

Latvia

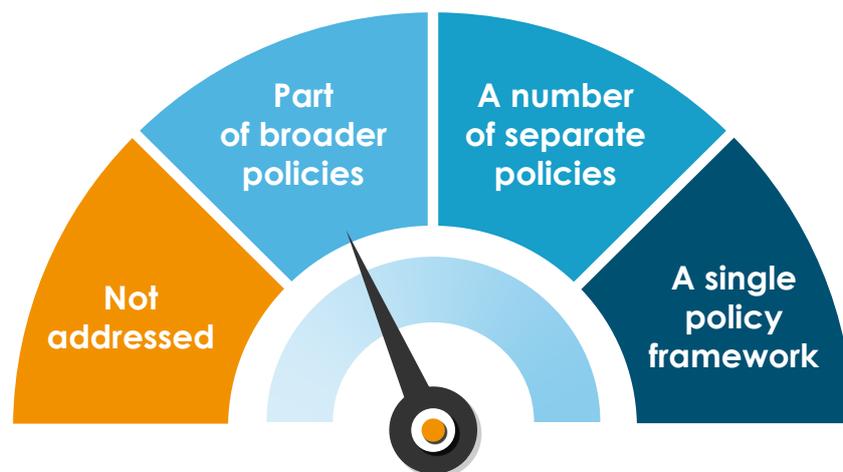
The Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy Map is a tool used to compare and exchange knowledge on policy making and implementation in EU Member States on the themes and recommendations of the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children (or BIK Strategy) first set out by the European Commission 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 Latvia, 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 part of broader 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

- [Latvian Media Policy Guidelines 2016-2020](#), approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on 8 November 2016.

- [Policy Guidelines for the Development of the information society 2014-2020](#), approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on 14 October 2013 in Information Society Development Guidelines for 2014 -2020.

Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment

- [Information Society Development Guidelines for 2014-2020](#) were developed to continue the current action policy in the field of information society development and determine the priorities of the ICT field for the EU Structural Funds planning period 2014-2020. The guidelines are a medium-term development planning document worked out by the work group for a period of seven years under the management of MEPRD. The work group consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, State Chancellery, associations of ICT field, Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Employers' Confederation of Latvia and Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments.
- [Cyber Security Strategy of Latvia 2019-2022](#) – The aim of cyber security policy is to strengthen and develop cyber defense capabilities by increasing resilience to cyber attacks and raising public awareness of cyber threats. To achieve this goal, five lines of action have been identified: promoting cybersecurity and reducing digital security risks; resilience of information and communication technologies; strengthening the provision of critical information and communication technologies and services; public awareness, education and research; international cooperation; the rule of law in cyberspace and the reduction of cybercrime.

Pillar 3: Creating a safer environment for children online

- [Information Society Development Guidelines for 2014-2020](#).

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

- Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA. After this directive was implemented, several laws were changed. Implemented in Latvia on 16 July 2013.
- [Plan for the Protection of Minors against Criminal Offences against Morality and Sexual Inviolability](#) 2019-2020, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on 2 July 2019.

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 Latvia, 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.

On the government level (policy planning level), the policies regarding the implementation of the EU strategy are divided between the following ministries:

- The Ministry of Culture coordinates the national media policy.
- The Ministry of Justice oversees the implementation of the [Plan for the Protection of Minors against Criminal Offences against Morality and Sexual Inviolability 2019-2020](#).
- The Ministry of Defence coordinates the implementation of Latvia's [Cybersecurity Strategy 2019-2022](#).
- The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development is in charge of the implementation of the [Information Society Development Guidelines](#).
- The Ministry of Welfare oversees the development of the new policy guidelines on children, youth and family policy.
- The Ministry of Interior is responsible for the implementation of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crimes Committed by Minors and the Protection of Children Against Crimes 2013-2019. A new policy document has not been drafted yet.
- The Ministry of Education and Science designs the standard curriculum of the education programmes for children of all levels in the formal education system. The ministry is also responsible for state policies to ensure the adequate learning environment of children, including the digital environment.

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.

- Under Pillar 1: High-quality content online for children and young people, this is primarily overseen by the [National Centre for Education](#).
- The [Latvian Safer Internet Centre](#) has the main responsibility for Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment and Pillar 4: Legislation and law enforcement against child sexual abuse and exploitation.

- Pillar 3: Tools and regulation for an online safe environment is overseen by the [State Police](#).

Inter-departmental communication mechanisms include the two-level cooperation mechanism in place. The local government level is where interdisciplinary co-operation groups on child protection are set up. The local government co-operation group on child protection acts as an advisory collegial institution in its administrative territory of the relevant municipality or city of the republic. The second level of cooperation is the state level where the [Council on Child Protection](#) operates. The Council on Child Protection acts as an advisory collegial body promoting concerted action by institutions, including local government co-operation groups, in the protection of the rights of children.

The [Latvian Safer Internet Centre](#) serves as a hub for multidisciplinary cooperation and generation of innovative ideas on child online safety. Moreover, the centre is the primary body promoting the involvement of young people in the planning and evaluating of its activities.

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. Examples include:

- [Restricting content on a child's phone – protects or harms?](#) This survey of more than 1,000 Latvians was commissioned by Samsung Electronics Baltics and conducted by the sociological research company Norstat in March 2019.
- A study of 1,203 children aged 9 to 16 on [media literacy](#) in Latvia was carried out in two stages integrating a qualitative and quantitative approach. In the first stage, in-depth interviews based on a qualitative methodology were conducted, while in the second stage, quantitative methods of conducting a survey of children and adolescents in Latvian education institutions were used.
- [Young children 0-8 and digital technology](#) is a qualitative exploratory study carried out by the University of Latvia. The study was supported by the Latvian Safer Internet Centre, Microsoft Latvia and the British Council.

The policy relating to children's use of the internet is one of the elements forming the Trust and Security Pillar in the National Digital Strategy – Information Society Development Guidelines 2014-2020 (ISDG). The evaluation of the ISDG was performed in two mid-term review reports in 2017 and 2019 and adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers. It has to be noted that detailed evaluation of implementation of the policy is performed based on evaluation tools used within activities of the Safer Internet Centre. The texts of mid-term review reports can be found in the policy documents database (available in Latvian only) on page 18-19 of the first mid-term report: 16.11.2017. Informatīvais ziņojums Par Informācijas sabiedrības attīstības pamatnostādņu 2014.-2020.gadam starposma izvērtējumu; on page 26-27 of the second

mid-term report: 05.12.2019. Informatīvais ziņojums Informācijas sabiedrības attīstības pamatnostādņu 2014.-2020.gadam starpposma 2. Izvērtējums).

Feedback/evaluation on the operation of Helpline 116111 and Hotline has taken place on a regular basis.

2.4 Involvement of young people in policy making

The involvement of young people in policy making is described as one whereby young people's interests are considered directly (for example, through analysis of existing surveys and data collections). Relevant organisations involved in supporting youth participation in policy making include:

- The [Latvian Safer Internet Centre](#) has established a youth panel in the framework of which consultations with young people are in place. Young people are also involved in awareness-raising campaigns organised by the centre. However, there is no direct systematic involvement of young people in the policy making on the topic of children's use of the internet which would be conducted by a ministerial level public entity.

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 led by the Latvian Safer Internet Centre. Government ministries have a complementary role.

The Latvian Safer Internet Centre regularly develops and promotes quality content, and also disseminates quality content that organisations and industry members have produced. Every year, the State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's rights announces a competition where children can express themselves in a creative way about internet safety. The Latvian Safer Internet Centre organises different activities to encourage young people to produce quality content.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other relevant activity (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment

Activities under Pillar 2 are led by the Latvian Safer Internet Centre. Government ministries have a complementary role. Examples include:

- To deal with educational issues brought up by latest global developments, including digitalisation, countries apply different approaches. Latvia is among the countries which, during recent years, are reforming its [general education curriculum](#) including [secondary education](#) to equip students with competences necessary for life and work in the 21st century.
- In 2018, the Latvian Safer Internet Centre, in cooperation with the National Centre for Education, organised a [diagnostic test](#) for 3rd and 6th grade pupils to measure the level of knowledge about safety online and media literacy.
- In celebrating Safer Internet Day each year, the Latvian Safer Internet Centre organises an [online test](#) for all school children about safety online.
- The Latvian Safer Internet Centre organises trainings for teachers and workshops for children, along with afternoon information sessions for parents.
- In April 2018, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development launched a 36-month long comprehensive communication and training programme [My Latvija.lv! Do it digitally!](#) to encourage the general public to use government e-services, to inform people about online services and the benefits of eID, as well as to provide them with knowledge on secure use of the digital environment. The programme involves extensive information and training activities, national and regional events and training for at least 6,000 national and local government officials, teachers, librarians and journalists (so called "Digital Agents") to improve their knowledge of digital solutions so that they can help people make the transition from on-site services to digital services.
- [Trainings for teachers](#) take place in different regions of Latvia.
- [Guidelines](#) have been developed by the National Centre for Education for teachers to ensure distance learning.
- Materials developed by the Latvian Safer Internet Centre with advice for parents and teachers include [how to prepare a device for safe use by children](#), and [how to ensure that videoconferencing is safe](#). Additionally, [guidelines](#) have been developed by the Data State Inspectorate about data protection in schools.

- The [Latvian Centre for Human Rights](#) is the main organisation dealing with hate speech issues.
- The Local Governments Training Centre of Latvia provides several eight-hour programmes for teachers, school deputy directors and librarians about internet safety. Modules include: Technologies and risks in the 21st century, Online addiction, and Safe and responsible use of the internet. Industry members, such as mobile operators, regularly organise awareness activities in cooperation with public institutions, law enforcement, NGOs, and the Latvian Safer Internet Centre.

Summary of Pillar 2 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
“Teaching online safety in schools”			
Strategies to include teaching online safety in schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
“Digital and media literacy activities”			
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"/>
“Scaling up awareness activities and youth participation”			

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Simple and robust reporting tools for users"			
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pillar 3: Creating a safe environment for children online

Activities under Pillar 3 are led by government ministries. Public agencies have a complementary role.

Summary of Pillar 3 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
"Age-appropriate privacy settings"			
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness-raising activities regarding age-appropriate privacy settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Wider availability and use of parental controls"			
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"/>
“Wider use of age rating and content classification”			
Activities to promote the adoption of age rating and content classification among relevant stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A complaints process for the effective functioning of such systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
“Online advertising and overspending”			
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Activities under Pillar 4 are led by government ministries. NGOs and civil society organisations have a complementary role.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 Latvia:

Cooperation with the state police and internet service providers

There is cooperation between the state police and internet service providers (ISPs) in Latvia to block [child sexual abuse material \(CSAM\) websites](#). In Latvia, since June 2018, the hotline of the Latvian Safer Internet Centre, in cooperation with the state police and internet service providers and with the support of Interpol, has implemented an IWOL (Internet worst-of-list) project, which ensures internet domain access denial to combat child sexual abuse crimes on the internet. Eight major ISPs in Latvia are involved in the project, thus reaching more than two million internet users. The main idea of the project is that when an internet user accidentally or knowingly attempts to access child pornography sites they are redirected to a stop page which warns about the prohibited content and involvement in crime. Information is also provided about where to seek help if they feel they have a sexual desire for children and they want psychological support. In addition, information is given regarding anonymous reporting of illegal content to the Latvian hotline. During the first 18 months of the project's implementation, 1,054,016 attempts were made to access websites containing child pornography in the territory of Latvia. During the first project phase it has had a preventive role in discouraging people from visiting banned content. However, for the next project phase the police intend to identify the most active visitors of child pornography sites and to target them with criminal investigations if the level of visits does not decrease.

Diagnostic test in schools

In April 2018, the Latvian Safer Internet Centre, in cooperation with the National Centre for Education (responsible for school curriculum, subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science), organised a [comprehensive diagnostic test](#) to assess third and sixth grade pupils' knowledge about online safety, media literacy and critical thinking. In total, 420 schools across Latvia took part in the test, which is more than 60 per cent of all schools in the country. The results show that although digital skills of pupils are satisfactory, some aspects need significant improvement, especially regarding online safety, critical thinking, and children's use of educational content on the internet. The goal of the diagnostic test was to evaluate the knowledge of Latvian pupils on online safety issues, to measure their ability to assess online content critically, to be familiar with web etiquette in the process of cooperation and communication, as well as to evaluate their ability to see the opportunities provided by the internet in learning school subjects. The diagnostic test was organised by the Latvian SIC in cooperation with the National Centre for Education. Pupils of grades 3 and 6 from all Latvian educational institutions were invited to take the test. The diagnostic test was organised online and completed by 17,806 pupils. They could complete the test in their native language: 14,477 pupils chose Latvian and 3,329 chose Russian. The diagnostic test included the following themes: online safety, critical thinking, communication and cooperation, the internet in education, and knowledge of legal matters and copyright.

Superheroes on the internet

The [Superheroes on the internet](#) campaign, launched in 2018, aims to promote media literacy for young internet users. It was a joint partnership between the State Police, the Ministry of

Culture, the Latvian Safer Internet Centre, and industry players (including Balta, Rimi and Deep White). Superheroes on the internet is a continuation of A Superhero Will Not Be Lost! campaign launched by the State Police in 2017.