betterinternetforkids.eu/sif.

This session began with an introduction from Sabrina Vorbau from European Schoolnet, who explained that this side event would consist of two panel discussions and would involve the Better Internet for Kids Youth Panel – 48 young people aged 12-18 from 14 different European countries. She then handed over to June Lowery-Kingston, Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet, DG CONNECT, European Commission for some opening remarks.

June Lowery-Kingston began by stating that nothing should happen in online safety without the involvement of young people: they should always be kept in mind when developing products and services. She cited Article 24 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights:

1. Children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their wellbeing. They may express their views freely. Such views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity.

2. In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child’s best interests must be a primary consideration.

She went on to note that young people could be considered “digital natives” (whereas adults are “digital immigrants”) and therefore adults can only learn from young people what they require to stay safe online. She also remarked that policymakers are sometimes misguided but well intentioned, and that only young people themselves know what they really need.

June Lowery-Kingston complimented the Youth Panel as a wonderful example of youth participation and commended the panellists for being involved so actively online and offline. They provide the voice for a generation across Europe, and the use of digital technology can make that voice stronger and bring meaningful change. She highlighted how the global events of 2020 had placed a greater dependence on technology but how the young people have demonstrated that agendas can still be advanced despite the challenges.

She concluded with a few words to the industry representatives present in the session, advising them to consult with young people regularly, to use the Youth Pledge for a Better Internet as a starting point, and to make their services user friendly, child friendly and age appropriate. In return, she stated that this could gain young people’s trust for life in those companies and services. She added that young people offer a unique and valuable viewpoint and therefore are crucial to debates around the products and services they use.
Panel 1 – BIK Youth Ambassadors and representatives from industry
The first panel was chaired by BIK Youth Ambassadors, Lilian and Kathrin, with the aim of hearing how industry had engaged with young people to involve them in tackling a business challenge that related to their youth users. Lilian and Kathrin thanked June Lowery-Kingston for her encouraging words and also thanked the young people and companies involved in the project this year. Kathrin remarked that there was still a long way to go for young people to have a proper say. The chairs then handed over to industry representatives to explain how they had sought the views of young people (including Youth Ambassadors) to improve their products and services.

Francesca Falco from Samsung began by explaining that Samsung started from the principle that all users are using the same technology (Samsung products), but that different users have different needs. They recognised that younger users could be exposed to potentially harmful content and behaviour online through the use of Samsung products.

Francesca Falco explained Samsung’s approach to online safety:

- **Prepare** people with digital skills.
- **Provide** knowledge and tools to use technology thoughtfully and safely.
- **Protect** from harmful content or behaviour through educational tools and tech solutions.

She then outlined their pilot project in Poland, involving 36 students from 7th/8th grade and taking place in two phases: on site (workshops to identify problems and youth users’ needs) and online (finding solutions). The young people’s challenge was to raise awareness about digital wellbeing. Three main issues emerged from the sessions: online contact with strangers who hide their identity, online hateful behaviour, and control of time spent online.

The solutions to these issues were to develop education and communication tools to help educate young people and parents/carers. They developed a campaign in Poland using infographics to share tips and tricks for staying safe and managing time spent online.

Francesca Falco finished by showing a summary video of the young people involved in the workshops sharing their ideas.

She was asked what Samsung’s future milestones were and explained that they plan to replicate the youth involvement process in the Baltic States; they have a dedicated network of schools to discuss online safety with. Francesca Falco was keen to see if the needs and requests of young people differed from country to country. Ultimately, she wanted to achieve a good overview of needs across Europe so Samsung could update their campaigns accordingly or design new tools.
Francesca Falco also commented that the young people involved had recognised the importance of parents and carers. They don’t like to be controlled but they do want help and support with issues – open dialogue between young people and their parents and carers is crucial.

Silvia Caneva from Twitter started by congratulating the Youth Ambassadors on their work. She explained that Twitter’s policies were usually developed with their Trust and Safety Council and experts, but in 2018 they asked for public feedback on a policy on hateful content before launching it on the platform. Therefore, she was keen to hear from young people on how Twitter could do better.

She highlighted media and information literacy as a key challenge on Twitter, especially for young people. Twitter want people to use their service and the internet in a healthy way. They worked with Youth Ambassadors to design and run a media literacy campaign for young people on the platform under the hashtag #Twitterforgood. Twitter also ran training on best practices, and safety and security of young people. They presented different scenarios involving online content and asked Youth Ambassadors how they would approach that situation and what the best course of action would be.

Silvia Caneva explained that they are hoping to launch the campaign on Safer Internet Day 2021, and that they will continue to engage in monthly discussions with the Youth Ambassadors based on the topics that the young people have identified.

Two Youth Ambassadors gave their thoughts about working with Twitter on the campaign. Andreas highlighted the risks of spreading misleading or fake information online, and how users readily accept terms and conditions on services without reading them. João explained how supportive and considerate Twitter had been of young people’s opinions. He also highlighted the importance of young people’s views in shaping the tools and features available on services like Twitter, and how they can be made known to all users. He also remarked that it was important for older generations to understand what they sign up for when using Twitter.

Representing Super RTL, Lidia de Reese thanked the young people for their work and explained the services that Super RTL offer as the most popular German entertainment provider for children of pre-school and primary age. She explained Super RTL’s long history of testing user experiences with children and involving them in product development.

She explained the recent launch in summer 2020 of the TOGGO radio service, where children aged 6-11 can request songs or a shout out message to family and friends. Children must complete and submit an online form to do this, and Super RTL wanted to know how well children understood this form and the concept of giving consent. They were also keen
to know the level (if any) of parental involvement and how the design of the form could be improved.

Super RTL’s UK Lab worked with children to investigate these issues. They found that children only read the headline on the form rather than the instructional text. They have heard of terms such as ‘privacy policy’ and ‘conditions of participation’ but lack understanding of these terms. When ticking these checkboxes on the form, children often involve their parents and carers.

Their next step is to run a playful workshop with children to explore redesigning the form so that children can more easily consent themselves. Lidia de Reese explained that the form collects little personal information. She also responded to a question about the long-term benefits of working with young people and that doing so has been valuable for Super RTL – knowing what children want, need and do has helped them as a company, especially in the shift from TV to digital provider.

**Raquel Alvarez from Sulake** introduced their main products – Habbo Hotel (age 13+) and Hotel Hideaway (age 17+). She identified their challenge as being the transparency of the terms and conditions (Ts & Cs). They explored this through codesign sessions run within Habbo Hotel with a selection of users.

Feedback from the young people about the Ts & Cs highlighted that they were repetitive, too long, too complex, boring, unengaging and didn’t match the games’ look and feel. Young people suggested that these could be better explained through a short video or by making a mini game with young people to help others learn about the Ts & Cs, with an in-game award-badge for successful completion. Others suggested making these terms part of the tutorials of the game, so they were more closely linked. The merits of training some users to be Ts & Cs Ambassadors was also considered.

The Youth Ambassadors praised Sulake’s positive approach and remarked that it should happen frequently in-game through surveys and polls. They also highlighted the importance of feedback from users who know the game and the community.

Lili and Kathrin asked panellists to sum up their experience of working with young people. Francesca Falco (Samsung) said it was crucial to work as peers and cocreators with young people to see their products from a different perspective. Silvia Caneva (Twitter) remarked that it was great to be challenged by and take inspiration from young people. Lidia de Reese (Super RTL) acknowledged that even experienced companies like Super RTL can be challenged to tackle tricky areas, and to consider new ways to engage with children due to the pandemic. Finally, Raquel Alvarez (Sulake) found the experience eye-opening and rewarding. She valued the inclusive approach and enthusiasm of young people, as well as their humour!
Panel 2 – BIK Youth Panel 2020
This panel was introduced by Ella, a BIK Youth Ambassador. She explained how the panel was split into six groups, each tasked with creating a video on a different issue of online safety and digital wellbeing. Each group presented their video and group members explained the issue covered in greater detail and shared some thoughts:

Group A – Fake or real?
This video depicted a schoolgirl using her phone and encountering different content such as scam advertising, controversial (bordering on hateful) statements, and biased views/opinions presented as fact. For each scenario, the viewer could choose whether or not to trust the content. Tips related to that type of content were displayed after each choice, with further advice at the end of the film.

Group B – Human and ethical
This video showed young people discussing the ways that minority groups may be treated online and how people are treated badly for being ‘different’. The group remarked that this was an issue that wasn’t discussed enough and, although it was not a new problem, there was still a long way to go in solving this issue globally. They hoped the video could be used to start a discussion but also to empower people to take a stand against hateful online behaviour.

Group C – Mental health and disability
This powerful video depicted young people holding up signs showing the hurtful and hateful language used online against people with mental health issues, learning needs and disabilities. The video concludes with the same young people holding up signs showing messages of support that could be used to counteract the negative messages. The group were very passionate about this issue and urged everyone to do more to combat this discrimination online.

Group D – Future Internet: Education on and off the internet
This video used hand-drawn animations to highlight the pressing need for greater sex education in schools. In the video, the group remark on the dangers of young people looking to porn for education on sex and relationships. The group explained that studying online during the pandemic has highlighted the need for greater sex education by schools. They also pointed to the opportunities that technology presents in delivering sex education such as promoting good-quality educational resources and using social media to highlight positive messages from NGOs and online influencers.

Group E – Future Internet: The timeline of technological and communicative advancement
This video attempted to answer the question “Are we going to be safe in a world of future technology?” by posing questions and points to consider. It highlighted the past, present and possible future of technology and what potential issues might exist in the future such as
greater digital dependency and the role of artificial intelligence. The group also advised caution, remarking that, while it is hard to predict the future, you can look to the past for patterns of behaviour. They also posed the question of how much technology should influence humans and how much we should use it.

**Group F – Future Internet: Teacher education**

This video depicted four young people on a video chat discussing the ways that technical issues and teachers’ technical ability had affected their education during lockdown. It highlighted the frustrations they have with outdated educational technology and some gaps in teachers’ knowledge in using technology to educate. The group explained that these came from their first-hand experiences during lockdown in their respective countries. The group remarked that “school is your second home” and therefore there is a pressing need for effective online classes, teacher training, and for schools to consider how they use technology in education.

After all videos had been shown and discussed, Youth Ambassadors explained that the videos were designed to raise awareness of online and technology issues, but also to encourage positive change. They urged attendees to remember something important from the session and to make a positive change to the online world.

The session concluded with participants contributing to an interactive word cloud to share their main take-away from the session. The Youth Ambassadors and panellists were also thanked for their hard work and enthusiasm.
Side event 2: A focus on the EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse (hosted by INHOPE)

This session was conducted under Chatham House Rule and hence a session recording is not available. Equally, information identifying speakers and participants has been removed from the session report. For more information, please see the INHOPE website or contact INHOPE direct.

This session looked at the EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse. The session was opened and attendees were welcomed on behalf of Insafe and INHOPE.

The value of industry listening to young citizens was noted, as well as the importance of sharing perspectives, resources and projects on this year’s Safer Internet Forum topic of creating a more inclusive environment for disabled and able-bodied people.

The similarities between the EU Strategy and the BIK Policy Map (the discussion of the afternoon’s session – see below) were stressed, while their differences were also acknowledged. While separated by eight years in adoption, these documents both share a common goal of ensuring that children can grow up to be confident and competent digital citizens, hugely important for both children themselves, and for the European economy.

The diversity of expertise at the table during this session was highlighted, with representatives from all of the different stakeholders in the fight against child sexual abuse. The Better Internet for Kids (BIK) family reaches out beyond Europe, the INHOPE network is truly global, and the SIC+ pilot programme also reaches beyond EU borders. It is a source of pride that EU work is seen as presenting a valuable contribution in the field. Attendees and speakers were thanked for their tireless work fighting this crime, especially analysts. There is a great need for everyone to collaborate to put this strategy into practice. “Without action, this strategy is an empty shell... and INHOPE are among the key players to turn this strategy into deeds.”

INHOPE welcomes this strategy and the practical plan it shows for combating child sexual abuse material (CSAM). INHOPE will work with all and any relevant stakeholders to progress towards these objectives and become more efficient at processing these reports and ensuring children are protected.

The expert panel of five speakers were then introduced, with each outlining how they see their organisation’s cooperation in implementing the strategy, as well as discussing the challenges they foresee.

The first speaker stressed that this strategy covers the issue of fighting child sexual abuse (CSA) in a comprehensive way: focusing on online and offline aspects such as investigation,
prevention and assistance to victims. The situation of CSA in the EU is “not great.” The EU hosts the majority of CSAM globally and COVID-19 has not made this easier. This strategy is the result of multicultural action from the European Parliament (EP) and the Council. It calls for concrete and specific action to protect the rights of children, in an attempt to avoid the pitfall of many policy documents of remaining too high level.

The strategy utilises the tools available to the EC at every level. These three tools are: legislation; their ability to coordinate between different stakeholders; and the provision of funding. Given these tools and the problem, the eight concrete initiatives defined in the strategy fall under three broad categories:

- Implementation of legislation.
- Strengthening law enforcement.
- Galvanising a coordinated and multistakeholder response.

Each of the eight steps of the strategy were then outlined:

**Legislation**
1. In relation to the existing legal framework, it is important to make sure that what exists already is fully implemented. The focus is on continuing this conversation to address any issues.
2. Secondly, it is important to address whether there are any gaps. Nine years have passed since the original directive which, in the digital world, is another era. The EC are therefore launching a study to look at possible gaps. As part of this, they have already identified one gap which concerns the ePrivacy Directive and the impact this has on technology companies voluntarily detecting CSAM on their platforms. The temporary derogation proposed by the EC seeks to maintain the status quo until a longer-term solution can be found. This is currently being negotiated and the EC is doing what they can to support a decision being made by the deadline of 21 December 2020.
3. Next year, the EC will put forward a piece of legislation which enables a long-term framework fighting CSAM to replace the temporary derogation. This will consider mandatory requirements for hosting providers to detect CSAM on their platforms.

**Coordination and funding**
4. Strengthen law enforcement efforts at national and the EU level. Investigation is very important, and national capacity in this regard has been identified as posing barriers to tackling the issue.
5. The fifth point concerns prevention: we need to go to the roots to address this problem before crimes are committed. This is the best way to help victims and to reduce the load on LEAs (law enforcement agencies). The EC is currently creating a network of researchers and practitioners focused on prevention, as this has until now
posed a problem in terms of implementing the directive. While this is understandable, there is a need to keep developing new and existing programmes to maximise the effectiveness of resources in this area.

6. The EC is looking into the creation of a European centre to facilitate greater coordination in the fight against child sexual abuse. Such a centre could be based on the models in Australia, Canada and the US, and would operate under EU rules, ensuring transparency and continuity in the way companies report CSAM and support LEAs in investigative efforts. An important feature of developing this centre would be to avoid duplicating what already exists, but rather to coordinate resources to be used in the most effective way to ensure Member States can benefit from global efforts.

7. The seventh point of the strategy concerns efforts by industry. They play a key role in this area so fluid dialogue and concrete actions are essential. Industry must take responsibility to tackle CSAM on their services and to advise policymakers. A particular point of attention in this area will be end-to-end encryption.

8. CSA is a truly global crime, so even though EU efforts primarily serve EU citizens and Member States, it doesn’t make sense to limit efforts only to the EU. Therefore, it is important to continue operations with global partners such as the WePROTECT Global Alliance. If and when there is an EU centre, it is hoped that it will serve to facilitate global cooperation.

There are three key messages emerging from the strategy.

1. This strategy aims to be a comprehensive response against these crimes using all the tools at EU level online and offline.
2. Everyone’s input is key. This strategy aims to be very concrete but will remain only on paper if not fully implemented. The EC team will do their part but they need everyone’s help. Many have already contributed to the development of the strategy; there will be many opportunities in the future to continue contributing.
3. Finally, this is a unique opportunity to make a long-lasting change in the fight against these crimes in the EU and globally.

A question asked what form a European Centre as outlined in point six of the strategy would take. The panel responded that the specific form the European Centre will take in terms of administration and governance is still being explored, but the idea is to have a pool of experts to facilitate the fight against these crimes across the EU through all the aspects of this crime (such as law enforcement, prevention and support for victims).

Europol welcomes the strategy and believes it will be an important instrument in this crime area, which is itself a very important area to focus on. The importance of collaboration with LEAs was noted, as “law enforcement cannot arrest their way out of this problem, and neither should we try.” “The strategy is essential but will be nothing if not implemented”.
Three features of the strategy were outlined: the need for clearer legislation regarding industry; the need for enhanced capacity of national law enforcement; and the importance of police intelligence.

It is difficult to understand why there is an emphasis of the rights of all users in terms of privacy on platforms, over the rights of the children being victimised. There needs to be a definite balance in this discussion, and a debate in which this conclusion is reached.

There is also a need for Member States’ national teams to have specialised units in relation to CSAM. Most do currently have a dedicated team, but one challenge is ensuring that those units have the resources and structure that is needed to fulfil the vision of the strategy. The strategy highlights that sufficient resources are required here, especially those required to enable international collaboration.

Regarding the need for police intelligence, the key to Europol’s work is the ability to channel intelligence, allowing them to better support all national intelligence and teams responsible for these investigations. Investigations follow very strict procedures including judicial oversight in the relevant countries. The rights of those being investigated are being very thoroughly taken into account, but the rights of the abused need to be as well. Law enforcement balance this very well, so members of society need to trust in those structures.

Recent innovations being implemented at Europol include the victim identification taskforce, recently functioning virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions, which started in 2014 and has identified 390 children. A second example is Europol crowdsourcing information from the public relating to specific objects, enabling localised information over cases. Finally, there is the Say No campaign against sextortion.

Another focus of the strategy is the online undercover area. During COVID, Europol provided reporting of trends noticed. They found that darknet offenders were minimally affected by COVID-19. This reiterates the importance of undercover police in uncovering people acting under assumed anonymity, bringing forward information and disrupting illegal activity.

The major challenge is the need for sufficient resources. LEAs are able to do many different types of jobs, and many groups think all of these should be regarded equally. This strategy says that the area of CSAE (child sexual abuse and exploitation) needs to be prioritised.

The role of the specialised unit for investigating reports of CSAM coming from Europol, Interpol, NCMEC and the national hotline in France (Point de Contact), as well as others, was discussed. The fight against CSAE is an area which has recently had greater attention paid to it, with specialised units and trainings across the country.
The Central Unit for the Protection of Minors of the French National Police has worked to highlight the need for a national prevention plan focusing on justice, education, health, and home office, but actions still have to be taken in many areas. This is where the influence of European legislation can help. While improvements have been made, further steps are needed.

Firstly, the new EU legislation will not allow online service providers to notify about CSA, a source of many of the referrals made to the Unit. Since the beginning of the year, it has received 80,000 reports from NCMEC, 50,000 of which were actionable. These reports include CSAM, as well as other situations of hands-on abuse. If these online services can no longer detect these online situations, there will be lots of cases that will not be brought to its attention, and so will be unknown to LEAs. Collaboration between ISPs and LEAs is essential, especially during COVID-19. This not only concerns the detection of visual material, but also keywords, such as discussions between minors and adults which can lead to solicitation or physical meetings. The EU strategy will allow stakeholders to continue moving forwards. Further, a NCMEC-style EU centre would bring more referrals and help organisation between LEAs, ISPs and hotlines.

The second big issue is end-to-end encryption. In the last few years, more and more offenders have moved to these services to discuss and exchange images. This is possibly because offenders know LEAs have little power in this area, because automatic detection is currently not possible for these services. There is a real need to work together and find a solution to this problem.

It is crucial for people to use any influence they have with national MEPs in favour of the derogation proposed by the EC. For more information on this topic, see the See No Evil, Hear No Evil campaign on the INHOPE website.

Next, the speaker from Twitter highlighted three relevant areas of the EU strategy for Twitter’s role in this fight. Firstly, concerning legislative approaches and gaps, it is encouraging that current gaps will be addressed. The privacy versus safety debate is hugely important, and companies are often placed in the middle of this without sufficient legal guidance.

This is a matter which Twitter are very combative on, both investing and leveraging technology to support their efforts. When made aware of links or images promoting CSAM, they are removed from the site and reported to NCMEC. For this to continue, companies need a clear legal framework for how to act. It is also very important that the proposed derogation allows companies to continue to detect this type of material. Without this, children are at greater risk and companies are left with legal uncertainty of how to address the issue.
There seems to be new regulation rolled out within the EU with little consideration with how this fits with existing laws and rules. Thus, it is important that research is being done on how to best implement this strategy in line with existing legislation.

There is also the need for greater consistency across legal frameworks. It can be difficult to see how EU country-specific frameworks relate to US policies. There is a concern that each country wants to show progress with how they are addressing the issue, but these entities need to build on what’s already happening. Facing a global challenge with national efforts results in the duplication of efforts, as well as an impact of political dynamics.

Two key legislative gaps are the privacy shield, and transfer of data between the US and the EU or outside of the EU. There must also be a focus on building capacity in law enforcement. They are receiving a lot of reports and must have the resources to address this.

Finally, there is the importance of multistakeholder cooperation. At Twitter there is always a chance of seeing CSAM being shared across different platforms, so partnerships with other platforms and LEAs are key. Furthermore, new players must come to the table as new techniques are being developed by all different companies. We must go beyond the few big social media platforms. Everyone can help to create a meaningful difference in this non-competitive space.

An audience member asked what the current policy is at Twitter regarding new hashes (that is, previously unidentified CSAM). Alongside Twitter’s transparency report, there is also the use of media hashing and working with partners to find new ways of dealing with this problem. Lots of energy is being invested to identify the ways in which Twitter is being used to spread information, so it is using AI (artificial intelligence) to block this at the start, rather than chasing the content down later. Twitter is also leveraging technology to prioritise content for humans to check.

The session concluded by pulling together some of the key points discussed. There are challenges ahead, but there is also a real positivity towards taking the strategy forward. This strategy outlines a positive series of steps and moves in the right direction, both for INHOPE’s goals of ensuring an internet free of CSAM, and in ensuring a world free of victims.
Side event 3: A focus on BIK policy


Hans Martens from European Schoolnet opened the last session of Safer Internet Forum 2020 which focused on the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Strategy. The BIK Strategy, first launched in 2012, aims to create a better and safer internet for children by building on four pillars: high-quality content online for children and young people, stepping up awareness and empowerment, creating a safer environment for children online, and fighting against child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.

The BIK Policy Map was established in order to exchange knowledge and experiences on BIK-related policymaking and implementation across EU member states. The first BIK Policy Map was published in 2015. A second report followed in 2018. After providing this introduction, Hans Martens officially announced the launch of the third BIK Policy Map report. He then gave the floor to Brian O’Neill, Professor of Media and Communications and Director of Research, Enterprise & Innovation at the Technological University Dublin who co-authored the report with Stephan Deyer of Leibniz-Institute for Media Research, Hans-Bredow-Institut and Thuy Dinh of the TU Dublin.
Brian O’Neill started his presentation by explaining that the BIK Policy Map is intended to monitor the implementation process of the BIK Strategy in the Member States of the European Union as well as Iceland, Norway and the UK. Brian O’Neill then explained the three dimensions of the BIK Policy Map:

(1) Policy framework
   - organisation of policy
   - kinds of policies
(2) Policymaking
   - policy coordination
   - evidence-based policymaking
   - participation in policymaking
(3) Policy implementation
   - stakeholder involvement
   - spread of activities

It thereby resembles the concept of Collective Impact, a theoretical framework that refers to the combination of various elements which makes for more effective and impactful policy implementation.

The newest BIK Policy Map report has found that there have been further achievements in the adoption of the BIK Strategy across Europe. The topic of child online safety has been addressed by all countries. There is, furthermore, a high level of awareness of the BIK Strategy and, in 77 per cent of the countries, the Strategy has played a role in the development of policies. Brian O’Neill continued by presenting the findings of the report according to the three aforementioned dimensions:

(1) Policy framework
   Approximately half of the countries developed BIK-specific policies whereas the other half addressed the BIK Strategy by embedding it in broader policies. Only two countries created an overarching BIK policy framework.

(2) Policymaking
   • *Policy coordination*
     The study reported more awareness for BIK-related issues and, as a result, more public activities in this field. Often, multiple ministries and agencies are involved in BIK policymaking, typically 4 to 6. This calls for close coordination. Most countries indeed have some form of coordination mechanism in place. Two countries established a multistakeholder body to coordinate BIK-related policies.
• Evidence-based policymaking
This area has seen large improvements since the previous BIK Policy Map report was published. There has been a big increase in availability of data for the purpose of decision making: 77 per cent of countries report to have access to quantitative data on children’s engagement with the internet. 67 per cent reported regular data collection. Evidence has influenced the design of public policies in 75 per cent of the countries.

• Participation in policymaking
Children are now systematically and directly consulted during the policymaking process in over half of the countries. In about a third, they are indirectly involved. In one country, young people and adults are sharing decision making. In contrast, in three countries, children are not involved in policymaking at all. Thus, there remains scope for improvement.

(3) Policy implementation
The report noted improvement regarding Pillar 1 which previously was a slow developing area. Multiple stakeholders are actively involved in the implementation of BIK-related policies. Safer Internet Centres have a central role in this regard, however in eight countries it has been reported that government ministries are actively involved as well. Concerning Pillar 3, a step up in state involvement was observed, for example, regarding issues such as age-appropriate privacy settings, age rating and content classification, and online advertising. In respect of Pillar 4, 23 countries report increased resources for law enforcement.

Finally, drawing on the concept of Collective Impact, Brian O’Neill presented a number of recommendations:

1. A common agenda both at European and national level is required.
2. The evidence base concerning BIK activities should be further strengthened.
3. Opportunities for collaboration need to be created building on the distinct and complementary strengths of different stakeholders.
4. Mechanisms for continuous communication and sharing of knowledge should be maintained and deepened.
5. The coordination processes both at national and European level need to be strengthened.

Panel 1
Following this presentation, Brian O’Neill launched the first panel discussion which focussed on the relevance of these findings and their implications for European countries.
Brian O’Neill asked **Martina Wagner, Senior Advisor, Swedish Media Council** which influence the BIK Strategy has had on the policymaking in Sweden and how the policy coordination has worked. Martina Wagner replied that there is no national body who act as policy coordinator in the BIK domain in Sweden. Additionally, not only are several ministries involved but also NGOs. There are, however, some coordination mechanisms in specific policy areas.

Brian O’Neill then directed the question to **Gerhard Pölsterl, Officer for School Books and Educational Resources, Austrian Federal Ministry for Labour, Families and Youth**, asking how he would characterise the influence of the BIK Strategy on Austria’s policies. Gerhard Pölsterl responded that some related policies had already been in place prior to the launch of the BIK Strategy. Strong ties with the Austrian Safer Internet Centre (SIC) then were essential for the sharpening of existing policies.

Remarking that Safer Internet Centres offer a Europe-wide infrastructure of importance for the BIK Strategy, Brian O’Neill gave the floor to **Szymon Wójcik, Saferinternet.pl Project Coordinator at the Empowering Children Foundation (Polish Safer Internet Centre)**, inquiring how he views the influence of the BIK Strategy at national policy level. Szymon Wójcik commented that, in general, NGOs are more sceptical towards official policies and strategies as they focus on direct actions. However, BIK is an exception in his view. The Polish Safer Internet Centre fully shares the aims of the BIK Strategy.

Moving on to the topic of evidence-based policymaking, Brian O’Neill asked Martina Wagner and Gerhard Pölsterl to describe the work that is done in this area in their respective countries. Martina Wagner responded that research is crucial for decision making. The Swedish Media Council has conducted a biannual survey on children’s engagement with media since 2005. Gerhard Pölsterl agreed that data is key for policymaking. In particular, it is important to gain insights into the views of children and young people so policymakers can properly address their needs and help them have a safe and inclusive experience online. On the topic of youth participation, Brian O’Neill asked Szymon Wójcik about the Digital Youth Forum which the Polish Safer Internet Centre regularly organises. Szymon Wójcik replied that engaging children and young people in a meaningful way and empowering them can be challenging.

**Manuela Martra, Head of Safer Internet within the Unit Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet at DG CONNECT** was then asked what she regards as the strengths and weaknesses of BIK activities across Europe. She responded that, in the case of the BIK Strategy, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. The Commission was very happy to see that progress has been made in the field of providing high-quality content online for young people. Manuela Martra highlighted, furthermore, the increase of state involvement observed regarding online safety. She also stressed that it was a big step forward that most of the countries are building on evidence to make decisions. The difficulties countries appear
to face in involving children and young people in the process of policymaking was pointed out as a weakness of the current state of the BIK Strategy implementation. Manuela Martra remarked that Safer Internet Forum 2020 had showed how valuable it is to listen to young people themselves.

A member of the audience asked if there is also a measurement of the effectiveness of the policies and initiatives. Brian O’Neill responded that the BIK Policy Map only examined the process of policymaking and implementation and does not focus on monitoring the impact of policies. Szymon Wójcik replied that their experience was that the impact of specific policies is difficult to measure. Martina Wagner commented that the Swedish Media Council is currently working on developing such a measurement instrument.

Brian O’Neill asked Manuela Marta about the potential future of the BIK Strategy. She responded that an assessment of the BIK Strategy has shown that its key features are still highly relevant. Developing several related strategies, the Commission is currently working on creating an overarching framework.

Panel 2

Thanking all participants of the first panel, Brian O’Neill then opened the second round of discussion providing a global outlook on the implementation of BIK-related or BIK-inspired policies and possible learnings.

Ella Serry, Assistant Manager of International Strategy and Futures at the eSafety Commissioner of Australia, stated that much of the model of Collective Impact has already been implemented in Australia. She particularly pointed out the introduction of the eSafety Commissioner, the world’s first government agency solely dedicated to online safety, as an achievement. Some of their authorities are to be further broadened.

Brian O’Neill then asked Daniel Kardefelt-Winther, Research Specialist at the UNICEF Office of Research, to share his view on key policies in other regions of the world. Daniel Kardefelt-Winther responded that there have been positive developments concerning the creation of a better internet for children in both Africa and South Asia. ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) adopted the Declaration on the Protection of Children from all Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse. The African Union adopted the Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data which, even though the focus is not on children, presents a step forward.

Rodrigo Nejm, Director of Education at SaferNet Brasil, reported that there is no formal strategy such as BIK in Latin America. However, he noted that Brazil has strong child protection organisations. There is also progress on the policy level in form of a data protection framework that includes children’s rights. Furthermore, Rodrigo Nejm stated that a national kids online survey is being conducted annually. In response to the question
whether this evidence base has been important for the formulation of good policies, Rodrigo Nejm said that the policymakers do not necessarily consult the studies. However, SaferNet Brasil continues to work on establishing cooperation.

Brian O’Neill then asked Narine Khachatryan, Coordinator at Safer Internet Armenia, what she has experienced as challenges and opportunities connected to the BIK strategy. Narine Khachatryan reported that a national concept for online safety and media literacy education had been developed in 2010 by the Ministry of Education and successfully implemented throughout the country. All national strategy papers to date have been developed in a bottom-up process. The Armenian Safer Internet Centre, which was founded in 2009, has a special focus on raising awareness and offering training opportunities.

Brian O’Neill thanked all panellists for offering their views and gave the floor to Hans Martens. Hans Martens thanked all participants of Safer Internet Forum 2020, and especially the young people, for their inspiring contributions before handing over to June Lowery-Kingston for closing remarks.
Close of Safer Internet Forum 2020

In her closing remarks, June Lowery-Kingston, Head of Unit, Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet at DG CONNECT of the European Commission stated that being the first edition to take place completely online, Safer Internet Forum 2020 had turned a challenge into an opportunity by including a wide range of participants from all over the world. The Forum has come a long way and stood the test of time, evolving with the digital environment. The lack of a physical event has been compensated by the excellent programme and the incorporation of an enriching global perspective.

June Lowery-Kingston thanked the team at EUN, INHOPE and her own team at the Commission for enabling this. Moreover, she thanked all speakers and participants, especially the young people who gave insights into their lives and shared their expertise. She emphasised that the European Commission remains firmly committed to child participation and inclusiveness.

Finally, June Lowery-Kingston encouraged the participants to get involved in Safer Internet Day celebrations on Tuesday, 9 February 2021. Find out more at www.saferinternetday.org.
Annex 1: BIK Youth Panel 2020

In the framework of the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) project, each year a BIK Youth Panel is organised prior to and during the Safer Internet Forum (SIF), encouraging a group of youth panellists to voice not just their personal opinions and challenges regarding safer/better internet issues, but also those of their peers whom they are representing at a European level. The BIK Youth Panellists are typically involved in other activities too at both national and European level, with many of them going on to become BIK Youth Ambassadors, representing the BIK agenda at high-level events such as the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

Due to the safety measures in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities of the BIK Youth Panel 2020 were redesigned in an online format. A suite of secure open-source online meeting and collaboration tools, which included the Big Blue Button videoconferencing tool used for the preparatory online meetings, were set up for the purposes of BIK Youth Panel 2020 activities.

Approximately two months prior to the Safer Internet Forum, 48 young people from 14 countries joined a total of eight preparatory online meetings, where they identified the topics they would like to focus on and the groups they would be working in. Throughout these meetings, BIK Youth Panellists started to work out the details of how to present their topic in a video presentation. With guidance from privacy expert Chris Pinchen and Austrian Safer Internet Centre Youth Coordinator Barbara Buchegger, panellists created their video script for six diverse topics as follows:

- Fake or real?
- Human and ethical
To make the preparatory online meetings a more fun experience for the youth panellists and to establish a more relaxed work environment for them, “theme nights” were developed during which everybody dressed up or presented skills based on a pre-selected theme. These ranged from musical instruments to favourite hats, and from pyjamas to Halloween costumes as seen in the image below.

Following the conclusion of preparatory meetings, two days of BIK Youth Panel activities, which traditionally would take place in Brussels prior to the Forum, took place online on 18-19 November 2020. Panellists used most of these two days to finalise their videos and to rehearse their presentations. On the afternoon of 19 November 2020, BIK Youth Panellists presented their videos to the members of the Alliance to better protect minors online, and representatives from the European Commission. The work of the youth panellists was lauded and received very positive feedback during this session. The occasion also provided an opportunity for the youth panellists to voice their thoughts and pose questions to the group of experts.

See the Side event 1: A focus on BIK Youth report above for further information on the Youth Panellist’s intervention in the Safer Internet Forum 2020 agenda.

Read more about the BIK Youth Panel 2020 on the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) website or find out more about the BIK Youth programme generally at www.bikyouth.eu.