

# Austria

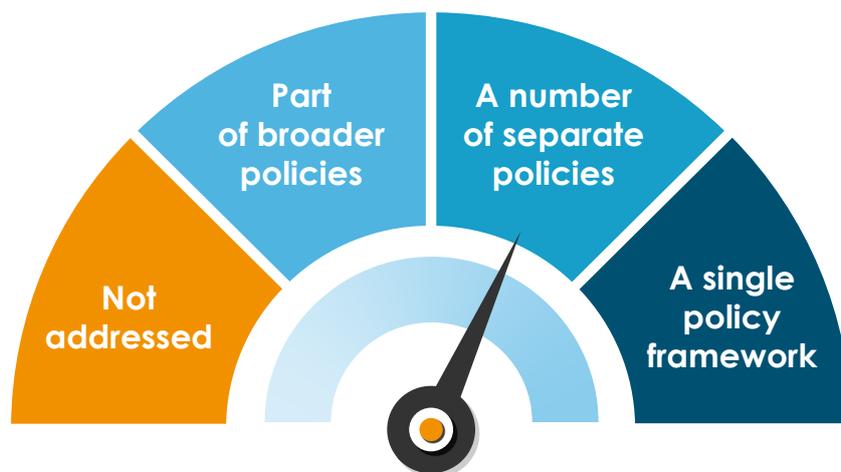
The Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy Map is a tool used to compare and exchange knowledge on policy making and implementation in EU Member States on the themes and recommendations of the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children (or BIK Strategy) first set out by the European Commission in May 2012. The third BIK Policy Map report (2020) examines the implementation of the BIK Strategy in 30 European countries, including all EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom.

For each country in the BIK Policy Map study, we outline findings for Policy frameworks, Policy making and Policy implementation, and conclude by providing a selection of good practices.

Download the full [BIK Policy Map report](#) from the Better Internet for Kids website.

## 1. Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks refer to the organising principles and long-term goals for policies, guidelines, decisions and other statements made at the national level in the course of putting into practice the BIK Strategy.



In Austria, the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children has featured in national policy debates on the subject of children's use of the internet. This topic is covered in a number of separate policies, principally through laws and regulations which address the four different pillars of the BIK Strategy. Some examples are given below.

### Pillar 1: High-quality content online for children and young people

- [Austrian Youth Strategy](#) – The Austrian Youth Strategy is an ongoing process to strengthen and further develop youth policy. The aim is to bundle and systematise measures for young people and to optimise their effectiveness. The youth strategy should also identify new fields of action and cooperation, identify further need for action and back them up with concrete measures.

- [Austrian Government Program](#) (29.01.2019) which includes commitments towards strengthening victim protection and protection of violence and hatred on the internet.

## Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment

- [Basic Decree on Media Education](#) – The basic decree on media education was updated in 2012 to take account of "network-based and social media" and to consider the newly created tasks of the universities of teacher education. It also takes into account the recommendation of the EU Commission of 08/20/2009 C (2009) 6464 final "on media literacy in the digital environment for a more competitive audiovisual and content industry and an inclusive knowledge society".
- [Basic Digital Education](#) (01.09.2018). As a pilot project, mandatory "Digital Basic Education" started in the school year 2017/18 at 178 Neue Mittelschulen and AHS lower secondary schools. From the 2018/19 school year, the prescribed curriculum has applied with nationwide implementation for all lower secondary schools (NMS, AHS).
- [Sicherheitspolizeigesetz](#) – Federal Law on the Organization of Security Administration and the Exercise of the Security Police (Security Police Act, SPG).
- [Erlass Kriminalprävention](#)/Decree on Crime Prevention(01.09.2018) – In the 2018/2019 school year, the police commenced rolling out the UNDER 18 prevention program across Austria. Specially trained staff provide information to children and adolescents from the age of 13 on the topics of legal awareness and the prevention of addiction and violence. The use of digital media is taught to children from the age of ten.

## Pillar 3: Creating a safer environment for children online

- [Austrian Government Program](#) (29.01.2019).
- [Broadcasting and media law](#) implementing Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council (14.11.2018).
- [Austrian Cyber Security Strategy](#) (2013) – The Austrian Strategy for Cybersecurity (ÖSCS 2013) forms the strategic framework for the national cybersecurity policy. An update is currently being worked on.

## Pillar 4: Legislation and law enforcement against child sexual abuse and exploitation

- [Sicherheitspolizeigesetz](#) – Consolidated federal law: Entire legal provision for the Security Police Act, version of 20 March 2021.
- [Erlass Kriminalprävention](#) – Decree on crime prevention, 1 September 2018.
- [Austrian Cyber Security Strategy](#) (2013) – the Austrian Strategy for Cybersecurity.

## 2. Policy making

Policy making refers to the general process by which policies are developed within each country, including how coordination and oversight is managed, the extent to which the policy agenda is informed by an evidence base, and whether there are arrangements for young people to be involved in the policy process.

### 2.1 How are policies coordinated?

In Austria, more than one ministry, agency or body is responsible for coordinating policies addressing the BIK Strategy with more than six ministries involved in the process.

Ministries involved include the Federal Chancellery; Federal Ministry of Labour, Family and Youth; Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research; Federal Ministry of the Interior; Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs; Federal Ministry of Justice; Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

### 2.2 Who is primarily in charge of policy coordination?

Responsibility for coordination of BIK-related policies varies by each respective pillar of the BIK Strategy.

Pillar 1: High-quality content online for children and young people

- This is primarily overseen by the [Federal Agency for the Positive Rating of Digital Games \(BuPP\)](#) at the Federal Ministry of Labour, Family and Youth.

Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment

- The [Austrian Safer Internet Centre](#) has the main responsibility for the Under 18 programme of the Federal Ministry of the Interior as an additional supporting entity.

Pillar 3: Tools and regulation for an online safe environment

- The [Austrian Safer Internet Centre](#) plays a key role in this pillar.
- [Rat auf Draht](#), the Austrian emergency number for children and young people, is an additional key initiative. The number can be reached anonymously and free of charge around the clock.
- The [Austrian Regulatory Authority for Broadcasting and Telecommunications](#) (RTR) is also a relevant agency. Its mandate is the promotion of competition in the broadcasting, telecommunications and postal markets, and providing operational support for TKK (Telecommunication Control Commission) and PCK (Post-Control-Kommission). Within its own area of competence, RTR issues ordinances for the protection of users and carries out supervisory activities, among others.

Pillar 4: Legislation and law enforcement against child sexual abuse and exploitation

- [Rat auf Draht](#), the Austrian emergency number for children and young people.

- [ECPAT Austria](#) – The Austrian Platform against CSEC (Commercial sexual exploitation of children) is a coalition of eight NGOs working on child rights issues and conducting research into child prostitution and child pornography. The coalition also aims to establish sustainable training structures on CSEC and the Code with the tourism industry, strengthen youth work and develop specific activities on CSEC by and for youth.

Inter-departmental communication is primarily facilitated by the [Saferinternet.at Advisory Board](#). The Advisory Board supports and advises the Saferinternet.at initiative. It also serves to network with other projects, as well as content-related exchange between the Advisory Board members.

### 2.3 Data collection in the last three years

Data collection to support policy making related to the BIK Strategy includes national and regional surveys with quantitative data specifically focused on children's use of the internet, quantitative data on some topics of children's use of the internet collected as part of a broader survey, and qualitative research specifically focused on children's use of the internet.

Data collection has impacted on policy and as a result of studies undertaken, multiple policies have been put in place or adapted in multiple areas, for example the National Youth Strategy and prevention strategies. Examples include:

- [Youth Media Study 2019](#) provides data on media behaviour from three angles: young people between 11 and 18 years of age; parents with children between the ages of 11 and 18; and Secondary level 1 educators (NMS, AHS lower level).
- [Children's Media Study 2020](#) examines media behaviour from three angles of: Children between 6 and 10 years; Parents with children between the ages of 3 and 10 years; and Educators from kindergartens and elementary schools.
- The [Youth Internet Monitor](#) is an initiative of Saferinternet.at and presents current data on social media usage by Austria's young people such as which social networks are currently very popular with young users in the country. A representative online survey by the Institute for Youth Culture Research was carried out for the Youth Internet Monitor 2021. 400 young people between the ages of 11 and 17 were asked about their use of social networks in November and December 2020.
- [2nd Survey of Schools: ICT in Education](#) – Austria Country Report. The study follows the Digital Education Action Plan Communication's call to provide more data and evidence regarding digitisation in education and digital technologies in learning. The survey was conducted in a partnership between Deloitte and IPSOS, on behalf of the European Commission. It builds on the European Commission's first Survey of Schools: ICT in Education.
- [Young people in digital time stress](#) presented by Saferinternet.at on the 16th international edition of Safer Internet Day on 5 February 2019.

- [The very youngest \(0-6\) & digital media](#) – As part of the Saferinternet.at initiative, the Austrian Institute for Applied Telecommunications (ÖIAT) and Internet Service Providers Austria (ISPA) commissioned a study on the subject of “The very youngest and digital media”, the results of which were presented at the 17th international edition of Safer Internet Day on 11 February 2020.
- [Digital media in elementary school age – perspectives of children and their parents](#) – As part of the Saferinternet.at initiative for the 15th international Safer Internet Day on 6 February 2018, the Austrian Institute for Applied Telecommunications (ÖIAT) and Internet Service Providers Austria (ISPA) commissioned the Institute for Sociology at the University of Vienna with a study on the subject of “Digital media in primary schools”. In a qualitative study, 12 children between the ages of 6 and 9 and their parents were asked about their use of digital media. The survey was supplemented by practical experience from hundreds of Saferinternet.at primary school workshops in recent years.
- [Rumours on the Net – How do young people evaluate information from the internet?](#) As part of the Saferinternet.at initiative, the Austrian Institute for Applied Telecommunications (ÖIAT) and Internet Service Providers Austria (ISPA) commissioned the Institute for Youth Culture Research with a study on the subject of “Rumours on the Net - How do young people evaluate information from the internet?”. In a representative online survey, 400 young people between the ages of 14 and 18 were asked how they used information from the internet. In addition, six in-depth individual interviews were carried out.

## 2.4 Involvement of young people in policy making

The involvement of young people in policy making is described as one whereby Young people are systematically and directly consulted and informed (for example, through hearings, consultations and specific surveys).

The BJV or [Austrian National Youth Council](#) is the official and legally-established representative body of children and youth in Austria. Together with its member organisations, it is a strong voice for the diverse interests and ideas of young people. Regarding youth issues, BJV has the status of a social partner. This means that BJV takes part in political negotiations on behalf of young people and works on a number of international projects. BJV is an active member of the European Youth Forum. Through the [Austrian National Youth Council](#), participation and consultation is a mandatory part of the policy development process.

## 3. Policy implementation

Policy implementation refers to the involvement of the relevant stakeholders in the delivery of initiatives and the spread of activities as envisaged under each of the four pillars of the BIK Strategy.

### Pillar 1: High-quality content online for children and young people

Activities under Pillar 1 are supported by government ministries as well the public service broadcaster which has a complementary role.

Recent changes include the introduction of the [Basic Digital Education](#) curriculum and the [Media Literacy Award](#). On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research, mediamanual.at annually awards the media literacy award [mla] for the best and most innovative media educational projects in European schools.

#### Summary of Pillar 1 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
Initiatives to stimulate the production and visibility of quality content for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiatives to encourage children's creativity and to promote positive use of the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiatives to implement standards for quality online content for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other relevant activity (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment

The [Safer Internet Centre](#) takes the lead in implementing actions under Pillar 2 with complementary roles by government ministries, public agencies, NGOs and civil society organisations.

In relation to "Teaching online safety in schools", there has been a new focus on pre-schools as well as on teacher training due to the new curriculum.

Participation in the European Media Literacy Week with the [Austrian Woche der Medienkompetenz](#)/Media Literacy Week is also noteworthy. The third Austrian Media Literacy Week was organised by mediamanual on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research during which Austrian schools, universities and associations, among others, presented their media literacy projects and activities.

#### Summary of Pillar 2 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
<b>"Teaching online safety in schools"</b>			

Strategies to include teaching online safety in schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to reinforce informal education about online safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to provide for online safety policies in schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to ensure adequate teacher training in online safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to support public-private partnerships in online safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>“Digital and media literacy activities”</b>			
Activities to support young people’s technical skills required to use online media content and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to encourage critical thinking around media industries and evaluating content for truthfulness, reliability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities that encourage interaction, engagement and participation in the economic, social, creative, cultural aspects of society through online media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities that promote democratic participation and fundamental rights on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities that challenge radicalisation and hate speech online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>“Scaling up awareness activities and youth participation”</b>			
National support for public awareness-raising campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of children when developing national campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of children when developing legislation with an impact on their online activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities or initiatives to match the Commission’s support for the national Youth Panels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industry funding and technical support for NGOs and education providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industry dissemination of awareness material either online or at the point of sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>“Simple and robust reporting tools for users”</b>			

Mechanisms for reporting content and contacts that may be harmful for children such as cyberbullying or grooming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiatives to facilitate cooperation between helplines and law enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiatives to monitor the effective functioning of reporting mechanisms at a national level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Pillar 3: Creating a safe environment for children online

The [Safer Internet Centre](#) plays the leading role in the implementation of Pillar 3. Government ministries, public broadcasters, industry, universities and NGOs are all described as having a complementary role.

A notable development in this area is the age rating for digital games in a pedagogical sense provided by [BuPP.at](#). The Federal Agency for the Positive Rating of Digital Games (BuPP) provides information on recommended computer games and recommended games for consoles and mobile devices (smartphones, tablets) in order to provide parents and educationalists with an orientation aid when making their choice. Background information and tips, as well as service offers on the topic, complete the range of services offered by BuPP.

Other relevant activity includes the implementation of trusted flaggers to combat hate speech.

#### Summary of Pillar 3 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
<b>“Age-appropriate privacy settings”</b>			
Activities to ensure the implementation of EU legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-regulatory measures by industry about age-appropriate privacy settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness-raising activities regarding age-appropriate privacy settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Wider availability and use of parental controls</b>			
Activities to promote the availability of parental control tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tests and certification for parental control tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Efforts to support industry implementation of parental control tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>“Wider use of age rating and content classification”</b>			
Activities to promote the adoption of age rating and content classification among relevant stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A complaints process for the effective functioning of such systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>“Online advertising and overspending”</b>			
Activities at the national level to ensure that legislation regarding online profiling and behavioural advertising is observed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support industry in developing codes of conduct regarding inappropriate advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Monitor implementation of codes of conduct at the national level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### Pillar 4: Fighting against child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation

Government ministries, the Safer Internet Centre and NGOs lead in the implementation of Pillar 4 activities with complementary roles played by industry, the public broadcaster and universities/research centres. The Federal Ministry of the Interior and Stopline.at (as the hotline) act besides multiple NGOs as leaders in this area.

#### Summary of Pillar 4 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
Increased resources for law enforcement bodies that fight against child abuse material online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective safeguards in place to ensure democratic accountability in the use of investigative tools to combat child sexual abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to support the functioning and visibility of hotlines at the national level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to support the improvement of cooperation between hotlines and industry for taking down child abuse material	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 4. Good practices

The following are three selected examples of good practices in supporting children's use of the internet in Austria:

### **Saferinternet.at**

The Austrian Safer Internet Centre, [Saferinternet.at](https://www.saferinternet.at), exists to promote a safer and better use of the internet and mobile technologies among children and young people. The Austrian centre comprises 147 Rat auf Draht, the Austrian helpline, which is the most familiar Austrian telephone helpline in general (about 90 per cent of Austrian youths know 147 Rat auf Draht). The Austrian hotline, Stoplevelne, was founded in 1998 by the Internet Service Providers Austria (ISPA) as a self-regulatory instrument of the internet industry to give internet users the opportunity to report illegal content they find online. Saferinternet.at maintains a youth platform where children and young people can express their views and exchange knowledge and experiences concerning their use of online technologies and contribute to the design of awareness-raising actions, tools and materials. The Austrian Safer Internet Centre has broad support of all relevant stakeholders in the country. In addition to CEF/Telecom funding, the awareness centre is nationally co-funded by government and industry partners: Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Labour, Family and Youth; Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Education, Science and Research; Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Digital and Economic Affairs; Facebook; and A1.

### **Decriminalisation of young people regarding sexting among themselves**

[Section 207a of the Criminal Code](#) ("pornographic images of minors") aims to protect children and adolescents under 18 years. Photo or video recordings of sexual acts in which minors are involved are therefore considered child pornography. Any act in connection with child pornography is prohibited, including the production, offering, possession or letting. On 1 January 2016, an amendment to the penal code came into force, decriminalising sexting between responsible minors. Accordingly, the mutual exchange of one's own pornographic photos or videos between two young people aged 14 and over is now free of punishment. This means, for example, that a 16-year-old girl can send her 17-year-old boyfriend a nude photo of herself. Neither the sending between the two, nor the possession of the photo is a criminal offense for the young people in this case.

### **Federal Office for the Positive Assessment of Digital Games**

The [Federal Agency for the Positive Rating of Digital Games \(BuPP\)](#) provides information on recommended computer games and recommended games for consoles and mobile devices (smartphones, tablets) in order to provide parents and educationalists with an orientation aid when making their choice. Background information and tips, as well as service offers on the topic, complete the range of services offered by BuPP.