



Safer Internet Programme

Empowering and Protecting Children Online

Most European children are online with some starting from the age of 6. Almost all teenagers have a mobile phone. The Safer Internet Programme, first launched in 1999, aims at empowering children online by supporting awareness raising initiatives, stimulating the production of quality content online and fighting against child sexual abuse images. The Digital Agenda for Europe reinforces the aim to enhance trust in the Internet and highlights the need for a coordinated and consistent set of instruments to maintain a safe environment for children online.

To empower and protect children online, the Safer Internet Programme:

- finances a great variety of projects, all aimed at creating a safer online environment for young people;
- supports Safer Internet Day;
- organizes the Safer Internet Forum;
- promotes and supports industry self-regulation;
- co-operates at international level with other relevant organizations.

The 2009-2013 Safer Internet Programme, which has a budget of €55 million, addresses additional new challenges:

- the rise of web 2.0 and its fast take-up by young people;
- mobile technologies;
- the need for quality content online for young children;
- harmful conduct like grooming or cyber-bullying;
- child sexual abuse material available online
- the need for a knowledge base concerning children's Internet use and risks

A. Current projects funded by the Safer Internet Programme

The Safer Internet Programme is mainly implemented through projects funded at national or pan-European level and which, over the years, have covered raising awareness, fighting illegal content, filtering and content labelling, involving the civil society in child online safety issues and creating a solid database of information related to the use of new technologies by young people. Below you will find more information about ongoing projects.

1. Safer Internet Centres

Safer Internet Centres are responsible for promoting safe and responsible use of the Internet and mobile devices by young people. Safer Internet Centres are now present in 30 European countries all with an awareness centre, and most including a helpline and a hotline (see map).



The **awareness centres'** main aim is to make young people, parents, carers and teachers more aware about the potential risks young people may encounter online and to empower them to stay safe. This is done through the development of awareness raising and educational material, organization of campaigns and information sessions.



Helplines offer individual advice to young people, parents, teachers and other care givers about how to stay safe online.

The awareness centres and helplines belong to the **INSAFE** network www.saferinternet.org, and is coordinated by the European Schoolnet.



Hotlines receive reports of illegal content, and in particular child sexual abuse material, from the public. The hotline will investigate these reports to determine if the contents reported are illegal and if so, trace their origin. If the content is illegal, the hotline will refer this on to law enforcement agencies in the country and also the Internet Service Provider as part of agreed notice and take-down procedures. If the content is hosted in another country, it will be passed on to the hotline in that country.

INHOPE www.inhope.org coordinates the network of hotlines.

2. Fighting online child sexual abuse material

Alongside INHOPE, the Safer Internet Programme co-funds initiatives aimed at supporting law enforcement bodies in their fight against child sexual abuse material.

a. INTERPOL

Running: 01/09/2009 to 31/08/2012
Safer Internet Programme funding: 500.000 €

The objective of the project is to provide 30 additional countries with access to the International Child Sexual Exploitation Image Database (ICSEDB) maintained by Interpol. The aim of the ICSEDB is to increase the number of victims identified and rescued from abuse. To this end, it uses sophisticated image comparison software to make connections between victims and places. It also allows authorized users in INTERPOL member countries to access the database directly and in real time.

b. iCOP

Running: 01/06/2011 to 31/05/2013
Safer Internet Programme funding: 490 000 €

The iCOP project aims to develop a novel forensics software toolkit to support law enforcement agencies across the EU in identifying new or previously unknown child abuse material on peer-to-peer networks. iCOP brings together international experts on online child safety technologies, representing European universities, law enforcement agencies and experts on child welfare.

3. Enhancing knowledge about existing and emerging uses, risks and consequences of online technologies for children's lives.

a. EU KIDS Online II (Enhancing knowledge regarding European children's use, risk and safety online)

Running: 01/07/2009 to 31/10/2011
Safer Internet Programme funding: 2.5 million €

EU KIDS Online II is the first study across most of the EU Member States which is conducted on both parents and children in order to investigate their attitudes and actions towards online safety. 25 European countries work together on this project, coordinated by a management group from 5 countries. The project builds on the work of EU Kids Online I, which compared available research across 21 European countries.

b. POG (Understanding the process of online grooming: the behaviours of men who target young people online)

Running: 01/06/2009 to 30/11/2011
Safer Internet Programme funding: 420.000 €

POG is the first European research project that studies the characteristics and behaviour of sexual offenders who have used the internet to groom young people. Researchers conduct a scoping study that reviews online groomers' case files, provide a report of the research and policy literature, and interview strategic stakeholders in the area concerned. 6 partners from 4 different European countries are cooperating on this project.

c. ROBERT Risktaking Online Behaviour - Empowerment through Research and Training

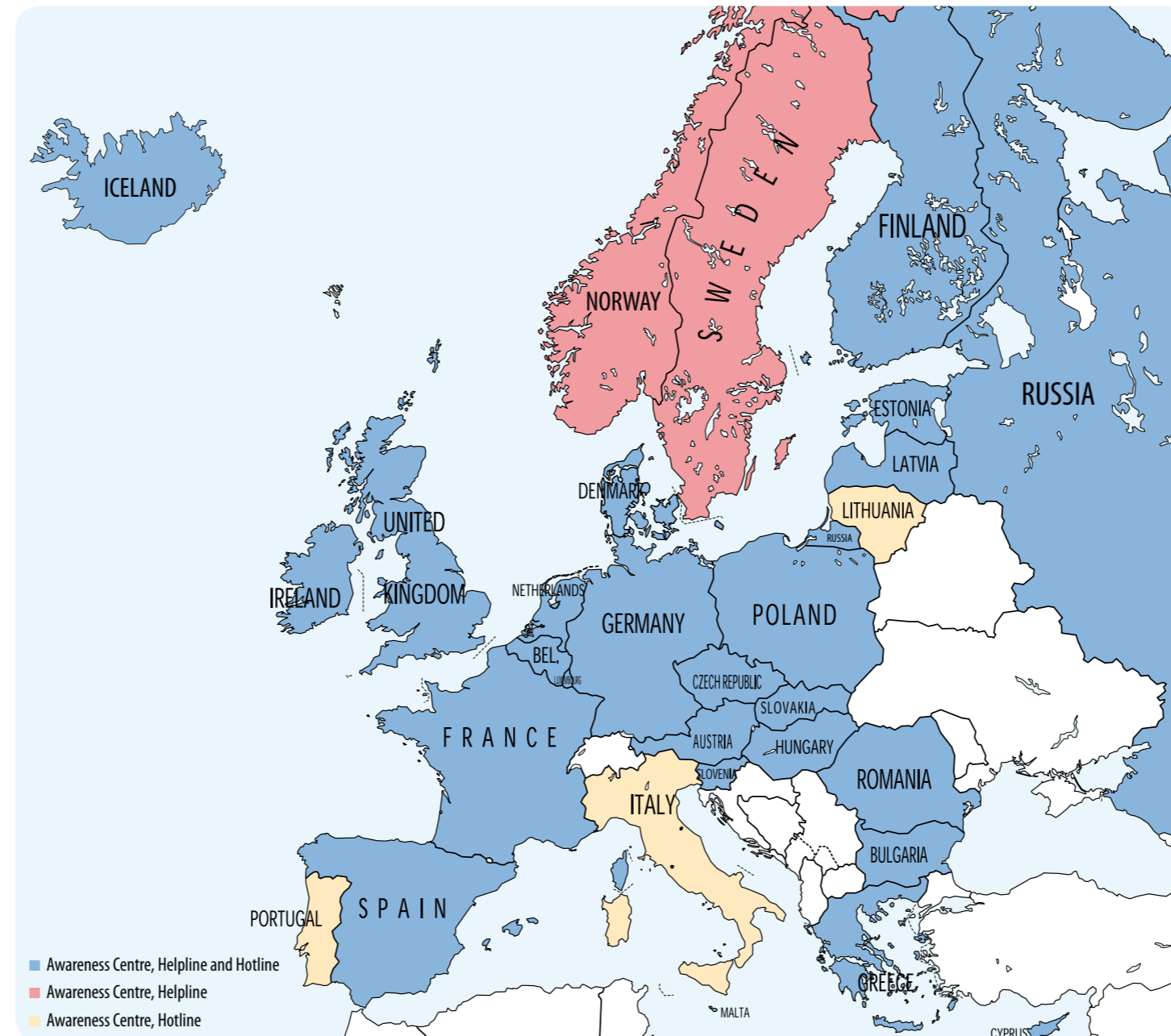
Running: 15/06/2010 to 31/05/2012
Safer Internet Programme funding: 400.000 €

The project will use insights about online abuse processes and factors making young people vulnerable, in addition to knowledge about perpetrator's strategies concerning grooming, to identify ways of increasing safety and empower children and young people when they are online.

d. EU NET-ADB: Research on the intensity and prevalence of the Internet addictive behaviour risk among minors in Europe

Running: 01/02/2011 to 31/01/2013
Safer Internet Programme funding: 893.776 €

The project addresses the risk of problematic internet use among minors, what can contribute to the development of internet overuse, especially among adolescents and will also look at harmful consequences. The project sets out to increase awareness about problematic internet use, specifically over or excessive use, and supply knowledge for developing robust public health strategies concerning this.



4. Involving civil society

a. The European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online (eNACSO)

Running: 01/09/2010 to 31/08/2012
Safer Internet Programme funding: 400.000 €

The European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online (eNACSO) consists of European children's rights organisations engaged in child online safety. The network will forge joint strategies for change, and promote its recommendations to national, European and international decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders, also concerning the way the governance of the internet develops into the future. 16 organisations from different countries cooperate in this network.

5. Filtering and content labelling

a. SIP-Bench II study Benchmarking of parental control tools

Running: 09/12/2009 to 08/12/2012
Safer Internet Programme funding: 443.960 €

The project aims to assist parents to choose the most appropriate parental control tool to fit their needs. Experts and users assess products, tools and services and produce a ranking list; the first benchmarking cycle (2011) showed that the large majority of tools tested enable parents to block access to certain websites, but they are less efficient at filtering so-called web 2.0 content (e.g. social networking sites or blogs and other user created content).

B. International co-operation

1. INHOPE's international membership

In addition to its European members, INHOPE, the network of hotlines, also includes members from Australia, Canada, Taiwan, Japan, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the US. They all contribute to fighting against illegal content on a global scale.

2. Russia

Co-operation between Russia and the EU in the field of online safety for children was established in 2007. A conference on Safer Internet for Children took place in Moscow in 2009. It represented a milestone in EU-Russia co-operation and was attended by 180 participants from all over the EU and Russia, gathering stakeholders from government, representatives from the Russian Duma, the industry, child protection experts, researchers and child welfare workers. The Russian Safer Internet Centre is a member of both the INHOPE and the INSAFE- networks.

C. Events

Safer Internet Forum

The Safer Internet Forum has been organized by the Safer Internet Programme as an annual conference on online safety issues since 2004. It brings together representatives of industry, researchers, law enforcement authorities, child welfare organizations and policy makers from Europe and beyond. Over the years, the topics have ranged from child safety and mobile phones, to fighting against illegal content and conduct, awareness-raising mechanisms, age verification and social networking, children and online safety education. The 2011 edition of the Safer Internet Forum takes place on 20-21 October, in Luxembourg under the theme "Every European Child Digital Safely – Emerging Challenges and Youth Engagement".

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day, organised by INSAFE, has been celebrated since 2004 and involves more than 70 countries across the world. Held every second Tuesday in February, it is part of a global drive to empower young people and to rally a wide range of online safety stakeholders to the cause.



The Safer Internet Programme supports the local initiatives and organizes a central event to increase the visibility of Safer Internet Day.

The 2012 edition of Safer Internet Day, which will take place on 7 February, will focus on the theme "Connecting generations and educating each other", with the slogan "Discover the digital world together safely!".

D. Self-regulation

The Internet and mobile technologies are areas that develop at a fast pace. In order to react quickly to new developments in terms of children's use and emerging risks, the Commission supports industry self-regulation, with the aim of ensuring a safer environment for children and young people.

Two self-regulation initiatives have been taken by the industry at European level with the support of the European Commission.

1 European Framework for Safer Mobile use by Young Teenagers and Children

In February 2007, leading mobile operators and content providers signed a **European Framework for Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children**.

The Framework describes principles and measures that the signatories committed to implementing on the national level throughout Europe. The signatories are made up of mobile operators covering 96 % of all mobile customers in the EU. An implementation report published by GSMA Europe in 2010 showed that mobile operators had made good progress in different measures to promote safe mobile use e.g. concerning classification of commercial content and production of educational material.

2 Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU

In February 2009, major social networks active in Europe signed the **Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU**, a self-regulatory document regarding the online safety for children and teenagers.

The signatories to the Principles have provided the Commission with publicly available self-declarations on how they implement this agreement in their safety policies. In 2011, the Commission presented the findings of the second independent assessment of the implementation of this agreement. Results showed that safety information, guidance etc. suited for minors is provided by almost all of the social networking sites that were assessed. Many also provide more effective reporting mechanisms compared to the first assessment in 2010. However, more needs to be done to improve the privacy protection of information provided in minors' profiles.

Further information on the Safer Internet Programme, as well as contact details of the running projects can be found online at

<http://ec.europa.eu/saferinternet>