

ENOC 23rd Annual Conference
Offline/Online: A Child's World
Children's Rights in the Digital Environment



25-26 September 2019

Hilton Hotel, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Hosted by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People



This Conference is co-funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC 2014-2020)

Offline/Online: A Child's World - Children's Rights in the Digital Environment

It is estimated that a third of internet users across the world are children and young people under the age of 18. As with the physical world, the online world offers many opportunities and challenges for children. Technology has fundamentally changed the lives of children and young people across the world. The digital environment has allowed children to communicate, play, learn and explore but it has also posed risks and potential harms that we must address.

Human and children's rights apply in all environments and have to take account of the fact that children often move between the offline and online world seamlessly. In recognition of this, the Council of Europe published guidelines to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of children in the digital environment (CM/Rec(2018)7) and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is developing a General Comment on this issue.

In the 30th Anniversary year of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Annual Conference of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children explored the realities of children's lives in the digital world and addressed how the full realisation of children's rights can be progressed in the digital environment. As independent children's rights institutions, children's ombudspersons and commissioners have a unique role to play in the protection and promotion of children's rights in every aspect of their lives. The conference provided a unique opportunity for participating young people, children's rights advocates, government representatives, NGOs, regulators and decision makers from across Europe to come together to explore the issues at stake.

The ENOC Annual Conference took place in the Hilton Hotel, Belfast, Northern Ireland, on 25-26 September 2019. It was preceded by a side event organised by the Council of Europe on Council of Europe Human Rights Mechanisms relevant to the rights of the child. The ENOC 23rd General Assembly meeting, marked by the election of the new ENOC Bureau, took place after the conference on 27 September 2019.

The event brought together 185 participants including: 63 participants from 35 ENOC member institutions, 16 young people and their coordinators participating in the ENYA project, observer Ombudspersons for children, observer non-governmental organisations operating in the children's rights field, representatives of the UN, European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe and recognised local and international experts and professionals working on children's rights in the digital environment.

Young people from 18 countries/regions (Albania, Andalusia, Basque country, Belgium FR, Belgium FL, Catalonia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Georgia, Iceland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Northern Ireland, Poland, Scotland, Wales) took part in the ENYA project this year. The project aimed at allowing children and young people to look at the challenges and advantages of the digital environment, and how they are addressed in the different countries. At the final stage of country activities, two elected young representatives per country/region, accompanied by ENYA Coordinators, participated in the ENYA Forum on 25-26 June 2019 in Brussels. They had the opportunity to present the outcomes of their home activities and work on common recommendations on children's rights in the digital



environment. One young participant per country/region (who participated in the Brussels Forum) attended the ENOC 23rd Annual Conference, where they presented their common recommendations and the outcomes of ENYA 2019 annual activities. Conference participants had the opportunity to interact with the ENYA group, and to learn more about their findings on the Conference theme. The ENYA recommendations are also reflected in the ENOC position statement on children's rights in the digital environment and promoted as a separate deliverable.

The majority of the Conference presentations are available [here](#). The publications/outcomes on the 2019 theme can be found [here](#).



Day 1 – 25th September 2019

Conference Opening Addresses



The first day of the Conference was opened by the ENOC Chair-elect **Koulla Yiasouma** (Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People), who welcomed the participants and introduced the conference theme, highlighting the opportunities and challenges posed by the online world. Then, the ENOC Chair **Geneviève Avenard** (Children's Defender France), gave an update on ENOC's 2019 activities and the main achievements on the Annual theme "children's rights in the digital environment".

Koulla Yiasouma introduced together with **Madeleine McKnight**, a member of the NICCY Youth Panel, the story of Northern Ireland and the city of Belfast. Madeleine Mc Knight also talked about the work of the NICCY Youth Panel and her involvement in the ENYA project.

David Sterling, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, gave a speech on the importance of this theme and introduced the main reforms of the Northern Ireland government to protect children online, especially the upcoming Online Safety Strategy.

To conclude this opening session and in the context of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, **Tara-Grace Connolly**, Coordinator at Our Future Our Choice Northern Ireland, talked about her experience as a Human Rights Defender and her commitment to make the voices of children heard.

Participation – Children and Young People's Voices

This panel was dedicated to the participation of children and young people from different backgrounds and was moderated by **Niall Muldoon**, Ombudsman for Children in Ireland.

It started with a group of **children with additional needs from Queen's University** in Belfast, accompanied by **Professor Laura Lundy**, Co-Director of the Centre for Children's Rights. They talked about their needs in the education system, for example trainings for



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teachers on the special equipment they use. They also highlighted the ways in which digital technology plays a positive role in their lives and how important funding is for having up-to-date equipment and technologies. This session was the occasion to remind that children and young people are not a homogenous group, and that technology and its provision must be accessible for all.



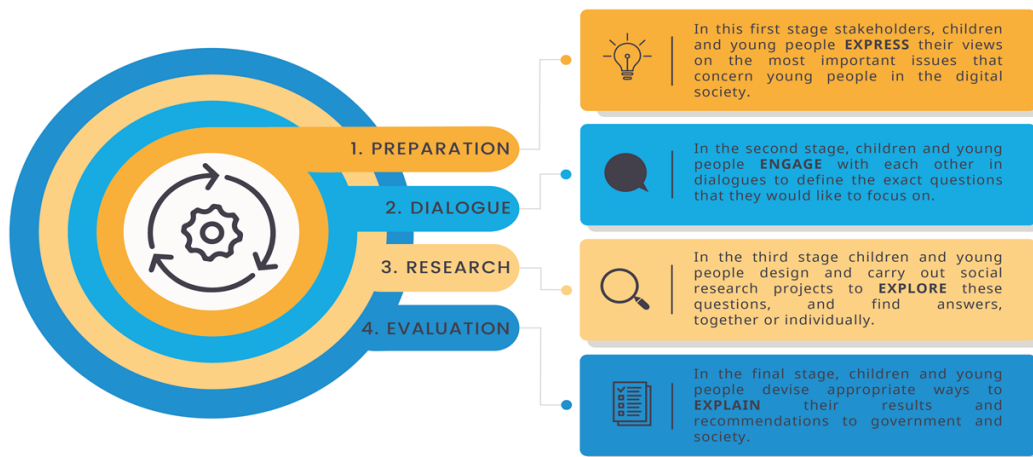
Then, the **16 children and young people participating in the ENYA project** introduced the annual theme with a powerful performance - “We are victims!”, sharing with the audience what they have experienced in the online world. The participants of the conference were invited to play a quizz on the app “kahoot” to test their knowledge of the digital environment and of young people’s recommendations that have been previously shared with all the participants. The ENYA group also presented the activities they carried out during the ENYA Child participation project, including a video produced during the ENYA Forum in Brussels (24-25 June 2019).



Finally, **Mairead McMullen and Mary O’Reilly** from Early Years and **Paul Butler** from Partners for Youth Empowerment (PYE), presented **Wyred**, an EU project empowering Children and Young People to engage as leaders, researchers and influencers of the online space. This project has for the last 3 years been developing an approach to the empowerment of children through research. It is based on the idea that children and young people have a key role to play in the digital world (as drivers of new behaviours and understandings), but their participation is not reflected sufficiently in policy and decision-making, especially in relation to digital issues. Therefore, the project aims to provide a framework for research in which children and young people can express and explore their



views in relation to the digital environment. It also provides a platform which acts as a safe space to share project work, and to communicate their opinions to other stakeholders. This is done by the implementation of a generative research circle involving networking, dialogue, participatory research and interpretation driven by children and young people, and out of which outputs and insights will emerge to inform policy and decision-making. Up to 2000 children and young people have participated in the WYRED research projects in 12 countries.



Participation – Ensuring Children Can Enjoy Their Rights in the Digital Environment

The afternoon session, moderated by **Sally Holland**, Children's Commissioner for Wales, addressed the ways to ensure that children have the right to engage in the digital environment safely.



The session began with a presentation by **Regina Jensdottir**, Head of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division, of the Council of Europe Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the Rights of the Child in the Digital Environment, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in June 2018. Ms. Jensdottir explained the purpose of the guidelines, which is to assist states and other relevant stakeholders in their efforts to adopt a comprehensive, strategic approach in building and containing the often complex digital world. Among the many topics covered are the protection

of personal data, provision of child-friendly content adapted to evolving capacities of children, helplines and hotlines, vulnerability and resilience, as well as the role and responsibilities of business enterprises.

Ms. Jensdottir highlighted the importance of the cooperation work between the Council of Europe and Ombudspersons for Children. The involvement of Ombudspersons for Children



in the implementation of the Guidelines should include the provision of remedies (Paragraph 70 of the Guidelines - “states should, where appropriate, also provide children and/or their parents or legal representatives with non-judicial mechanisms, administrative or other means to seek remedy, such as through ombudspersons for children and other national human rights institutions and data-protection authorities”), an engagement at all stages of the policy-making process (Paragraph 84 of the Guidelines - “States should engage all relevant stakeholders, such as ombudspersons for children and other independent human rights institutions (...) in the design, drafting, implementation and evaluation of a national strategy or action plan”), and the implementation of an effective participation of children (Paragraph 7 of the Guidelines “States and other relevant stakeholders should actively engage children to participate meaningfully in devising, implementing and evaluating legislation, policies, mechanisms, practices, technologies and resources (...).”).

She also presented the upcoming Council of Europe conference “#Redefining Power: Strengthening the rights of the child as a key for a future-proof Europe” that will take place on 13-14 November 2019 in Strasbourg, in the context of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021). This Strategy identifies the rights of the child in the digital environment as a priority area, and this subject will be widely discussed during the conference.

The presentation of Ms. Jensdottir was followed by workshop sessions held in parallel. workshop moderators were requested to identify key points to take back to the group feedback session.

Workshop Sessions

Workshop 1 – Parents:



The first workshop was about parental education and use of social media, and was chaired by **Maria Rossidou** from the Office of the Commissioner for Children’s Rights in Cyprus. She introduced the topic of parents sharing pictures of their children on social media (“sharenting”) by identifying a key question: how to be the gatekeeper and protect the child, as well as the parents themselves?

The first speaker, **Rhea Verheul** from the Ombudsperson for Children’s Office in the Netherlands, talked about digital parenting. She presented some facts about the



Netherlands: for example, 83% of parents monitor their children's online behavior in some way. She highlighted that digital parenting is different from digital monitoring. Rather, children need guidance from their parents and others relevant authorities. To do so, it is crucial to have sufficient tools and trainings for parents.

The second speaker, **Karen McCauley** from the Ombudsman for Children's Office in Ireland, gave a presentation on the age of digital consent. She presented relevant provisions from the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The GDPR came into force on 25 May 2018 with the aim of giving people more control over the use of their personal data. It does not include a definition of a "child" but it does make children visible. There is an explicit reference to children and a new emphasis on the importance of protecting children's personal data: as data subjects, children have rights in relation to their personal data. Ms. McCauley explained that the GDPR does not address the question of when children should exercise their data protection rights themselves, but child-specific protections are attached to some of its provisions. One of these provisions is Article 8 on the age of digital consent. Article 8 sets out when it is lawful for information society services offered directly to a child to process a child's personal data on the basis of consent. It is lawful on the basis of the child's consent "*where the child is at least 16 years old*". Where the child is below the age of 16, it is lawful "*only if and to the extent that consent is given or authorized by the holder of parental responsibility over the child*". Ms. McCauley presented how the legislation was debated, adopted and developed in Ireland. She underlined the importance to give meaning to the age of digital consent through effective and appropriate tools of verification as well as clear, concise and accessible information.

The last speaker, **Donna Kernaghan** from Barnardo's Northern Ireland, talked about parenting infants in a digital world. She introduced the concept of "technoference" which refers to everyday interruptions in interpersonal interactions or time spent together that occur due to digital and mobile devices. Barnardo's NI conducted a research with 199 participants to gain an understanding of parents' and infants' use of digital technology in everyday home life and how this may impact on parental/infant interactions; to explore parents' awareness of infant mental health with specific reference to the "Five to Thrive" approach (respond, cuddle, relax, play, talk); and to identify which areas parents of infants could benefit from additional support in order to improve service delivery. She presented the results of this study. For example, 44% of parents use phone/tablet when infant is playing under their supervision, and parents with high use of digital technology at home are more likely to have no rules limiting infants' use of digital technology compared to those with medium or low levels of use.

Key points:

- There needs to be more parental responsibility, awareness raising must be continuous and systematic.
- There should be trainings for parents starting from primary schools. These trainings need to be comprehensive and supportive of children.
- There needs to be a triangulated approach, to strengthen the relations between teachers, children and parents/caregivers.
- There needs to be a code of conduct for the business sector.
- There should be further discussion on video games and their impact on children's rights.

Workshop 2 – Education:



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This workshop was moderated by **Mairead McCafferty** from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People's Office and addressed the issue of digital education.

The first speakers, **Rhian Evans** and **Rachel Thomas** from the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, talked about digital competency through the revision of the Welsh curriculum. The idea of the Welsh government was to move away from traditional subjects (eg. Health and wellbeing) to a broader curriculum including literacy, numeracy and digital competency. The curriculum includes a digital competence framework which covers 4 areas and can be used by teachers: citizenship, interacting and collaborating, producing, data and computational thinking. They explained that this framework is outcome-based for ages 3-16, is not tied to specific online/offline platforms, and can help ensure that learners develop high levels of competence in these skills and have opportunities to extend them across the curriculum. The Children's Commissioner for Wales helped in the development of this curriculum by creating peer-led resources on cyberbullying for young people, ensuring that the curriculum is rights-based and influencing Welsh government to develop professional learning for teachers and to involve children and young people in the development of the framework.

The second speaker, **Daniel Toda Castán**, from the Office of the Ombudsman for the Basque country/Spain, gave a broad overview of how the Basque country is trying to enhance digital skills through education. There are two main fields of action in the realm of education in the Basque country: enhancing digital competency in schools, and preventing cyberbullying. M. Toda Castán went through the State-level legislation and the Basque legislation, and their implementation. These legislations frame digital competence as a core competence, and make an explicit reference to the right to digital education. In the Basque country, IT is part of the curricula from preschool to post-obligatory secondary education. Regarding cyberbullying it is difficult to obtain data as it is under reported, but there are some good initiatives such as "Bizikasi" - a permanent structure set up by the Basque government to disseminate information and train students on the issue of cyberbullying. He also presented the work of the Basque Ombudsman, for example the materials created for the prevention of cyberbullying and other online risks. He concluded by saying that, even if it is too early to measure effects of implementation, first steps have been taken to create conditions for digital competence in the Basque country.



The last speaker, **Andres Aru** from the Office of the Chancellor of Justice in Estonia, talked about good practices in Estonia to improve children's digital skills and support them online. Estonia is a leading country in Europe on digital competences. The Estonian State has provided funds for high speed internet access, modern equipment and digital learning tools (e-textbooks and workbooks, open learning materials, etc) at schools. At the same time, Estonian children are also leading in terms of excessive internet use and experiences of cyberbullying. Mr. Aru gave examples of good practices in Estonia. Estonia have for example special ward in child psychology to deal with digital addiction (which has similar symptoms to drug and alcohol abuse). They also created "Web-Constables" who are police officers trained to monitor the digital environment and fight cyberbullying. They also give lectures on safety in the internet for children, parents, and teachers, and give advice or pass on the case to investigators.

Key points:

- The best protection and empowerment we can give our children is education.
- There is a "digital addiction" when children are spending too much time online. Parents should give children alternatives, and encourage their child to spend family time rather than spending it online.
- There should be appropriate equipment and infrastructures in schools.
- We need to move away from negative terminology, and understand that the digital world is beneficial, especially as a research tool in school, but it must be used responsibly.

Workshop 3 – Regulation:



The third workshop was moderated by **Stéphanie Carrère** from the Office of the Children's Defender France, and introduced different examples of legislation and regulations online.

The first speaker, **Kjersti Botnan Larsen** from the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children's Office talked about the challenges of enforcement for a safer digital environment in Norway. She explained that a lot of stakeholders are involved in this area (government agencies, NGOs, helplines, etc) which led to a fragmented approach, an overlap of responsibilities and a lack of research. The online and offline worlds are regulated in some articles of the Civil Law but there are also problems in the implementation of the law, especially because of the lack of knowledge and awareness of what is legal and what is not. The Norwegian



Ombudsman for Children is working for a rights-based, comprehensive and strategic approach to ensure better help for children who experience something negative online, and to improve children, professionals and parents' digital skills.

The second speaker, **Søren Gade Hansen**, from the Office of the National Council for Children, Denmark, presented the Statutory Code of Business. He first explained the role of the National Council for Children (as opposed to an Ombudsperson) which is to deal with policy and not cases. He highlighted that there are a lot of regulations in the area of the digital environment in Denmark. This includes the Code of Conduct for the Business sector, which is unique in this area (even if it is not legislative). A Consumer Ombudsman in Denmark is responsible for ensuring that business enterprises comply with the Danish Marketing Practices Act, and the principles of fair marketing, including the Statutory Code of Business.

The last speaker of this workshop was **Nataša Jović**, from the Office of the Protector of Citizens, Serbia. She presented the Cybercrime Strategy 2023 of Serbia. This Strategy focuses on cybercrime and protection. The Action Plan includes initiatives to prevent cybercrime against children: trainings of children, parents and professionals, IT Caravans, digital literacy curricula, communication campaign such as the "Smart and Safe" project, Girls in ICT Day, etc. It also includes measures for the prevention and protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse through information and communication technologies: establishment of a data base of child abuse or child pornography content on the internet, establishment of direct communication between the police and Interpol, etc. Ms. Jović underlined the need for public awareness raising, as we do not have enough information in relation to safety when using technology.

Key points:

- There are laws to protect children online, but we need more legislation on prevention.
- The involvement of children and young people in the design of these regulations is crucial.
- The public and the private sectors should be involved in decision-making processes.

Workshop 4 – Protection:



This workshop was dedicated to protection of children online and was moderated by **Eduard Israyelyan**, from the Human Rights Defender's Office in Armenia.



The first speaker, **René Schlechter**, Chair of the Ombuds-Committee for the Rights of the Child in Luxembourg presented the initiative “Bee Secure”. This initiative started in 2007 and has been operating under the “Bee Secure” brand since 2010. It acts as a Safer Internet Centre for Luxembourg. It belongs to the Europe networks Insafe and INHOPE. Bee Secure has four key strands:

- Trend monitoring
- Awareness raising
- Help and assistance
- Illegal content reporting

It comprises a helpline to give advice via phone regarding all questions about safety online and the use of digital media. It also comprises a stopline to report illegal content online in the context of child sexual abuse material, discrimination, racism, terrorism, etc. Bee Secure meets regularly with groups of children and young people through youth panels, and online with the “Bee Secure Young Experts Team”. Trainings are provided to teachers, parents, primary and post-primary children (which is compulsory for children in their first year of post-primary school). Bee Secure also includes an educational element via annual thematic campaigns which aim to educate people in a positive way, to create a culture of safety, and facilitate a broader view of internet safety.

The second speaker, **Eilís McDaniel**, Director of Family & Children’s Policy in the Department for Health, Northern Ireland, talked about the Northern Ireland Online Safety Strategy. She explained that Northern Ireland has been working with other parts of the UK on cyber safety. The UK government produced a comprehensive paper which outlines proposals to develop a framework to promote online safety. All Northern Ireland Departments are committed to this development. The work started in 2015 but has been slowed by the collapse of the Northern Ireland government. Through the consultation with children, the strategy was entitled an “online” rather than e-safety strategy. It aims to support children and young people to engage with the online world in an educated, safe, responsible and respectful way. The Strategy seeks to develop skills and knowledge for children to stay safe online, and to facilitate access to age appropriate support if required. There are three pillars to the Online Strategy:

- Sustainable infrastructure.
- Education of children and young people to ensure a consistent approach to online safety.
- Evidence informed quality standards.

Key points:

- Digital companies have a responsibility in keeping children safe online, and should be held to account. There needs to be stricter regulations.
- Adults need to be educated with regards to their online sharing (photos of children on social media for example), and children should have a say.
- Online safety strategy, awareness raising and trainings are crucial to prevent risks online, including online sexual abuse.



Day 2 – 26th September 2019

Protection: How do we Protect Children and where does the Responsibility Lie?



The second day of the conference started with a panel about the protection of children and young people online. This panel was moderated by **Margrite Kalverboer**, Ombudsman for Children in the Netherlands.

Professor Laure Lundy, Co-Director of the Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast, gave an inspirational speech about what a child rights approach means. She warned ENOC members that children's rights are not just about pity, protection, participation, or proxies. According to her, rights are not mere gifts or favors; rights are about entitlement. It is something that can be demanded or insisted upon without embarrassment. Rights are not just protection, it is empowerment. Vulnerability should not eclipse agency. Rights are not just participation, but participation with purpose and parameters. Finally, rights are not just the "proxies" (the four general principles of the UNCRC and the idea of "wellbeing"). She explained that the four general principles of the CRC constitute an accessible shorthand for the child rights project as a whole. That is both good and bad since the "recognisability" and significance attached to these four Articles is not only legally and logically unsustainable but can distort and detract from the implementation and monitoring of the CRC as a whole. Moreover, she argued that references to the CRC in discussion about well-being are sometimes very loose or inaccurate, seemingly deployed as an international policy backdrop or to give pseudo-legal legitimacy to existing well-being approaches rather than indicative of any real attempt to engage with the CRC. Professor Lundy called on Ombudspersons and Commissioners for Children to act to emphasise the universality and entitlements of rights: a child rights approach should be about entitlement of every child to every right, empowerment of children to claim their rights and accountability of states for ensuring their realisation.

The second speaker of the panel, **Dr Geoffrey Shannon**, Chairman of the Adoption Authority of Ireland, presented the online world as the "New Child Protection Frontier". All children have the right to grow and develop their potential in the online world. However, the online world is a tool that can be used to the detriment of children. There are new challenges



in the online world. For example the technical complexity underlying online offers a very different regulatory challenge to child abuse. As the Internet is accessible worldwide, he argued that robust and targeted regulations are required to ensure that a uniform and coherent system of protection is engaged (he talked about the digital age of consent for example). Building resilience through education is also a crucial step. He gave the example of cyber-safety that should be included in the curricula for example.

Dr Sarah Starkey, Neuroscientist, Independent Neuroscience and Environmental Health Research, shared with ENOC members the results of her research on the risks of wireless technologies. She explained that our bodies absorb radiofrequency signals when using these technologies. There is ample evidence of the wide range of effects on the brain and its development and functions. There is also some evidence that radiofrequency signals are linked with behavioural problems, particularly hyperactivity, cognitive impairment, increased anxiety or stress, increased risks of brain tumours, increased risks of infertility and miscarriage, etc. She insisted on the responsibility of everyone who works with children to prevent impairment of children's health or development. Children, parents and schools should be educated about the risks and how they can stay safer. Children should also be provided with wired (not wireless) connections for computers, and there needs to be more efforts to offer safe working environments for pregnant women to protect their unborn children. Ms. Starkey called on ENOC members to make recommendations for safe schools, pre-schools, children and maternity wards in hospitals (through risk assessments), and to protect the digital rights of children in a way that also protect their right not to have their health or development damaged.

The last speaker of the panel, **John Carr**, Author and Consultant on Internet Safety and Security, talked about the roles and responsibilities in the digital world. He explained how difficult it is to get detailed information from tech companies on how they deal with children in their online activities. Therefore, he argued that it is very important to have an independent authority which will have the power to require businesses to provide information and to impose fines if companies refuse to cooperate. He presented the Online Harms White Paper as a good practice. It sets out the UK Government's plans for a package of legislative and non-legislative online safety measures, that will make companies more responsible for their users' safety online, especially children. It includes a proposal to establish a regulator with the legal power to compel tech companies.

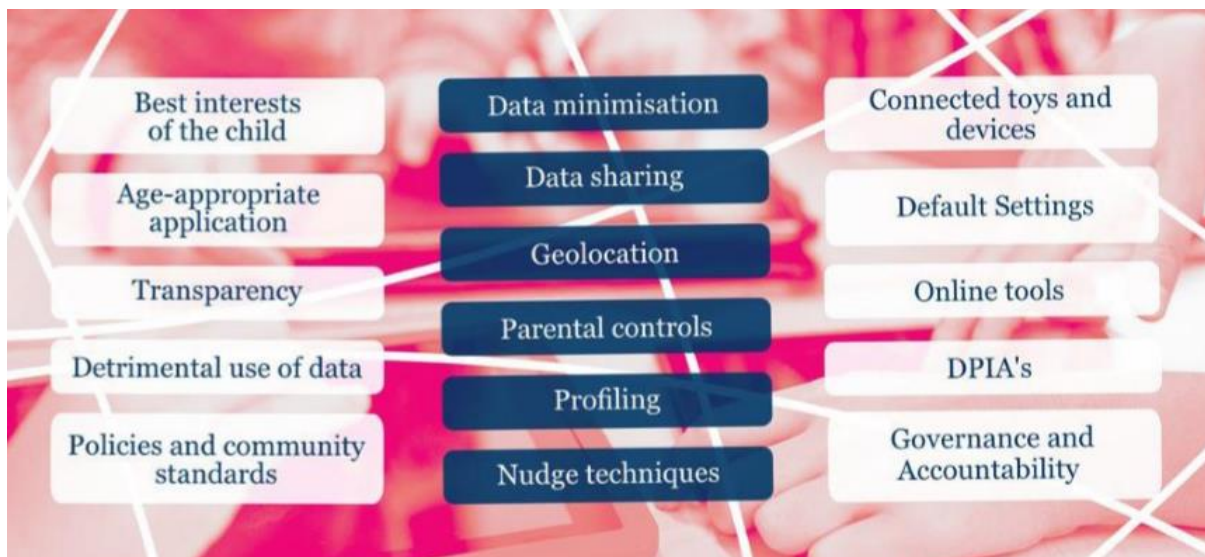
Protection and Participation – Child Rights Compliant Laws and Practices

This panel addressed the regulation and legislation that should be in place to ensure a balance between protection and participation of children in the digital environment. It was moderated by **Salvör Nordal**, Ombudsman for Children in Iceland.

Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England, talked about the protection of data and presented the Age Appropriate Code to Conference participants. She said that children now are digital natives, which is a force for good but they need the power and tools to navigate as they grow up in the digital world: the aim should not be to protect children from the digital world but to protect them within it. In that sense, the Age Appropriate Design



provides a code of practice, a set of standards designed to reflect the new dynamic ways in which children's personal data is used online. Introduced by the Data Protection Act 2018, the draft code sets out 16 standards of age appropriate design for online services like apps, connected toys, social media, platforms, online games, educational websites and streaming services. The code gives practical guidance on data protection safeguards that ensure online services are appropriate for use by children. Ms. Longfield introduced some of the key standards. For example, the best interests should be a primary consideration when designing and developing online services likely to be accessed by a child. By considering the best interests of child users in all aspects of the design of online services, organisations should be well placed to comply with the "lawfulness, fairness and transparency" principle. There should also be default settings that must be "high privacy" by default. Geolocation should also be switched off by default and an obvious sign for children should be provided when location tracking is active. Ms. Longfield concluded with a recommendation to strengthen the collaboration between ENOC and the European Data Protection Boards to hold tech companies and national governments to account.



This presentation was followed by an **ENYA Session**. Children and young people who participated in the ENYA project gave the following recommendations to the conference participants.

Privacy:

- Schools, parents, media and peers have to educate children and young people and their parents on online privacy.
- There needs to be more awareness on oversharing among young people and parents. Parents should also be aware of the privacy rights of their children: they should not post pictures of them online without their consent.
- It has to become mandatory for (social) media companies to ask people for consent before private content of them (pictures, information...) is published online by others.
- (Social) media companies should take responsibility of the personal information that children and young people provide.



- Europe should make it mandatory for companies to have terms and conditions that are accessible, easily read and understood by people of all ages.
- National governments should be encouraged to provide accessible information to highlight the most important information and terms and conditions of the digital environment and to raise awareness on digital rights of people.

Education:

- The Government should provide equal access to the internet and to educational platforms in the digital environment.
- There should be provisions for teachers and educators on the main issues faced by children and young people in the digital environment.
- Children and young people should be educated from younger ages on social media and technical usage.
- The government should implement different sources of information (in formal and informal ways) on the digital environment for children and young people as well as for their parents, guardians and teachers.
- There should be promotion of sexual education involving the digital environment (for example on gender, on the risks of sexting, etc.) to promote online respect and sexual awareness.

Risks and challenges:

- Children and young people should be able to get personal support from a local person if they experience problems online.
- In situations of online bullying or sexting it is important that both the victim and the perpetrator get support. In addition it is important to focus on preventing rather than punishing.
- “Don’t do it” - attitudes towards sexting in education are ineffective and ignore the realities that children and young people nowadays live in. Schools should address the topic of sexting/sharing nudes in courses on sexuality or digital media.
- Children and young people should have the right to talk about sexting and online bullying in a confidential environment without their parents being told.
- Fake news is a concern for children and young people and can put them at risk. Creating an app or website that can fact-check news can help children and young people to spot fake news.

Participation and opportunities:

- The digital environment should be accessible to everyone. Special attention needs to be paid to the accessibility of the digital environment for children with specific needs (children with disabilities, children separated from their parents, children on the move, children in alternative care, children in poverty, etc.).
- An app should be developed to help children and young people to learn about Human Rights and Children’s Rights in a fun and accessible way.
- A general app to protect the privacy of children and young people should be developed. This app has to provide trustworthy information and you should be able to complain about privacy issues through this app.
- When the government makes decisions and laws that affect them, children and young people should always be involved.



- Children and young people should be supported in how to interact in a positive way with digital media.



After the presentation of their recommendations, ENYA children and young people launched an interactive session in small groups. Conference participants discussed different case studies with ENYA children and young people on what children experience online and what Commissioners and Ombudspersons for Children recommend to do/can do in such situations.



Provision – Holding to account – European mechanisms

The afternoon session gathered different European stakeholders to talk about the European mechanisms to protect children online. It was moderated by **Geneviève Avenard**, ENOC Chair and Children's Defender in France.



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The first speaker was **Emilio Puccio**, Coordinator of the European Parliament Intergroup on Children's Rights. He presented the missions of the Intergroup and the new Co-Chairs (MEPs David Lega, Caterina Chinnici, Hilde Vautmans, Saskia Bricmont). He talked about the work of the European Parliament on children's rights in the digital environment, for example with the European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2017 on the

implementation of Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on combating child sexual abuse and exploitation and child pornography. He highlighted that legislation is not enough to have a safe internet, and that all part of the society should be involved, especially tech companies.

The second speaker, **Françoise Kempf**, Advisor to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, introduced the work of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights in the children's rights field. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent institution within the Council of Europe. The Commissioner's main activities focus on carrying out country fact-finding visits, elaborating specific



recommendations to national authorities, thematic reporting and advising on human rights systematic implementation, or intervening as a third party before the European Court of Human Rights. Ms. Kempf highlighted one of the key missions of the Commissioner which is to facilitate the activities of national ombudsperson institutions, so she encouraged Commissioners and Ombudspersons for Children to request support from the Commissioner when needed. She presented the work of the Commissioner in key areas such as the repatriation of foreign children in Syria, the detention of children on the move, or artificial intelligence.

The last speaker, **Valeria Setti**, European Commission Coordinator for the rights of the child, talked about oversight and regulatory mechanisms implemented by the European Commission to protect children's rights in the online world. She presented the EU Strategy for a better internet for children which includes the Safer Internet Centres, dialogue and cooperation (for example with the Alliance to better protect minors online), and regulatory measures. She introduced some key European Commission regulations and directives:





- The Child Sexual Abuse Directive, which requires the removal of web pages containing child sexual abuse images and covers investigation and prosecution of crimes, assistance to and protection of victims, awareness raising and prevention,
- The Audiovisual Media Services Directive, which coordinates national legislations on all audiovisual media, and aims to protect from harmful content, for example with new obligations for video-sharing platforms (age verification, parental control systems, content rating, etc),
- The General Data Protection Regulation, which was designed to harmonise data protection rules for all companies operating in the EU, and give additional layer of protection for processing data of vulnerable persons.

This panel was followed by a session called “A year in the life of Ombuds and Commissioners for Children” during which ENOC members presented their country updates and annual activities.

The conference was closed by ENYA children and young people who gave an inspirational speech on the annual theme, what they have learned during the ENYA project and what they expect adults to do to protect their rights in the digital environment.



Day 3 – 27th September 2019

**ENOC 23rd General Assembly
[ENOC Members Only]**

The minutes of the General Assembly meeting are available only for ENOC members upon request to the ENOC Secretariat.

The General Assembly meeting was marked by the presentation and approval of ENOC 2019 activities and accounts, the endorsement of ENOC 2019 Statements and the election of the new ENOC Bureau.

The new Bureau is:

- Ms. Koulla Yiasouma (Northern Ireland/UK): current Chairperson (2019-2020)
- Mr. Bruce Adamson (Scotland/UK): Chairperson elect (2020-2021)
- Ms. Geneviève Avenard (France): past Chairperson
- Mr. Niall Muldoon (Ireland): Secretary
- Ms. Salvör Nordal (Iceland): Treasurer

