

NOTE

Better Internet for Children Strategy Extracted from EASA's September 2021 bulletin

As announced on 24 March 2021, the European Commission intends to update its Better Internet for Children Strategy (BIK Strategy).

The 2012 BIK Strategy includes provisions aiming at stepping up children awareness and empowerment and at creating a safe environment for children online, along with a subsection (2.3.4) that specifically addresses online advertising and overspending. A short preliminary survey, which seems to be meant for children and the civil society, is currently open until 11 October. The publication of the Commission's Roadmap accompanied by a more extensive consultation are expected by the end of the year, and the adoption of the updated Strategy is not expected before Q2 2022.

The BIK Strategy provides a set of measures (funding, coordination and promoting self-regulation) to help create a safer online environment, including in the area of online advertising (currently in Section 2.3.4). Under this framework, the European Commission co-funds Safer Internet Centres in Member States, with the Better Internet for Kids portal as a platform for resources and sharing best practices. Policy Map reports taking stock of progress made were published in 2015, 2018, and the latest in November 2020, which will inform the upcoming update of the Strategy. The latest report's data shows a positive trend between 2018 and 2020 in the development and implementation of codes of conducts at national level.

Renew Europe organised on 30 August a Webinar on Children Right's in the Digital World, attended inter alia by MEP Liesje Schreinemacher (IMCO Member) and MEP Adrián Vázquez Lázara (JURI Chair), and the Head of Unit at DG Connect in charge of the BIK Strategy update, June Lowery-Kingston. Among the issues raised, protection of children "by-design" of the platforms or services was often mentioned, along with the need to adapt the online environment to kids and ensuring age limitations as relevant. Self-regulation per se was not part of the discussion, but soft law was mentioned as a good complement to legislation.

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