

## **SAFER INTERNET PLUS (2005 TO 2008)**

### **FINAL EVALUATION**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the view of the evaluators, the Safer Internet Plus Programme has been successful in achieving the stated objectives as set out in the original Programme Decision and in subsequent annual work programmes.

It has contributed to achieving a Safer Internet through a range of interventions, and has not only achieved almost pan-European coverage of hotlines and awareness nodes, but has also exercised considerable influence on policies and practices in the area of online safety further afield. Safer Internet Plus has therefore been instrumental in helping to protect and empower Internet users within Europe and on a broader international level and is acknowledged as a model of good practice.

The Programme has also successfully fostered dialogue within and between different sectors, as well as between countries, in order to promote the exchange of information, the enhancement of knowledge, and the development of consistent and collaborative solutions to the challenges posed by use of the Internet.

Safer Internet Plus has responded in a flexible and timely way to the demands of the dynamic social, technological and economic environment within which it operates, including the Enlargement of the European Union, the increasing convergence of technologies and the advent of so-called 'Web 2.0'.

In its specific focus on promoting a safer online environment, particularly for children and young people, the Programme complements other European Commission initiatives on related issues such as cyber-crime, media literacy and children's rights.

The principles of continuity and enhancement have underpinned all the actions of the Programme by building on previous programmes, particularly elements such as the establishment of hotlines and awareness nodes, and encouraging complementary activity such as the expansion of the networks and research on various aspects of children's, parents' and offenders' use of the Internet.

The recommendations from the evaluation of the Safer Internet Action Plan, which immediately preceded Safer Internet Plus, have largely been incorporated during the four-year period of the Programme, although further progress may be needed in the areas of hotline visibility and industry dialogue.

While the nature of the Internet and the diverse cultural, political and economic contexts within Europe inevitably mean that there is always scope for further intervention and progress, the Safer Internet Plus Programme has relied on “a relatively small budget outlay to produce a significant impact and influence.

Feedback from stakeholders shows clear appreciation of Safer Internet Plus, particularly the knowledge sharing opportunities which it provides, and in emphasizing the importance of the work continuing. The Programme has created a good foundation on which future interventions can build. A number of recommendations have been identified in order to improve still further the impact of future initiatives.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The rights and privacy of children, young people and other legitimate Internet users should be protected and promoted within all activities of the Programme. The involvement of young people themselves in discussion, design and delivery of solutions could be further intensified.
2. Continued efforts could be made to achieve active support and involvement for the Programme and individual projects on a national level from all relevant sectors. This should be reflected in the creation of multi-stakeholder networks at the European level in order to bring together different constituencies.
3. Co-operation and collaboration with third countries, both within and outside Europe, on a policy and operational level should be given a high priority, particularly with regard to identifying, tracing and eradicating illegal child abuse images.
4. Enhanced dialogue and cooperation should be established among the various EU initiatives with an intersection of interests or the potential for collaboration with the Safer Internet Plus Programme in order to identify new areas of synergy and innovation and to improve the effectiveness of the individual programmes.
5. Future solutions should continue to take into account national, cultural, linguistic and socio-demographic factors, particularly for new, candidate and accession countries, to ensure that interventions remain relevant and valid.
6. The technical knowledge base of the Programme should be further strengthened in order to retain a high level of current knowledge and credibility.
7. The Programme would probably benefit from a more consistent ‘brand’ with quality control measures in place for internal and partner websites

and other resources. More proactive use could be made of the press and media across Europe.

8. Further knowledge enhancement activity could be conducted in two key areas: problematic, risky and criminal online behaviours on the part of children and young people themselves; the underlying reasons for the trends identified by INHOPE in respect of illegal content.
9. The roles of the two networks (INHOPE and INSAFE) should be revisited to ensure they offer the most appropriate mechanism for co-ordinating the work of national nodes. Consideration should be given to the question of whether the two networks should be merged to reflect the emphasis on combined hotline, awareness and helpline activity and to deal adequately with the planned extension of the scope of the programme to include cyber-bullying and grooming.
10. A high priority should be given to raising the visibility of hotlines, which in some countries still suffer from low levels of public awareness. The visibility of helplines also needs attention in order to provide European citizens with appropriate contact points, and to complement the work of the hotlines by dealing with issues of a broader nature.
11. The Programme could engage more actively with industry. Priority should be given to establishing a common code of practice among Internet Service Providers throughout Europe, along the lines of the Framework Agreement signed by mobile network operators.

## **EVALUATION PROCESS**

The evaluation of the Safer Internet Plus Programme was carried out between May and July 2008 in accordance with the legal base of the Programme and respecting the Commission's evaluation standards.

The process was conducted by an independent expert panel<sup>1</sup> appointed by tender and consisting of Ruth Harris (chair), Ola-Kristian Hoff and Wolfgang Kleinwaechter, with information provided on request by the Safer Internet Plus staff. A member of the European Commission Evaluation Unit, Reka Bernat, was responsible for overseeing the process from a procedural point of view.

The evaluation process began with a kick-off meeting in Luxembourg in May, and a further physical meeting and two telephone meetings of the panel were held during June and July, supplemented by ongoing email and telephone correspondence, and face-to-face at other events where possible. Several drafts were circulated, discussed and adapted in the process of preparing the final evaluation report.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 9 for brief curricula vitae of the expert panel

All members of the expert panel were involved in conducting the stakeholder interviews, contributing to discussion and commenting on the various drafts of the report. Specific tasks were allocated as follows: Ruth Harris collated information from secondary sources, chaired the meetings and drafted the report; Ola-Kristian Hoff designed, analysed and documented the questionnaire and interview process (further details of which are available in the appendices to this report), and presented statistical analysis; Wolfgang Kleinwaechter undertook and presented further statistical analysis.

Invaluable input was provided by the interview and questionnaire respondents, and the evaluators wish to express their thanks for the detailed and insightful comments offered by so many stakeholders of the Programme.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Safer Internet Plus Programme has been running over a four year period from January 2005 to December 2008, and is a successor to the Safer Internet Action Plan (1999 – 2004). It was established by the Decision No 854/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 establishing a multiannual Community Programme on promoting safer use of the Internet and new online technologies:

*This Decision establishes a Community programme for the period 2005 to 2008 to promote safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly for children, and to fight against illegal content and content unwanted by the end-user.<sup>2</sup>*

The Decision acknowledges the achievements of the Safer Internet Action Plan, predecessor to this Programme, and affirms the need for further work:

*The Safer Internet Action Plan (1999 to 2004) adopted by Decision No 276/1999/EC (1) has provided Community financing, which has successfully encouraged a variety of initiatives and has given European added value. Further funding will help new initiatives to build on the work already accomplished.<sup>3</sup>*

Participation in the Programme is open to legal entities in the Member States of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries. Candidate countries can also participate if the necessary steps have been taken to join the Programme through signature of a bilateral agreement (Memorandum of Understanding). The Decision also allows for participation by (although not funding of) legal entities established in third countries and international organisations, where such participation contributes effectively to the implementation of the Programme.

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<sup>2</sup> Article 1.1, Objective of the programme

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 6

With an overall budget of 45 million Euros, the Safer Internet Plus Programme has four action lines:

- 1) fighting against illegal content
- 2) tackling unwanted and harmful content
- 3) promoting a safer environment
- 4) awareness raising.

It represents both a continuation and enhancement of the previous Safer Internet programmes, and has both a social and an economic dimension. As indicated in the Programme Decision, the focus is clearly on the end user, particularly children under the care of their parents or other caregivers at home, and under the supervision of their teachers at school. Indeed, as the Programme has developed during the four year period it has become increasingly child-centred.

### **Basis for evaluation**

A final evaluation of the Safer Internet Plus Programme is necessary in accordance with the legal basis as set out in Article 5 of the Decision No 854/2005/EC of 11 May 2005 establishing a multiannual Community Programme on promoting safer use of the Internet and new online technologies.

*1. In order to ensure that Community aid is used efficiently, the Commission shall ensure that actions under this Decision are subject to prior appraisal, follow-up and subsequent evaluation.*

*2. The Commission shall monitor the implementation of projects under the programme. The Commission shall evaluate the manner in which the projects have been carried out and the impact of their implementation in order to assess whether the original objectives have been achieved*

*3. [...] The Commission shall submit a final evaluation report at the end of the programme.*

The Commission's *Sound and Efficient Management 2000* initiative also requires systematic evaluation of all EU programmes. The evaluation report will be submitted to the European Parliament and Council. The terms of reference for the evaluation cite an indicative list of questions to be considered<sup>4</sup> as the basis for the evaluation.

In addition to the legal and fiscal bases for evaluation, the dynamic and rapidly evolving nature of the technical environment within which the Programme operates also demands regular appraisal of the issues and the extent to which the various Safer Internet Plus activities are addressing them effectively.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 4

## **Research methodology**

As an ex post evaluation this process has been focused on assessing the Programme in order to provide a summative report. However, it is important to note that a number of funded projects are still running (and will continue even beyond the end of 2008) and therefore to some degree the evaluation will of necessity be formative.

The evaluation methodology has been to gather both primary and secondary data and to synthesize and analyse that information in order to draw conclusions about the assessment of the Programme and possible directions for the future.

Primary data has been gathered in two ways<sup>5</sup>:

i) by inviting interested parties to submit their views on the strengths and weaknesses via an online form. This invitation was sent by email to over a thousand subscribers to the Safer Internet mailing list, as well as to project partners;

ii) through interviews, based on a standard questionnaire to ensure consistency, with a range of stakeholders identified by the panel supporting the evaluation. These have included project partners from each of the action lines, independent reviewers and evaluators, pan-European industry actors and representatives from organisations in third countries, primarily Russia.

The online form received 61 submissions from stakeholders from a broad range of sectors and from across and beyond Europe. Twelve stakeholders took part in the interview process, including project participants, network co-ordinators, evaluators, reviewers and external third parties with an interest in the programme from a range of sectors and countries within and outside the European Union.

In addition to the qualitative data derived from the primary research, a broad range of secondary data has been gathered, mainly through desk research at programme and project level. This encompasses both qualitative and quantitative data derived from two areas – those derived from within the body of documentation relating to the Programme itself and those external to Safer Internet activities.

The first of these categories, those derived from the Programme itself, can be sub-divided into Programme level sources and Project level sources. The second category, namely external data sources, can equally be sub-divided into European Commission material over-arching or relating to other initiatives, and content produced by other agencies. The latter includes in particular surveys about children's use of the Internet and other technologies, parental awareness of issues around safe use of the Internet, and children's own understanding of the risks.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendices 6, 7 and 8 for details of the survey and interview questionnaire and responses

Key to an understanding of the evolution of Safer Internet Plus over its four-year lifespan are the surveys and public consultations carried out under the auspices of the Programme. These provide valuable feedback to shape the development of Safer Internet Plus and any follow-up initiatives.

### **Report structure and themes**

This report gives an overview of the Safer Internet Plus Programme in respect of the aims, objectives and activities, and then offers an evaluation of key areas, namely:

- Relevance
- Implementation
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Achievements
- Impacts
- Sustainability
- Complementarity.

Since the Safer Internet Plus Programme is inspired by the principles of continuity and enhancement, these principles underpin the entire evaluation. It is important to identify those features which build on the achievements of initiatives funded under preceding programmes, and the extent to which the Programme has responded to new threats and opportunities, stimulated a multiplier effect and broadened its global reach. In particular, the report considers the extent to which the recommendations identified in previous evaluations have been implemented.

However, given the dynamic and fast-moving technical environment within which Safer Internet Plus operates, it is reasonable to expect that even continuing projects will identify new areas of challenge and develop their products or services in order to respond effectively, and enhancement should therefore form the bedrock of the Programme.

From this analysis emerges a general conclusion as to the overall level of success of the Programme, accompanied by recommendations for future action.

### **OVERVIEW OF SAFER INTERNET PLUS**

The Safer Internet Plus Programme represents the continuation of a series of interventions by the European Union in the area of safer use of new technologies.

In 1999<sup>6</sup> the European Parliament and the Council adopted a multi-annual Community Action Plan on promoting safer use of the Internet by combating

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<sup>6</sup> Decision No 276/1999/EC

illegal and harmful content on global networks (the 'Safer Internet Action Plan').

Decision No 1151/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council extended the Safer Internet Action Plan for two years and amended its scope to include measures to encourage exchange of information and co-ordination with the relevant actors at national level as well as special provisions for the accession countries.

As stated in the Decision establishing Safer Internet Plus, the overall aim of the Programme is to promote safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly for children, and to fight against illegal content and content unwanted by the end user.

By comparison with the preceding programme, coverage of the Safer Internet Plus Programme was extended to include new online technologies, including mobile and broadband content, online games, peer-to-peer file transfer, and all forms of real-time communications such as chat rooms and instant messages primarily with the aim of improving the protection of children and minors. A broader range of areas of illegal and harmful content and conduct of concern were covered under Safer Internet Plus, including racism and violence.

The basic philosophy of the Programme is that of empowerment of the user and it aims to maximise the impact on the target audience by using networking and the multiplier effect. Synergy was also foreseen with Commission policy and actions in the area of protection of minors in audiovisual and information services, consumer protection, spam, network and information security and criminal law.

### **Ex ante evaluation**

The stated focus on these priorities and approaches followed an ex ante evaluation<sup>7</sup>, published in March 2004, which identified new challenges in both qualitative and quantitative terms:

- Qualitative, in respect of new technologies with ever-increasing processing power and storage capacity, the growth in broadband access to the Internet and new mobile phone capabilities
- Quantitative, as regards the growing level of use and increased connectivity, especially by children, and the proliferation of spam (it was predicted that more than 50% of global email traffic would soon consist of spam).

A wide range of target groups was identified, including children and those responsible for them, governments, law enforcement agencies and regulators, industry, NGOs and academic institutions.

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<sup>7</sup> SEC(2004) 148 COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER EX ANTE EVALUATION Safer Internet plus (2005-2008)

It was agreed that in order to continue and enhance the activities and achievements of the previous interventions, and to achieve the desired social and economic impacts, the scope of the Programme should be extended as outlined above.

The Safer Internet Plus Programme (2005 to 2008) required a substantial increase in funding in order to meet the demands of new types and uses of technology, the projected increase in the workload of the hotlines, the enlargement of the European Union and the exponential increase in the amount of spam.

The actions of the Programme were identified as follows:

- (a) fighting against illegal content;
- (b) tackling unwanted and harmful content;
- (c) promoting a safer environment;
- (d) awareness-raising.

Within this broad framework, each action line also has specific objectives with an indication of expected results, and these have been seen to evolve over the four-year duration of the Programme, as set out in the specific work programmes for each annual call. A detailed analysis of the work programmes (below) reveals the development of priorities and emphases.

The Programme has two aspects:

1. a pronounced social dimension that focuses on domains where it would be wrong to rely either on regulation alone or on market forces to ensure the safety of users of Internet and new online technologies;
2. an economic dimension by helping to create a climate of confidence and to promote the use of Internet and new online technologies and so to enhance the economic benefits that greater access to these technologies will bring to society.

### **Geographical scope of the programme and Enlargement**

In addition to the EU Member States, EEA countries Norway and Iceland have taken part in the Programme, as well as in its predecessor.

Shortly before the start of Safer Internet Plus, the Fifth (and largest) Enlargement of the European Union took place, with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia acceding to the EU in May 2004. The second part of the Fifth Enlargement followed in January 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania joined the Union. They therefore automatically became part of the programme. In addition, there are currently three candidate countries – Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey – and four ‘potential candidate countries’ (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia). These latter countries can join the Programme by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (and paying a financial contribution): however, no such MoU has been signed. The only candidate country ever to have signed an MoU is

Bulgaria, with the result that a Bulgarian hotline was set up even before it joined the European Union.

The stated aim of the Safer Internet Plus Programme is to have a hotline and multiplier awareness actions in every Member State. The Programme also allows for third country organisations to participate in projects, and encourages liaison with relevant agencies in third countries, with particular focus on Russia.

### **Activities**

The Programme has been implemented by means of the annual publication of a work programme and call for proposals. This has resulted in a wide range of projects being funded under the various action lines, complemented by non-funded activities as appropriate.

### **2005 work programme**

The initial work programme in 2005 had a fixed call deadline of 24 November 2005. It introduced some significant changes from the previous Safer Internet Action Plan as outlined above, notably the emphasis on networking and achieving a multiplier effect, and the introduction of helplines within awareness nodes. Rather than funding filtering projects per se, the programme aimed to increase take-up of filtering and rating systems, and adapt content labels to the needs of converging technologies. The objectives were as follows:

- a. to allow users to report illegal content by setting up hotlines in each member state
- b. to tackle unwanted and harmful content through 1) benchmarking and promoting filtering technology; 2) adapting content rating systems to fit converging platforms; 3) foster discussion between child welfare experts and technology specialists about possible technical measures
- c. to promote a safer environment by a) encouraging cross-border actions in the field of self-regulation; b) tackling specific areas such as racism and spam
- d. to increase awareness about safer use by developing actions designed to reach children, families and schools across Europe.

### **2006 work programme**

The work programme for 2006 had a fixed deadline of 29 September 2006. It consolidated and enhanced the objectives of the previous work programme by:

- a. offering funding for hotlines in countries where no hotline had been funded under the 2005 call
- b. recommending that hotlines and awareness nodes should preferably consist of a single organisation (so-called 'combined nodes') in order to achieve maximum efficiency and impact
- c. inviting proposals for measures allowing users to limit unwanted and harmful content, and manage spam

- d. reinforcing the call for targeted projects to increase take-up of content rating and quality site labels by providers, and to adapt labels to reflect convergence of technologies
- e. inviting proposals for pilot projects facilitating co-operation between hotlines and law enforcement, particularly in the area of matching content between databases of illegal material
- f. undertaking further work on children's use of mobile phones with the objective of reaching agreement with mobile network operators on best practices and their implementation across Europe
- g. creating a thematic network to implement cross-border actions in the field of co-regulation and self-regulation to combat spam harmful for children
- h. offering funding for awareness nodes in countries where no node had been funded under the 2005 call
- i. announcing an extension of the role of the EUROPE DIRECT information service to include Safer Internet enquiries, with the aim of increasing information for the general public and raising the visibility of hotlines and awareness nodes.

### **2007 work programme**

The work programme for 2007 had a fixed deadline of 22 October 2007 and introduced an enhanced focus on fighting illegal content, with particular emphasis on fighting distribution of child sexual abuse images. Other developments included:

- a. encouraging the establishment of an industry-led Financial Institutions Task Force, facilitating dialogue and actions from the European financial sector towards inhibiting payment through their systems and cooperating with law enforcement agencies.
- b. stimulating international co-operation and encouraging related activities in adjacent countries, particularly Russia
- c. creating a thematic network to stimulate organised and extensive cross-border exchange of best practice between law enforcement agencies in the fight against production and online distribution of child sexual abuse material within Europe and internationally
- d. inviting targeted projects to enhance analysis of illegal material by law enforcement agencies
- e. conducting a public consultation on child safety and mobile phones, and encouraging exchange of good practices and the establishment of self-regulatory measures
- f. creating a thematic network of European non-governmental organisations promoting children's rights and welfare, in order to ensure that the needs of children are taken into account in discussions about the Internet and new media in Europe.
- g. no new actions were funded under the heading "tackling unwanted and harmful content".

## 2008 work programme

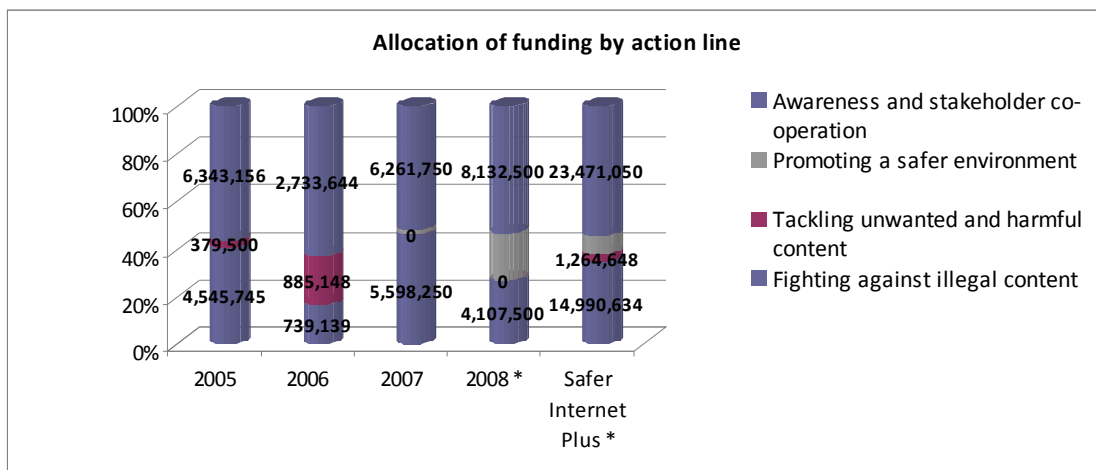
The most recent work programme (2008) had a fixed deadline of 28 May 2008, and reflected a new emphasis on broadening the knowledge base to enhance understanding of a) safer online technologies, including how children use them, and b) online-related sexual abuse of children, in particular online grooming.

Also emphasised in the most recent work programme was the need to consult and empower children and young people themselves, including through the establishment of youth panels.

The programme also proposed co-operation with key stakeholders in the area of social networking to enable discussions concerning identification and effectiveness of relevant state-of-the-art technologies and codes of conduct.

The 2008 work programme presented a call for tenders for study on benchmarking filtering software and services, which would be a follow-up to the SIP-BENCH reports in 2006, 2007 and (scheduled) 2009.

Hotlines, awareness nodes and helplines are further encouraged to present proposals for a combined node with a single advisory board. They are also required to demonstrate in a more robust way than previously the kind of support the project would receive from national authorities, industry, NGOs or childcare organisations by providing supporting letters from such organisations. Hotlines also need to provide such supporting letters from national law enforcement agencies, and awareness nodes need to present documentation proving their mandate to educate the public in Safer Internet.



\* Based on evaluation results and implementation plan not approved at time of publication<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 2

## **Thematic development**

Based on these annual work programmes, some broad areas of evolution since the start of Safer Internet Plus can be identified. These include (but are not necessarily restricted to) the following thematic, technological, geographical and administrative or contractual areas:

- Extension of the two networks to include new countries
- The creation of helplines to provide information on safer Internet issues
- Increasing collaboration between hotlines, awareness nodes and helplines: from 2006 onwards these have been encouraged to submit proposals for combined nodes and to set up joint Advisory Boards
- In addition to the requirement for combined activity on a national level, the two networks have also begun to collaborate more closely during the period of Safer Internet Plus - for example, INSAFE and INHOPE co-hosted a pilot event in the Czech Republic in November 2007, with the aim of encouraging national hotlines and awareness nodes to meet regionally with industry to develop a closer working relationship
- Increasing dialogue between and within different sectors – industry, law enforcement, NGOs, content providers etc
- Inclusion of EUROPE DIRECT as a point of contact for enquiries
- Increasing liaison with law enforcement at a development level, for example on image recognition, and the creation of 'black list' databases
- Focus on 'new' platforms (e.g. mobile phones) and issues (e.g. social networking)
- Importance of gathering and disseminating specialist knowledge through knowledge enhancement projects
- Increasing involvement of children and young people in the development, design and dissemination processes: for example, since the 2008 call awareness nodes have been required to establish youth panels.

## **Project status<sup>9</sup>**

A list of projects funded under the Safer Internet Plus programme is appended to this report.

Once the 2008 project negotiations are concluded, the Programme will be funding 27 awareness nodes (of which the 25 in Member States cover 99.7% of all Internet users in the European Union), 21 helplines and 24 hotlines. Of the Member States, only Malta and Estonia will not have an awareness nodes, helpline or hotline (the Maltese awareness node and hotline will not receive renewed funding, and Estonia has never submitted a proposal).

A significant number of the projects funded in the latter stages of Safer Internet Plus are continuing projects, mainly in the area of hotlines, awareness nodes and helplines, which become increasingly merged with other national projects to form combined nodes in accordance with the requirements of the Programme.

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 1 for full list of projects funded under Safer Internet Plus

Safer Internet Plus supports two thematic networks, with another two in the pipeline. EU Kids Online is a network of researchers from 21 European countries, while YPRT is a network gathering technical and pedagogical experts with the aim of empowering young people to make their own decisions on how to deal with harmful and unwanted content on the Internet. The NGO network (ENACSO) will begin on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008, and a police network is under negotiation.

<b>CALLS FOR PROPOSALS - RESULTS</b>				
	<b>2005*</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007**</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Hotlines</b>	14	3	4	-
<b>Awareness nodes</b>	5	3	2	1
<b>Combined 2 or 3 elements (hotline/awareness/helpline)</b>	10	5	13	14
<b>Hotline network</b>	1	-	1	1
<b>Awareness network</b>	1	-	-	1
<b>User empowerment</b>	1	1	-	-
<b>Media</b>	1	-	-	-
<b>Pilot projects</b>	-	3	-	-
<b>Law enforcement network</b>	-	-	1	-
<b>NGO network</b>	-	-	1	-
<b>Targeted project</b>	-	-	1	1
<b>Knowledge enhancement</b>	-	-	-	2
<b>TOTAL FUNDING (Million Euros)</b>	<b>10.87</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>13.75</b>
* It should be noted that at contract negotiation state it was agreed to merge 2 Polish projects, 2 Belgian projects and 2 Czech projects into combined nodes for each of their respective countries, namely a node where at least two of the three elements – hotline, awareness node and helpline – are included in a single project.				
** Some recommended projects from the 2007 call are still under contract negotiation or have recently concluded contracts: these include 2 stand-alone hotlines and 2 stand-alone awareness nodes, along with 13 partially or fully combined nodes (ie two or three elements respectively). Also in this category are 2 thematic networks, CIRCAMP and the European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online (ENACSO), 1 targeted project, I-Dash, and the INHOPE V hotline co-ordinator project.				

### **Eurobarometer**

Two Eurobarometer surveys were conducted under the auspices of (and funded by) the Safer Internet Plus Programme. The first in 2005 was a quantitative survey exploring the attitude of European Union citizens towards illegal and harmful content on the Internet and their knowledge of how to protect their children against it. It covered 25 Member States, candidate and acceding countries and was conducted in December 2005. This survey complemented an earlier set of studies carried out under the Safer Internet

Action Plan in 2003 (covering the 15 'old' Member States) and 2004 (bringing in data from the 10 Member States which joined the European Union on 1 May 2004). A further report in 2004 presented the comparative highlights from the 2 studies.

A pan-European qualitative survey was undertaken by Eurobarometer in 2007 in 29 countries (the 27 Member States as well as Iceland and Norway). Through focus groups in each of the countries, 9 to 10 year olds and 12 to 14 year olds were interviewed in-depth about their use of online technologies, such as the Internet and mobile phones, and how they see and deal with risks.

A further quantitative Eurobarometer will be conducted during the autumn of 2008 among parents of 6 to 17 year olds, with the results to be published by the end of the year.

### **Safer Internet Forum**

The Safer Internet Forum offers an opportunity for exchange of views and best practice between different actors, as well the chance to explore emerging issues in a multi-sectoral context – for example the challenges raised by children's use of mobile phones and ensuring exchange of best practice on age verification schemes and rating/classification systems (scheduled for 2008). It has no fixed membership and is open to all who wish to attend.

The networking opportunity provided by the Programme is highly valued by many stakeholders, who emphasize the fact that Safer Internet Plus enables sectors to work together who would not otherwise have joined forces, for example major telecoms providers and NGOs such as Save The Children.

The objective of the Forum is to bring together relevant actors, particularly from industry, the child welfare sector and public bodies (including law enforcement), for dialogue and discussion on issues of safer Internet. An annual event has been held in Luxembourg, attracting a high level of attendance and participation by key stakeholders.

The Forum in June 2005 focused on the issue of children and mobile phones with the objective of contributing to improve the common understanding of this issue at European level. The Forum itself was supported by a series of country reports, prepared the previous month, which added significantly to the level of awareness of national legal and regulatory requirements and industry responses. Approximately 200 participants engaged in discussion about risks, national approaches and codes of conduct, such as those established in the United Kingdom, Italy and Germany. The Forum also addressed the question of agreeing a set of minimum requirements for a self-regulatory system for content available through mobile phones.

In June 2006 the Safer Internet Forum considered two topics, children's use of new media and blocking access to illegal content (child sexual abuse images). Approximately 200 participants from a broad range of

sectors were involved in wide-ranging discussions. The following year's Forum (2007) was devoted to the issues addressed by the public consultation, namely online-related sexual abuse of children, awareness raising for different target groups and the impact and consequences of convergence. The Safer Internet Forum was attended by 125 participants from 29 countries and more than 20 speakers. The outcomes fed into the consultation report and in turn have helped to influence the Commission's response to such issues.

The Forum for 2008 will take place in September with an agenda including age verification, social networking and cross-platform/cross-media rating, as well as exploring what is known about children's use of online technologies.

### **Safer Internet Day**

The awareness activities include Safer Internet Day, which is held each February to raise awareness of online safety issues in general and the activities of the Programme in particular. This has been one of the outstanding successes of Safer Internet Plus, becoming an annual focal point for awareness across Europe and beyond. The evaluation of the Safer Internet Action Plan 2003-4 praised Safer Internet Day as being increasingly recognized as a valuable opportunity to improve communication among involved stakeholders and to reach out to the broader public. This trend has continued during the lifetime of Safer Internet Plus.

Participation has been steadily growing, indicating an increase in general awareness, national and organisational commitment, and media interest. In 2005 65 organisations from 30 countries took part, and the activities included the launch of a storytelling competition for children attended by personalities such as Princess Alexandra of Denmark and President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson of Iceland.

In 2006 a total of 37 countries and around 100 organisations participated in the Safer Internet Day. In addition to the many national, regional and local events, there was a worldwide "blogathon" for safer Internet: a wide range of organisations active in promoting Internet contributed to the blog and invited comments from visitors, children, schools and parents. In 2007 more than 200 organisations from 43 countries participated in activities around the world, and in 2008 over 56 countries were represented through the involvement of over 121 organisations.

The increase in participation is qualitative as well as quantitative, with the geographical reach extending far beyond the European to include countries as far afield as Brazil, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand. Media interest in the event is also growing each year, with some countries achieving extremely high and positive coverage: for example in 2007 the EU awareness nodes alone reported a total of 1256 media items.

The Commission has made good use of Safer Internet Day as an opportunity to celebrate and publicise the achievements of the Programme, for example in

2007 when the occasion provided an opportunity to sign the European Framework for Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children.

On Safer Internet Day 6 February 2007, 16 leading mobile operators and content providers signed a European Framework for Safer Mobile use by younger teenagers and children. The Framework responds to many of the concerns expressed in the replies to the public consultation on children and mobile phones. It describes principles and measures that the signatories commit to implementing on the national level throughout Europe by February 2008, including:

- access control for adult content
- awareness-raising campaigns for parents and children
- the classification of commercial content according to national standards of decency and appropriateness
- the fight against illegal content on mobiles.

Safer Internet Day 2008 included a Youth Forum, which brought together 27 young people (12 to 19 years old) from nine countries across Europe to discuss issues related to their use of social networking sites, mobile phones and awareness raising.

### **Mobile Network Operators**

The subsequent implementation of the Framework has been extremely successful, with the GSM Association reporting in April 2008 that self-regulatory codes of conduct are in place in 21 countries of the European Union, and that similar codes are expected to be introduced in the remaining six countries of the EU as 24 mobile operators and content providers covering all the Member States have signed the framework. These signatories serve about 550 million customers across the European Union<sup>10</sup>.

Also in April 2008 fourteen leading European mobile operators, mobile content, social networking companies and internet providers launched TeachToday<sup>11</sup>, an educational website designed to help teachers encourage children to use the internet and mobile technology responsibly and safely. The industry consortium worked closely with European Schoolnet, the co-ordinator of the INSAFE network, to create the materials.

### **Communication activities**

The Programme is supported by a range of communication activities designed to communicate with a wide audience of stakeholders including potential and actual project partners, policy makers and the general public.

Prior to each annual Call for Proposals (with the exception of 2006) a central information day was held in Luxembourg, complemented in the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Calls by targeted information days elsewhere in Europe. This

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.gsmworld.com/news/press\\_2008/press08\\_25.shtml](http://www.gsmworld.com/news/press_2008/press08_25.shtml)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.teachtoday.eu>

complements the information available to proposers online and via the helpdesk, and provides an opportunity to discuss the Call and specific proposals face-to-face.

A central information day was held in Luxembourg on 13th June 2005 with distribution of information packages to around 100 participants. This coincided with the Safer Internet Forum in order to reach a broad range of stakeholders. In addition the Safer Internet Plus helpdesk was available for servicing email enquires and for pre-screening of around 30 pre-proposals.

Instead of a central information day in 2006 targeted information days were organised between May and July in co-operation with the relevant Programme Management Committee member and representatives of INHOPE and INSAFE networks in some countries where no hotline or awareness node was recommended for funding under the 2005 call, namely Estonia, Romania, Italy, Slovakia and Portugal.

The 2007 Call was supported by a central information day in Luxembourg on 27<sup>th</sup> June (again in conjunction with the Safer Internet Forum) with distribution of information packages to around 120 participants. In addition, targeted information days were organised in co-operation with the relevant Programme Management Committee member and representatives of INHOPE and INSAFE networks in some countries (Hungary (15 participants) and Romania) where no hotline or awareness node had been recommended for funding under the 2006 call.

A central information day was held in Luxembourg on March 11th 2008 with around 60 participants. In addition, a targeted event was organised in co-operation with the Programme Management Committee member and representatives of INHOPE and INSAFE networks in Hungary.

A pre-proposal service has been offered since 2005. This allows prospective proposers to submit an outline description of no more than three pages for comment by the Commission.

The Commission maintains a Safer Internet mailing list, with over 1000 subscribers, which is used to inform participants about events and developments related to the Programme and the wide context, and the Head of Unit provides the Quicklinks online group which collates and disseminates news about safer Internet from around the world.

### **Evaluation and review**

The Safer Internet Plus Programme has seen a number of changes to administrative and contractual processes and requirements. These include the provision of standardised work packages and indicators for hotline and awareness / helpline proposals and simplification of consortium structures with a reduction in the number of partners.

Proposals for funding are invited on an annual basis, and evaluated by a panel of independent evaluators drawn from a range of relevant backgrounds. The evaluation consists of several stages. At the individual reading and assessment stage, each expert completes and signs off an Individual Assessment Report for each proposal and notes a score for the relevant award criteria. This is followed by a consensus evaluation, during which the three experts who assessed a given proposal individually meet to evaluate it with a view to reaching a consensus on their merits against the respective action objectives, starting from their individual views. A report is drafted based on the consensus of the triplet suggesting a score for the proposal.

Finally a panel discussion is held to review the results of the consensus meetings, establish a ranked list of proposals recommended for funding for each action and approve the list(s) of proposals not recommended for funding. In the panel adjustments may be made, comparing proposals which have received similar scores, in order to establish a priority based on the overall view of the evaluator panel meeting. Based on the list and minutes from the panel meeting, a final recommendation report is produced by the overall rapporteurs addressing the final ranking and the rationale for the funding proposal.

Given the increasing complexity of proposals for integrated networks, particularly in terms of the way in which they meet the requirements of establishing combined nodes, some difficulty arises as to how they can be fairly evaluated. Whilst a fully combined node, incorporating hotline, awareness node and helpline within a single project, is more directly in keeping with the objectives and requirements of the Programme, the three individual elements may be of inferior quality to those within another project comprising only two elements, for example hotline and awareness node but without a helpline.

The implementation of the Programme also requires mid-term reviews of all projects. These reviews are conducted by independent experts and take various forms: paper, telephone, face-to-face and site visit. The review covers a range of questions, including how well the financial and human resources have been used, the European Added Value, and the range and quality of deliverables. The outcome of these reviews provides useful evaluation data not only in terms of individual projects, but also for the action lines and the overall Programme.

The outcome of the mid-term review process for Safer Internet Plus has been that five projects were recommended to modify their activities in order to fulfil their contract obligations, the rest were considered to have successfully met their objectives and be on track to complete the project satisfactorily. The reasons for modification ranged from lack of clarity in the organisational structure, insufficient integration of the various elements of combined nodes (a difficulty highlighted by some stakeholders), management difficulties resulting from staff changes, poor communication and dissemination strategy, and inadequate cross-sectoral representation.

One issue arising from some of the less positive reviews was the lack of experience in some organisations, not so much of the issues specific to Safer Internet, but of the relevant management skills necessary to run an effective project. This is most noticeable where there have been significant staff changes.

### **Europe Direct**

Since 2006 the Europe Direct service has included issues of online safety. This service can be accessed by the general public across Europe by telephone, web/email or in person by visiting one of the local information centres in each country. Although the service provides statistics<sup>12</sup> for the number of contacts with citizens from each country, as well as the priority topics, insufficient detail is provided to make any assessment of how effective this collaboration has been in raising the profile of the Programme or general awareness levels.

### **Knowledge enhancement**

The Safer Internet Programme has been proactive in supporting and conducting surveys about levels and types of Internet use across Europe, particularly among children and young people, as well as the degree of understanding of risks.

There was a shift in emphasis in the most recent Eurobarometer survey from parents to children. Although this creates a difficulty in drawing direct comparisons, for example in the increase of awareness levels, it does offer insights into children's behaviour and attitudes, as well as helping to identify new areas of concern such as addiction and Internet literacy (including the need for better critical skills).

### **Public consultations**

In addition to the Eurobarometer surveys, public consultation exercises have been carried out under the Programme to inform the identification of future priorities and shape Commission responses. The first public consultation concerned child safety and mobile phones, and was conducted between July and October 2006. The exercise attracted 74 contributions from 20 European Union countries plus Norway, and from a range of sectors including industry, non-governmental organisations, public administration, academia and individuals.

There was broad consensus that, along with all the benefits that mobile phones bring to young people, some risks undoubtedly exist. The main risks identified by the contributors confirmed the areas set out in the consultation report, namely harassment and bullying, grooming and sexual discussions, miscontracting with minors, access to chargeable content, fraud and spam, cost issues, exposure and access to illegal/harmful/adult content,

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<sup>12</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/visit\\_us/statistics/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/visit_us/statistics/index_en.htm)

pornography and violence and risks concerning children's privacy, in particular due to the inappropriate use of camera phones and location services.

All respondents agreed that the responsibility for children's safe use of mobile phones should be shared between parents and carers, the industry (mobile network operators and service providers) and the public authorities.

A number of contributors suggested exploring solutions at the European level, for example in the areas of common thematic content classification, development of common standards for mobile based Internet filtering tools, alternatives to blocking Internet, and child safety in handset manufacturing standards.

Given the findings of the Eurobarometer survey 2005 that in some countries children are more likely to have a mobile phone than access to the Internet (for example in Lithuania, Latvia and Greece) the need to address these issues becomes all the more urgent.

A second public consultation addressed the theme of Safer Internet and online technologies for children. This was conducted by means of an online consultation from April to June 2007, complemented by input from the Safer Internet Forum in June 2007. The consultation focused on 3 topics:

- Fighting illegal content
- Fighting harmful content
- User-generated content and online communication

The public consultation attracted 93 contributions from a range of stakeholders, including industry, child welfare and rights organisations, consumer bodies, hotlines and awareness nodes, law enforcement, regulators and government, research, academics and individuals.

The key conclusions of the public consultation were broadly as follows:

- the idea of creating a risk free internet for children and young people is an illusion
- there is a need to empower and equip children, who are recipients, participants and actors in the digital environment, to avoid hazards and deal with risks
- new risks will be created by increasingly interactive use of online services such as Web 2.0, as well as by convergence of technologies
- the foremost danger remains that of online-related sexual abuse
- a number of further critical illegal online activities exist, for example selling alcohol to children, to racism/xenophobia, drugs promotion, anorexia/bulimia sites, glorification of war, bomb-making, sale of weapons
- parents and professionals should be empowered to understand children's online activity and behaviour
- the Commission has a clear role to play, for example in promoting cooperation between different stakeholders.

The recommendations can be classified under 6 major headings:

1. Illegal content and online activities: this focused on the continuation and evolution of hotlines, the blacklisting of illegal sites, with the USA and Russia as a priority, an EU level database of illegal content, and the need to increase law enforcement capacity to respond more effectively
2. Awareness raising: this should be child-centred, with better segmentation of target groups, make more effective use of the media. Media literacy and online safety education should be embedded in school curricula from six years of age, and parents should also be educated in these areas
3. Stakeholder cooperation and exchange of best practice: this should be further fostered and supported by the Commission, in particular in the area of professional networking and training, and in the promotion of enhanced use of ISP blocking of websites containing child sexual abuse images
4. Self regulation: a framework similar to that created by European mobile network operators was suggested for other industry stakeholder groups
5. Technological tools: there should be support for the development and use of software for tracing, analysing and blocking websites disseminating online child abuse material, and age identification and verification systems
6. Knowledge base: there is a pressing need to carry out further qualitative and quantitative research into a range of aspects of children's online experience.

A third public consultation<sup>13</sup> is currently under way on the issues of age verification, cross-media rating and classification, and online social networking. Submissions are invited by 31 July 2008, and the results will be fed into the Safer Internet Forum in September 2008, which will consider the same issues.

### **EU Kids Online**

The insights revealed through Eurobarometer and the public consultation activities are complemented by information from other sources such as the Mediappro report, various SAFT surveys, the Youth Protection Round Table and EU Kids Online.

An increasing emphasis is being placed on understanding the psychology of children and young people at different stages of their development, and the need to design content and activities accordingly in order to communicate effectively. The Byron report<sup>14</sup> particularly highlights the issue of vulnerable children, and how to ensure that they are protected in the online environment.

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<sup>13</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/sip/public\\_consultation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/public_consultation/index_en.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Safer Children in a Digital World, Children and New Technology: Dr Tanya Byron, March 2008

The EU Kids Online project examines research carried out in 21 Member States into how children use the Internet and new media. Their online repository includes 235 studies, forming a unique body of research to inform policy-makers, practitioners and academics about the nature of the evidence base, research availability and the key gaps.

A tentative grouping based on the EU Kids Online analysis suggests that most research is conducted in Northern Europe, that the considerable volume of research in the Nordic region might reflect the extent of internet diffusion, given the relatively small population sizes, and that less research has been conducted in Central and Southern Europe, though there are exceptions:

- Southern Europe: Greece (29), Portugal (19), Spain (14), Slovenia (11)
- Nordic region: Denmark (19), Iceland (7), Norway (17), Sweden (27)
- Northern Europe: Belgium (33), Estonia (17), France (15), Germany (33), Netherlands (15), UK (50)
- Central Europe: Austria (21), Bulgaria (7), Czech Republic (12), Poland (12)

All participating countries have researched the main issues of internet use (a topic in over half of the studies in all countries) and access. However, there seems to have been little research on why some children lack access. As regards use, it appears that there is less material available on the newest kinds of use, such as blogging and podcasting. Overall, the research needs to catch up with the technology and with the policy agenda.

## **RELEVANCE**

The Safer Internet Plus Programme has managed successfully to ensure that the themes and actions are relevant to the social, geographic and above all technological landscape.

By funding state-of-the-art studies and surveys, as well as staying abreast of the outcomes of external research, the Commission is able to adapt the priorities of the Programme to respond to changing challenges and needs.

ECPAT is undoubtedly right in stating<sup>15</sup> that “The rapid nature of technological change and uptake is a blatant barrier to more timely action. The ICT industry is so clearly ahead of governments and most communities, while many parents struggle to stay abreast of the latest Internet games their children are playing, at the very least, without truly grasping the intricacies of the platform.” The dynamic context of Safer Internet Plus creates challenges on the one hand in devising effective solutions and on the other hand in ensuring that all the necessary stakeholders engage with the process of implementing these solutions.

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.ecpat.net/EI/PDF/ICT/Violence\\_in\\_Cyberspace\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.ecpat.net/EI/PDF/ICT/Violence_in_Cyberspace_ENG.pdf) 2005

However, the Commission has acted in a timely manner to incorporate some of the key findings from these and other surveys and consultation exercises into the Safer Internet Plus Programme and into the proposed follow-up initiative. A number of concerns raised within these consultations are not new – for example whether or not there should be more legislative standardisation across Europe – but may warrant ongoing consideration in light of the changing environment. An example would be that of grooming, which has become of increasing concern in a number of Member States and at European level. For example, it was discussed at the 2007 Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. A number of countries have already introduced specific legislation in this area.

Further research needs have been identified in several areas, outlined in the results of the public consultation above, and also by the Commission-funded MAPAP<sup>16</sup> project, which highlights the importance of studying the increasing use of Peer to Peer file exchange systems for the distribution of child sexual abuse images. "Gaining an insight into the form and extent of paedophile exchanges is an aspect of P2P networking that has so far been under explored." The EU Kids Online project also identifies younger users, new kinds of risk, and mobile/new technologies as areas in which research has until now been lacking.

### **Geographic, social and cultural**

The geographical scope of the Programme is another area where Safer Internet Plus has responded in a timely and effective way. The rapid geographic growth of the EU has been mirrored quickly in the reach of the programme, which has made it a priority to include new Member States in its activities. In addition to funding for individual projects within the new members, the co-coordinating nodes for hotlines and awareness have also expanded as a result of the Enlargement.

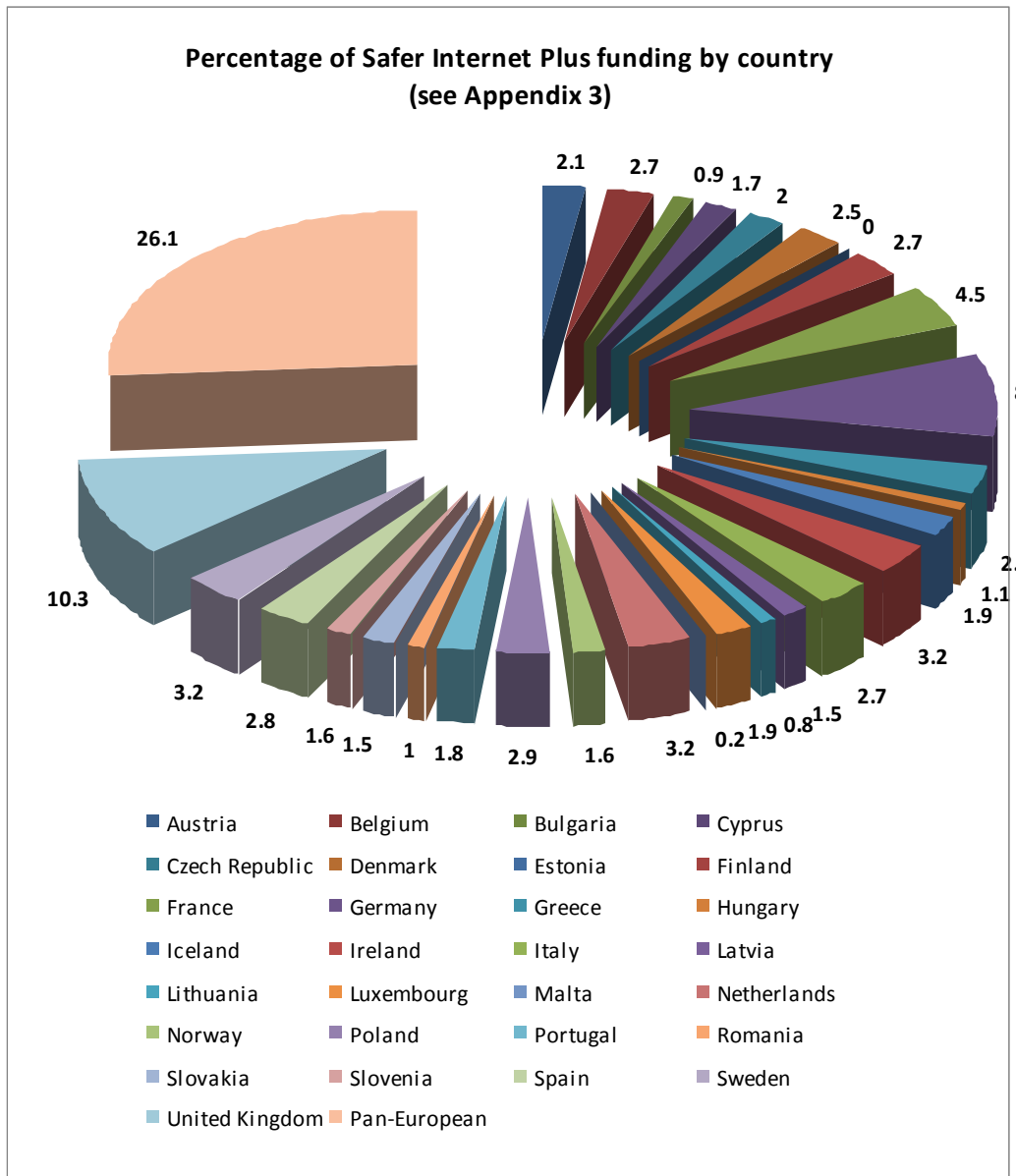
The implications of expansion also have cultural and economic dimensions. The findings of the Eurobarometer surveys are of particular significance in this regard. There appears to be a greater need for information about keeping children safe online in the new Member States compared with the 'old' Member States. There is evidence that in the 'old' Member States awareness levels have risen significantly during the period of this Programme and its predecessors, while this is less true of the new Member States.

While on average 44% of parents would like more information about how to protect their child from illegal or harmful content and contact, the 2005 survey revealed extreme differences between EU Member States, with scores ranging from 29% of Danish respondents feeling they need more information to 86% of respondents in Greece. This wish is most widespread in the accession and candidate countries (64%). The trusted sources and channels

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<sup>16</sup> Measurement and Analysis of P2P Activity Against Paedophile Content (<http://antipaedo.lip6.fr/>)

for education and awareness materials also vary between the two sectors, namely school, the government and the traditional media.



Given the differences in some of the new Member States in a range of areas, it is essential that the future programme continues to promote solutions which are culturally relevant and valid. These areas of difference include the balance between the respective roles of government, law enforcement and civil society, attitudes to reporting illegal activity, and expectations of how and from where educational material will be provided. The Programme's decentralised approach of empowering each national awareness node and hotline to develop its own relationships, materials and procedures within common guidelines is intended to foster regional and linguistic variation while maintaining quality and consistency.

The perception exists among some stakeholders that there is an English-speaking or even a UK bias to the Programme – whilst it is important to have a common language for the activities and documentation of the Programme, it is also essential for future effectiveness and impact that all countries feel the same sense of ownership and validation. Some stakeholder feedback also expressed a feeling that some countries and projects sometimes appear to get a disproportionate exposure in pan-European meetings.

No concrete statistics are available to support any perception of bias, nor can robust conclusions be drawn on the basis of the informal interviews and questionnaire responses alone. Nevertheless, it is essential to stress that best practice examples appear to be distributed across all parts of Europe and can be found among inexpensive as well as expensive projects. The impressive diversity and quality of ideas seen in different projects makes it crucial to ensure that good practice can be identified and disseminated from the entire scope of projects, regardless of geographical background, size or language.

The issue of language and access to information is one which is worthy of further consideration in future interventions, particularly in light of the almost total coverage of Member States which Safer Internet Plus has achieved.

### **Parental engagement**

Closely linked with the geographical relevance of the Programme are issues of socio-demographic relevance. Significant amounts of socio-demographic data are available from the Eurobarometer surveys and other sources. One issue which is highlighted is the discrepancy between the levels of awareness between computer-literate and professional parents and those who do not use the Internet much themselves and are not in professional jobs. The special Eurobarometer 250 survey found that parents do not behave differently based on the gender of their child, but rather education is the only relevant factor for which significant differences are found.

This is reinforced by the findings of the Byron report in the UK which indicates that parents who are themselves experienced with the technology choose more effective approaches to protecting their families. In general, parents equate their ability to protect their children when online with their relative skill levels, so children of parents with few internet skills are potentially disadvantaged in terms of protection from the risks. Some 71% of UK parents from lower socio economic groups do not currently use the internet<sup>17</sup>.

“Such less technologically experienced parents tend either to be naïve about the risks, and so less controlling, or they are panicking about the risks, and adopting a controlling approach in a way that is reactive and not very effective. There are also likely to be additional challenges in engaging these parents with messages around e-safety, given that they may not see the

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<sup>17</sup> UK online/ICM 2007

benefits of internet use, and may be lacking the skills and confidence to use the internet.”

Some stakeholders believe that regardless of social and educational background, the current generation of parents is unlikely to be able to give effective support to their children in staying safe online. Other research suggests that this is an unrealistically negative view, but it does highlight the need to understand the differences between children’s use of the Internet and their parents’ use, and the differing views of risk. These are both areas which have been covered in Eurobarometer surveys and which will be further explored through knowledge enhancement projects. It also underlines the need to use schools as channels and multipliers for awareness campaigns, particularly in order to reach those children whose parents are not engaged with the issues or feel inadequate to tackle them.

In order to ensure that the activities of the Programme remain relevant to all sectors of society within the European Union this issue should be given particular consideration in future in order to ensure that a ‘digital safety divide’ is not being created and that children are being equally well protected in all parts of society.

### **Children’s involvement**

Safer Internet Plus also has a high degree of relevance in its recent focus on consulting children and young people and ensuring that both their rights and their opinions are a priority within all aspects of the Programme.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse<sup>18</sup> affirms the importance of children themselves participating in the development of policies and initiatives to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as the need for the private sector as well as civil society to be involved in policies to tackle these issues and “implement internal norms through self-regulation or co-regulation”.

As regards children’s representation, it was suggested at the Safer Internet Plus management committee meeting in February 2007 that the Commission should create a young people’s consultative group similar to the Digi-Board in the Netherlands. Contributors to the public consultation on children and new technologies also emphasized the importance of involving an empowering young people themselves, and the Work Programme 2008 includes this as a specific objective. Some projects do already have youth panels, and the YPRT project in particular has young people’s participation at its heart. Safer Internet Day 2008 included a Youth Panel.

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<sup>18</sup> (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 12 July 2007 at the 1002nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

## **Technology**

Those responsible for the Programme have worked hard to ensure that it remains technologically relevant. The last four years have seen unprecedented growth not only in the availability of ubiquitous and high-speed digital services, but also in the interactive and participative use of these technologies. However, there is some feeling among stakeholders that in the wake of the cessation of specific funding for filtering projects, the technical aspect of Safer Internet Plus needs strengthening in order to ensure that the Programme retains an appropriate level of technical knowledge and expertise, and that it has credibility with stakeholders within an essentially technical environment. While the same stakeholders might agree that support for filtering should not be a priority, they would still perceive a negative effect in terms of lower technological input to the entire programme. Upcoming projects on issues such as image recognition should help to redress this balance.

## **Internet penetration**

There has been a growth of 210.5% in Internet usage in the European Union between 2000 and 2008, with 59.9 % of population now being online<sup>19</sup> (March 2008). The highest levels of growth can be seen in Eastern Europe, ranging from 389% in Hungary up to 775% in Romania. The increase in the accession countries stands at 35.1%, Turkey 22.5% and Macedonia 19.1% (the same level as the world average).

Broadband penetration within the European Union has also been increasing: in the third quarter of 2007, the original Member States of the EU (EU15) achieved average broadband penetration of 19.9%, surpassing the United States (19.6%) and very close to Japan (20.2%)<sup>20</sup>. However, this trend is not uniform across Europe. Northern European countries continue to be world-leaders in broadband penetration, while the level in Greece, Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria remains below 10%. A range of factors influences this variation, including (but not limited to) economics, culture and climate. Nevertheless, Forrester Research, an independent technology and market research company, estimates that by 2010 41% of European households will have broadband connectivity and this will have increased to 71% by 2013<sup>21</sup>.

The Eurobarometer survey 2005 was a quantitative study about Internet use largely based on the 2003/4 survey in order to allow meaningful comparison. Additional questions were included to better understand the context (parents' use of media) and cover new services (mobile phones, online games, and filtering tools). It covered the 15 'old' Member States, the 10 countries which had joined the European Union in 2004 and the 4 accession and candidate countries.

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<sup>19</sup> Internet World Stats – March 2008

<sup>20</sup> European Competitive Telecommunications Association Broadband Scorecard

<sup>21</sup> [www.forrester.com](http://www.forrester.com)

The survey revealed that just over a third of children owned a mobile phone. 60% of parents whose children accessed the Internet had not set any rules about its use. The number of children using the Internet is similar in old and new Member States (approximately half) but considerably lower in the accession and candidate countries, where around one child in five uses the Internet (21%) and slightly fewer children own a mobile phone (18%).

All of this has implications for the way European citizens, including children, will use the Internet. Recent research by the OECD<sup>22</sup> indicates that broadband use leads to more frequent and longer use, and has both reinforced existing activities such as email and online shopping, but has also created new forms of use such as video-streaming, podcasts and broadband television. It finds that “broadband users are also more participative. They contribute content to web sites, they keep online diaries and blogs, and share photos, videos and artwork.”

This is supported by research by the EU Kids Online project which found that 2007 saw a huge increase in the use of interactive and participative technologies, especially social networking, across Europe. Examples include Norway, where 93% of 12-17 year olds use social networking sites. And even in countries where the internet arrived more recently, social networking is popular, one example being the fact that more than two thirds of high school students in Estonia use such sites.

The OECD research also notes that broadband access is growing fastest for those without previous access. This may have implications for awareness activities in terms of reaching users who have leap-frogged the technology without necessarily having learned to handle the risks.

### **Mobile phone penetration**

Mobile phone usage is matching the trends seen for Internet and broadband. The GSM Association<sup>23</sup> reports that in the year to April 2008, the number of 3G users in the EU doubled to 112 million. Europe has adopted 3G faster than any other region of the world.

Research on young people’s use of online technologies appears to indicate that despite awareness of the ‘rules’ for safer Internet, many young users are giving out personal information. Information from the EU Kids Online network reveals for example that in Ireland the level has increased dramatically since the advent of social networking sites – a rise from 28% of 9 to 16 year olds divulging personal details in 2006 to 79% in 2007. The network highlights the need to provide appropriate advice and guidance to teenagers, particularly in some countries new to the Internet or where their experiences are ‘ahead’ of their ability to cope.

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<sup>22</sup> OECD Broadband Growth and Policies in OECD Countries

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.gsmworld.com>

A recent survey of nearly 22,000 people across Europe by European Schoolnet revealed that 57% of young users make their online social network profiles public and disclose personal information<sup>24</sup>.

Social networking sites have enjoyed phenomenal rates of growth over the past couple of years. MySpace attracted more than 114 million visitors worldwide in June 2007, a 72% increase from a year earlier, while Facebook made even more dramatic gains, rising 270% to 52.2 million visitors over the same period<sup>25</sup>.

The annual Safer Internet Plus work programmes have identified and sought to address these issues, particularly the proliferation of mobile phones across Europe, sometimes ahead of or even instead of 'fixed' Internet, and the rise in social networking sites. The use of public consultations to gauge opinion and seek solutions has been effective both in developing creative approaches and to ensuring 'buy-in' from relevant stakeholders. These have been supported and reinforced by the Safer Internet Forum meetings and workshops, as well as by the Impact Assessment, intended to inform the design of a follow-up initiative but also useful in identifying and prioritizing issues within Safer Internet Plus.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Commission published a Communication on the implementation of the Safer Internet Plus Programme in November 2006, evaluating the progress and achievements of the Programme so far<sup>26</sup>. The report commended the work of the hotlines and stressed the need for this to continue, as well as the increase in targeted campaigns by awareness nodes to reach children, parents and teachers, and the impact of Safer Internet Day in achieving visibility. It stated the intention to increase the geographical coverage of the two networks (INHOPE and INSAFE), to foster closer co-operation and dialogue between all stakeholders, to help European citizens to find practical information about safer use of the Internet more easily through the national nodes and the Europe Direct service, and to raise the visibility of the Programme overall.

There has been a trend towards simplification in the implementation of the Programme. The proposals and progress reports rely increasingly heavily on the use of standardised work packages, at least in the case of the hotlines, awareness nodes and helplines, and standard assessment methodologies provided by the hotline and awareness networks. Some stakeholders have suggested that longer contract periods would simplify the process still further, and this would warrant consideration in the design of a follow-up programme.

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<sup>24</sup> [http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/insafe\\_survey.htm](http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/insafe_survey.htm)

<sup>25</sup> [www.comscore.com](http://www.comscore.com)

<sup>26</sup> Communication on the implementation of the multiannual Community Programme on promoting safer use of the Internet and new online technologies (Safer Internet plus) COM 2006 661 FINAL

Although the use of standardised work packages has certainly provided greater consistency in the proposed activities for integrated networks, and may well have made the process of submitting proposals easier, they have created some difficulty for both evaluators and reviewers in making a realistic assessment of the actual work plan, methodology and tasks involved in the project. This risks on the one hand under-estimating the achievements of the best projects, and on the other hand masking the lack of activity or attainment of projects which may be under-performing.

For each of the calls in 2005, 2006 and 2008 there was sufficient budget available to fund all eligible proposals recommended by the independent evaluators. This was not the case in 2007, and therefore five projects were put below the funding threshold despite otherwise being suitable. In 2008, although the necessary budget could have been provided and several proposals were evaluated as being over the threshold, it was felt appropriate to fund only one project respectively in the areas of knowledge enhancement and analysis of illegal content.

Generally the level of funding for each action line has been consistent with initial projections<sup>27</sup>.

### **Programme management**

The management of the Programme by the Commission has been efficient and effective, with good communication between officials and project partners on an informal as well as a formal basis

Perhaps inevitably, some proposers and co-ordinators find the administrative procedures difficult, but it is recognised generally that there is a need for accountability in respect of public funding which has to be under-pinned by the procedural requirements.

However, there are a few points worth considering in terms of improving the procedures:

1. Electronic submission should be considered as a way of streamlining the proposal stage;
2. The use of longer contract periods for appropriate projects would contribute to a reduction in the administrative burden;
3. There is a degree of double reporting required from the hotlines and awareness nodes, since they need to submit a standardised assessment methodology document to the INHOPE and INSAFE networks respectively, and also need to provide much of the same information (report statistics, number and coverage of awareness tools and materials etc) direct to the Commission in the progress reports. Efforts should be made to find a way of rationalising this reporting process to ensure that unnecessary resources are not expended on duplicated activity and that best use is made of available data.

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<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 2

## **EFFECTIVENESS**

Generally speaking the Programme has been effective in achieving its stated objectives. There are hotlines and awareness nodes in almost all Member States, a number of thematic networks have been established to facilitate dialogue and exchange of best practice between different stakeholders, and work is continuing on developing technical solutions in areas such as image recognition. The thematic networks are an effective way of involving organisations who might otherwise not engage directly with the Programme.

Stakeholders are overwhelmingly positive about the effectiveness and impact of Safer Internet Plus, particularly in relation to their own individual action line (in the case of project partners).

## **Quantifiable evidence**

The detailed level of effectiveness within the broad Programme objectives is more difficult to quantify, and it is important to collect and analyse more measurable data in follow-up initiatives in order to ensure the effectiveness and impact of funded activities.

However, some useful and valid statistical information is available, particularly for hotlines, which can be used to a limited extent to try to assess the impact of the Programme. During the period of the Programme these statistics have been collected and analysed with increasing consistency and sophistication through the INHOPE network, giving some sound data for evaluation. Individual projects also provide their own statistics.

## **INHOPE statistics**

There is no doubt that the number of reports to hotlines has increased significantly during the period of the Programme. However, INHOPE itself acknowledges that interpretation of the raw figures is problematic, and although more reports than ever are being sent to law enforcement and to content hosts, the severity and frequency of illegal content seems to be increasing.

The INHOPE statistics indicate that between September 2004 and December 2006 the INHOPE network received 900,000 reports from the general public, with a further million reports being processed by hotlines as a result of internal monitoring. 21% of reports, ie 20,000 per month, related to illegal or harmful content, half of it containing child abuse images. There has been a 15% increase each year in the level of reports of child abuse images, with adult pornography growing by 24% per year and racist/xenophobic content by 33%.

Within the category of child sexual abuse images it appears that the severity of the content is increasing, with 29% of all potentially illegal URIs known to IWF containing the most severe forms of abuse. There is also a general decrease in the age of abused children and an increase in number of new abused children, with domestic images replacing commercial ones.

INHOPE acknowledges in the Global Internet Trend report<sup>28</sup> that “The increase in reports could be due to many reasons which cannot be determined by the analysis performed for this report. These reasons could include:

- Change in hotline numbers
- Change in hotline visibility
- Change in hotline activity (derived<sup>29</sup>, proactive<sup>30</sup>)
- Change in criminal activity
- Change in visibility of criminal activity

It is suspected that the root cause for the observed growth in the number of reports .... is a combination of the above and possibly other reasons? More research needs to be done on this very challenging topic. “

As well as reports on content which is confirmed to be illegal, hotlines receive and have to process a significant number of general queries. The statistics for 2005 and 2006 record 3,000 such queries per month, representing a rise of 30% per year. Dealing with these enquiries consumes substantial hotline resources, arguably more resources than for ‘standard’ reports because of the need for direct communication and sensitivity to the motivation of the correspondent. Reports on material outside the hotline remit grew by 43% per year, making up about 7% of all reports processed.

In order to avoid expending resources on processing off-topic enquiries and reports, some hotlines will have to find ways to avoid having to receive them. It is to be hoped that the increasing collaboration of hotlines and awareness nodes within a combined project may help in redirecting such reports to a more appropriate service.

INHOPE comments in the report that “The trends indicate that the public in each country where a hotline is operating trust their national hotline with a wide range of reports of illegal content.” However, the Eurobarometer survey 2007 indicates that on average only 4% of the public knows that there are hotlines, and that people are most likely to think of the police when confronted with illegal content. Given that the earliest hotlines had been operational for nearly 10 years by that stage, the level of awareness is disappointing. This illustrates that there is some considerable way to go in achieving Recommendation 1 from the evaluation of SIAP 2003-4, namely to increase the visibility of hotlines and promote greater awareness among end users and the media. A recent review of Safer Internet Plus project websites also identified the need for both hotlines and awareness nodes to pay more attention to the visibility of their sites.

As regards the effectiveness of hotlines in getting illegal content, particularly child sexual abuse images, removed from the Internet, the report states that

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<sup>28</sup> Published June 2007, presents statistics for the period between September 2004 and December 2006

<sup>29</sup> ‘Derived’ refers to reports which are generated by follow-up actions upon external reports

<sup>30</sup> ‘Proactive’ refers to reports which originate from proactive hotline activity, ie not as a result of an external report

“the trends indicate that hotlines play a vital role between the Internet consumer and the major law enforcement agencies to ensure that clearly identified reports of illegal content are sent to the agency with the most capability of taking action against the content and the perpetrators.” The number of reports transmitted to law enforcement” stood at approximately 6,400 reports per month, as at the last quarter of 2006 showing an average rate of increase of just under 10% per year.

However, INHOPE hotlines rarely receive structured feedback from law enforcement in relation to these reports. This is due to the complexity of online transnational crime investigations, the time delay between receiving the report and completing a successful investigation, the limitations of national legislation on the issue of giving feedback, the challenge of relating specific reports received from a hotline to a specific criminal activity and perhaps other reasons. INHOPE reports that this lack of feedback can be quite demotivating for hotline employees who work daily with harmful and illegal content in order to report it for investigation. Hotlines are working to adopt signed Memoranda of Understanding with national law enforcement which would include feedback in relation to reports forwarded for investigation. It is now also a contractual requirement for hotlines to have their operational guidelines endorsed by a national law enforcement agency.

The number of reports forwarded to another INHOPE hotline stood at approximately 1,400 reports per month, at the last quarter of 2006, showing an average rate of increase, between September 2004 and December 2006, of 16 additional reports per month (equivalent to 13% per year).

Material identified as being potentially illegal under national law is also referred to the content host. The number of reports transmitted to the hosting ISP was approximately 5,000 reports per month, with an average increase of 23% per year. However, little data is available as to how much content has actually been removed from host servers, and therefore the impact of the hotline activity is difficult to assess with any certainty. More should be done under the successive programme to identify and quantify the tangible outcomes of hotline reports, rather than attempting to interpret raw figures as indicators of success or otherwise.

The general trends seen in the report are broadly reflected in the statistics provided more recently for 2007. INHOPE itself notes that “the trends sometimes raise more questions than they answer. Often we would like to know the combination of reasons why some trends exist in order to better focus resources and tactics in the future. Such work will be part of the future work plans.”

It is not easy to assess whether the overall increase in levels of hotline reporting is positive – representing an increase in user awareness of how and where to report illegal content – or negative - illustrating a major rise in the amount of illegal material being produced and distributed.

Other factors would also be useful in analysing the raw data, such as identifying where illegal content is being hosted – this may give an indication of how well self-regulation is working in Europe, as well as identifying possible areas for further liaison and collaboration, and is an element which INHOPE should consider including in future statistical work. The cost of processing each single report is in some countries very high, and it is important to ensure that funding resources are allocated and spent as effectively as possible.

A similar quantitative approach would be appropriate in the context of assessing the long term effectiveness of the Commission's intervention on the issue of spam through the SPOTSPAM project (now completed). However, a positive trend appears to be emerging in that reports to INHOPE hotlines about non-illegal spam decreased by 57% per year during 2005 and 2006.

With the increasing emphasis on issues such as cyber-bullying and grooming, it is important to consider whether reporting will continue to be the most effective mechanism. The role of civilian hotlines is likely to change in those countries (such as Italy and Sweden) where there is a shift in the balance of responsibility and the relationship between police and civilian hotlines. In the case of Italy, the hotline is now focusing more on image recognition, and this is an example of how the remit can develop in response to a changing national context.

### **Awareness outcomes**

As regards awareness activities, it is similarly difficult to quantify the effectiveness on a comprehensive basis. However, awareness nodes have produced some excellent materials, both online and offline, and there has been increased use of the network for sharing resources. There are currently 604 resources available through the INSAFE website, which include press releases, audio-visual content, games and offline materials.

Feedback from stakeholders indicates that there is scope to increase the level of willingness of some individual projects (particularly those which have a longer track record and in countries with high penetration of Internet and mobile technologies) to learn from as well as contribute to other network partners. Unfortunately some proposals give the impression that the project participants believe that they have much to teach other projects, but little to learn from them. Such an assumption would be a great mistake for any project, no matter how outstanding – this is usually pointed out in the evaluation (and/or the review) process.

### **Filtering**

With regard to filtering, the stated aim not to fund filtering projects per se, but rather to increase take-up of filtering and rating systems appears to have been effective so far, although there is considerable work to be done in identifying suitable software tools and systems. The 2007 SIP-BENCH report found that generally "filtering technology is maturing and can be made effective to live up

to the expectations of child carers throughout the EU. Still, further improvement is needed to remove the perception of 'filtering does not work'."

Generally the filters designed for children up to 10 years old are more effective than those for older children, and tools work better on English language sites. However, generally most filters benchmarked in the study had improved compared to the previous year for general harmful content. Neither filtering nor blacklisting was found to be either sophisticated or fast-moving enough to cope with Web 2.0 content.

### **New challenges**

There are new areas of challenge which have been identified very effectively through Programme activities such as public consultations and Safer Internet Forum meetings. These include online video games, an area also highlighted in the Byron report, media literacy and cyber-bullying. The Anti-Bullying Alliance<sup>31</sup> in the UK distinguishes between 7 different types of cyber-bullying, based on the technology used, and the Commission's Impact Assessment reports that up to a third of young teenagers in the UK had experience some form of online or digital bullying. The Commission has been swift to respond to these issues in later Work Programmes, but it is too early to make meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of this intervention.

### **EFFICIENCY**

In terms of cost effectiveness, the level of Programme funding varies very considerably between projects, with some producing excellent results on relatively small budgets while others require much higher financial resources.

Attempts at analysis<sup>32</sup> of funding levels between countries according to population, Internet or mobile penetration are problematic and inconclusive. Whilst some countries receive a higher percentage of funding than would appear commensurate with the population, other factors are also relevant, some of which are more tangible than others, such as cost of living variations, average salaries, socio-demographic distribution, cultural issues, and the diverging role of civil society.

However, an overview of funding distribution reveals the following general trends:

- Approximately 75% of the funding is country specific and allocated to hotlines, awareness nodes and other national initiatives
- The remaining quarter is used for pan-European projects (technical, network co-ordination, knowledge enhancement etc)
- Of the pan-European funding, some 41% has been spent on the network co-ordination (approximately 10% of total funding)

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<sup>31</sup> Cyberbullying report 2005

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix 3

- All countries, with the exception of Estonia, have received funding for country initiatives.

Given that national hotlines, awareness nodes and helplines are essentially nodes in a European network, it is not entirely accurate to refer to the funding of national initiatives as “country specific”. However, a few points are worthy of note:

- Of the node funding, which is on a national basis, larger countries receive higher funding overall
- However, smaller countries receive a higher funding per capita than the larger countries
- Luxembourg and Iceland receive more than €1 per capita, while the average is less than 30 cents
- Germany and the United Kingdom have received most funding. (The reasons for this are historical and operational respectively: Germany traditionally had several hotlines, the UK has a hotline with the most extensive operation in Europe, and obviously has a very high reach as English can be said to be the lingua franca of the Internet.) Yet, it is worth noting that per capita, the funding for Germany and the UK is still relatively low.

There appears to be some correlation between Internet coverage and level of funding in the sense that the higher the Internet penetration, the higher the funding (in total numbers). It is difficult to draw any specific conclusion from this figure other than to note that it is unsurprising to find that the higher the level of online activity, the more funding is needed for Safer Internet measures.

It is clear that funding a hotline or awareness node in a small country is relatively expensive. The question of whether a more centralised approach is useful may warrant future consideration (for instance, if more police hotlines are created). However, the very broad coverage has had obvious advantages in terms of raising national awareness of the issues and putting the focus on illegal content.

A considerable proportion of funding is dedicated to transnational projects such as INHOPE and INSAFE, various thematic networks and targeted technical projects, which again defy attempts to analyse funding levels according to simplistic criteria. A similar difficulty arises with regard to sectoral representation among funding partners, such as public sector, NGO, industry, and law enforcement, particularly since the increased involvement of combined nodes which may include several organisations from different sectors.

Increasingly during the lifetime of Safer Internet Plus there has been a tendency among some successful projects to submit ever more expensive proposals without necessarily demonstrating a corresponding increase in value for money. In a number of cases, following recommendations by evaluators, the funding level has been reduced and/or the contract period changed in order to ensure better value for money from such projects.

It is to be expected that the requirement for combined nodes would rationalise the management burden of the projects in the future, and one might expect to see a reduction in cost rather than the latter. Also in this regard, given the multi-stakeholder nature of many of these consortia, and more particularly of the Advisory Boards overseeing them, there is potential for the organisations themselves to exercise a greater multiplier role amongst their own constituencies.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

The Programme demonstrates considerable achievements, building on those recognised in the evaluations of the Safer Internet Action Plan. Not only has it continued to keep the issue of Safer Internet high on the agenda of policy makers across Europe and beyond, but it has also become a driver for action outside the European context. Representatives of the Programme and the projects, particularly the network co-ordinators, are regularly invited to speak at events all over the world, including Brazil, South Africa, Canada and Washington, as well as across Europe.

### **Knowledge sharing and best practice**

As far as stakeholders are concerned, the major benefit and achievement of the Programme lies in the sharing of knowledge and expertise – this is equally true of hotlines and awareness nodes, both of whom recognise the value of learning from others' strengths and weaknesses alike.

The expertise generated and fostered by Safer Internet Plus is recognised and valued internationally. For example, the Australian Communications and Media Authority acknowledges that “the EU is nearly unique in the world in having developed and articulated a series of programs aimed at addressing the full range of identifiable online risks in a comprehensive and integrated manner.” The same report<sup>33</sup> goes on to say that the EU “has stimulated activity internationally with its influence felt beyond member countries, providing a focus for the development of technological and educational safety solutions and measurements of their desirability and effectiveness.”

### **Global influence**

In a broader international context, the Programme's experiences and best practices are seen as very helpful and stimulating by other countries and regions which are confronted with similar challenges. This became evident in particular in the context of the Internet Governance Forum<sup>34</sup> (IGF) meeting in Rio de Janeiro in 2007, where Safer Internet Plus stakeholders organized

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<sup>33</sup> Developments in Internet Filtering Technologies and Other Measures for Promoting Online Safety, ACMA February 2008

<sup>34</sup> The IGF was established by the UN Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis (November 2005) as a platform for discussion of issues related to Internet Governance. One of the main themes of the IGF is Internet Security.

various workshops. Contributions by stakeholders from Europe, in particular from Programme partners, were seen as a very valuable contribution to this global debate. The European Commission and individual project partners will be participants in the forthcoming IGF 2008 meeting in Hyderabad in December 2008, which will provide an opportunity to share experiences and best practice with other regions in the world.

The very broad international membership of INHOPE is also a testament to the standing of the Programme in the wider Internet community. For individual projects as well, affiliation with and funding by the Safer Internet Plus Programme brings credibility within their own national context and this is helpful in attracting funding.

### **Europe-wide coverage**

The expansion of the two networks to cover virtually the whole European area as well as countries further afield is an undoubted achievement. Following the 2008 Call, the two networks include 27 awareness nodes, 21 helplines and 24 hotlines.

The INSAFE network has grown from coverage of 21 countries in 2006 to 34 countries in 2008, including all Member States except Estonia. The INHOPE network has enjoyed similar growth, with 13 members joining during the period of the Safer Internet Plus Programme, bringing the total membership to 33.

INHOPE now includes hotlines from all Member States except Sweden (where the role of the hotline has been taken over by law enforcement) and Estonia. INHOPE also has a growing number of members from third countries – Canada, Chinese Taipei and Japan have all joined the network during the last four years – which is particularly important given the global nature of the problem and the need for truly international cross-border collaboration.

Another achievement is the extent to which the Programme has encouraged collection and analysis of a huge body of research on Safer Internet issues by the EU Kids Online Project.

Another excellent example of successful self-regulation arising from Safer Internet Plus, and one of the outstanding achievements of the Programme which could serve as a model of good practice in relation to spam and other problems, is the agreement with mobile phone operators on protecting minors, initiated by the Commission and signed on Safer Internet Day 2007. Implementation and impact of this agreement is an area which would warrant consideration in the succeeding programme. The success of the dialogue and collaboration with the mobile industry sector under the Programme demonstrates what can be achieved in a relatively short time.

The same progress has not been made in the case of the ISP sector. A Safer Internet Forum meeting was held in Luxembourg in June 2004 (ie prior to the

start of this Programme) to discuss the scope for a European Code of Conduct for Internet service providers, particularly in the field of protection of minors. However, it has not subsequently been possible to establish a funded project during the course of Safer Internet Plus. As shown by the discussions with mobile phone operators, which gave rise to an industry agreement, and those with the social networking sites which started recently, the Commission is taking an alternative approach involving a series of meetings of interested parties, including industry and child welfare organisations, in order to reach agreement on a common text for a code of conduct. This objective could be pursued in the course of the follow-up programme in order to try to reach the same level of effective co-operation with the Internet Service Provider sector as has been achieved with the mobile network operators.

Among the hotlines, law enforcement actions arising from reports are an excellent indicator of both the achievements and the impact of the Programme. One such instance comes from Spain: in June 2008 the activity of the Spanish hotline, Protegeles, led to one of the largest police operations against child abuse images on the Internet in Spain with the arrest of more than 55 people arrested and the seizure of 179 hard discs seized. These Internet users, some of them minors, from various social backgrounds were both distributing and producing child sexual abuse images.

As regards the awareness activities, the Safer Internet Day has been an undoubted success – the event has grown in terms of numbers and geographical scope year on year, with an increasingly international focus and an impressive level of press and media coverage, and it is a relatively low-overhead way of attracting global participation in the activities of the Programme.

## **IMPACT**

In exploring and defining the priorities for the follow-up programme (2009 to 2013) the Commission conducted an Impact Assessment<sup>35</sup> based on progress so far in this and previous programmes.

The report acknowledges that “most impacts are inherently difficult to quantify due to the lack of availability of comparable data and figures. However, despite this problem, the main impacts can still be determined”.

### **Political impact**

The impacts can be broadly categorised as social or economic. An overarching impact is the role Safer Internet Plus plays in helping to put the topic of online safety on the agenda of national governments and international organisations.

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<sup>35</sup> Accompanying document to the Proposal for a Decision establishing a multiannual Community programme on protecting children using the Internet and other communication technologies {COM(2008) 106 final} {SEC(2008) 243}

The consistent approach and messages across Europe are an important factor – in terms of the impact of the Programme, this consistency means that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Although at times different national approaches (including legislative frameworks) have been seen by some stakeholders as an obstacle, the more coherent approach of Safer Internet Plus has generally made the work easier.

As regards the more localised impact of the Programme, it is felt by some stakeholders that there is still scope for more activity at national level in a number of Member States, and European activity and intervention should be complementary to rather than a substitute for national involvement. On the other hand, the high level of success of the Programme in some of the new Member States warrants particular mention.

### **Social impact**

Social impacts can be seen in the contribution made by the Programme to combating illegal content, as evidenced by the increase in reports from national hotlines to law enforcement agencies and ISPs, resulting in the removal of content. Those hotlines operating a 'blocking' list of overseas-hosted sites containing child sexual abuse images add to the impact in their countries.

The helplines are the most recent and least well developed element of the integrated network. Even among those projects which incorporate helplines, there seems to be a lack of clarity as to their definition and role. This is an areas which needs further consolidation in order for the helplines to exploit their potential impact among Internet users within Europe

In terms of awareness work, the social impact lies in empowering individual users by educating them in a relevant and effective way about issues of safer Internet. Although the quality and reach of the content in the repository of awareness resources varies, the impact of some individual outputs has been considerable. An excellent example of this is the "Wo ist Klaus?"<sup>36</sup> video clip, produced by Klicksafe in Germany, which has been translated into seven other European languages, broadcast on television in several Member States, and viewed over 80,000 times on YouTube. A Spanish TV clip<sup>37</sup>, "Life online is what YOU make of it", was also used for Safer Internet Day 2008 and translated/adapted for 24 countries across Europe.

There has been a positive move towards targeting awareness materials more specifically for different audiences, and broadly speaking the 2005 Eurobarometer survey found that awareness levels had improved, particularly as regards how to report illegal content: the 41% average awareness level of the EU15 countries in 2003 increased to 54% in 2005. More recent research is needed to provide a more current analysis of how effective awareness

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.klicksafe.de/common/presse.php?site=spot>

<sup>37</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/sip/si\\_day/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/si_day/index_en.htm)

actions under Safer Internet Plus have been. The Eurobarometer survey planned for the end of 2008 should provide useful data in this regard.

Nevertheless, overall it would appear that the Commission's approach of having a European awareness network with national nodes offers the flexibility needed to design and deliver relevant solutions, given the economic, social and cultural differences revealed by Eurobarometer. The public Annual Reports produced by most of the projects are a useful source of information as regards the impact of the Programme on a national level.

The work of the SIP-BENCH survey of technical tools will have a social impact in improving the effectiveness of software available to parents, increase public confidence in such tools and thereby help to reduce children's access to unwanted or harmful content.

The collaboration and dialogue with industry, notably mobile network operators, and the resulting Framework agreement will undoubtedly have an impact in helping to prevent children and young people from receiving or accessing harmful content via their mobile phones.

The impact of all elements of Safer Internet Plus is greatly increased by broad national support for and engagement with projects by sectors such as (but not limited to) government, law enforcement, child welfare, industry, academia and users. There is some concern among stakeholders that the range of sectors involved in some projects and in some countries is not sufficiently broad. Ironically this can be a particular danger in countries where issues of safer Internet are well recognised and solutions well established. The emphasis on creating multi-stakeholder advisory boards should present an opportunity to ensure that all relevant actors are involved on a national basis. These can then also fulfil a multiplier function for the messages and outcomes of the projects within their own constituencies.

### **Economic impact**

Economic impacts are perhaps less tangible. However, for the mobile and Internet industries the creation of a climate of confidence will encourage exploitation of the opportunities which new digital technologies offer to children and adults alike. The Impact Assessment also refers to the fact that the preventive protection of children helps to avoid costs in the health security and social / youth support systems which are caused by the treatment of psychological trauma. Direct economic benefits are likely to result from future actions against spam for a range of stakeholders, in terms of improved productivity.

A possible negative impact is the migration of illegal content to servers in third countries as a result of successful hotline activity and policy development within Europe. Since the Global Internet Trend report published by INHOPE in 2007 did not include the apparent source of illegal content, it is difficult to quantify the extent to which this is happening. It would be useful to have such data including in future analysis. Nevertheless, the broadening of the

INHOPE network to include hotlines from outside Europe and the current progress towards effective dialogue with Russia can both help to address this issue.

A meeting between Commission officials and representatives of the Cyber crime unit in Moscow in September 2007 was useful and participants met again in Luxembourg in December 2007 with the aim of bringing together law enforcement, government and Internet Service Providers for an exchange of information on the issue of online child abuse images. A range of topics was discussed, including practical means and methods for tackling the problem and tracing the victims, as well as how to enhance international co-operation. It is hoped that a follow-up meeting with a broader range of actors, including NGOs, can be arranged in Moscow in 2008 with the facilitation of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

### **Information sources**

The models and methods used within the various action lines should be constantly reviewed in order to enhance the impact of the Programme further. For example, as regards awareness, in the Eurobarometer 2005 survey 44% of parents expressed a wish for more information about how to protect their child from illegal and harmful content and contact. According to the respondents, this information should be provided by schools (36%), the Internet provider (31%) and the media (21%).

However, the OFCOM Media Literacy Audit<sup>38</sup> reveals that children and young people receive information about Internet safety from a range of sources but that for teenagers the peer group has the most influence on online attitudes and behaviour.

This underlines the need to involve young people themselves in the design of policies and solutions, and the importance of engaging them with the development and delivery of awareness messages. This is particularly pressing as the research<sup>39</sup> indicates that although young people know the dangers of contacting new people online they will still take risks and actively solicit contact with strangers, for example those who share their interests. The same research also highlights the fact that teenagers are both senders and receivers of potentially problematic content. For example, a substantial minority of older teenagers circulates pornography among themselves or those they meet online.

### **Visibility**

The visibility of the Programme in general and the individual projects in particular could be further enhanced, which in turn would increase the impact. Feedback from stakeholders indicates that the visibility of the Programme is

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<sup>38</sup> [www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media\\_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/children/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/children/).

<sup>39</sup> April 2005

higher in those countries where the issue of online safety had not previously been on the agenda, for example in some of the new Member States.

A recent review of the websites of Safer Internet Plus hotlines and awareness nodes highlighted the opportunity to give more general information, such as legal background and relevant articles, explanation of different types of content, information on the safer usage of the Internet and new technologies, possible threats and ways in which they can be prevented. In this way a more comprehensive repository of Safer Internet information could be provided and the value of the websites enhanced.

Overall, the impact of the Programme would be enhanced considerably by greater visibility, in terms of both online and offline presence and promotion. The Safer Internet Plus Programme website is a useful source of information for proposers, partners and other stakeholders. Web traffic statistics would be useful in analyzing the effectiveness of this medium, although some measure of the visibility of the Programme can be deduced from search engine results. A Google search for the phrase 'Safer Internet Plus' yields nearly 56,000 hits, of which the Commission's own sites make up the top 5 rankings, while a search for 'saferinternet.org' gives almost 22,000 results. Over 1,000 sites link to 'saferinternet.org'. The Programme therefore appears to have a healthy web presence. The Commission has improved its own Safer Internet Plus website to include safety tips as well as policy and procedure documents.

A recent review of integrated network project websites revealed that more or less clear identification that the project is co-funded by the Safer Internet plus Programme is given by all the hotlines and awareness nodes, although the exact format and wording varies. A link to the Programme is found on the websites of all except 3 hotlines and 3 awareness nodes. However, the 'branding' of the Programme varies considerably between project websites and indeed on offline materials – greater consistency in branding would assist in establishing the identify and credibility of Safer Internet Plus within different sectors, countries and regions.

### **Press and media**

There is scope for Safer Internet Plus to generate more press coverage for the Programme as a whole. While undoubtedly individual project partners attract media interest within their own national context (and there are over 150 press releases on the INSAFE website, most of them generated by individual nodes), it would appear from the list on the Commission website<sup>40</sup> that just 10 press releases have been issued directly during the four-year period. Given the considerable activity level and significant achievements of the Programme, this could be expected to be higher.

Commissioner Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission responsible for Information Society and Media is cited as having given 8 speeches on relevant issues during the lifetime of the Programme. This high-

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<sup>40</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/sip/comm\\_activities/pressrel/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/comm_activities/pressrel/index_en.htm)

level engagement is crucial in raising the visibility of Safer Internet Plus in particular and the broad issues of safer use of online technologies in general. However, it would be useful for the website to include speeches and presentations given by Programme officials, since this would provide a more realistic indication of the communication activities undertaken in support of the initiative.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

The sustainability of the Programme itself is robust. Providing that the European Commission continues to fund Safer Internet interventions, at what is relatively a very modest level compared with many other programmes, there are always new issues to be faced due to increasingly sophisticated technology and changing patterns of use.

Sustainability is more difficult to assess in terms of individual projects, which vary significantly in the level of other funding which they can attract. For some projects, sustainability may not even be an issue, since they are time-limited in their scope and relevance. For others, such as hotlines and awareness nodes, there will always be new material and new users.

Evaluations of previous programmes, as quoted in the Impact Assessment, show that there are a significant number of activities that would not have been undertaken at all without the intervention of the previous Community programmes. In other cases, activities would not have benefited from the exchange of best practice with other European countries, and therefore the added value at this level would be diminished. The 2006 evaluation report stated that if Commission funding ceased, a third of hotlines and awareness nodes would not be able to continue for lack of alternative funding. A similar situation exists today, not only in relation to the integrated networks but also to targeted projects and thematic networks, funded in some cases up to 100%.

There is a delicate balance to be struck between continuing to fund (in some cases at a very high level) projects which do in fact have the contacts and credibility in their own countries to find other income sources, and ensuring that projects which do not have the same capability to be self-sufficient.

There is also the question of whether the remit of certain projects creates a perceived need for sustainability and corresponding funding burden which goes beyond the original purpose, for example with the network co-ordinators, where care has to be taken that the primary aim remains one of facilitating and enabling their members to work more efficiently and effectively at the European level.

It is important continually to monitor the function of the networks to ensure that the model is still the most appropriate one. In particular, the requirement for hotlines, awareness nodes and helplines to form combined nodes at the national level in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency also raises the

question of whether the two networks should be required to combine in a single organisation to co-ordinate all activities across Europe.

The 12 month contract (rather than the requested 24 months) allocated to INHOPE in the 2007 Call was directly intended to promote synergy and enhance co-operation with INSAFE after the 2008 Call. Given the different approaches and strengths of INHOPE and INSAFE, there should be good potential for cooperation between the two networks.

In the latest call for proposals the level of funding available for non-profit organisations was increased from 50% to 75%. While this is undoubtedly useful in initiating and support activity at the start-up stage, it may not be the best way to promote sustainability in the long term. The Commission may wish to consider introducing a sliding scale for funding to encourage a gradual move towards independence where appropriate. However, the difficulties of such a system should not be under-estimated, for example the risk of actually creating disincentives for projects to find co-funding if the outcome is likely to be a reduction in Commission support. This is an area which needs further exploration.

### **COMPLEMENTARITY**

The Programme offers complementarity with a wide range of initiatives within and external to the European Commission, as well as with national initiatives within most Member States, particularly with regard to fighting illegal content, tackling the problem of spam, promoting media literacy and affirming children's rights.

### **National initiatives**

There is a clear emphasis among stakeholders on the importance of Safer Internet Plus as a catalyst for international and national involvement. Where there was no previous national engagement (be it government, industry or other organisations), it helped to put the issues on the agenda and bring stakeholders to the table. In countries where organisations had already started working on these issues, Safer Internet Plus helped to co-ordinate the approach and gave credibility to organisations that might otherwise have found it difficult to get the attention of national authorities and industry.

From an overall perspective it is obvious that the programme and its predecessors have been a success in terms of reaching the goals of the programmes as stated by both Parliament and Council in terms of augmenting national efforts and involving a broad range of stakeholders. That, however, does not mean that national cooperation - or international for that matter - is always flawless. A closer look at the situation in some countries might reveal competing organisations which should co-operate but don't, organisations which should have been involved but do not know about the programme, governments which take less interest than they should, industry and police who do not want to cooperate with each other or with NGOs, or indeed,

conversely, industry and police who co-operate too closely without consulting civil rights organisations or government.

In a way, it would be surprising if such issues did not arise with so many potential stakeholders in each Member State. Even with the considerable influence that the European Union has, it has neither the mandate nor the power to impose national cooperation. However, changes to the work programmes during the course of Safer Internet Plus have been specifically designed to contribute (further) to national cooperation, for instance by the creation of thematic networks (to bring on board organisations that otherwise have no interest in taking part directly), introducing combined nodes (bringing hotlines and awareness nodes closer together) and requiring national Advisory Boards.

As the measures are relatively recent, it is hard to assess the overall impact on national cooperation, but it can reasonably be expected that it will be extremely positive. For instance, while cooperation between hotlines and police is generally good, many national hotlines have struggled to get a formal approval from law enforcement for their work. The panel would expect police participation on the Advisory Board to facilitate the cooperation with police on a whole range of issues, including how a hotline should deal with illegal content.

As the national Advisory Boards have very significant potential for addressing and solving issues of cooperation nationally, further consideration of how they work in the countries where they are already established would enhance their effectiveness. Stakeholder feedback highlights two points:

- 1) Advisory Boards as such are indeed useful in promoting national cooperation
- 2) the function of Advisory Boards warrants further review in terms of the implementation, particularly the frequency of meetings, participation and mandate.

It is certainly important to ensure that membership of the Advisory Boards is kept at a relatively high level to keep their influence. If the frequency of the meetings and broad scope of topics result in delegation of attendance and responsibility to lower level participation, the potential impact may be diminished.

## **European-level initiatives**

### **Cyber Crime**

The 2007 Communication Towards a General Policy on the Fight Against Cyber Crime<sup>41</sup> has the objective of strengthening the fight against cyber crime at national, European and international level. Further development of a specific EU policy, in particular, has long been recognised as a priority by the Member States and the Commission. It is envisaged that the policy will

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<sup>41</sup> COM(2007) 267 final

eventually include improved operational law enforcement cooperation; better political cooperation and co-ordination between Member States; political and legal cooperation with third countries; awareness raising; training; research; a reinforced dialogue with industry and possible legislative action.

The Justice, Freedom and Security DG (JLS) has responsibility for internal security and criminal justice, including cyber crime. One unit is responsible for developing and implementing initiatives to prevent and combat cross-border and organised crime, bringing Member States and other stakeholders together. The website<sup>42</sup> stresses the need for cooperation and partnerships between the private and public sector as a way of tackling new types of crime such as cybercrime and child pornography.

The relevant current JLS funding programme is the framework programme on “Security and Safeguarding Liberties” which aims at ensuring an effective operational co-operation in the fight against crime and terrorism and strengthening their prevention. The framework programme consists of two financial instruments encompassing the following specific programmes: Prevention of and Fight against Crime; and Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and other Security related risks.

### **Protection of Minors**

The Commission’s Recommendation on Protection of minors and human dignity in audiovisual and information services (2006) builds on the 1998 Recommendation, the implementation of which was the subject of two evaluations during the period of the previous Safer Internet Action Plan programme. It states the intention to take a number of initiatives to promote the protection of minors and human dignity in audiovisual and online information services:

- introducing a European freephone number to provide Internet users with information on issues relating to the protection of minors and human dignity;
- possible support for the establishment of a generic second-level domain name reserved for monitored sites committed to respecting minors and their rights;
- support for the formation of networks by self-regulatory bodies and the exchanging of experience among them, with the aim of assessing the effectiveness of codes of conduct and approaches based on self-regulation.

### **Network security and spam**

A number of European Union instruments and initiatives address the problem of spam. The Commission adopted a Communication on Fighting spam, spyware and malicious software<sup>43</sup> which acknowledges the Safer Internet Plus

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<sup>42</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/justice\\_home/organisedcrime/dg\\_organisedcrime\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/justice_home/organisedcrime/dg_organisedcrime_en.htm)

<sup>43</sup> COM(2006)688 final

Programme as a complementary element of the EU's coherent approach to this issue.

Under the 6th RTD Framework Programme, the Commission has launched projects<sup>44</sup> to help stakeholders fight spam and other forms of malware. These projects range from general network monitoring and detection of attacks to the specific development of technologies to build filters to detect spam, phishing and malware.

“Dialogue, partnership and empowerment - the Communication on a Strategy for a Secure Information Society” was adopted by the Commission on 31 May 2006. It calls for a structured process of consultation and dialogue on network and information security to be established with relevant stakeholders, including public administrations, private sector and individual users, and ENISA, as appropriate. It mentions issues like spam and privacy, but does not focus on specific risks to children, nor does it<sup>45</sup> cover risks arising from access to content.

The Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development runs from 2007 until 2013 and includes information and communication technologies, although not specifically in the context of children.

ENISA (European Network and Information Security Agency)<sup>46</sup> is a centre of excellence for the European Union on network and information security. It deals with a range of issues, including spam, and published a position paper in October 2007 on Security Issues and Recommendations for Online Social Networks<sup>47</sup>. An evaluation of ENISA is currently under way.

### **Violence and victims**

The Daphne II programme<sup>48</sup> runs from 2004 until 2008 within the General Programme "Fundamental Rights and Justice" with a budget of 50 million Euros. It aims to support organisations that develop measures and actions to prevent or to combat all types of violence against children, young people and women and to protect the victims and groups at risk.

Some areas of the work being undertaken under Daphne II (and planned for Daphne III) can potentially complement the knowledge enhancement elements of Safer Internet Plus. These include the studies on violence against children and young people by their peers, attitudes of young people to violence, ways in which they can be involved in preventative, protection and/or victim support-related actions, and research about treatment programmes for perpetrators of violence in Europe.

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<sup>44</sup> [www.diademhttp://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/projects.htm#search](http://www.diademhttp://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/projects.htm#search)

<sup>45</sup> COM(2006)251

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.enisa.europa.eu/index.htm>

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.enisa.europa.eu/doc/pdf/deliverables/enisa\\_pp\\_social\\_networks.pdf](http://www.enisa.europa.eu/doc/pdf/deliverables/enisa_pp_social_networks.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/funding/2004\\_2007/daphne/funding\\_daphne\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/2004_2007/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm)

## **Convergence**

The i2010 High Level Group<sup>49</sup> paper on the implications of convergence identifies 2 areas which complement the Programme, namely a secure environment for European citizens and consumers, and the need to protect minors and human dignity in a converging environment. The paper notes that “protection of minors in the digital environment is a real concern, since minors are heavy and active users of online content and services. There are challenges to face regarding unwanted access to unsuitable, extreme, adult or harmful content and to risky communications.”

“One of the main challenges in term of protection of minors and of human dignity is the enforcement and extra-territoriality: if we are not able to enforce the EU regulation for content coming from outside the EU then we should work on alternative or complementary solutions on the model of the Safer Internet action plan. Another challenge is for the regulatory framework to protect minors and consumers without hindering the development of emerging technologies or services.”

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2007<sup>50</sup> requires Member States are required to ensure that audiovisual commercial communications provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction comply with the following requirement<sup>51</sup>:

(g) audiovisual commercial communications shall not cause physical or moral detriment to minors. Therefore they shall not directly exhort minors to buy or hire a product or service by exploiting their inexperience or credulity, directly encourage them to persuade their parents or others to purchase the goods or services being advertised, exploit the special trust minors place in parents, teachers or other persons, or unreasonably show minors in dangerous situations.

In addition, Article 3h requires that Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that on-demand audiovisual media services provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction which might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors are only made available in such a way that ensures that minors will not normally hear or see such on-demand audiovisual media services. Under Article 22 providers are required to meet certain requirements specific to television broadcasting in order to ensure the protection of minors.

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<sup>49</sup> The Challenges of Convergence

<sup>50</sup> Directive 2007/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007 amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC

<sup>51</sup> Article 3e

## **Video games**

The Commission issued a Communication on the protection of consumers, in particular minors, in respect of the use of video games<sup>52</sup> in April 2008. This acknowledges that “the Internet offers new forms of media consumption and new opportunities for cultural diversity, including video games, but it can also be a means for spreading illegal and, particularly for minors, harmful content. This creates specific challenges in terms of protecting young people.” It commends the work of PEGI in helping parents understand the risk for potential and harm in this environment, and affirms the Commission’s support for developing a co-regulatory pan-European age rating system.

## **Media Literacy**

The Communication on a European Approach to Media Literacy in the digital environment<sup>53</sup> cites the Safer Internet Plus Programme as aiming to empower parents, teachers and children with Internet safety tools. In the rapidly evolving information society, media literacy skills are needed for awareness and inclusion in relation to technological, economic and cultural innovations

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2007 defines media literacy as referring to skills, knowledge and understanding that all consumers to use media effectively and safely. It also stipulates certain requirements to protect children and young people.

A study on "Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe" was carried out for the Commission by the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona in the second half of 2007<sup>54</sup>. The study covered the 27 Member States of the European Union and the EEA Member States. The broad theme of the report was a shift from a focus on protection to a focus on action among users, with shared responsibilities between ‘emissary and receptor’, with the objective of the empowerment, autonomy and participation of citizens. This mirrors the increasing trend in Safer Internet initiatives towards the empowerment of children and young people in managing their own experience of online opportunities and risks.

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and online information services industry (2) already contains a series of possible measures for promoting media literacy such as, for example, continuing education of teachers and trainers, specific Internet training aimed at children from a very early age, including sessions open to parents, or organisation of national campaigns aimed at citizens, involving all communications media, to provide information on using the Internet responsibly.

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<sup>52</sup> COM(2008) 207 final

<sup>53</sup> COM 2007 833 FINAL

<sup>54</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media\\_literacy/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/studies/index_en.htm)

## **Rights of the child**

A number of European instruments affirm the rights of children: underpinning most of these is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>55</sup>, which addresses a number of issues relevant to Safer Internet Plus, such as the right to protection, freedom of expression and consultation. The same basic principles are echoed in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights<sup>56</sup>. Most relevant to the Safer Internet Plus Programme is the paragraph stating that “Children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. 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.”

The Commission identified children's rights as one of its main priorities in its Communication on Strategic Objectives 2005-2009<sup>57</sup>: “A particular priority must be effective protection of the rights of children, both against economic exploitation and all forms of abuse, with the Union acting as a beacon to the rest of the world”. The Commission Communication Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child<sup>58</sup> goes further in committing the European Union to ensuring that all internal and external EU policies respect children's rights in accordance with the principles of EU law, and that they are fully compatible with the principles and provisions of the UNCRC and other international instruments (so-called ‘mainstreaming’).

The Commission also commits to promoting and strengthening networking and children’s representation in the EU and globally, and it will gradually and formally include them in all consultations and actions related to their rights and needs (in accordance with Article 12 of UNCRC).

## **Privacy**

The Council of Europe Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on Protecting the Dignity, Security and Privacy of Children on the Internet<sup>59</sup> stresses the importance of children’s privacy on the Internet, and states that “other than in the context of law enforcement, there should be no lasting or permanently accessible record of the content created by children on the Internet which challenges their dignity, security and privacy or otherwise renders them vulnerable now or at a later stage in their lives.” Member States should explore the feasibility of removing or deleting such content, including its traces (logs, records and processing), within a reasonably short period of time.

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

<sup>56</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default_en.htm)

<sup>57</sup> Strategic objectives 2005-2009. Europe 2010: A Partnership for European Renewal, Prosperity, Solidarity and Security - COM(2005) 12, 26.1.2005

<sup>58</sup> Brussels, 4.7.2006 COM(2006) 367 final

<sup>59</sup> Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies

Most recently, the European Data Protection Supervisor has issued an Opinion<sup>60</sup> on the proposed 2009-2013 Programme, in which he supports the objective of the proposal but highlights the importance of including data protection authorities as interlocutors in the process of 'ensuring public awareness about online safety, as well as the need to protect the privacy of children themselves and other Internet users.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it is clear from the above that the Safer Internet Plus Programme tackles issues common to a number of actions which have been taken elsewhere in the Commission. The value and unique contribution of the Programme are acknowledged explicitly by several of those initiatives. The challenge is to ensure that Safer Internet interventions retain their 'unique selling point' within the broader arena, and ensure that actions continue to complement rather than duplicate activity elsewhere.

## **CONCLUSION**

The technological, social and economic landscape within Europe has developed significantly during the period of the Safer Internet Plus Programme. The European Union has been integrating the largest single influx of new Member States in its history, with all the various implications which such a major expansion brings about. Levels of broadband and mobile phone penetration have increased exponentially across Europe, and convergence of platforms has been taking place at a rapid pace. With the advent of so-called Web 2.0 the role of all Internet users – including children and young people – has become radically more interactive.

The Programme has generally made good progress towards addressing these various developments, largely through the flexibility offered by an annual work programme and call for proposals. The principles of continuity on the one hand and enhancement on the other have largely been embodied, though building on the successes of previous programmes, such as hotlines and awareness actions, while at the same time enhancing these activities through, for example, reinforcing the relationship between hotlines and law enforcement, and underpinning all the activities of the Programme with knowledge enhancement projects.

Successful work has been undertaken in the area of fostering dialogue within and between different sectors, and in encouraging the mobile phone industry in its efforts to adopt effective self-regulatory mechanisms. There have been some notable achievements in a number of different Safer Internet Plus actions.

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<sup>60</sup> Opinion of the European Data Protection Supervisor on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual Community programme on protecting children using the Internet and other communication technologies (June 2008)

The extent to which the Programme has implemented the recommendations<sup>61</sup> of the final evaluation of the Safer Internet Action Plan 2003-4 is generally good, although there is scope for further progress in some key areas. Considerable progress has been made in achieving most of the recommendations, particularly with regard to tailoring awareness activities to different target groups, and involving young people themselves in identifying issues and designing solutions. The Commission has initiated and supported discussion on age verification, the establishment of a Europe-wide list of illegal content and the implications of convergence.

It is clear that the Programme has contributed to the better protection of children on the Internet and in the broader digital environment, for example by increasing the quality, the breadth and the geographical scope of the various activities such as the hotline and awareness networks, and by adding significantly to the body of knowledge about use of the Internet and related technologies by children on the one hand, and offenders on the other. These successes have been achieved at relatively modest cost to the European taxpayer.

It is important that the work of the Programme should be continued and enhanced into a further phase, responding again to the changes in the technological landscape which will inevitably occur in such a fast-moving environment.

Some of the recommendations from the final evaluation of SIAP 2003 to 2004 need to be addressed again during the next phase of intervention. There is still more to be done in the area of assessing the effectiveness of filtering and promoting the use of software tools among parents and schools. Further dialogue is needed to ensure that safer Internet education is embedded within primary and secondary school curricula across Europe. There is still a need to document and codify some of the procedural issues between hotlines and law enforcement, particularly as regards communication about the outcomes of reports. Tangible progress towards agreeing common self-regulatory measures with the Internet Service Provider industry has not materialised – it is to be hoped that the example of the mobile network operators can be used as a model for future success in this area. Perhaps most importantly, the visibility of hotlines is still relatively very low, and it is crucial to address this in order to ensure that they are genuinely an effective tool on a national and international level.

Children and young people are rightly no longer perceived by industry, educators or government as largely passive consumers or victims of online content or activity. They have become actors in their own right on the digital stage. They have rights – for example to express themselves freely through the creation of content, to be consulted on decisions and actions which affect them, to have their privacy respected, and to be afforded protection from harm. At the same time children and young people share the same responsibilities as other Internet users – to act in such a way online as to

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<sup>61</sup> See Appendix 5

uphold other people's rights, including those of their own peer group. The follow-up programme needs to build on the recent focus within Safer Internet Plus on these issues, tackling peer issues such as cyber-bullying, misuse of digital images, and risky behaviours.

There is also a need to build further on the work which has been done in establishing dialogue and cooperation with third countries. Significant progress has been made in this area, as evidenced by the international membership of both INHOPE and INSAFE, the involvement of various countries outside Europe in Safer Internet Day activities, and the discussions with Russia.

In addition to the undoubted achievements and impact of Safer Internet Plus within Europe, the European Union is seen as a model of good practice internationally in the area of online safety, and there is considerable scope to exercise this influence even more extensively in the course of future programmes. In this way the Commission can seek to ensure that Safer Internet initiatives can continue creating a safer online world for Europe's children and beyond.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The rights and privacy of children, young people and other legitimate Internet users should be protected and promoted within all activities of the Programme. The involvement of young people themselves in discussion, design and delivery of solutions could be further intensified.
2. Continued efforts could be made to achieve active support and involvement for the Programme and individual projects on a national level from all relevant sectors. This should be reflected in the creation of multi-stakeholder networks at the European level in order to bring together different constituencies.
3. Co-operation and collaboration with third countries, both within and outside Europe, on a policy and operational level should be given a high priority, particularly with regard to identifying, tracing and eradicating illegal child abuse images.
4. Enhanced dialogue and cooperation should be established among the various EU initiatives with an intersection of interests or the potential for collaboration with the Safer Internet Plus Programme in order to identify new areas of synergy and innovation and to improve the effectiveness of the individual programmes.
5. Future solutions should continue to take into account national, cultural, linguistic and socio-demographic factors, particularly for new, candidate

and accession countries, to ensure that interventions remain relevant and valid.

6. The technical knowledge base of the Programme should be further strengthened in order to retain a high level of current knowledge and credibility.
7. The Programme would probably benefit from a more consistent 'brand' with quality control measures in place for internal and partner websites and other resources. More proactive use could be made of the press and media across Europe.
8. Further knowledge enhancement activity could be conducted in two key areas: problematic, risky and criminal online behaviours on the part of children and young people themselves; the underlying reasons for the trends identified by INHOPE in respect of illegal content.
9. The roles of the two networks (INHOPE and INSAFE) should be revisited to ensure they offer the most appropriate mechanism for co-ordinating the work of national nodes. Consideration should be given to the question of whether the two networks should be merged to reflect the emphasis on combined hotline, awareness and helpline activity and to deal adequately with the planned extension of the scope of the programme to include cyber-bullying and grooming.
10. A high priority should be given to raising the visibility of hotlines, which in some countries still suffer from low levels of public awareness. The visibility of helplines also needs attention in order to provide European citizens with appropriate contact points, and to complement the work of the hotlines by dealing with issues of a broader nature.
11. The Programme could engage more actively with industry. Priority should be given to establishing a common code of practice among Internet Service Providers throughout Europe, along the lines of the Framework Agreement signed by mobile network operators.

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**Appendix 1**  
**List of funded projects**

<b>SAFER INTERNET PLUS – PROJECT LIST</b>				
<b>Country</b>	<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>A. OPEN PROJECTS</b>				
Austria	Saferinternet.at	Awareness and Helpline	01/01/2007 - 31/12/2008	€ 223.349
Belgium	CoBeNo	Hotline and Awareness	01/10/2006 - 30/09/2008	€ 480.263
Bulgaria	SAFE-NET BG	Hotline	01/08/2005 - 31/07/2008	€ 119.810
Cyprus	SafenetCY	Hotline	01/03/2007 - 31/08/2008	€ 150.823
Cyprus	CyberEthics	Awareness	01/09/2006 - 31/08/2008	€ 146,275
Czech Republic	CZESICON	Awareness, Helpline and Hotline	01/01/2007 - 31/12/2008	€ 360.756
Denmark	ANDK 2	Awareness and Helpline	01/09/2006 - 31/08/2008	€ 185,877
Denmark	Red Barnet Hotline 2	Hotline	01/09/2006 - 31/08/2008	€ 181.988
Finland	FIA	Awareness, Helpline and Hotline	01/08/2007 - 01/09/2008	€ 310.000
Germany	Klicksafe.de	Awareness	01/11/2006 - 31/10/2008	€ 977.549
Germany	IBSDE	Hotline	01/03/2006 - 31/08/2008	€ 419.499
Greece	SafeNetHomePlus	Awareness	01/01/2007 - 31/12/2008	€ 308,844
Greece	Safeline 2	Hotline	01/01/2007 - 31/12/2008	€ 174.245
Iceland	SAFT	Awareness and Helpline	01/10/2006 - 31/08/2008	€ 250,000
Iceland	Barnaheill Stopline	Hotline	01/09/2006 - 31/08/2008	€ 188,000
Ireland	WIISAN	Awareness and Helpline	01/10/2006 - 30/09/2008	€ 354.804
Italy	EAST	Hotline and Awareness	01/01/2007 - 31/12/2008	€ 425.731
Latvia	Net-Safe	Awareness	01/09/2006 - 31/08/2008	€ 108,920

Latvia	Hotline Latvia	Hotline	01/07/2007 - 31/08/2008	€ 64.500
Lithuania	SAFER INTERNET LT	Hotline and Awareness	01/04/2007 - 31/03/2009	€ 149,529
Luxembourg	LUSI	Awareness and Helpline	01/11/2006 - 31/10/2008	€ 240,000
Luxembourg	LISA Hotline Alert	Hotline	01/11/2007 - 31/10/2008	€ 82,620
Netherlands	NaNSoS2	Awareness	01/12/2006 - 30/11/2008	€ 322.501
Norway	NONOplus	Awareness	01/10/2006 - 30/09/2008	€ 250,000
Poland	Saferinternet.pl	Awareness, Helpline and Hotline	01/10/2006 - 30/09/2008	€ 477.156
Portugal	PSI	Hotline and Awareness	01/01/2007 - 30/06/2009	€ 350.324
Slovakia	ANSR	Awareness and Helpline	01/08/2007 - 30/04/2009	€ 251,000
Slovenia	SAFE-SI 2	Awareness	01/03/2007 - 31/08/2008	€ 180,460
Slovenia	Spletno Oko	Hotline	01/09/2006 - 31/08/2008	€ 86.434
Sweden	Answer II	Awareness and Helpline	01/02/2007 - 31/01/2009	€ 319,345
United Kingdom	EMPOWER	Awareness	01/07/2007 - 30/06/2009	€ 958,700
	INHOPE 4	Hotline Network Co-ordinator	01/09/2006 - 31/10/2008	€ 995.000
	INSAFE plus	Awareness Network Co-ordinator	01/10/2006 - 30/09/2008	€ 768.566
	QUATRO Plus	Targeted Project	01/10/2007 - 30/09/2009	€ 435,148
	MAPAP	Targeted Project	01/10/2007 - 30/09/2009	€ 450,000
	EUKidsOnline	Thematic Network	26/06/2006 - 25/06/2009	€ 498.342
	YPRT	Thematic Network	01/11/2006 - 30/04/2009	€ 379.500
<b>B. COMPLETED PROJECTS</b>				
Austria	STOPLINE	Hotline	01/03/2006 - 29/02/2008	€ 126.578
Finland	Northern Hotline - Nettivihje	Hotline	01/03/2006 - 29/02/2008	€ 143,000
France	AFA PdC	Hotline	01/03/2006 -	€ 204,435

			29/02/2008	
Germany	Jugendschutz	Hotline	01/03/2006 - 29/02/2008	€ 186.624
Ireland	ISPAAI www.hotline.ie	Hotline	01/03/2006 - 29/02/2008	€ 198.824
Malta	Supportline 179	Hotline and Awareness	01/01/2006 - 29/02/2008	€ 134.012
Netherlands	Meldpunt	Hotline	01/03/2006 - 29/02/2008	€ 194.825
Spain	Protegeles 3	Hotline	01/03/2006 - 29/02/2008	€ 196.246
Spain	Safenet II	Awareness	01/11/2006 - 29/02/2008	€ 250,000
United Kingdom	IWF	Hotline	01/04/2006 - 31/03/2008	€ 650,000
	PEGI Online	Targeted Project	01/09/2005 - 31/08/2007	€ 159,877
<b>C. PROJECTS UNDER NEGOTIATION OR WITH RECENTLY CONCLUDED GRANT AGREEMENTS</b>				
Austria	SI Austria	Combined node (Hotline, Awareness and Helpline)	01/03/2008 31 months	€ 635,000
Bulgaria	SAFE NET BG	Combined	01/03/2008 24 months	€ 350,000
Germany	SING-G	Combined	30 months	€ 2,000,000
Denmark	ANDK3	Awareness node	01/09/2008 12 months	€ 160,000
Denmark	Red Barnet Hotline 3	Hotline	01/09/2008 12 months	€ 140,000
France	ISC 2008-2010	Awareness and Helpline	01/04/2008 12 months	€ 400,000
France	AFA Point de Contact	Hotline	01/04/2008 18 months	€ 180,000
Greece	Saferinternet.gr and Safeline 3	Combined	01/03/2008 24 months	€ 670,000
Ireland	SII	Combined	01/03/2008 24 months	€ 710,000
Italy	EAST 2	Combined	01/04/2008 24 months	€ 700,000
Luxembourg	LuSI	Combined	01/03/2008 24 months	€ 400,000
Netherlands	NaNDB	Awareness node	01/03/2008 12 months	€ 185,000
Poland	PSICoN	Combined	01/03/2008 24 months	€ 715,000

Romania	SIGUR.INFO	Combined	01/03/2008 24 months	€ 420,000
Slovenia	SIP-SI	Combined	01/03/2008 24 months	€ 450,000
Spain	PROTEGELES 4	Combined	01/03/2008 24 months	€ 720,000
Sweden	ANSWER 3	Awareness and Helpline	01/02/2009 23 months	€ 465,000
United Kingdom	IWFSIP2008HL01	Hotline	01/04/2008 15 months	€ 450,000
	INHOPE V	Hotline Network Co- ordinator	01/11/2008 12 months	€ 700,000
	CIRCAMP	Thematic network	24 months	€ 550,000
	CHILD ONLINE	Thematic network	24 months	€ 300,000
	I-DASH	Targeted project	01/07/2008	€ 800,000
<b>D. PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING UNDER 2008 CALL</b>				
Belgium	BINSI	Awareness and Hotline	24 months	€ 600,000
Cyprus	CyberEthicsGII	Combined	24 months	€ 420,000
Czech Republic	Saferinternet.CZ	Combined	24 months	€ 545,000
Denmark	SICNDK	Combined	12 months	€ 350,000
Finland	FIAS	Combined	24 months	€ 675,000
France	ISC-PDC France	Combined	18 months	€ 1,050,000
Hungary	SaferInternetHU	Combined	24 months	€ 450,000
Iceland	SAFT	Awareness and Helpline	24 months	€ 350,000
Latvia	Net-Safe Latvia	Combined	24 months	€ 400,000
Lithuania	Safer Internet LT	Awareness and Hotline	21 months	€ 160,000
Netherlands	NaNDB and Meldpunt	Awareness and Hotline	24 months	€ 525,000
Norway	NONOsafe	Awareness node	24 months	€ 400,000
Portugal	PSIplus	Awareness and Hotline	18 months	€ 400,000

Slovakia	SLOVCON	Combined	20 months	€ 375,000
United Kingdom	UKSIP	Combined	18 months	€ 1,750,000
	INHOPE	Hotline Network Co- ordinator	12 months	€ 600,000
	INSAFE 2.0	Awareness Network Co- ordinator	24 months	€ 1,200,000
	FIVES	Targeted Project		€ 550,000
	EU Kids Online	Knowledge enhancement	24 months	€2,500,000
	POG	Knowledge enhancement	36 months	€ 425,000

**Appendix 2**  
**Safer Internet Plus funding by action line**

<b>Action line</b>	<b>Exp.2005</b>	<b>%2005</b>	<b>Exp.2006</b>	<b>%2006</b>	<b>Exp.2007</b>	<b>%2007</b>	<b>Est. Exp.2008*</b>	<b>Est. %2008*</b>	<b>Est. Exp.SIP*</b>	<b>Est. %SIP*</b>
<b>Fighting against illegal content</b>	4,545,745	40%	739,139	17%	5,598,250	46%	4,107,500	27%	<b>14,990,634</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Tackling unwanted and harmful content</b>	379,500	3%	885,148	20%	0	0%	0	0%	<b>1,264,648</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Promoting a safer environment</b>	0	0%	0	0%	240,000	2%	2,975,000	20%	<b>3,215,000</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Awareness and stakeholder co-operation</b>	6,343,156	56%	2,733,644	63%	6,261,750	52%	8,132,500	53%	<b>23,471,050</b>	<b>55%</b>

\* Based on evaluation results and implementation plan not yet approved

### Appendix 3 Country statistics

Country	€ FUNDING	M€ Funding	% FUNDING	POPULATION	% EU POP	INTERNET Internet	BROADBAND	€ /	cents/capita
Austria	846,000	0.85	<b>2.1 %</b>	8,300,000	1.7 %	60%	46%	0.10	10.19
Belgium	1,112,000	1.11	<b>2.7 %</b>	10,700,000	2.1 %	60%	56%	0.10	10.39
Bulgaria	350,000	0.35	<b>0.9 %</b>	7,600,000	1.5 %	19%	15%	0.05	4.61
Cyprus	717,000	0.72	<b>1.7 %</b>	800,000	0.2 %	39%	20%	0.90	89.63
Czech Republic	833,000	0.83	<b>2.0 %</b>	10,400,000	2.1 %	35%	28%	0.08	8.01
Denmark	1,018,000	1.02	<b>2.5 %</b>	5,500,000	1.1 %	78%	70%	0.19	18.51
Estonia	0	0.00	<b>0.0 %</b>	1,300,000	0.3 %	53%	48%	0.00	0.00
Finland	1,128,000	1.13	<b>2.7 %</b>	5,300,000	1.1 %	69%	60%	0.21	21.28
France	1,834,000	1.83	<b>4.5 %</b>	63,700,000	12.7 %	49%	43%	0.03	2.88
Germany	3,587,000	3.59	<b>8.7 %</b>	82,200,000	16.4 %	71%	50%	0.04	4.36
Greece	1,191,000	1.19	<b>2.9 %</b>	11,200,000	2.2 %	25%	7%	0.11	10.63
Hungary	450,000	0.45	<b>1.1 %</b>	10,000,000	2.0 %	38%	33%	0.05	4.50
Iceland	788,000	0.79	<b>1.9 %</b>	300,000	0.1 %	84%	76%	2.63	262.67
Ireland	1,307,000	1.31	<b>3.2 %</b>	4,400,000	0.9 %	57%	31%	0.30	29.70
Italy	1,126,000	1.13	<b>2.7 %</b>	59,600,000	11.9 %	43%	25%	0.02	1.89
Latvia	602,000	0.60	<b>1.5 %</b>	2,300,000	0.5 %	51%	32%	0.26	26.17
Lithuania	310,000	0.31	<b>0.8 %</b>	3,400,000	0.7 %	44%	34%	0.09	9.12
Luxembourg	765,000	0.77	<b>1.9 %</b>	500,000	0.1 %	75%	58%	1.53	153.00
Malta	90,000	0.09	<b>0.2 %</b>	400,000	0.1 %	32%	17%	0.23	22.50
Netherlands	1,295,000	1.30	<b>3.2 %</b>	16,400,000	3.3 %	83%	74%	0.08	7.90
Norway	650,000	0.65	<b>1.6 %</b>	4,700,000	0.9 %	78%	67%	0.14	13.83
Poland	1,192,000	1.19	<b>2.9 %</b>	38,100,000	7.6 %	41%	30%	0.03	3.13

Portugal	750,000	0.75	<b>1.8 %</b>	10,600,000	2.1 %	40%	30%	0.07	7.08
Romania	420,000	0.42	<b>1.0 %</b>	21,500,000	4.3 %	22%	8%	0.02	1.95
Slovakia	626,000	0.63	<b>1.5 %</b>	5,400,000	1.1 %	46%	27%	0.12	11.59
Slovenia	651,000	0.65	<b>1.6 %</b>	2,000,000	0.4 %	58%	44%	0.33	32.55
Spain	1,166,000	1.17	<b>2.8 %</b>	45,300,000	9.0 %	45%	39%	0.03	2.57
Sweden	1,334,000	1.33	<b>3.2 %</b>	9,200,000	1.8 %	79%	67%	0.15	14.50
United Kingdom	4,245,000	4.25	<b>10.3 %</b>	61,200,000	12.2 %	67%	57%	0.07	6.94
<b>Pan European*</b>	10,715,000	10.72	<b>26.1 %</b>						
<b>TOTAL</b>	41,098,000	41.10	<b>100.0 %</b>	502,300,000	100%				
<b>*Pan European projects</b>									
<i>INHOPE</i>	2,445,000	2.45	<b>5.9 %</b>						
<i>INSAFE</i>	1,969,000	1.97	<b>4.8 %</b>						
<i>YPRT</i>	380,000	0.38	<b>0.9 %</b>						
<i>EU Kids Online</i>	2,998,000	3.00	<b>7.3 %</b>						
<i>MAPAP</i>	500,000	0.50	<b>1.2 %</b>						
<i>QUATRO PLUS</i>	435,000	0.44	<b>1.1 %</b>						
<i>SPEER</i>	338,000	0.34	<b>0.8 %</b>						
<i>I-DASH</i>	800,000	0.80	<b>1.9 %</b>						
<i>Circamp</i>	550,000	0.55	<b>1.3 %</b>						
<i>Child Online</i>	300,000	0.30	<b>0.7 %</b>						
<i>Total</i>	10,715,000	10.72	26.1 %						

## **Appendix 4**

### **Indicative questions for the evaluation of Safer Internet Plus**

***What are current developments in nature and size of the problem areas that the Safer Internet Plus Programme was set up to address? Have the problems evolved, have circumstances, technology, social or economic factors changed since the initiation and last evaluations of the Programme?***

***Are the focal activities and the target areas the most relevant or still relevant to achieve the Programme's overall aim? Are the current objectives relevant for the future?***

***To what extent are the objectives relevant to the industry, Internet users, parents, teachers and children? Has there been an added value for all these target groups?***

***Are inputs in line with the objectives and tasks assigned to the Programme? ie cost effectiveness***

***How effectively have Safer Internet Plus Programme inputs been converted into the various programme outputs and results? Could you identify other activities that could achieve results more efficiently?***

***How have the results of the Programme contributed to the better protection of children on the Internet and in the broader digital environment? Could you identify other activities that could achieve objectives more effectively? What are the main obstacles to and opportunities for enhanced programme effectiveness?***

***Did the activities have sustainable impacts? To what extent would positive changes induced by Safer Internet Plus Programme have happened without any EU intervention?***

***How does the Programme support and complement EU legislative instruments?***

***Can any lessons be drawn from this assessment which can be used in the implementation of the follow-up programme? (E.g. do funding conditions need to be changed for instance with regard to own contributions, size of the projects, participation requirements etc.) Is there a need for specific indicators for improved follow-on evaluation?***

***How has the Programme influenced other activities outside Europe?***

## Appendix 5

### Recommendations from the final evaluation of Safer Internet 2003 – 2004

#### **Recommendation 1: Increase the visibility of hotlines.**

- *Promote greater awareness of hotlines among end users and the media.*

#### **Recommendation 2: Improve the cooperation between hotlines and other stakeholders in particular the police and ISPs.**

- *Encourage the harmonisation of procedures between hotlines and the police across Europe.*
- *Produce a manual explaining procedures for information exchange and guidelines on best practices, which clearly define policies, ethics and procedures for people involved in this work.*
- *Co-ordinate the development of a European black list of illegal content and promote its wide implementation by ISPs.*

#### **Recommendation 3: Awareness-raising should focus on specific target groups and improve outreach**

- *Require awareness nodes to pursue tailored strategies to address children, parents or teachers.*
- *Facilitate discussion among national administrations (e.g. education ministries) to examine how safer use of the Internet can be brought into the schools (training teachers, curricula, setting up youth councils as self-regulatory bodies at schools).*
- *Promote more active involvement by the media in awareness campaigns.*
- *Devote a higher proportion of the programme budget to awareness-raising.*

#### **Recommendation 4: Involve children and young people in identifying problems and designing solutions**

- *Obtain children's feedback and engage them in designing appropriate awareness-raising messages and solutions.*

#### **Recommendation 5: Increase end user awareness of the options available for filtering harmful content**

- *Encourage awareness nodes to promote awareness of filtering tools in particular among parents and schools.*
- *Assess the effectiveness of different filtering solutions.*

#### **Recommendation 6: Encourage industry self-regulatory solutions at the European level**

- *Promote the adoption of age verification systems.*
- *Foster the exchange of best practices, inter alia, of codes of conduct, content labelling and rating systems.*

#### **Recommendation 7: Map possibilities for future technological developments and user options**

- *Analyse the implication of convergent services and new modes of communication on the safety of children and on user behaviour and disseminate results.*

## **Appendix 6**

### **Survey methodology**

Although a user survey was not originally envisaged, the expert panel decided that speaking to a range of people who knew the programme would be useful to get a first hand idea of opinions. The panel agreed on a standardised questionnaire and spoke to a cross section of stakeholders, including contractors under all the different action lines, as well as proposal evaluators and organisations that did *not* have a contract under the programme. In total 12 people provided interviews lasting generally between one and two hours each.

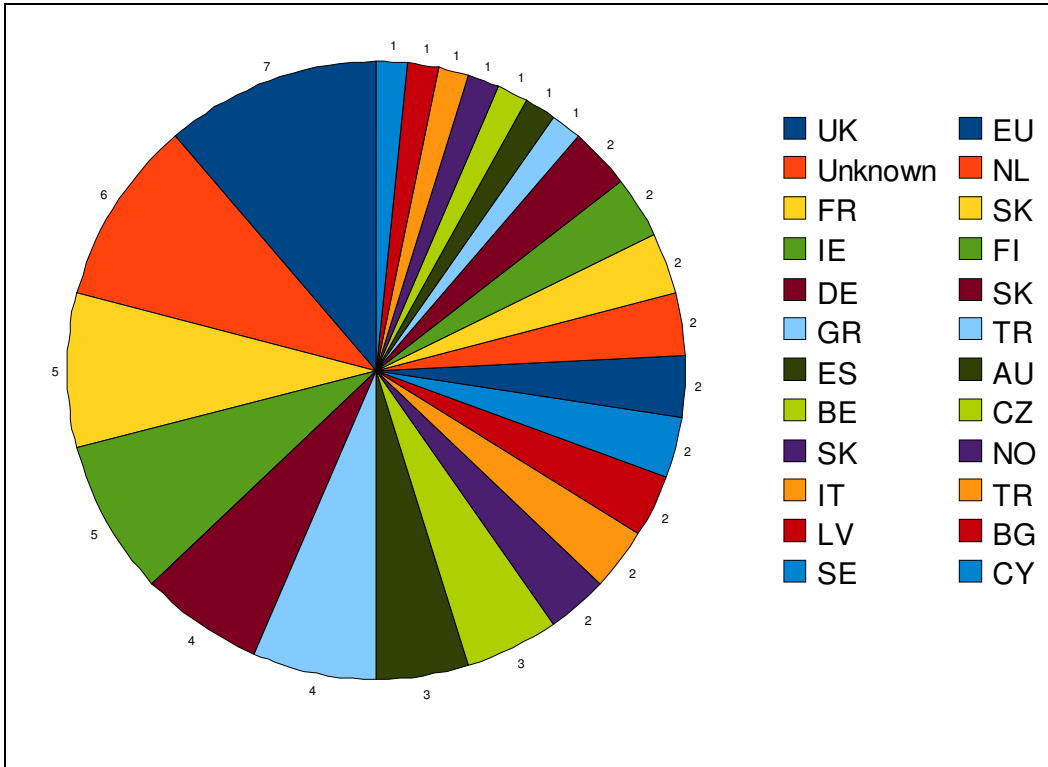
The interviews were conducted by phone or face to face if the interviewer and interviewee met for other reasons. In theory, the phone interviews were intended to take about 30 minutes, in practice they very often took much longer, in some cases as long as two hours. Questions 4-6 were skipped if not relevant as they deal primarily with proposal application and management (it is worth mentioning, however, that even external stakeholders often commented on the full range of questions).

In addition, the panel also created an online form with two free text questions - strengths and weaknesses of the programme. An email was sent to the entire programme mailing list of some 1000 email addresses encouraging the recipient to go to a website outside the Commission and submit their comments. Even if it was not specifically encouraged, the form allowed for anonymous comments.

The purpose of the exercise was to let everyone have their say, to get as much different feedback as was possible in the limited time available and also to hear any views not obvious to the panel. It was especially important to the panel to get the views of unsuccessful applicants and others who were not directly funded by the programme.

61 people filled in the questionnaire. About half of the responses came from contractors, the rest from different NGOs, government bodies, researchers, industry organisations and others. Almost all of Europe was represented, and there were also responses from outside Europe. The panel considered the online questionnaire very useful to provide a backdrop for the evaluation, and a very cost efficient way of surveying stakeholder opinions.

The charts below show the distribution of responses to the online questionnaire. Please note that it is an approximate breakdown, which in a few cases is based on assumptions based on IP address. A couple of obvious abuse attempts of the form have been removed. Interestingly, the applicants take a positive view of the programme even if they have been unsuccessful in their efforts to get funding.



**Survey respondents by country**

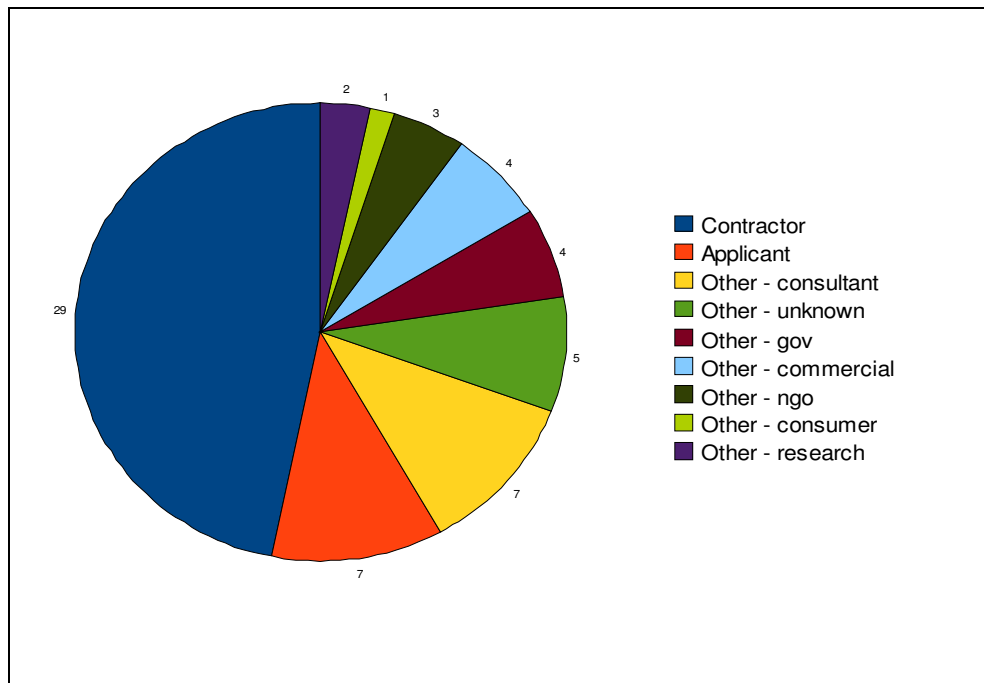
Both surveys promised anonymity to the respondents in order to prompt candid answers. For that reason it is also difficult to present verbatim responses as the context makes it very clear who makes the statement. This became especially clear when many of the interviewees described their national situation in great detail. This is why all in-depth interviews are filtered through the evaluators, and we hope we have done them justice in conveying their points of view in this report.

Neither of the two surveys should, of course, be considered as a scientifically valid analysis of the programme. However, they very much served the purpose of providing the panel with an overview of opinions. Several caveats are in order though:

1. The phone interview and online form only reached people known to the programme and vice versa.
  - The information says nothing about how well the programme is known by the general public. That would have to be measured by Eurobarometer and other surveys.
  - The Safer Internet mailing list is open to anyone who signs up, but we know little about who they are. It is however likely that the list has good coverage among people working with these issues in Europe.

2. The online survey, made no attempts at targeting a representative groups, and no (detailed) analysis have been made of the respondents to see whether certain groups are over-represented.
  - It could, for instance, be that primarily the more positively inclined chose to respond to the survey.
  - This is to some extent compensated through the detailed interviews which aimed at covering all stakeholder groups.
  
3. The online survey only asked for short replies with no second priority for strengths and weaknesses. In retrospect, it would have been interesting to ask also for second priorities as it might have given a fuller picture of respondents' views. For instance, very many mentioned knowledge sharing as the main strength. It is likely that many of those who chose a different strength to emphasise, might have mentioned this as their second strength. Also, as someone pointed out, not being prompted for several replies, some are likely to have skipped the obvious: that national action may for instance have prevented incidents of child abuse.
  
4. Some 50% of the respondents in the online questionnaire and all but a few of the in-depth interviewees are in some way receiving funding from the programme.

However, what the surveys did provide was valuable input for the evaluators in terms of issues worth examining. The panel is very grateful to everyone who took the time to respond, online, by phone or face-to-face, and their detailed and insightful comments.



Survey respondents by sector

**Appendix 7**  
**Survey and questionnaire text**

**EVALUATION OF SAFER INTERNET PLUS – JUNE 2008**

**What is your relationship to the Safer Internet Plus programme?**

- Project partner
- External stakeholder (please specify)

*The main objectives of the **Safer Internet plus** Programme 2005 – 2008 are:*

- (a) fighting against illegal content*
- (b) tackling unwanted and harmful content*
- (c) promoting a safer environment*
- (d) awareness-raising*

1. In your opinion, how successful has **Safer Internet plus** been in achieving the objectives outlined above?
2. What has been the main obstacle to achieving the objectives outlined above?
3. What do you feel has been the main impact of **Safer Internet plus**
  - a) on your own area of work
  - b) on a national level?
  - c) on a European level?
4. What would be your one suggestion for improving the administrative processes involved in;
  - a) submitting a proposal?
  - b) running a project?
5. Is your project sustainable without **Safer Internet plus** funding?
6. Has **Safer Internet plus** helped you to develop contacts and collaboration, both nationally and on a European level?
7. What do you feel are the three main strengths of **Safer Internet plus**?
8. What do you feel are the three main weaknesses of **Safer Internet plus**?
9. Do you feel **Safer Internet plus** has enough flexibility to enable projects to respond effectively to new technical developments and challenges?
10. What new challenges (eg social, technological, economic) will your project – and the Safer Internet programme – face in the future?

**QUESTIONS TO CONTRACTORS, PROPOSERS AND OTHERS: SAFER INTERNET PLUS PROGRAMME (ONE PAGE ONLY):**

The Safer Internet Plus programme (2005-2008) is currently being evaluated by external experts. As you have some previous knowledge of the programme, we ask for a minute of your time to answer the two questions below - just one sentence on each - emphasising strength / weakness of the programme. This is to give the evaluators a general overview. Some projects will be contacted for more detailed feedback. Any information you give will be treated confidentially.

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Please indicate how you know the programme:**

- a) contractor under the programme,
- b) proposer/applicant (but never signed contract),
- c) other (please specify):

**What is the most significant strength of the programme (2005-2008)?**

**Weaknesses of the programme (2005-2008): If you could change one thing, what would it be?**

**Other comments:**

## Appendix 8 Summary of survey and questionnaire outcomes

### The pros and cons of Safer Internet Plus: key points from the questionnaire exercise

*"The programme is very successful, relevant, efficient and not controversial"*  
*"The work has been done, but there is doubt as to whether the results are sufficiently noticeable within society."*

Both the phone interviews and the online questionnaire revealed a great involvement in the topics covered by the Programme. All in all it is fair to say that the response was overwhelmingly positive. Not only from projects funded, but also from other stakeholders. That said, as a general observation it is also pretty clear that the respondents consider Safer Internet Plus to be more successful in their own action line than the others. A hotline is, for instance, more likely to say that fighting illegal material (through hotlines) is the most successful part of the Programme. In fact, in listing strengths in the online questionnaire, several just mentioned "hotlines" or "awareness". Positive though this may be, a more detailed response would have been useful - and this may be an argument for asking for several strengths and weaknesses if the exercise is to be repeated in the future.

### Sharing knowledge

*"The crucial impact is on the accession countries, where they are able to jump several years at once. Countries can learn from each other."*  
*"Providing an enriching lifelong learning environment for all participants .. enormous pooling of knowledge."*  
*"European dimension: possibility to implement Internet Safety projects by sharing expertise and best practice, and learning from other countries."*

This was a point made by very many respondents. It is an interesting point as this has been a priority of European Union programmes on illegal and harmful material from the very beginning. The knowledge sharing reinforces the very core of the European added value and the justification for co-ordinated European action. If one looks at the organisations funded by the Programme, the argument makes a lot of sense. Many of the organisations are small organisations with an idealistic background. Being provided with concepts from others is a great help when trying to design a project nationally with limited resources.

The awareness nodes are the obvious example. Recycling information material, education packages, television spots, etc makes a lot of sense. One well known example is the German TV spot "Wo ist Klaus?" that was translated to other languages and shown in several other countries in the awareness network. One should mention that there are other TV spots (and certainly other material) that was never translated and used in other countries. So while "Wo ist Klaus?" may be a good example of knowledge sharing, there

is reason to believe even more material could be shared. As important, by the way, is learning from others also in terms of mistakes and failed campaigns.

But sharing knowledge is by no means limited to the awareness network; it is also frequently hailed as a Programme strength by hotlines. INHOPE has for many years done extensive trainee programmes for hotlines and has focused on hotlines about to start through a number of funded measures.

Networking (as in getting to know the police and industry...)

*"The Safer Internet Forum is excellent. It focuses on some of the difficult issues, and invites vital people. The EC are seen as an objective actor in a contentious sector. More funding could be given for more events, on specific topics, in geographical areas."*

*"..the networking component within the Safer Internet Plus Programme is the strength. It turned out that there has been and still is a big need to exchange views and facilitate the dialogue between actors from the different areas of safer Internet activities."*

This was a specific question in the in-depth interview, and was mentioned frequently in the online responses as a strength of the Programme. In many ways it overlaps with "sharing knowledge" but it goes further in as much as it allows groups that otherwise would not have worked together to join forces. Typically, as the Programme emphasises projects that include NGOs and industry, it provides a basis for cooperation between for instance major telecoms providers and organisations such as Save the Children. It will also increasingly facilitate dialogue with law enforcement to discuss with both of the above sectors to find good solutions to common issues.

Networking on a European level is seen as a great advantage for many organisations. Safer Internet Plus has built on previous experiences and included thematic networks and other mechanisms to strengthen this effect. To judge from the responses, this is in line with user wishes.

Users and other stakeholders also mention the usefulness of meetings. Both the hotline network and the awareness network hold meetings on a regular basis. These serve not only as a tool to exchange knowledge and determine a common approach, but they expand the general network and introduce the participants to topics related to their work.

In a broader sense, the same applies to the Safer Internet Forum, an annual event hosted by the Commission. Common topics, such as whether or how hotlines should exchange their databases with police for the purpose of national blocklists, are discussed. Other information made available from the Commission (eg through mailing lists) was said to be useful nationally. The consultation exercises (eg on mobile phone safety) were also seen as useful both by industry stakeholders and by national nodes.

## Opening doors - legitimising national efforts, putting the issue on the agenda

*"[When we] started 8 years ago, nobody in government or elsewhere knew anything about the issues. People were afraid to put brakes on the advancement of technology. The EU support and focus on these issues, brought other stakeholders to the table And there was a domino effect - when the big companies acted, everyone else did. Nobody wanted to be seen not doing anything. ... European backing facilitates national collaboration."*

*"The work of SIP has contributed to the new Council of Europe Convention, ie the inclusion of online elements. At the upcoming 3rd World Congress in Rio, the SIP will be part of the background documentation."*

*"It has attracted the attention of decision makers and the press, and therefore had an indirect effect and/or pressure on national policies which was effective."*

*"Politically it is very helpful when arguing for child protection issues against a liberal industry market view to have support at the European level. "*

*"[Our organisation] has become a central reference point for.. Internet Safety. [SIP] has raised the knowledge level of the staff and the profile of the institution. .. the project has been very successful in contacting and collaborating with different institutions: some of these would have happened without the programme through other projects. But most have come about as a result of SIP."*

The European Union formed a policy on illegal and harmful content at an early stage in the networked society. Many Member States doubtless already had considered issues related to this, but where this was not the case, the EU approach opened doors for many organisations. According to the responses this is still true. In several of the new Member States, Safer Internet Plus helps to put the topic on the agenda.

The Programme also helps organisations who work in this field to contact and get support from government. It was also mentioned that if the Commission services came to a national meeting, it was much easier getting national approval. (This appears to be most true in Southern Europe and the new Member States, and especially when it comes to police support for hotlines.) One respondent said that the Programme certainly had the strongest effect in those countries where illegal and harmful content was not already on the agenda.

In addition to putting the issue on the agenda in Europe and Member States, the attention given to Internet safety issues by the Union has also had an international impact and is well known outside Europe.

## National involvement

*"There clearly is a need for greater political involvement at national level. "*

*"National government should be more involved to increase impact."*

*"There might still be scope for greater involvement from both industry and government"*

*"It is a genuinely tough task to get national governments to see that children's safety is something they can take action on. Progress has been slow, although there is improvement in the area of media literacy."*

The surveys confirm that Safer Internet Plus has put issues of Safer Internet on the agenda in a good number of countries and brought national stakeholders to the table. There is nevertheless some indication that some countries would wish for more involvement by national government in their work, but it is hard to recognise that as a general trend beyond stating that endorsement by national government is seen as an advantage.

Co-ordinated European effort, long term and in-depth - while national legislation varies

*"The Program has successfully managed to create a culture of 'Safer Internet Access' in Europe "*  
*".. in the battle against illegal and harmful content, finding a common approach"*  
*"The harmonization of national legislation within EU27 is a prerequisite for successfully running cross border projects dealing with illegal activities."*  
*"It is the typical European situation; there are 23 hotlines and all have different legal frameworks"*  
*"The strength of this programme is the interoperability of the Internet security in the E.U"*  
*"Safer Internet is best suited, best placed and best equipped to ensuring that the enormous potential of Internet..."*  
*"To be a long term programme allowing for in depth actions conceived for educational impact over the time"*

Sending the same message is important and frequently mentioned as a strength of the Programme. The fact that the Programme maintains a consistent message over time and allows the development of the ideas was mentioned as a great advantage. This sentiment may also be a response to a frustration mentioned by a couple of respondents: national legislation vary greatly and makes it complicated to co-ordinate efforts. While different national approaches may be seen as an obstacle, it appears that the [more coherent] approach of Safer Internet Plus has made the work easier. The coherent approach by the EU has probably helped avoiding national initiatives that could have posed obstacles to the development of the networked society.

The increasing child participation - youth panels

*"With regard to Youth Panels, they need to be made up of the right people (not only "open" but also "selected/selective") , and to be asked the right questions."*  
*"..too little direct participation by children and youth, there should be more involvement of youth or kids council as actors in the programme..."*  
*"Children's participation and consultation should be strengthened"*

In more recent calls, youth panels have been proposed. This appears to be a correct choice as it is frequently mentioned. However, it was mentioned by organisations that have tried this, that a youth panel will require some work: it is vital that the youth panels are asked the right questions to be useful - for instance, youth may have an optimistic view when it comes to what their age group should be allowed to see in media, but may have a more realistic view when asked what younger children should see.

## Usual suspects - self recruiting

*"EC funding has gone into government structures, not empowering the right agencies."*

*"To some extent one gets the impression that the same people are speaking about the same things at meetings. There is a strong need for bringing in new people in the discussions."*

*"It would possibly be better to broaden the base - appoint people because of their skills, and not just because they know about the programme."*

*"Safer Internet plus has a problem reaching the NGO sector in Eastern European countries..."*

*"... more communicated in all countries, ..[we] got to know about the Safer Internet plus programme just by accident."*

While the Programme has managed to engage a broad range of organisations, a couple of interviewees raised concern that the recruitment base to the projects could be even wider. This appears to differ greatly between different countries, but there may be countries where organisations have been established as Safer Internet "representatives", more or less by coincidence, and failed to bring other relevant organisations on board. It seems to the panel that the thematic networks is indeed one effort by the Commission to involve organisations that would not normally be partners in other projects - the involvement of police in thematic networks is one example of this.

It appears in general that several stakeholders would have liked to see more (or sometimes other) national organisations getting involved. How to broaden the recruitment in Member States is not obvious, though.

## Country bias and incompatible approaches

*"The British perspective is that we are leading rather than following."*

*"While efforts in the UK deserve lots of credit, it is certainly not possible to copy the UK approach everywhere."*

*"Weakness: Conferences to be in the UK?"*

In a way, this is the opposite of the knowledge sharing mentioned above. While it is certainly very valuable to share knowledge, not all information is equally useful everywhere. For instance, a Nordic mobile campaign which targets 10 year olds with cartoons appropriate to that age group, may not be very useful in country (like Spain) where mobile penetration among 10 year olds is very low. Normally, this is not really a problem as it is a matter of picking the information best suited, but when it was still raised by several interviewees, it was because some countries dominate the fora where such things are discussed.

An evaluator also mentioned that some countries that have high technology penetration also very often came through as somewhat arrogant both in their proposals and when presenting at meetings. Some proposals, when discussing European added value, very often indicated that the project

certainly could share its wisdom, but failed to mention the possibility to learn from others.

#### Insufficient visibility - today's parents, the lost generation

*"..efforts are spread too wide and too thin." (evaluator)*  
*"Not well known enough, needs to be championed by Government and all stakeholders." (other NGO)*  
*"..industry's own research indicates that parental awareness is not increasing...." (industry)*  
*"There is not enough money in the Commission to actually raise awareness sufficiently amongst parents until the tech-savvy generation grows up and gets their own children." (project officer)*  
*"Main weakness is parents - they don't think it is their responsibility and don't get involved (they would just say that all the foreigners are to blame). I think we must give up on this generation of parents " (project officer)*

Several respondents were concerned that the Programme was not sufficiently visible. But visibility clearly varies between different countries. Some replies would indicate that the highest level of visibility exist in new Member States and in certain countries where the project has succeeded in gaining widespread media coverage and political attention. Increased visibility appears to have been most successful in those countries the topic was not on the agenda, and where national authorities have supported national projects. However, it has also been indicated that although a specific project may not be visible, the development of tools for teachers and other multiplier organisations has raised the general awareness among teachers and others who work with children and technology. Common branding of all Safer Internet Plus issues was proposed by one as a way of increasing general visibility.

Doubt was voiced whether it was at all possible to get enough attention from those who are parents today. Many of them have little first hand experience with technology from their own youth and are not aware of (and possibly not interested in) issues related to internet safety. One respondent remarked that it is not possible to launch a sufficiently massive campaign to get the interest of today's generation of parents. One might draw the conclusion, that a possible lack of interest by parents would make it all the more important to focus the efforts on schools to make up for the lack of attention at home.

#### Increase co-operation with educational sector

*"SIP lacks direct links with education efforts (on a Commission level). Safer Internet should be part of the curriculum - coordinated with DG Education and Culture."*  
*"The programme could legitimize and facilitate the inclusion of safer Internet content into curricula and teacher training programmes."*  
*"They should network with education (EC- Education D.G.) projects and initiative."*

In line with the above, several respondents also wanted a stronger involvement with schools. However, it should be noted that it is difficult for one project to address individual schools, but there are indications that educational packages that are distributed centrally with the help of school authorities could be a good way of reaching children. This has been done in many countries with apparent success.

### Quantifiable results

*"It is all very well setting things up ¶ but what are the outcomes and where is the quantifiable evidence? .. Without quantifiable outcomes, the objective cannot be said to have been successfully achieved."*

*"There should be more consideration given to the quality and continuity of the work. Measuring of the real impact has never taken place."*

*"Measuring the effect of the programme is a difficult and challenging task, and some work needs doing to assess the impact."*

Ideally each project should have result indicators that are easy to assess. The calls - and contracts - for the national nodes, also emphasise the need for success criteria. It is hard to say what could be done to improve this. The only suggestion of improvement that came up in the interviews was an improvement of the statistics: this mainly related to the hotlines, where possibly even more could be done in collating European statistics to policy makers and other stakeholders.

### Eurocentricity - insufficient reach outside Europe

*"The programme does not reach the countries that produce illegal content. While we appreciate the difficulties and are aware of the efforts done with Russia, there is too little movement on Asia and Latin America."*

*"Main weakness: Geographical limitation ¶ in combating illegal material, EU 27 rarely represent the countries of interest (production-distribution)"*

*"There is without a doubt a need to address Asia, Africa and Latin America in a more concerted fashion. This programme has credibility and ability to move policies and developments in areas of the world where online child protection and legislation clearly is inconsistent or even non-existent."*

*".. the full-scale implementation in Russia of [Safer Internet plus]-like activities is the nearest future of the development of Internet in this country"*

*"The Programme has taken a Western European model and tried to make it work in Eastern Europe. It requires modification, especially in former Soviet states."*

Not being able to target countries outside Europe is seen by many as a barrier to reaching full effectiveness of the Programme. The recent efforts of the programme to establish collaboration outside Europe are seen as useful but the results are yet to be seen.

### Lack of technical projects

*"The technical action line should be strengthened and broadened. Something could be developed (not filters), lots of ideas to be explored."*

*"...encourage more contributions from the members of the Technical/Research Community."*

*"It is important for the programme to stress the importance of technology development and standards for child safety."*

The original action line devoted to technical development, now no longer deals with filtering. Indeed, there has been a pause in the technical projects before more recent calls also have targeted such topics as victim recognition. It appears few stakeholders would argue that filtering projects should be revived at this stage, or that the Programme could contribute much in addition to what is commercially available for filtering. Obviously, there are also problems related to freedom of expression. One respondent, acknowledging this, nevertheless thinks the lack of technical projects has resulted in less technical knowledge overall in the Programme.

### Unclear relationship between INHOPE and INSAFE for combined nodes

*"INHOPE is going through an interesting and not unwelcome change. It will need more international support, and support from Interpol and Europol will be indispensable. INSAFE is a very different network, where members may not feel as strongly that they belong to an organisation."*

*"There is unclear relationship between INSAFE and INHOPE as well as what kind of the future role of both networks in the management of the combined nodes. "*

*"The programme should also facilitate a better integration and collaboration between the Insafe and Inhope network and its members. "*

Safer Internet Plus has moved towards combining hotline and awareness nodes nationally. This work is obviously in its early phases and a couple of correspondents expressed concern that the division of work between the two co-ordinating networks was not clear at this stage. In several countries the 'marriage' has not been completely painless. The work of the national awareness node and the hotline are often very different. It seems however, that the overall effect is good in recent proposals, not least in terms of creating a common national advisory board that brings all stakeholders together. One combined node remarked however: *"We are required to have Advisory Board meetings three times a year. This is difficult, simply filling the agenda with sufficient interesting items to make the time worthwhile to high level people. Instead, we could have had more focused meetings with parts of the Advisory Board more frequently."*

As for the networks as such, recent calls have required strong collaboration between the hotline network and the awareness network. It is to be hoped that realising the synergies and developing co-operation is a task that will be crowned with success. Given the different approaches and strengths of the

two networks, there should be good potential for co-operation between the two networks.

#### Overlap with other programmes

*"Major weakness: Lack of knowledge enhancement until the current Work Programme. The Commission feels that JLS is responsible for social issues. Overlap with Daphne."*

*"The EU has started so many initiatives on Internet safety and security that the Safer Internet Plus programme is getting buried. "*

*"The lack of joining efforts from other relevant EU framework programmes (7th FP (IST) and Daphne to mention a few) - there are substantial scope for linking key projects from these programmes and one could imagine that the EC would be able to facilitate initial contacts through roundtable or expert meetings."*

#### Sustainability

*"Yes, the project is sustainable but with great restrictions. While the basic tasks would still be performed, international activities and a lot more would not be possible."*

(combined node)

*"Is project sustainable - yes, I certainly hope so, but wouldn't have happened without SIP. We spend a lot of time fining viable financial models for the future, so I am cautiously optimistic."*

*"No, our project would not exist without EC funding. It also should not even if it may eventually be possible. EU funding provides an independence that industry funding does not. " (network coordinator)*

*"The project would be sustainable if national co-funding could be found. However, EC funding is important in giving visibility and credibility to projects."*

The interview questionnaire specifically asked about sustainability. Generally the response was that, yes, it would be possible to continue the work, but on a much smaller scale. As is seen from the quotes, some organisations have concerns about whether industry funding is a good thing, even if it is possible. It is interesting thought, to see that many of the projects appear to want to continue some work even without funding - but as they say - their effect would often be limited.

#### Other issues, flexibility and future challenges

*"New technologies such as P2P, Social Networking. Society is connected with complex connectivity everywhere, which impacts on social life, rights, security, privacy etc"*

*"The balance of concern will tip from illegal to harmful, making it more important to find a clear conceptual approach to what is harmful."*

*"We need far more focus on problematic online behaviour of children and young people themselves ie putting themselves at risk // this issue is avoided as being too difficult."*

*"New virtual threats and new improved services: eg problems of personal data online and identity theft will increase. "*

In general the projects felt that the contract and the Programme were sufficiently flexible to deal with new issues. On future issues one remarked that the pace of technology is so rapid that it is very hard to see far into the future. Issues related to social networking, peer to peer networks, cyber-bullying, online games, new mobile applications, user generated content were mentioned as topics that would require attention in the time to come. It was also pointed out that there is a trend towards children themselves becoming the perpetrators of online crime - the reference appeared to be to copyright infringement but also bullying and other issues.

### Administrative procedures

*"While writing proposals is a soul destroying task, but also useful. It is good that the project is forced think about the way ahead and make a good plan for the coming years."*

*"Of course it would be nice to reduce the amount of papers and forms, but I am not sure it is possible. The proposals must be done, and must be comprehensive in order to justify our work."*

*"I am sure improvements can be made, but cannot think of any specifics, overall I have no gripes with the system."*

*"On an informal level the staff in Luxembourg is very helpful. Formally, there is little information to go on. It is obscure as to who constitutes members / beneficiaries / affiliates on contracts - the whole language is difficult to understand."*

*"The standard Work Packages are not helpful."*

*"The templates for project proposal and reporting sometimes lack flexibility."*

*"The Commission has simplified the process in the last few years, for example by providing templates // this is very helpful and much better than before."*

*"Ability to give a longer project cycle to what are non-commercial activities promoting awareness of Internet safety or reacting to illegal content."*

While it was said by the online respondents that the administrative procedures related to project management were too difficult, it did not generally appear to be a major issue in the phone interviews. Quite the contrary, when asked several responded that although they found the tasks to be "a pain", they also accepted the fact that they should be accountable for public funding received.

Some issues were however mentioned.

- The Commission could consider revisiting the idea of relying more on electronic submission of proposals and reports.
- In some cases, there is double reporting - there is potential for streamlining the general reporting.
- It is not always clear how the deliverables (in the standard contracts) are defined.
- Project length - some would prefer longer contracts - possibly to avoid the task of writing proposals too often and getting longer perspective on the planned work.

It is probably fair to conclude that the projects generally accept the reporting requirements, but feel that any effort to improve procedures and simplify the reporting would be highly appreciated.

## **Appendix 9 Evaluation Panel**

**Chairman: Ruth Harris (formerly Dixon)** has been involved in issues of safer Internet since 1996, playing a major role in the Internet Watch Foundation, INHOPE, of which she was inaugural president, and at policy level within the UK and internationally. As an independent consultant Ruth has provided training and advice on Internet safety for a diverse range of clients including law enforcement, the public sector, commercial organisations and NGOs. She now runs her own not-for-profit company using the Internet as a positive tool for citizenship education.

Ruth was a member of the expert panel for the mid-term evaluation of the Safer Internet Action Plan in 2001, and has been a regular evaluator and reviewer for the Action Plan and Safer Internet Plus.

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**Ola-Kristian Hoff** has a law degree and has worked with issues related to technology and law for many years, both as a research assistant at the University of Oslo and later as assistant director general in the Norwegian Ministry of Justice.

He was seconded to the Commission services when the first Internet Action Plan was adopted. He is currently in private practice in Oslo and is well acquainted with the Safer Internet Plus Programme and its predecessors as an evaluator and a reviewer.

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**Wolfgang Kleinwaechter** is Professor for International Communication Policy and Regulation at the Department for Media and Information Sciences of the University of Aarhus, Denmark. He has extensive experience of European Union programmes as a project participant and evaluator, and chaired the Safer Internet Action Plan (SIAP) evaluation panel in 2006.

Wolfgang is also involved in Internet governance issues, and in 2006 he was appointed as Special Adviser to the Chair of the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF). He has researched and written widely on Internet policy, law and regulation.

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