



# IT'S OUR WORLD: CHILDREN'S VIEWS ON HOW TO PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Council of Europe  
Children's Rights  
Division

Report on child  
consultations of  
April 2017



The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

All requests concerning the reproduction or translation of all or part of this document should be addressed to the Directorate of Communication (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or [publishing@coe.int](mailto:publishing@coe.int)). All other correspondence concerning this document should be addressed to the Children's Rights Division, Directorate of Democracy (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or [children@coe.int](mailto:children@coe.int)).

This document has been produced in the context of the work of the Council of Europe's Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF).

Cover and layout: Council of Europe

Cover photo: Shutterstock

This publication has not been copy-edited by the SPDP Editorial Unit to correct typographical and grammatical errors.

© Council of Europe, September 2017

# **It's Our World: Children's views on how to protect their rights in the digital environment**

Report on child consultations of April 2017

The child consultations have contributed to drafting the  
Guidelines to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights in the digital environment  
by the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF)  
through its Drafting Group of Specialists on Children and the Digital Environment (CAHENF-IT)

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Child participation and methodology of the consultation .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Child participation .....	5
2.2. Preparation of the child consultations process .....	6
2.3. Methodology .....	6
<b>3. Overview of issues raised by children for consideration by the CAHENF .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Main outcomes of the child consultations .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Annex 1. Outcomes of the child consultations by country and group .....</b>	<b>17</b>
A. Croatia.....	17
B. Cyprus .....	20
C. Czech Republic .....	23
D. Germany .....	25
E. Hungary .....	30
F. Italy.....	37
G. Romania .....	40
H. Ukraine.....	43
<b>Annex 2. Overview of the child consultation groups .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Annex 3. Non-governmental partner organisations and facilitators.....</b>	<b>50</b>

## 1. Introduction

1. “The rights of the child in the digital environment” is one of the priority areas of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021): *“New Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) affect children’s enjoyment of a significant number of fundamental rights guaranteed by the UNCRC, the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter. According to recommendations issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, all children should be able to safely access ICTs and digital media, and be empowered to fully participate, express themselves, seek information and enjoy all the rights enshrined in the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols without discrimination of any kind.”*

2. The Ad-hoc Committee on the Rights of the Child (CAHENF), mandated to oversee the implementation of the Strategy, is tasked with elaborating policy guidelines for member States with a view to promoting, protecting and fulfilling children’s rights in the digital environment. This work is expected to be finalized in November 2017, with a view to submitting these guidelines for consideration and possible adoption by the Committee of Ministers shortly after. The drafting process involves consultations with other key stakeholders, including Council of Europe bodies and committees, relevant civil society actors, private sector and children.

3. Recalling that “children have the right to be heard and participate in decisions affecting them, both as individuals and as a group”<sup>1</sup>, in April 2017, 200 children have been involved in the drafting of the Guidelines through consultations carried out with the support of several non-governmental organisations in 8 member States, in Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Ukraine.

4. This report provides an overview of the discussions held during the above-mentioned child consultations and the issues of importance to children with respect to their rights and obligations online. It includes unfiltered messages addressed to the CAHENF by participating children, as well as contextual information on focus groups and feedback received from facilitators and children on their experience of the consultation process. An overview of key issues raised by children is included in section 3. A detailed description of each consultation in the various countries is provided in Annex 1 to the report.

5. This project is a good example illustrating that the Council of Europe not only provides guidance to member States on how to embed child participation in a systematic manner and in all contexts relevant for children, but it also involves directly children in its own child-related standard-setting and decision-making procedures.

## 2. Child participation and methodology of the consultation

### 2.1. Child participation

6. Child participation means that children, i.e. any person under the age of 18 years, individually or in groups, have the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, to be heard and to contribute to decision making on matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. All children and young people, including those of pre-school age, school age and those who have left full-time education, have a right to be heard in all matters affecting them.

7. The right of children and young people to participate applies without discrimination on any grounds such as race, ethnicity, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation or other status. Particular efforts should be made to enable participation of children and young people with fewer opportunities, including those who are vulnerable or affected by discrimination and for disabled children with special needs.

---

<sup>1</sup> Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021).

8. In order to be able to participate meaningfully and genuinely, children and young people should be provided with all relevant information and offered adequate support for self-advocacy appropriate to their age and circumstances. Children and young people who exercise their right to freely express their views must be protected from harm, including intimidation, reprisals, victimisation and violation of their right to privacy. Children and young people should always be fully informed of the scope of their participation, including the limitations on their involvement, the expected and actual outcomes of their participation and how their views were ultimately considered.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2. Preparation of the child consultations process

9. The goal of the process was to organise child consultations in different member States of the Council of Europe. In every country, consultations were carried out in two groups: one based on age and one addressing children in vulnerable situation, as defined by the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (such as children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children in care, Roma children, children on the move or otherwise affected by migration, and children from minorities). The purpose was to ensure that different groups of children from different backgrounds were able to participate in the consultations and have their experiences, ideas and thoughts reflected in the outcomes of the child participation process.

10. The consultations were implemented in all countries through selected national and local non-governmental organisations. The children were informed about the process through open calls in various settings e.g. schools, communities or organisations providing extracurricular activities or child care institutions. All activities within the framework of the child participation in drafting of the Guidelines were carried out in accordance with the common values of the Council of Europe: respecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The best interest of the child was a primary consideration in all actions implemented throughout the whole project in line with the domestic legislation on child protection.

## 2.3. Methodology

11. The children were consulted in small groups with the support of an adult who facilitated the consultation as a procedure (facilitator). The facilitator's role was to (1) to create a safe and comfortable environment for all members of the group, (2) to keep the consultation focused on the topic of interest while ensuring that all children had the opportunity to contribute and (3) to provide support for the children to gather and express their views and opinions in a comprehensive and understandable way. All the facilitators were trainers with vast experience in working with children and with good knowledge of children's rights and child participation.

12. The consultations were implemented based on the session outlines of activities with non-formal educational means. The facilitators filled out a reporting form with details about the outcomes of each session. The aim of the sessions were:

<b>Session 1</b>	To draw the focus of the group to the issue of interest.  To get to know the participants.
------------------	--

---

<sup>2</sup> In line with the Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18.

<b>Session 2</b>	<p>To have a common understanding among all the participants in terms of knowledge about the rights of the child and the digital environment.</p> <p>To inform the children about the scope of their participation, including the limitations on their involvement, the expected and actual outcomes of the procedure and the follow-up opportunities.</p> <p>To support the children in planning the steps of the consultation and deciding on the form and content of their message delivered to the decision-makers later on.</p>
<b>Session 3-4</b>	<p>To support the children during their exchange of views on the Guidelines and prepare their message to the CAHENF (in child-friendly language: to Strasbourg).</p>
<b>Session 5</b>	<p>To close the consultations, reassure the children that their message will be delivered to the CAHENF and they will get follow-up on the Guidelines.</p> <p>To evaluate the consultation process itself.</p>

### 3. Overview of issues raised by children for consideration by the CAHENF

13. The CAHENF, with the support of its [Drafting group of Specialists on Children and the Digital Environment](#) (CAHENF-IT), will analyse the results of the child consultations with a view to ensuring that the text of the guidelines will take due consideration of the elements provided by children before it is being formally adopted. Appropriate follow-up is hence provided through the work of the Committee in the process of finalization of the draft text. The elements below have been extracted from the messages and videos provided by children and associated with the relevant sections of the draft text.

Country	Key message from children	Covered in the draft guidelines (Yes/No/Partly)	Key issue raised for consideration by the CAHENF as appropriate
<b>3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS</b>			
<b><u>ROMANIA</u></b>	Clarify the definition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evolving capacities of the children</li> <li>best interest of the child</li> <li>actors' obligations</li> </ul>	<b>Y</b> (par. 1,2,7,8,9)	Definitions are clear enough in the guidelines.
<b><u>CROATIA</u></b>	"When we get older, we get smarter and have better understanding of the internet and we have better rights on the internet"	<b>Y</b> (par. 7)	Confirmation of the concept of the evolving capacities of the child.
<b><u>CYPRUS</u></b>	<b>Equal rights</b> for all cultures/children regardless of background (access, privacy, education, play, protection/safety, expression and identity): "Everyone should have the same right"	<b>Y</b> (par. 3,4)	Reinforced by the children's views: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explicit emphasis on borders (physical, emotional and technical) that might limit children's participatory rights</li> <li>Equal (digital) rights, regardless of citizenship status</li> <li>Emphasize how "children" also include youth up to 18 year old.</li> </ul>
<b><u>HUNGARY</u></b>	Rights for equality, fight against hate speech, prejudice and discrimination	<b>Y</b> (par. 3,4)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>HUNGARY</u></b>	The children (minority) did not believe that their opinion and views would be taken into consideration. Therefore they were not thinking about these rights. This is especially in relation to school environment.	<b>N</b>	To be considered.
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	"We are against of discrimination by age."	<b>N</b>	To be considered.
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	"Children have rights for equal opportunities and work We are against discrimination."	<b>Y</b> (par. 3,4)	Reinforced by the children's views



<b>4. OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND MEASURES TO EMPOWER PROTECT AND SUPPORT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT</b>			
<b>4.1 ACCESS TO AND USE OF THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT</b>			
<b><u>ITALY</u></b>	"Everybody should have the possibility of an internet connection. Internet access should be a common good and not a privilege."	<b>Y</b> (par. 10,11)	It is fully considered within the guidelines.
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Content free of charge Non discrimination	<b>Y</b> (par. 11)	Games, videos and music should be available free of charge for all children (equal access), Access for all children regardless of their socio-economic status
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Stable Broadband Connectivity	<b>Y</b> (par. 11)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>ITALY</u></b>	Youngsters have to have a more restricted internet access with respect to adults + youngsters should not have the possibility to meet people online	<b>N</b>	To be considered.
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Access to WLAN free of charge everywhere	<b>N</b>	"Affordable access" at par. 11
<b><u>HUNGARY</u></b>	Access to wifi free of charge in public places	<b>N</b>	"Affordable access" at par. 11
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	"We are for free access to internet."	<b>N</b>	"Affordable access" at par. 11
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	Young people need access to the Internet network anywhere and at any time, and no one should control this process.	<b>N</b>	"Anywhere and at any time" – <u>adequate, available, affordable secure access at par. 11</u>
<b><u>CROATIA</u></b>	Access	<b>Y</b> (Par. 13)	Reinforced by the children's views: access accompanied by education and literacy
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	Children with special needs have no supportive space to access and learn how to use digital environment without adults	<b>Y</b> (Par. 13)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>HUNGARY</u></b>	Lack of information and content in minority language	<b>Y</b> (par. 19)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Comprehensibility of procedures of consent	<b>Y</b> (par. 14)	Reinforced by the children's views: Strengthen the need for consent procedures and T&Cs comprehensible to children
<b>4.2 RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND INFORMATION</b>			
<b><u>ITALY</u></b>	Children should have the right to express their opinion on the web	<b>Y</b> (par.16,17,20)	Reinforced by the children's views

<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	Online space doesn't mean for us only fun but also option to express our ideas to actual topics.	<b>Y</b> (par.16,17,20)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>CYPRUS</u></b>	Internet is useful to do research and gain information about anything	<b>Y</b> (par.19)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	"Even if it seems that youngsters don't care much about anything, thanks to internet we have all information situated in one place."	<b>Y</b> (par.19)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b>4.3 PARTICIPATION, RIGHT TO ENGAGE IN PLAY AND THE RIGHT TO ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION</b>			
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	<p>"It's really important for us to have an opportunity to participate, not only in daily life, but also on the internet, especially on social sites where we stay in touch with our friends."</p> <p>"Some of us play various online games that help to raise English skills and develop strategy thinking."</p>	<b>Y</b> (par. 21)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>CROATIA</u></b>	Right to be heard	<b>Y</b> (par. 21,23)	Reinforced by the children's views: empowerment of children to advocate for themselves
<b><u>HUNGARY</u></b>	Access to the Internet as a social place (e.g. for playing and keeping in contact) very important	<b>Y</b> (par. 21)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	Children have right for unlimited leisure	<b>N</b>	Propose not to include "unlimited" in the guidelines
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Independent leisure activity	<b>Y</b> (par. 21)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Right to play	<b>N</b>	<p>To be considered: guarantee for an appropriate amount of time to play online</p> <p>Right to play could be more emphasized as it is important for the children</p>
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Right to play safely – Games should be safe	<b>Y</b> (par. 32)	Reinforced by the children's views: protection from age inappropriate games, warnings in advance of downloading games containing cruelty
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	"Children have a human right to play, to talk to their friends	<b>Partly</b> (par. 21)	To be considered: right to engage in play could be more emphasized as it

	and to explore their life”		is important for the children
<b>ROMANIA</b>	“The “participation and play” we could modify, making out of this chapter, two chapters”	<b>Partly</b> (par. 21)	To be considered: another reference to the fact that the Right to engage in play could be more emphasized as it is important for the children
<b>GERMANY</b>	Creation of content and games	<b>Y</b> (par.22)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b>4.4 PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION</b>			
<b>CROATIA</b>	Misuse/abuse of personal images	<b>Y</b> (par. 27,28)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b>GERMANY</b>	Right to respect for privacy, no unnecessary registration	<b>Y</b> (par. 29,30,31,37)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b>GERMANY</b>	Deletion of images/the right to be forgotten	<b>Y</b> (par. 34)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b>GERMANY</b>	Cameras in toys	<b>Y</b> (par. 36)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b>GERMANY</b>	“You should have a nickname”	<b>Y</b> (par. 39)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b>GERMANY</b>	Advertisement	<b>N</b>	To be considered: sufficient reference in par. 88 or “States should require content providers to make advertisement recognisable to children and provide easy to use tools to close / leave the advertisement”.
<b>GERMANY</b>	Spending money	<b>N</b>	To be considered in connection with the content of par.88.
<b>GERMANY</b>	Disclosure of private data	<b>N</b>	To be considered.
<b>4.5. EDUCATION AND DIGITAL LITERACY</b>			
<b>ITALY</b>	“Introduce safer internet (privacy rights, the right way to use internet, digital rights) as curricular or extracurricular matter at school for students and parents, provide explanations about risks on the digital environment (privacy, freedom of expression) during the informatics subject in elementary middle schools and high schools”	<b>Y</b> (par. 40, 41, 46, 51)	Reinforced by the children’s views: the necessity to involve also the parents on the educational actors, specifying the related contents, also strengthen the role of the educational system
<b>HUNGARY</b>	Digital literacy – including sufficient technical facilities and development of creativity and hobbies – should be a topic in schools	<b>Y</b> (par. 40-46, 51)	Reinforced by the children’s views that responsibility of states to ensure that formal institutions, in particular schools, help children develop a wide range of skills, also creative; emphasis on state responsibility to ensure that children have a good understanding of – and trust – their own rights
<b>CROATIA</b>	Digital Literacy	<b>Y</b>	Reinforced by the children’s views

		(par. 41-44)	
<b><u>CROATIA</u></b>	If children want to know more about a topic they can search on the internet where many things are better explained than in the school books (e.g. facts and images about the WWII)	<b>Y</b> (par. 45)	High quality online resources to support the children's formal, non-formal and informal education
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Education about digital literacy	<b>Y</b> (par. 40-46)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	<p>"Most users should be familiar with the skills to use the Internet"</p> <p>"[Children] should be warned about the consequences of [their] mistakes"</p> <p>"Internet /.../should be used in training and development of the young person./.../ These processes must be integrated into learning at school or at university"</p>	<b>Y</b> (par. 40-46)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	False information	<b>Y</b> (par. 41)	Critical understanding reinforced the by children's views
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Educational resources available in digital environment	<b>Y</b> (par. 45-46)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Access and technology in schools and libraries	<b>Y</b> (par. 42)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>ITALY</u></b>	Education for parents	<b>Y</b> (par. 46)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	"Children aren't thinking about possible impacts on their privacy, health and protection of personal data. /.../ more pressure on education in formal and non formal ways in this area"	<b>Partly</b> (par. 41, 51)	Health: is it sufficiently covered by par. 46 or 49?
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	"/.../ To create an App that would associate all projects and courses for children and youth./.../ The app would contain: database of projects for children and youth, searching according to the town, state, age, focus or type of the project"	<b>Y</b> (par. 44)	Reinforced by the children's views with concrete project ideas
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	"There should be more pressure on development and translation of websites that already exist and devote	<b>Y</b> (par. 19)	Reinforced by the children's views

	oneself to online education.”		
<b>4.6 THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION AND SAFETY</b>			
<b><u>CROATIA</u></b>	Vulnerability/Protection	<b>Y</b> (par. 49)	Due to the particular vulnerability of children the need for special protection is reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Health issues: explicit protection from physical harm caused by the digital environment	<b>Y</b> (par. 49)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	[Adults] should keep balance protecting children from harm with allowing to play, to be involved in digital world	<b>Y</b> (par. 49)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	It is important to defend and prevent safety on the internet	<b>Y</b> (par. 49)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>UKRAINE</u></b>	Children must be supported with the knowledge and tools to make decisions about their own protection.	<b>Y</b> (par. 51)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>CROATIA</u></b>	They would like to know how to advocate for themselves if they are hurt in any way	<b>Y</b> (par. 51)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>ITALY</u></b>	Creation of a collaboration with private organisations in this area of expertise to offer a voluntary educational workshop about internet risks and digital rights	<b>Y</b> (par. 52)	Strengthening the role of the private stakeholders is reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	Danger of addiction	<b>Y</b> (par. 53)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Age restrictions	<b>Y</b> (par. 54)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u></b>	The security of websites inappropriate for children and youth, because most of young people just easily click on the confirmation of age. /.../ we propose to make the security more sophisticated and to require more demands than just clicking on „okay button“.	<b>Y</b> (par. 54)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>ITALY</u></b>	ISP should verify the age of the children (asking the fiscal code or the identity card)	<b>Y</b> (par. 54)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>GERMANY</u></b>	Protection from commercial fraud	<b>Y</b> (par. 55)	Reinforced by the children’s views
<b><u>CROATIA</u></b>	Protection from unwanted	<b>Y</b>	Strong control of the platform

	publishing of content regarding themselves	(par. 55)	provider on published content (video and images) is reinforced by the children's views
<b>ITALY</b>	Creation of a collaboration between UE and social network administrators to create a specific control in matter of contents published by underage users	<b>Y</b> (par. 55)	Introducing a well-balanced approach in order to avoid infringements of the law by minors (i.e. cyber-bulism), while respecting their freedom of expression is reinforced by the children's views
<b>CROATIA</b>	Cyber-bullying	<b>Y</b> (par. 58-60)	Reinforced by the children's views: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid re-victimization online/offline</li> <li>• Peer support is considered as a solution</li> <li>• Empowerment for self-help is considered as a solution</li> </ul>
<b>UKRAINE</b>	We are against cyber bullying	<b>Y</b> (par. 58-60)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b>CROATIA</b>	Risk of Grooming	<b>Partly</b> (par. 58)	Since the perception of children about potentially dangerous contacts is diverse, there should be a detailed reference to online grooming not only to cyber-bullying in par. 58-60
<b>CROATIA</b>	Fake profiles	<b>N</b>	Probably addressed to false identities Amendment with regard to platform providers' responsibility to guarantee the true identity of their users. To be considered.
<b>CYPRUS</b>	Parental/adult support important (child-adult engagement when going online), especially in order to get proper protection from parents/adults from the dangers of the Internet ("mom and dad as filters")	<b>Y</b> (par. 20,46,90)	Reinforced by the children's views
<b>ITALY</b>	Parents should be able to block those web sites they do not consider appropriate for their children under, at least, 14/15 years	<b>Y</b> (par. 20,46,90)	Reinforced by the children's views

#### 4. Main outcomes of the child consultations

14. Despite the diverse and different backgrounds of the children taking part in the seventeen child consultations in eight Member States, they expressed similar views and made the same recommendations in relation to several issues.

15. Children in general were aware of children rights, but knowledge about the content of the rights differed widely. Children themselves referred to their evolving capacities saying that, as they are getting older,

they are getting smarter and have a better understanding of the digital environment. They expressed that they expect support from their parents and adults according to their age and maturity, sometimes the use of “parental control” was also justifiable for them.

16. Equality as an overarching principle was mentioned not only in consultations with vulnerable groups, but children who felt more likely to be subject to discrimination proposed concrete actions. For instance, unaccompanied minors recommended including equality in order to ensure that every child’s rights are protected and not only those of European children. Children with learning disabilities drew attention to the lack of available public and other spaces to access internet and digital literacy. Roma children chose to focus on an anti-Gypsyism message as they were concerned about the hateful content and hate speech about Roma present on the internet.

17. How children approached the topic itself underlined an important message: children of today literally live in the digital environment, the border between reality and the online world being already blurred in their mind. Online and offline interactions can have the same effect on children and can be easily connected or cumulated. One of the examples mentioned in several consultations is the act of bullying between peers since in the digital environment the bullying goes on after the school is closed and all the children are at home. Children referred to their needs to parental and adult support and guidance, but also emphasized that they need balanced interventions and not too restrictive, protective measures. They required trust and attention as in any other field of their life.

18. All the children agreed on that everyone should have access to internet, without discrimination, and many of them mentioned that access should be available for free of charge, anywhere or at least in public places. At the same time, the participants admitted that children are more vulnerable, so the access should come along with education and literacy, support from parents and adults and the provision of child-friendly environment. The access is important for the children for various reasons: to learn, to play, to socialize and to express themselves. The need for child-friendly, understandable language in case of terms and conditions regulating access to websites were raised in several groups.

19. Children were aware of their right to play, but had different views about the content of the right: some children asked unlimited leisure time online, while others argued for five or even only one hour play-time per day. Many children were concerned about the safety in relation to online games including the effect of violent games, the risk of meeting strangers in common platforms and in-app purchases.

20. One of the main concerns of the children, expressed during the discussion about privacy rights and data protection, was the fear from the misuse and abuse of their photos. Children were well aware of the consequences of sharing content online, such as the fact that they can lose control over further dissemination of the material and they can get hurt in “real life”. They themselves knew several ways to download or acquire images, therefore, they proposed as a solution to restrict access to images and provide stronger control by social media sites. The issue of cameras in toys was raised by younger children.

21. The respect for private and family life was raised several times in relation to keep contact with friends. In case of particularly vulnerable groups, such as asylum-seeker children and children living in the countryside while the parents working abroad, the need to stay in touch with family was emphasized. In spite of the fact that children were aware that digital identities could be fake and people in real life could be different compared to how they described themselves online, many of them were not worried to get to know new people online and few of them would even arrange meetings with strangers.

22. The lack of digital literacy education in the state curriculum was the most highly shared concern among children from all the participating Member States. Despite the fact that many of the children said that they learnt everything by themselves about the digital environment in practice, children would still expect to gain knowledge on digital and privacy rights, safe internet use, assessment of false information at school. Children even recommended setting up websites and applications for educational purposes eventually integrated into the formal education.

23. Children were aware of several risks embodied in the digital environment including cyber-bullying, online grooming, hate speech, but many times they did not know what to do and where to turn if they need

help. On several occasions, they reiterated that they would expect more information about the potential risks of harm in the digital environment and guidance from the school.

24. Children gave outstanding feedbacks about the child participation method used. On one hand, they enjoyed the non-formal educational settings where they were free to express their ideas and views as an equal member of the group. However, some participants felt uncomfortable at the very beginning and missed the formal setting given by the school environment. On the other hand, they found the consultations interesting since it was the first time they had the chance to talk about these topics, which are important and relevant for their life. The child consultations created space for children to express their opinion freely make them feeling that what they think does matter and that they can really make a difference, which will eventually have a positive impact on their life. All the children expressed their interest to get a follow-up on how their views were ultimately considered and how they can contribute to the implementation of the Guidelines when they are adopted. Children were empowered in this process, their self-esteem and self-confidence were raised and they had been trained how to advocate for their own rights.



## Annex 1. Outcomes of the child consultations by country and group

### A. Croatia

#### Age group (13-14 years old)

1. The Croatian age group consisted of children from the age of 13 and 14 years from Vinkovci. Generally considered good students, they regularly took part in after school sessions and planned to enrol in secondary education. The children volunteered to participate in the consultation after the school psychologist presented them the aims and structure of the activity. The impression of the facilitator about the group was that they are eager to work, they are cooperative, talkative, creative, likeable and hardworking. The language of the consultation was Croatian.
2. In general, the children were aware of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and children's rights. They knew how to define who is a child, and they called themselves children and not youth. They were aware of digital media, social media and networks, and they have experience in using them as well.
3. During the general discussion, children made the following comments:

*"Children need internet as much as adults need it; children have lots of interests which they can learn online; Facebook has age limit but everyone lies that they are 16 years old so they can go on Facebook."*

*"There are lots of bad things on the internet; when we get older, we get smarter and have better understanding of the internet and we have better rights on the internet."*

*"Children/young people can use the internet the same way as the adults? Yes, but with parental control."*

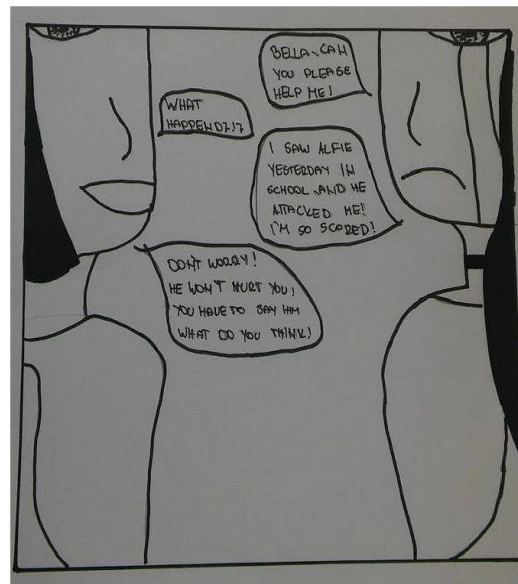
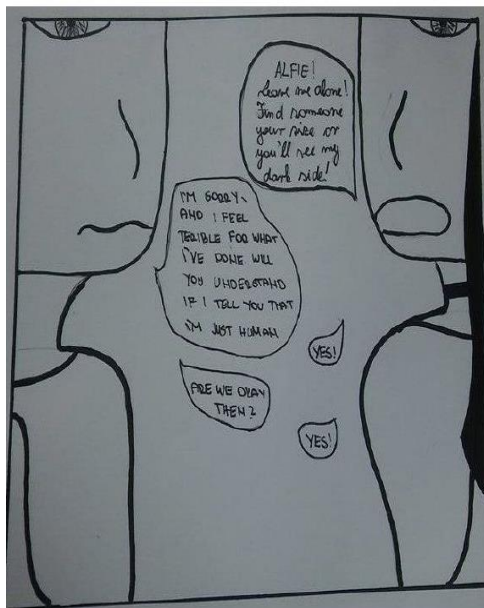
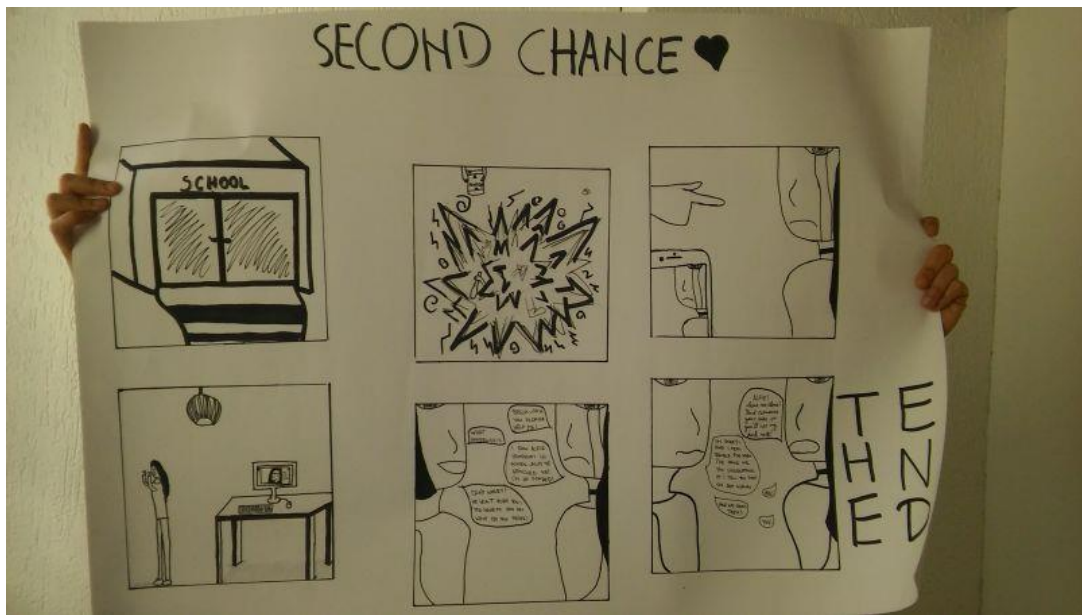
*"Children/young people can get to know new people online and become friends. Yes, but those persons are not necessarily the ones we think they are, they can be dangerous people."*

*"Children/young people can keep contact with their friends and families online. Yes, especially if they are far away."*

*"Children/young people can use the internet to study as well as to prepare for school. Yes, children often want to know more, for example facts and photographs about World War II, because it is better and in more detail explained on the internet than it is in their school books."*

*"Children/young people can play on the internet. They can download games, they do not have to play them online."*

4. The message of the Croatian children is called "Second chance" and it speaks of bullying that children can experience in school and which can also be transferred to social networks by sharing pictures or videos of a bullied child. According to the child participants, that kind of materials spread very easily and quickly on social networks, such as Facebook. **Every child deserves to be protected from publishing unwanted information, pictures and videos about him/her.** Considering the theme of sharing videos on social networks, children are proposing that **all of the social networks should have strong control over video and picture materials that are published**, so that children who are hurt in "real life" don't have to suffer the consequences also over the phone or personal computer. The name of the message "Second chance" was given because the bullied girl confronted her bully, forgave him because everyone can make a mistake and deserves a second chance. However, during the discussion about the content of the message none of the children declared having similar experiences, they were aware of dangers of social networks and wanted to emphasise that every child deserves to be protected from publishing unwanted information, pictures and videos about him/her.



## Vulnerable group

5. The second group in Croatia was composed of six volunteer children from a half-day stay in a social child-care facility situated in Osijek. The children were between the age of 10 and 15 but, due to the strict rules of the child-care facility, the facilitator had no insight into the details of their social and cultural background. The language of the consultation was also Croatian.

6. The children had many great ideas and the excitement was palpable as they get to know that their voices will be heard in Strasbourg. There were ideas that were excellent but unfortunately were not feasible because of the rules of child-care facility. The older part of the group was sticking to the theme of their rights in the digital world, while the younger part of the group had difficulties comprehending the assignment so the younger group needed facilitation to focus on the theme of the session. The older part of the group made a decision about the content of the message which the younger part of the group accepted, and the younger part of the group decided on the form of the message which the older part of the group accepted. This type of cooperation shows harmony and support in teamwork.

7. The group prepared a message through a presentation in which they ask for their rights to be safe on the internet. **They want to be protected from fake profiles** and they suggested that when a profile is being created, the person should enter their VAT number so that the number of fake profiles would decrease. They also want to **make sure that their pictures cannot be downloaded from their profiles and used for wrong purposes**; they want Facebook to ban downloading pictures and set out a warning message if someone has screenshot their picture.



## Feedback from the children

8. The Croatian children have rated this experience as highly positive, they would participate again in similar workshops and they were very happy to be a part of this project. They were surprised and excited, because they previously thought that this was like any other workshop they had in school and they were

looking forward to the follow-up of the project. According to the feedback of the NGO partner, this project created space for children to express their opinions freely, make them feel that their opinion matters and they can change things. It also empowered them, raised their self-esteem and self-confidence, which eventually lead to better knowledge about the topic and more adjusted reactions if their rights are violated.

## B. Cyprus

### Age group (7 years old)

9. In Cyprus, the age group was composed of classmates from elementary school at the age of 7 years, including one child with visual sensory impairments. The school is considered one of the best public schools in the neighbourhood, the social background of the families is average middle class. All children have access to some degree to the internet for learning and playing games, most of them had a phone or a tablet that they can use at home. The consultation was implemented in Greek language.

10. All children participated in an enthusiastic way; some children were familiar with some of the terms and even able to give examples. During the general discussion, the participants defined children as “a human being that learns” and “someone who goes to school”. The digital environment was explained as “a thing we use to find the answers to difficult questions”. One of the children said that the internet in practice is very dangerous, “we should not meet people online and especially not speak to strangers and as a stranger approaches us, we should immediately speak to our parents about this matter”. The participants also emphasized the fact that the internet can be used as a way of studying, preparing for school and that useful information can be found on the internet.

11. Initially, the children divided themselves into 3 groups and each group decided to create drawings to be sent to Strasbourg. After they finished the drawings, the group decided to send video messages and make some additional individual drawings.



#### The team of dragons

We should not judge others because they are different or because they are from a different country.



FACEBOOK is dangerous.



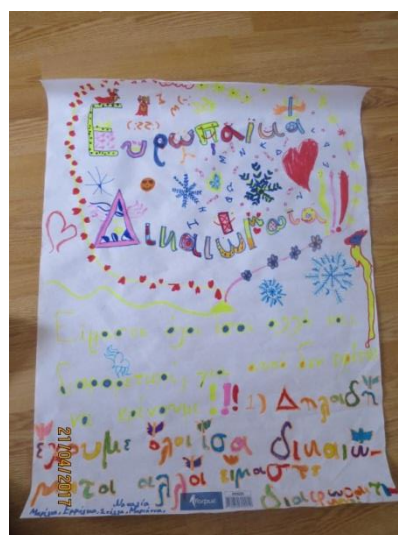
The internet is useful: WE ARE STRONG.





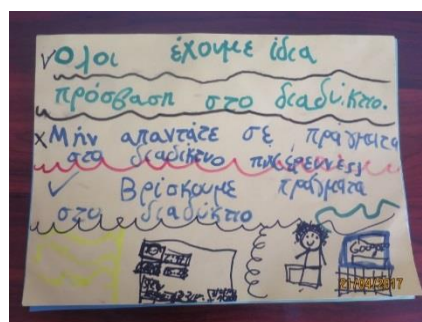
### Team Lighting

Everyone should have a home  
Everyone should be equal  
Everyone should have the same rights  
Do not make fun  
Everyone should go to school  
Everyone should do all the same things  
I you play, I should play  
Everybody should have a family



### Team- European rights

We are all equal but different  
that's why we should not judge  
Because we all have equal rights  
others are different



We all have the same access to internet; Do not answer to things on internet, e.g. research; we find thing on internet

### Transcript of the video message (English translation)

We can play games online but only with the permission from our parents. We have to use internet together with our parents and we should not spend too much time because we might ruin our eyes. We should be protected from the internet. Everybody should have the same access to internet and we can definitely use internet as a way to do some research and find things. We can play video games online but with moderation and we should definitely not buy things online. We all can learn how to properly use internet but at the beginning we need our parent's help. We should not use internet alone, we should always have someone with us. On this paper I have created two different things: on the one side, I have the stones, representing the bad things and on the other side, I have the balls that represent the good things and that is because internet has both good and bad things.

## Vulnerable group

12. The group was composed of unaccompanied asylum seeker and refugee children living in the Children's Shelter "Home for Hope" in Nicosia and who volunteered to take part in the activity. All the participants were boys (as the shelter accommodates only males) at the age of 16-17 with Somali origin. The complexity of their previous and current life circumstances make this group vulnerable. The language of the consultation was English.

13. In general, participants were interested in the topic and had a basic knowledge. Although, they had a difficulty to consider themselves children: they expressed that in their country, Somalia, children 15-18 years old are considered adults. Accordingly, they think that children up to 15 should not use internet the same way as adults but children 15-18 should be able to do so. The participants expressed that children can learn how to use internet by themselves because they learned by themselves, too. All children agreed that they can express their view online without restrictions, they can keep contact with family and friends and can use internet to study and play. There was a discussion about knowing people online and making friends with them and also about incidents of bullying, abuse or unlimited use of internet by children. In relation to this argument, they claimed again that since they are considered adults in their countries, they can protect themselves. However, in scenarios involving young children they were more aware of that children's rights should be protected by legal measures.

14. The focus of the group discussion was on non-discrimination among children and the rights of all children in all cultures to be protected - not only European children. **They agreed that all children in the world have the right to have access to the internet, to be educated through internet, to play on the internet, to feel safe and have their privacy protected.** Based on this, they decided to create a collage with pictures from magazines and drawings to express their wish for non-discrimination of cultures and the equal right of all children in the world to have the same rights.



## Feedback from the children

15. The children in the age group, knowing that their message will be transferred to Strasbourg, were expecting to experience what the Council of Europe will do to protect them. It is also worth mentioning that some of the children wanted to take their drawings home to show to the parents. It could be interpreted as a genuine interest on what they have learnt as well as that they wanted to share their thoughts and concerns with their parents so they will take the internet serious and provide protection for them from the "bad internet". The participants of the vulnerable group were expecting to send their message to Strasbourg as

soon as possible and expressed that they were waiting for the feedback and the positive effect on the drafting of the Guidelines. They were very interested, enthusiastic and looking forward to the follow-up.

## C. Czech Republic

### Age group (14-18 years old)

16. The group was composed of the members of the National Parliament of Children and Youth aged between the age of 14 and 18. All of them are members of their youth parliaments and they actively participate in their schools, towns or regions. The participants know each other and had friendly relationships. The language of the consultation was Czech.

17. During the general discussion, some participants referred to the early age of children when the access to the internet is not appropriate for them because of “dangerous websites with porn or bad-influence content”. The topic of learning digital literacy divided the group, as some argued that children are not able to teach themselves how to use internet and they need to be informed about dangers and protection of their personal data. While others pointed out that it is better for children to teach themselves how to use the internet because they don’t get information from competent people (parents, teachers) anyway. Although children agreed that internet provides opportunity to be in touch with family and friends anytime they want, they also pointed on the danger of meeting “bad people” in the digital environment, especially “paedophiles or drug dealers”. Participants mostly agreed on that children in digital environment are vulnerable and they should have at least feeling that there is a protection for them.

18. The participants split up into two groups and discussed the content and form of the message to be sent to Strasbourg. The first group chose “protection and safety” using a form of video, the second one chose two topics “evolving capacities of children” and “education and digital literacy” using a form of letter. They decided for two topics because they felt that there is a connection between them.

#### Transcript of the video (English translation)

We, as children and youth, think that it is important to defend and prevent safety on the internet, because kids are really vulnerable and sensitive. In our opinion it is not paid enough attention to this problematic. Children aren't thinking about possible impacts on their privacy, health and protection of personal data. They could easily become victims of cyber bullying, crime, but also addiction to internet, games etc. We think that there should be more pressure on education in formal and informal ways in this area. We find the security of websites inappropriate for children and youth, because most of the young people just easily click on the confirmation of age. Therefore we propose to make the security more sophisticated and to require more demands than just clicking on „okay button“. So we would like to ask you not to take this message lightly, because for us it is really important to feel safe on the internet.

**Letter (English translation)**

Dear members of the Council of Europe,

Within the workshop about children rights in the digital environment we decided to focus on two areas: Evolving capacities of children and Education and digital literacy. We had an interesting and fruitful discussion which brought us to one idea – to create an App that would associate all projects and courses for children and youth. We see big potential in the digital environment because here children and young people spend plenty of their time. Raising the medialization of educational projects and simplifying the reachability of them could lead to evolving capacities of children and youth and motivate them to meaningful using of modern technologies.

We know that there are already various web sides with this topic (e.g. eurodesk.cz, dobrovolnik.cz,...). Despite this we think that in the time of higher usage of mobile telephones the app would be also rewarding. The app would contain: database of projects for children and youth, searching according to the town, state, age, focus or type of the project. We also think that there should be more pressure on development and translation of websites that already exist and devote oneself to online education. They would be more available to children and youth thanks to the translation to European languages.

Best regards,

Members of the National Parliament of Children and Youth

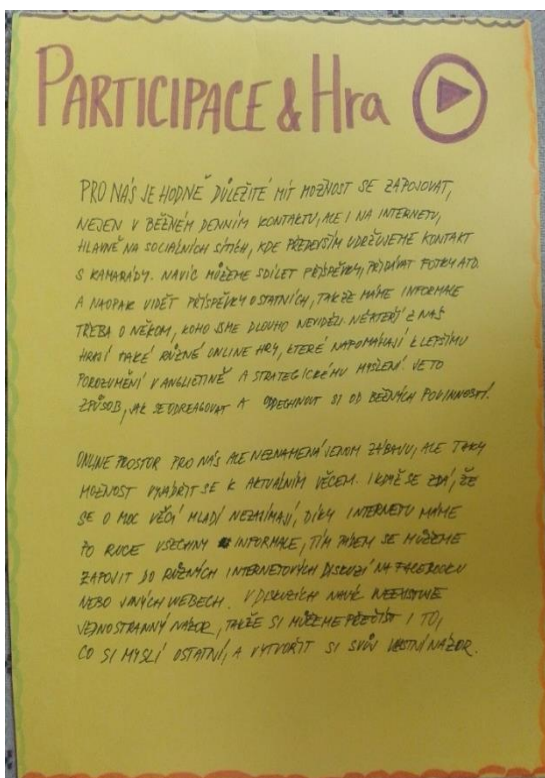
**Vulnerable group**

19. The group was composed of children from children homes and foster care who are part of the Youth Advisory Board of Lumos Foundation and have learning disabilities. They chose to take part in this activity as they were interested in topics such as advocacy, support of vulnerable children, foster care, transformation of social services in Czech Republic and children rights. The language of the consultation was Czech.

20. Some of the participants already know the work of the Council of Europe so they shared their knowledge and how they got the information. During the general discussion, some stated that for younger children (under five) the digital environment can be very risky since there are not enough safety rules for such young children. They discussed the accessibility for children and young adults with special needs and agreed on that children with special needs have no supportive space to access and learn how to use digital environment without adults. Playing games on the internet divided the group as some of the children said that games on the internet are not good for development of the children, while others stated if games are educative children should play them.

21. From the beginning, children wanted to be in one group and they started to plan together and build the strategy for the form and content of their messages. They decided to work on the topic of “Participation and play” in form of a letter.





#### Letter (English translation)

##### Participation and play

It's really important for us to have an opportunity to participate, not only in daily life, but also on the internet, especially on social sites where we stay in touch with our friends. In addition we are able to share posts, add photos, etc. On the other hand we can see others posts so we have information about someone who we haven't seen for long time. Some of us play various online games that help to raise English skills and develop strategy thinking. It's a way how to chill and have a rest without current duties.

Online space doesn't mean for us only fun but also option to express our ideas to actual topics. Even if it seems, that youngsters don't care much about anything, thanks to internet we have all information situated in one place. That's why we can join to various discussions on Facebook and other web sites. Moreover in discussions there is not only one-sided opinion so we can read others thoughts and create our own opinion.

#### **Feedback from the children**

22. The participants of the age group were excited that their messages will go direct to the Council of Europe and they were looking forward to hear about the next steps. They also liked the form of the consultation, they enjoyed working in teams and the whole process overall. The children in the vulnerable group were also curious what will happen to their message and they expressed their expectation to get feedback from the Council of Europe later. They evaluated the consultation positively, they took home in their backpack mostly new information (about Council of Europe, children's rights), also good feelings about the work done and good experiences. They also said they liked to work in a group and they also appreciated the new friendships they made.

#### **D. Germany**

##### **Age group (11 years old)**

23. The group based on age was composed of primary school students at the age of 11 attending a course called „Life Skills“. This school is considered a children's rights school which means that the children started to learn about children's rights at grade 4. The facilitator did not get detailed information about the social and cultural background of the children but was aware of that they had diverse family backgrounds (mixed families from Germany, Turkey, Russia). The language of the consultation was German.

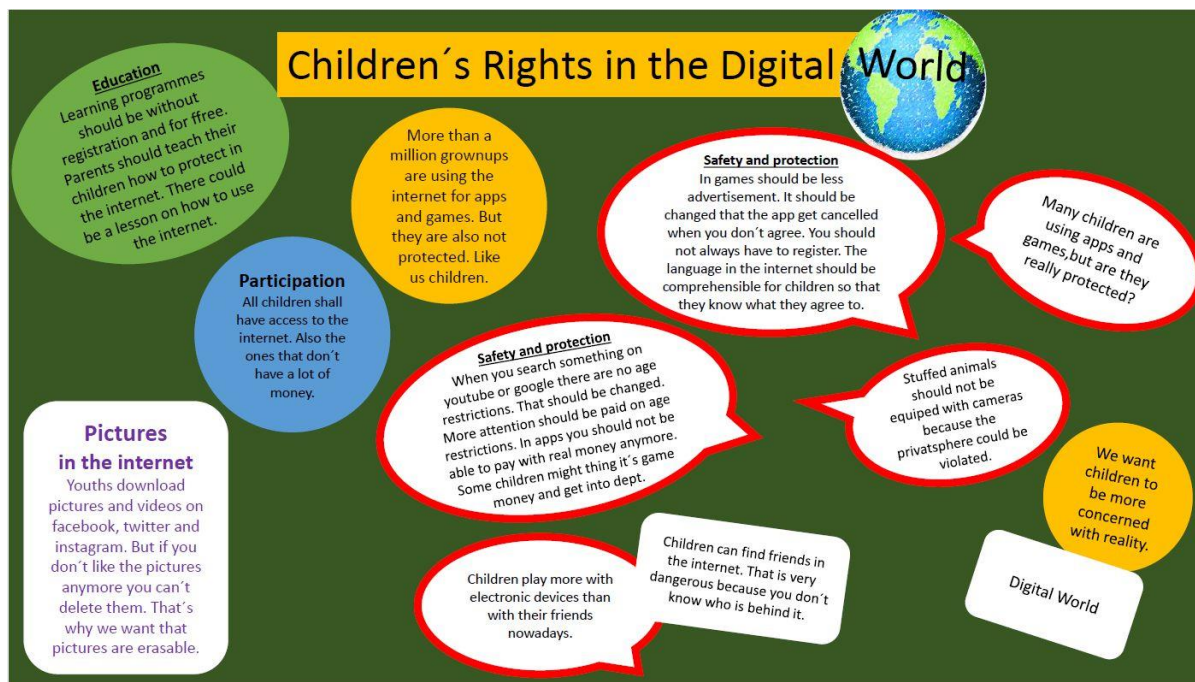
24. The introductory session about children's rights and definitions went smoothly as the group talked about children's rights the day before in class. According to the participants, children are smaller people than grownups, don't have to work, have parents, from 18 on of full age, from 14 teenagers, have more energy than older people, like sweets, most of them go to school. During the brainstorming about the digital world they mentioned key words as virus, sharing pictures in groups, access to camera, private data, smart phone, tablet, laptop, tv, nintendo, internet, google (knowledge), siri, facebook, twitter, instagram, whatsapp, smart board (in school), youtube, snapchat, musically, skype. One of the participants mentioned that „changes on apps need my agreement otherwise I can't use the app anymore – even though I don't know what's written there“.

Another comment referring to snapchat was „you think you send it only to a group but maybe you send it to the whole internet world“.

25. During the general discussion, the children made the following suggestions:
- „Grownups are protected better on the internet.“
  - „Parents should look out – it could be dangerous if you leave children alone in the internet, for example when friends write you but they are not friends.“
  - „Children don't have so much experience. They could download something wrong or enter a wrong website.“
  - „If you write something in the internet it does not go away, it stays there – it stays there forever even if you say something silly.“
  - „You shouldn't trust strangers in the internet.“
  - „Grownups could pretend to be children and your friends.“
  - „If I use it for my homework I don't learn anything when I look up everything.“
  - „There are also a lot of false information on the internet because everybody can write anything.“
  - „I don't play so often, only when I'm bored. Often I don't know what is behind it.“
  - „They should not be able to download any games, like shooting games. Then they can have nightmares.“

26. The children discussed the form and content of the message and formed two groups. One of the groups decided to make a voice message and the other one to work on a poster.





### Transcript of the voice message (English translation)

Boy 11: Hello and welcome to blabla-TV!

Age restrictions:

If a game is marked with FSK<sup>1</sup> 181 every kid should ask their parents first if it can download the game which is restricted for 18 years or younger.

If a game is from 18 years there should be a protection. Games should be safe. If a game is including blood there should be a warning.

Knowledge about the internet:

There should be age restrictions. You should have a nickname. When you are writing with someone in the internet, you should make sure that you are talking to a friend or a family member. Because if you are talking to a stranger, the danger is high to be tricked. Children shouldn't download anything where they don't know what it is.

Girl, 11: Registration and agreement:

There should not be registrations in apps before you install it or use it. If there are changes in apps, there should not be agreements.<sup>1</sup> If they are necessary they should be comprehensible for children. When I click on "I don't agree" then I can't use the app anymore. This is not supposed to be like that.

Advertisement:

There is advertisement in almost all games. That is very annoying. The cross should be bigger in order to leave the advertisement better. You should be able to leave the advertisement right away instead of waiting for the countdown to pass.

Boy, 11: No payments:

Games, videos and music as well as everything available in the internet should be free of charge. In games you should be able to earn money by mini-games. No money payments!

Cameras in toys:

In toys no remote controlled cameras shall be installed. You should be able to control the camera and record with it on your own. You should be able to switch in on and off by yourself. There should be no cyberteddies anymore.

### Vulnerable group

27. The German vulnerable group consisted of children from a small class in a clinic school between the age 11 and 13 years. The children have different psychiatric issues and they stay for a few weeks to a few months in these small and familiar classes. It was of particular importance for their teacher to be present during the consultations as they are familiar with them. The language of the consultation was German.

28. The participants defined children as “young people are becoming descendants of grownups” and “are going to take over the world”. Among children’s rights they mentioned pocket money, access to internet, equal treatment, living non-violent, care/custody, health (for example health insurance card), education. They knew the digital world as the place to play games (even brutal ones like GTA), where they can get information and go on social networks. Children also made the following comments:

*"I know better how to use the computer than my mother. My mother should have restricted access."*

*"One time I have bought something accidentally without knowing it. I think it can be dangerous."*

*"It's not fair when children have different rights than grownups. Parents are examples. When they play shooting games I can do that too."*

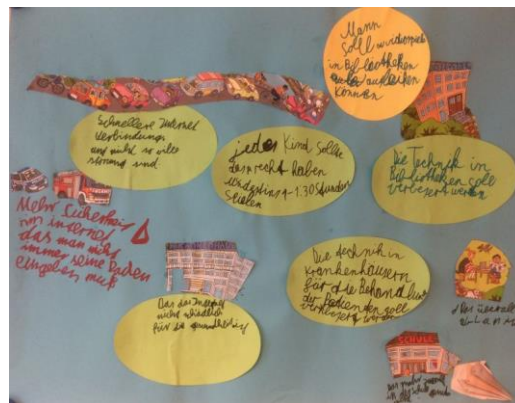
*"It can be dangerous. You can even buy snakes in the internet. This is a medium heavy scandal."*

*"It could be helpful for homework. Sometimes I check on youtube for something if I forgot how it works."*

*"Every child has the right to play."*

*"I want to play 5 hours a day."*

29. The children agreed on to prepare posters with the main ideas and recommendations they want to send to Strasbourg.

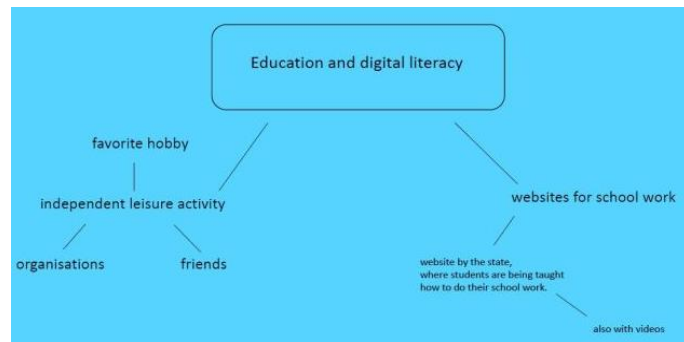
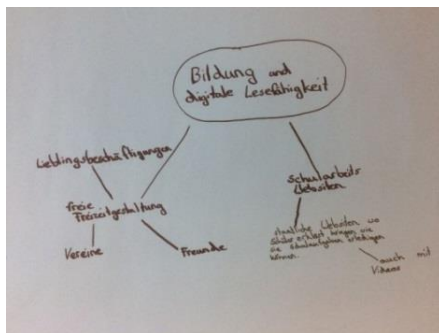




Children and youth can play in the internet. We agree.



(Everything that exists in real life as well.)



## Feedback from the children

30. At the beginning of the consultations, the facilitator brought a bar of chocolate to illustrate the purpose of the method: everybody took a piece of the chocolate and tasted it. In the meantime, the facilitator wrote down three associations for this chocolate without tasting it (e.g. how the children would describe it to her). Then the participants were asked to explain what they were tasting and what their associations were. Then, the facilitator told them the three words and compared with what the children said. With this method she was able to demonstrate to the group that they are experts of their own topics and thoughts and that the Ad hoc committee for the Rights of the Child needs to know what they think, they can't just assume it without asking them. This method was very helpful for explaining the purpose of the consultations but also helped an external person to build trust with the children.

31. The groups were very interested in the task, full of ideas, happy to take part, although they had previously worked on children's rights and were familiar with them they were actively taking part and enjoyed sharing their ideas and giving answers. They were also serious about their answers and considerations. Participants in both of the groups expressed that they would like to see the results of their work in relation to the Guidelines or somewhere else.

## E. Hungary

### Age group (14- 18 years)

32. In the Hungarian age group out of 14 participants 12 participants were older than 16 years old; the two other participants were 14 and 15 years old. All of them were students of the secondary school, they came from different classes, but some of them were classmates. Due to their family background, age and education, the presumption was that these participants have extended knowledge and clear views on the topic. The consultation took place in Budapest, in Hungarian.

33. According to the facilitator, it was interesting how much everyday politics have structured the thinking of the participants. In the beginning they told that in their opinion "anything related to the European Union or Council of Europe must have been something connected to politics", and "as they are not really involved in politics and know too little about it, they do not see how they will participate in this group work". Therefore, it was clarified that being connected to politics means something complicated for them, very far from their life, and they perceive no possibility to participate actively in all those issues of interest that were presented to them. The way of expressing themselves was appropriate to their age: just as other teenagers they spoke in a friendly and intellectual way, thinking about ultimate solutions and "the big things of the world". Their discourse and opinion about the Council of Europe and rights are much more based on theories, information from news (often told by family members) and formal, lexical knowledge from school than their personal experiences. Unlike, they relate to the topic of digital environment directly, they shared several personal memories, experiences.

34. The issue of child participation and freedom of expression were also discussed in school life. The children did not believe that their opinion and views would have been taken into consideration. Therefore, they were not thinking about these rights. They have accepted that children/students have not lived with these rights. They did not believe in the system of student government/council, because in their opinion it has not been functioning effectively. They were explaining this system as a formal student representative council, which has to be elected everywhere, the candidates sometimes have been appointed involuntarily. The group did not consider the students council as an interest representative body. They assumed that financial source should have been involved to achieve something through the student council (e.g. some program) but they were not thinking or were not aware that some community acts could have been done to express the opinion of the students or initiate actions to improve school/students life. A member from a student council shared some good example that was unknown by the other participants (submitted complaint against a teacher, who later resigned).

35. Finally, the group agreed to discuss the following topics in a closed Facebook group set up only for this purpose:

- They wish to reform the Hungarian educational system comprehensively. They would like to introduce new teaching methodologies which involve and count with the 'digital environment' effectively, they also would improve the technical conditions of their education. It means that more digital devices should be involved during the classes, and also would be suggested to organise obligatory training course for teacher and pedagogy students on the usage of digital devices and introduce new methodologies.
- Regarding the new methodologies and reform, it would be welcomed to have a subject at schools which is dealing with: digital environment, digital literacy, data protection, awareness raising on the risk of internet use. The aim would be to teach the 'new generation' how to use internet 'wisely', smartly and efficiently.
- They would like to participate and express their opinion in an environment where ethics and non-violent communication are fundamental.

### Transcript of the social media group discussion (English translation)

Guys, Education should be reformed...

/Check in at the school/

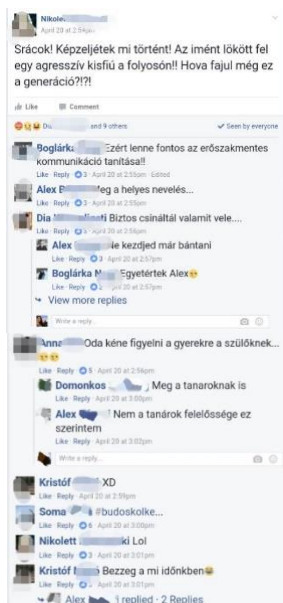
- For example by digitalizing it?!
- I agree. I think methods of teachers' education are also important to be changed. And further education for teachers too
- Looooool
- Using more modern devices is an important issue too
- We should live with the opportunities of internet too
- Cool idea!
- Oh yes, I thought about such things as well. Any more smart ideas?
- Would be great if tools were developed
- Education methods too
- Small children's internet awareness should be developed, to protect data and avoid dangers



Guys, imagine what's just happened! An aggressive little boy just pushed me in the corridor!

How far does this generation go?

- Therefore educating non-violent communication is so important!!
- And right parental education as well
- Maybe you did something to him as well...
- Don't start mocking her
- I agree Alex
- You really have bad intentions
- Parents should pay attention to their children...
- Teacher should do so as well
- I don't consider it as the responsibility of teachers





## **Vulnerable group No. 1**

36. One of the groups was composed of children of Roma origin living in Hodász, in Eastern Hungary. In Hodász mainly Vlah Roma people (Cerhari) live and foster Romani language and Vlah Romani culture. Hodász is unique not just because of its Romani cultural heritage but also for its religious life. At the same time this Vlah community is quite traditional (e.g. moral and ethical rules for girls and women) and only in the last 10-15 years it has been observed that the young girls continue their studies outside of Hodász. Other important information is that music has a vital role in this community's life. The authentic/traditional Romani music, religious songs and pop music are also singed and played by the member of the Roma community in Hodász. In 2016, a group of youngsters took part in the Hungary's Got Talent TV show and became well-known nationwide. The success of this band might influence the teenagers in Hodász as well.

37. The participants in the consultation were mainly 13-15 year old teenagers (including two 12 years old and two 16 years old teenagers). All of them were bilingual (Hungarian – Romanes). During the consultation the participants used Hungarian, but the message was phrased in Romanes as well, and some short discussions between the participants were in Romanes. The topic of being bilingual was also discussed. For the children it is natural that they speak in both languages, also aware where they could use or could not use it. There are only few websites which operate in Romanes. The participants mentioned that there are more Romani websites in other countries, but because of the different Romani dialects it was difficult to understand. It was raised also that they speak Hungarian, and they would be happy if websites which are available in English would be translated into Hungarian. They were not aware about the Council of Europe, but some participants googled during the break. They expressed that in this case it would be great would they have learnt English (but they learn German) or websites and children rights related content would be translated into Hungarian.

38. They were aware of the definition of a child. At the same time mentioned that in practice a child was a person who is supported by their parents, so being financially independent and being 'serious' made someone adult. The digital environment term was also discussed, mainly the children were aware what the meaning was about, and for easier communication 'being online' term was used instead of digital environment.

39. The majority of the participants were aware of their rights. At the same time participants mostly determined themselves as a member of the community/society, rather than an individual, and this impacted on their considerations on rights and responsibilities. It was mentioned many times during the consultation that they could live with their rights until it was not conflicting with others rights/interest. The role of ethic and traditions was also considered important. This also meant that they tend to be more sensitive/open for the rights of other vulnerable groups. The role of the parents and the family were quite strong, and many children rights were obvious for them. While parents pay attention to the needs and requirements of their children, at the same time the children also have obligations. They felt their rights in the school were limited, considering that freedom of expression or involvement in decision-making process almost impossible.

40. The participants were purposeful from the very beginning, it seemed obvious for all the participants that the core message and content would be focusing around equality and non-discrimination, and that their message will involve singing, playing music and drawing a poster. As it was mentioned earlier the majority of the participant were gifted/talented children, and this determined the form of the message. They easily decided that they wished to sing the Romani Anthem (Gelem, Gelem) and a song from a Hungarian Roma pop singer, whose title is "Black White". This song is about equality and aim to fight against prejudice (and its harmful effect). Generally music, art and sports have been the only channel for Roma to get attention from the publicity. On one hand, the children had self-esteem and were aware that they are good in music and would promote their own talent instead of writing a formal letter. On the other hand, they learn that music could help to phrase any message or problem to the world.

41. In the media, in the social media, on YouTube and in different internet sources many negative comments and posts have been published against Roma, which could classify as hate speech. The participants have seen many posts, comments like this, they thought the internet generally spreads negative stereotypes about Roma. Having understood that the Council of Europe is dealing with human rights and has a regional/international mandate, children wished to send a message about the right to non-discrimination and

equality, as the most important/sensitive right which is violated so often. They also felt that they have to send a message as a group, and not just as an individual.

42. Their message was to stand up for rights for equality, fight against hate speech, prejudice.



43. In the poster, the Romanes sentence “Kase sam sar tumen” means literally that “We are same as you”. The Hungarian part of the message is: Do not prejudice/judge Roma, do not prejudice us because of our traditions, religion, skin colour and otherness. On the post-it is written the first verse of the Romani Anthem (written below in English) in Romanes. The typical shape and colour of the flowers resembles to the patterns of traditional Vlah Romani skirts and scarfs.

44. The first song in the video message is Gelem, gelem (Roma Anthem, also known as Opre Roma), composed by Zarko Jovanovic. This song was chosen because this give “formality” to the message and at the same time also emphasise the Roma identity and existence. This could be considered as the introduction of the Roma (they chose the International Roma Anthem, but not the Hungarian Roma Anthem, it could be considered that they did not think about the micro community but generally about Roma) for the Council of Europe, and the second song is the “message” itself.

45. The title of second song in the video message is Black, White, which is played and singed by a Hungarian Roma singers, the main vocalist who won a Hungarian talent TV show in 2016 (Gergő Oláh). The song’s aim is to promote equality and put attention on the issue of prejudice which has harmful effect on different social and ethnic groups. The video clip also has a message (blank and white video) due it shows faces from different ethnical/national background.

**Transcript of the video message 1<sup>st</sup> song  
(English translation)**

**Romani Anthem - Gelem, Gelem - I went, I went**

I went, I went on long roads  
I met happy Roma  
O Roma where do you come from,  
With tents happy on the road?  
O Roma, O Romani youths!  
I once had a great family,  
The Black Legions (means Nazis) murdered them  
Come with me Roma from all the World  
For the Roma roads have opened  
Now is the time, rise up Roma now,  
We will rise high if we act  
O Roma, O Romani youths/children!  
Open, God, White doors  
You can see where are my people.  
Come back to tour the roads  
And walk with happy Romani  
O Roma, O Romani youths!  
Up, Gypsy/Roma! Now is the time  
Come with me Roma world  
Dark face and dark eyes  
Much as I like dark grapes

**Transcript of the video message 2<sup>nd</sup> song (English translation)**

**Black, white**

Black white  
Look into my eyes, Do not prejudge, but get to know me  
because it also hurts me,  
twinge in my heart  
if you look at me  
but do not see me.  
Please donate me your trust.  
This pasture-land is colourful  
the diversity of different nations makes it beautiful  
Here is no fence  
Here is no one fears  
Shabby World, let me live  
I am responsible for myself  
May the sky rise and everything what beautiful is  
Because if you are not an enemy  
the hope will rise you  
Let the distress pass  
Laugh back to me  
If your soul call me  
You are walking in encircling sine  
  
Tele tut dikhen - They look down on you  
dumo sikaven - showing their back to you  
Le vorbencha but saj dukhaven - You are offended by words  
Na mukh kerkipo Do not allow for  
Ande tyo jilo the bitterness to stay in your heart  
sikav lenge tyiro lashipo Show them your goodness/kindness  
phen tut kamel o Deloro – Tell them that Great God also loves you

**Vulnerable group No. 2**

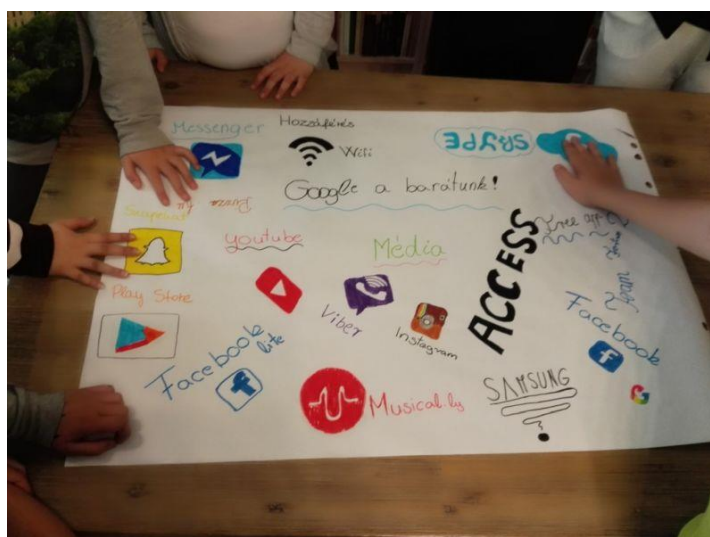
46. The second consultation with children took place in Ujpest, a Budapest district which used to be considered as district of blue-collar workers and poor people, and nowadays is considered a suburb for low income inhabitants. The child participants were socially disadvantaged students attending an extra-curricular educational program (so-called 'Tanoda') addressed to Roma and non Roma students in a cultural centre. The facilitator emphasised that the participants did not have hobby or free time activities, mainly the smart phones and internet are considered the only possibility for free time activities, the only source of enjoyment. The language of the consultation was Hungarian.

47. Children were aware of the legal definition of a child. The digital environment term was also discussed, mainly the children were aware what the meaning was, and for easier communication 'being online'/using smart phones terms were used instead of digital environment. They were aware about some

children rights and some of these were obvious (family life), but they felt their rights in school are limited, especially freedom of expression or involvement in decision making process almost impossible.

48. During the general discussion, the children agreed that children/young people can use the internet in the same way as adults, but at the same time they mentioned that adults use the internet for work as well and kids mainly use it for different purposes. It was said that they learnt everything about the internet by themselves, without help and mentioned that sometimes adults have less knowledge than children. The risk of getting in touch with strangers was mentioned and one of the participants told a story of a girl (friend of a participant) who was raped by a man in the first blind date after they got to know each other on social media. The possibility of blocking a person was mentioned as a solution for handling a problematic situation. Only one of the participants said that she would have spoken with her mother before meeting someone from the internet. Mainly peers who would have been notified, anyway role of parents, teacher or other adults would have been excluded (lack of trust).

49. Concerning the message, the children decided to prepare a poster with their main recommendations and concerns. They would like to have wireless internet in many public spaces and in the cultural centre ('Tanoda') also, so they could have access generally to the digital environment, and in some extent access to information was also phrased. Descriptions in Hungarian in the poster are the following: Google a barátunk- Google is our friend, Hozzáférés – Access.



### Feedback from the children

50. At the age group meeting the atmosphere was friendly and warm, the children had many questions, because they were stressed whether the 'messages' were good enough, what they should have written and how. In general the children were grateful for the good time together, the information, and what they really could take home - as they said - is the chance of participation and the responsibility for it. One participant shared that the consultation effected positively on her self-esteem /self-confidence, because earlier she had not spoken and expressed her views in a big group.

51. The consultation of the group in Hodasz, in the Roma community was almost 6 hours long, but the participants expressed their gratitude for the possibility to be consulted on the Guidelines and even asked the facilitators to come back for other consultations. The classical gender roles were also observed there, as in traditional Roma communities male and female mainly work and spend free time activities in groups divided by gender. During the consultation the girls created the content and managed the process as 'coordinators' and the boys accepted/followed the girls' ideas. As a well-functioning group everybody had a role, everybody made what he/she had talent for, the 2-3 participants who were not talented in singing, drawing or playing music or were a bit passive but were also involved in the video. This showed that they respect each other and considered everybody as a member of the group.

52. The Hungarian children in the other vulnerable group expressed that they had concerns about the consultation, but finally facilitators earned their trust. These participants were the youngest from Hungary, they received less attention from the parents than the children in the other two groups. It was phrased several times that they don't really have trust in adults, but at the same time it was obvious how important was for them that adults (such as the facilitators) pay attention to them. The facilitators were invited for return for further activities here also.

## F. Italy

### Age group (16-17 years old)

53. The participants of the Italian age group applied to take part through an open call circulated in the school (Istituto Pitagora, private high school). The students were between 16 and 17 years old, they came from different grades and from two different curricular courses: scientific course and the accountant course. The consultations took place in Sassari, the second biggest city in Sardinia, which is quite multicultural, as the background of the child participants. The language of the consultation was Italian and English.

54. The participants were already familiar with children's rights but their knowledge about the digital environment was diverse. Some of the students were more interested in the introductory discussion and had a different way of speaking because already considered themselves as grown-ups, while others were thinking like youngsters and included small children in their opinions. Accordingly, one opinion was that youngsters should have restricted internet access compared to adults, children should not meet people online because for example they don't have enough knowledge to understand if a Facebook profile is fake or not.

55. After they got familiar with the Guidelines and the opportunity to send a message to Strasbourg, they decided to focus on four main points: access, freedom of expression and information, education and digital literacy, participation and play. They decided to be creative and make a booklet, with some pictures and their personal opinions and suggestions for each point.

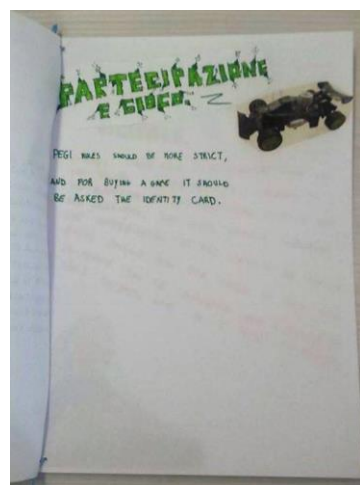
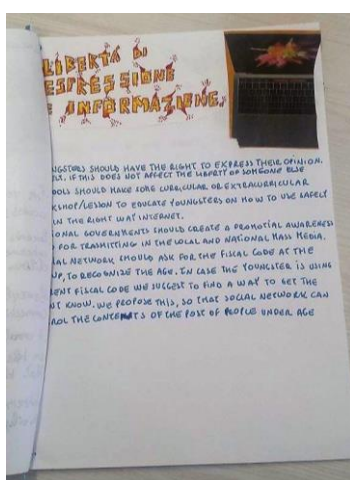
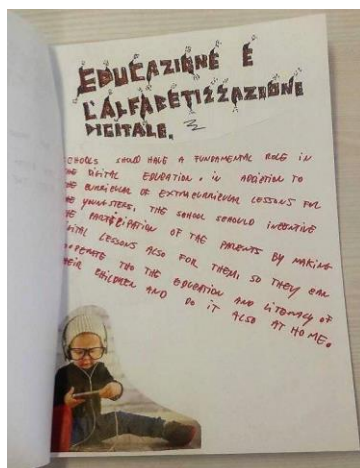
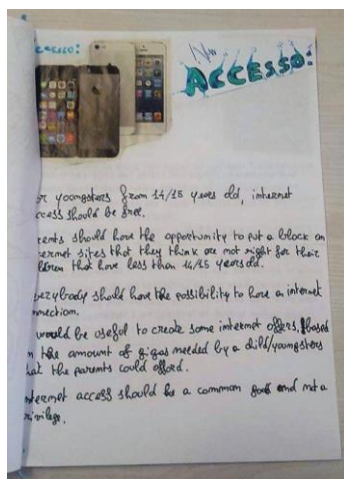
56. **"Access:** For youngsters from 14/15 years old, internet access should be free. Parents should have the opportunity to put a block on internet sites that they think are not right for their children that are less than 14/15 years old. Everybody should have the possibility to have internet connection. It would be useful to create some internet offers based on the amount of gigas needed by a child/youngsters that parents could afford. Internet access should be a common good and not a privilege."

57. **"Education and digital literacy:** Schools should have a fundamental role in the digital education. In addition to the curricular or extracurricular lessons for the youngsters, the school should incentive the participation of the parents by making digital lessons also for them, so they can contribute to the education and literacy of their children and do it also at home."

58. **"Freedom of expression and information:** Youngsters should have the right to express their opinion freely. If this does not affect the liberty of someone else. Schools should make some curricular and extracurricular workshop/lesson to educate youngsters on how to use safely and the right way internet. National governments should create a promotional awareness campaign for transmitting in the local and national mass media. Social network should ask for the fiscal code at the sign-up, to recognize the age. In case the youngster is using different fiscal code we suggest to find a way to get the parents know. We propose this, so that social network can control the contents of the post of people underage."

59. **"Participation and play:** PEGI rules should be more strict, and from buying a game it should be asked the identity card."







## Vulnerable group

60. The participants were schoolmates from a public high school (Istituto Tecnico Commerciale S. Satta) with ages ranging between 17-18 years. They were considered vulnerable because they are living in rural areas and their families are facing economic difficulties. The school is in Nuoro and the villages are situated in the center of the Sardinia Island, so the youngsters who live there suffer a sort of isolation and closure.



## Freedom of expression and information

- Creation of curricular and extra-curricular courses in matter of "get informations from internet" and online freedom of expression, for students and parents.

## Access

- Realisation of a optional Parental Control in matter of web sites and social networks, based on age targets.




## Education and digital literacy

- Creation of curricular and extra-curricular courses in matter of "the right way to use internet" and digital rights, for students and parents.
- Provide explanations about risks on the digital environment during the informatics subject in elementary middle schools and high schools.
- Create a collaboration with private organisations in this area of expertise to offer a voluntary educational workshop about internet risks and digital rights.

61. During the general discussion, the participants shared their opinion on several topics. According to one of the participants, **children should be educated about the use of social networks in order to prevent cyberbullying**, another participant emphasized that **it is fine to use internet in schools and for homework if it does not substitute the schools in terms of lessons, content and knowledge**. At one point while the rest of the group was actively discussing one of the participants was arguing with them about the concept of freedom as his point of view was "equal freedom for everybody" should be given without considering the different cases.

62. Concerning the content of the message to the Council of Europe, they decided to focus on four main issues: access, freedom of expression and information, right to respect for private and family life, and data protection, education and digital literacy. About the form, they decided to be creative and technological and make a powerpoint presentation, with some pictures and their personal opinions and suggestions for each point.

### Feedback from the children

63. The children at the age group were happy and proud to be chosen to represent youngsters from Italy in this project. They hoped that their suggestions will be really taken into consideration by the working group drafting the Guidelines. They were happy to gain knowledge about what the Council of Europe is doing for them, and they said that the contents were interesting and the methodologies chosen were really useful, appropriate and interactive.

64. The participants of the vulnerable group also hoped that their suggestions would be really taken into consideration by the adults working on this policy document. They said that the methodologies chosen were good but they also said that it would have been better to have more time to work on the messages as it was a really important task for them as they were representing all the youngsters from the country.

## G. Romania

### Age group (11 years old)

65. The Romanian group was composed of classmates of the age of 11 who expressed interest to take part in the consultation. The participants use internet and mobile applications on more than two devices at least 5 hours weekly and they were involved in non-formal educational activities before. The language of the consultation was Romanian.

66. The participants associated with the term of children the following words: fun, me, little person, play, childhood, youth, person under 18, happiness, teenager, you can have a childish mind even if you are 40. Among children rights they mentioned education, liberty, life, food, play, respect, Internet, family, shelter, fun, health, free expression and love. Around the Internet they experience that the adults have some prejudices when they see them online. Even if not more than 5 minutes since they connected the parents already tell to them to stop saying “you are online all the time”. They emphasised that often they feel judged with no space to reply or to share their views as it is happening in this consultation. One participant said “It depends on what access means because it is quite vague. I don’t want to stay on the Internet as long as the adults because they have more things to do online but I truly think that also the children should have Internet access at home and at school because here we don’t use it. I don’t remember when we used it last time with our teachers.”

67. Concerning the content of the Guideline, the children answered the question “Do you want to modify something?” with the following recommendations:

- We should separate the rights from obligations.
- Each right and principle should have also a short explanation that could be easily understood by children and in this case anybody will get it not just some professional.
- I think that a lot of rights should be adapted for the Internet
  - Right to be informed correctly
  - Right to education
  - Right to use the Internet and not be bullied
  - Right to digitalization (The digitalization addressed a human need, everything could be invented in this way)
  - Right to choose for oneself
  - Right to learn gradually: we are not on the same level and we should progress in our own rhythm and in way that is easier for us (listening, visually, by doing etc), how I saw in Spain
  - Right to learn in and for school using games, free talks, movies and technology.

68. The children quickly decided for an unedited video as they saw the easy way to communicate their message.



### **The transcript of the video (English translation)**

**Facilitator 1:** One... and go!

**Boy 1:** Your ideas were very good, but we had something to add. Some structures were not easy for us to understand. For instance, “best interest of the child”... “best interest of the child”, “actors’ obligations”, which we could not understand on our own. And... “evolving capacities of children”. That’s all I have.

**Facilitator 1:** Mhm!

**Girl 1:** The “participation and play” we could modify, making out of this chapter, two chapters. And for “evolving capacities of children” we could make it in such a way so as the title would be more child-friendly - for instance, “capacity to grow up” or “capacity to grow”.

**Boy 2:** We thank you for knowing that also our opinion matters. But some topics such as “actors’ obligations” could be rephrased to our better understanding.

**Girl 2:** Thank you for understanding us, even though we are children. Some structures were... were not easy for us to understand and we modified them.

**Girl 3:** The “right to non-discrimination” and the “right to be heard” are very good ideas, but the “best interest of the child” can be a little rephrased, so as to be easier to understand it.

**Girl 4:** We thank you that you have chosen us to... to suggest you our ideas, and for having trusted us.

**Girl 5:** We thank you!

**Whole group:** Thank you for having consulted us!

### **Vulnerable group**

69. The participants involved children from a high school in Piatra Neamț, with ages ranging between 12 and 18 years old. Each of them had one or both parents living abroad for work purposes, a frequent situation in Romania. Most of them, but not all, came from middle/upper “social class”. Several came from divorced families and as such are experienced either limited contact with one of the parents, or even a prohibition from one of the parents to be in contact with the other parent or otherwise have been put in the situation of being the go-between between the parents. Some of them mentioned they lacked the communication with the absent parent or at least with another person (preferably an adult, but not necessarily), therefore they appreciated this initiative of the Council of Europe to ask for their opinion and to listen to what they have to share.

70. The children participated willingly, being curious and feeling the need to talk to someone about their situation.

71. During the general discussion, the following issues were raised by the children:

*“Children should have access to knowledge the same way as adults have.”*

*“Websites such as Facebook and YouTube should not limit the access based on age.”*

*“Children should not have access to the Internet the same way as adults because there is information on the Internet that can affect those who are younger and are not yet fully developed from a psychological point of view, or information the younger ones cannot yet understand.”*

*"Children should not have access to the Internet the same way as adults so as not to enter dangerous situations and meet shady people online (Arabs, old people/pedophiles and so on)."*

*"There are many pedophiles, Arabs and so on online, especially on Facebook." (dangerous situations)*

*"Society tends to influence us to alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes and so on."*

*"It's grose to stumble, as an 11-year old child, on a forum talking about fascism, haters and so on."*

*"The Internet is such a wide space, that nobody bothers to check the information you offer, age-wise. For example, I created my Facebook account when I was 12 and the limit was, if I recall correctly, 13. Nobody came to my home to ask me how old I really was." ("YouTube only asks you to enter your phone number and your year of birth.")*

*"Not all children/young people can keep contact with their friends and families online. Maybe some of them don't have the skills, maybe they cannot do it, and maybe they don't have access to the Internet."*

*"We can find information on the Internet and save time to work for other school subjects. We can also cheat."*

*"It's easier to find information on the Internet."*

*"Some children cannot play online, maybe they don't know how, are not interested or cannot afford it."*

*"I don't believe children need special protection online, because they enter at their own risk."*

*"You are not vulnerable online because you are not face to face with the other person."*

*"We should have discussions with our parents before they let us stay online. They should explain why people swear on the Internet and so on. My father used to do that."*

*"Children with one parent living abroad should have the right to have an account that is better protected."*

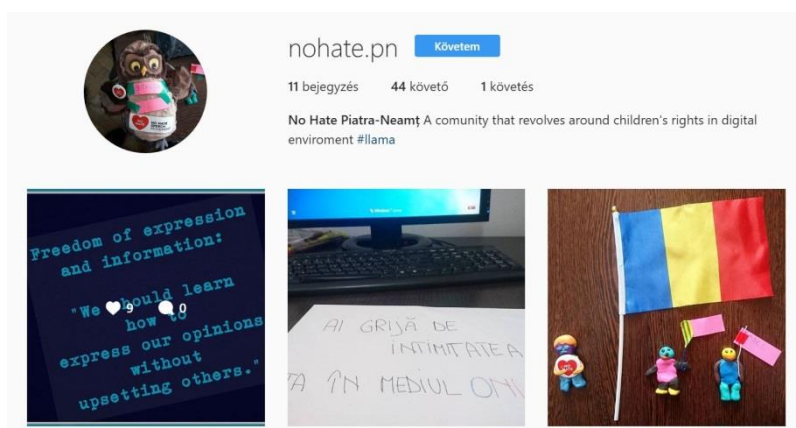
*"This topic should be discussed more in schools, with pros and cons."*

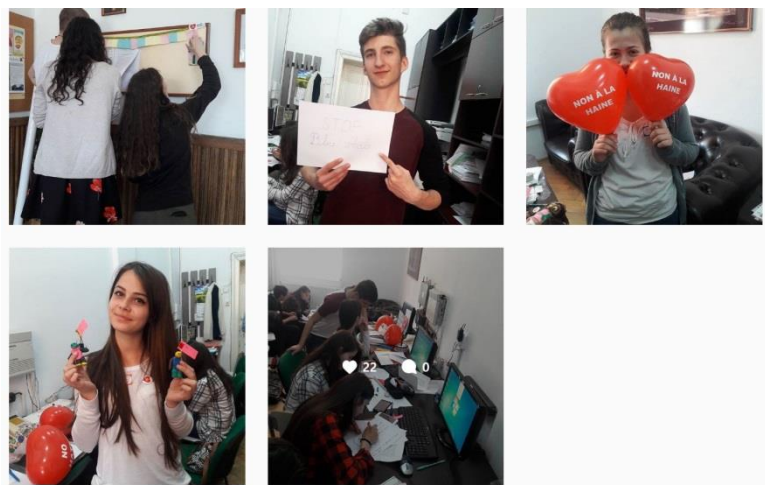
*"This topic should be discussed more with parents."*

*"Parents should be <baptized> online." (= to know how to better use the Internet).*

72. The children agreed to include the individual opinions of each of them in a centralised manner on an Instagram account, as they agreed to what each of them said, but could not come up in the limited time available with just one message of the group. They felt the need to share more ideas. Some of the children, however, would have wanted to simply listen to what others had to say and help them convey their messages.

73. The Instagram account of the vulnerable group: <https://www.instagram.com/nohate.pn/>





### Feedback from the children

74. The facilitator of the age group reported the following: *“I observed and I felt a very intense need to be heard, to talk about their difficult experiences. I felt very connected with them from the beginning and they felt very safe to express themselves and to share the way they feel, think and also act in different situations. I observed their willingness to make me understand exactly what they experience and the easiness to talk about their inner world.”* The participants said that they felt proud about being the voice of Romanian children and that they were eager to contribute hoping that their opinion will count in the overall process, their input will be read and used. They expect to be informed about the final version of the document and if it's possible to talk directly with the authorities about their rights. They concluded that they want this kind of experience also at school.

75. The participants of the vulnerable group appreciated the consultation and repeated several times that such topics should be discussed more often in schools. **They also suggested several times that a dedicated class on digital education/digital literacy should be included in the curriculum. They also mentioned that such classes should be offered to their parents/carers as well.** Moreover, they highlighted the importance of having a person to talk to about these issues, particularly tailored for their needs as a vulnerable group.

76. Some of the children were curious whether the Council of Europe will keep them informed on the outcomes of the consultation, if they will hear from the Council of Europe again or not. Some of the children asked whether they will be invited to a conference as a follow up of the consultation, to learn more about how the activity influenced the decisional process nationally and internationally. The children were pleased to be reassured that the Council of Europe will take into consideration their input and include it in the official documents.H.

## H. Ukraine

### Age group (13-14 years old)

77. The age group consisted of students aging 13-14 years old from Vinnytsia region, central part of Ukraine. All participants were registered a week before the event either by themselves or through their teachers. The language of the consultation was Ukrainian.

78. The group was very interested to learn about the work of the Council of Europe and to understand the purpose of such consultation. It was clearly something new for the children and they enjoyed the process, as the difference in views and opinions was clearly visible and gave everyone a food for thoughts. The child participants made their mind on topic of the consultation also, as one of them summarized “I believe that the elders should not just restrict the usage of Internet, but explain and teach about the possible threats it may have”.

79. The participants learned more about their role in the policy-making procedure of the Council of Europe which motivated them to be active in developing the message. After the facilitator set the framework about the form and content of the message, the group immediately decided that they want to make a video and started to write (all together) the main bullet points that they want to address.

### **Vulnerable group**

Transcript of the video:

We are the students of 6G class of Vinnytsia Mykola Pyroghov Humanitarian Gymnasium #1. We have got acquainted with the program of the Council of Europe and decided to express our opinion towards Children's Rights. We are for free rights of children. We are against discrimination. We are against cyber bullying. Children have right for unlimited leisure. We are against of discrimination by age. Children have rights for equal opportunities and work. We are for free access to Internet. We are for quality education. We are for Children's Rights!

80. The vulnerable group was composed of students at the age of 16 and 17 from different backgrounds but all coming from rural areas. Some of the participants joined through an open call while others had already been in contact with the NGO partner in previous projects on educational and social issues. The consultation took place in Lviv and the language was Ukrainian.

81. The first impression of the facilitator about group was great as children were interested in the event as non-formal education is rare in Ukraine and they were excited to listen to something new and participate in it. They especially liked the connection of the workshop to the Council of Europe as for the majority of them it was their first encounter with the work of this international organisation. The participants also learned a lot about each other because they could express their opinions and saw how differently a topic can be perceived. As one of the children summarized, "my friend is not agreeing with me, that is a surprise, we all know about the issues and we have our own thoughts but we truly never talked or discussed that".

82. When the children understood that there is no a strict format for the message to be prepared, they decided to write two open letters to Strasbourg.

**Letter (English translation)**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

My generation grows up in the environment of the Internet and electronic devices. Few people can now imagine life without the technical advantages of our time. However, virtual security, as well as security in the real world is very important. So I think that holding events like this consultation is very important for the awareness and understanding of all the dangers of cyberspace especially for us.

During our workshop we conducted a lively debate about the benefits of the use of the Internet and disadvantages of it, such that can harm. It was important to hear the views of our peers and find common solutions to correct this problem.

During the discussion, we concluded that young people need access to the Internet network anywhere and at any time, and no one should control this process. However, most users should be familiar with the skills to use the Internet. We also believe that the Internet is not just an entertainment, but should be used in training and development of the young person. These processes must be integrated into learning at school or at university.

I sincerely hope on accounting of our views that represent a community of active youth from the Ternopil region.

Best regards,

The group of students from the Ternopil region.

**Letter (English translation)**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

We were born to have equal human rights, to be active citizens in our world and to be free to express our opinions. Children have a human right to play, to talk to their friends and to explore their life. A lot of this is happening online. Adults should support them in exploring the Internet, but not restrict them, not prohibit using the entire network. They should keep balance protecting children from harm with allowing to play, to be involved in the digital world.

Access to Internet is a part of our life, education and development with all the good and bad included. We understand that cyber bullying, sexual websites and self-harm are a great danger to our mental wellbeing.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was written before the Internet appeared. According to this convention children have the right to be protected. However we haven't got the balance yet. Children must be supported with the knowledge and tools to make decisions about their own protection.

During this workshop we got the message about the significance of the cyber world. Although we are allowed to make mistakes, we should be warned about the consequences of our mistakes.

To sum up, under the pressure a child will never find the way of self-development. That is the main reason why parents should be trusted to their children.

Your faithfully,

Group from Lviv session

**Feedback from the children**

83. The participants of the age group appreciated the process very much and expressed the desire to participate in similar events in the future. They learned about their rights and they mentioned since it was their first encounter with the Council of Europe they would like to receive a follow-up and participate in such activities in the future as well. According to the feedback of the participants of the vulnerable group, it was again very successful and delightful. The children also expressed that they would like to participate actively in the implementation of such policy that concerns them and they raised the idea to organise an informal group to follow-up on this activity.

## Annex 2. Overview of the child consultation groups

In April, 2017, 17 child consultations took place in 8 countries with the participation of 200 children (113 boys, 87 girls) with the aim to channel the views of the children on the draft of Council of Europe Guidelines on Children's Rights in the Digital Environment which are being prepared by the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child.

	Age group	Vulnerable group
Croatia		
Particularities	13 and 14 years of age	10-16 years old children in half-day stay at “Klasje” child-care facility
Number of children (M/F)	4M/5F	3M/3F
Place of the consultations	Elementary school “Ivana Mažuranića”, Vinkovci	Centre for provision of services in community “Klasje” Osijek (social childcare facility)
Language of the consultations	Croatian	Croatian
Children involved	15	
Cyprus		
Particularities	Children under the age of 12, one child with visual impairment	Unaccompanied minors at the age of 16-17 with Somali origin
Number of children (M/F)	7M/8F	6M
Place of the consultations	Elementary school, Nicosia	Children's Shelter "Home for Hope" , Nicosia
Language of the consultations	Greek	English (language used) Somali (mother tongue)
Children involved	21	

	Age group	Vulnerable group
Czech Republic		
Particularities	Children between 12 and 18	Children from children homes and foster care with learning disabilities
Number of children (M/F)	5M/5F	2M/4F
Place of the consultations	Duha Participace office, Prague	Centrum of Don Bosco, Pardubice
Language of the consultations	Czech	Czech
Children involved	16	
Germany		
Particularities	Children from school class, different family backgrounds (mixed families from Germany, Turkey, Russia)	Children with different psychiatric issues in a clinic school
Number of children (M/F)	3M/3F	5M
Place of the consultations	Class room, Berlin	Class room, Berlin
Language of the consultations	German	German
Children involved	11	



	Age group	Vulnerable group	
Hungary			
Particularities	Children aged 15-18	Socially disadvantaged children	Roma minority children
Number of children (M/F)	5M/9F	1M/6F	8M/7F
Place of the consultations	Secondary school, Budapest	Rácz Gyöngyi Cultural Center, extra-curricular educational program, Budapest	Hodász
Language of the consultations	Hungarian	Hungarian	Hungarian, Romanes (Cerhari dialect, bilingual children)
Children involved	36		
Italy			
Particularities	Between 16-17 years old	Children living in rural areas and facing economic obstacles, 17-18 years old	
Number of children (M/F)	6M/1F	4M/2F	
Place of the consultations	Private High school students, Sassari	Commercial Technical Institute students, Nuoro	
Language of the consultations	Italian, English	Italian, English	
Children involved	13		

	Age group	Vulnerable group
Romania		
Particularities	Children at the age of 11	Children living in rural areas with one or both parents living abroad
Number of children (M/F)	2M/5F	4M/7F
Place of the consultations	Elementary school, Bucharest	Piatra Neamț, Romania – Petru Rareș National College
Language of the consultations	Romanian	Romanian
Children involved	18	
Ukraine		
Particularities	16 – 17 years old from rural areas	School students from Vinnytsia town and the region, 13-14 years old
Number of children (M/F)	20M/19F	19M/12F
Place of the consultations	Lviv	Vinnytsia
Language of the consultations	English/ Ukrainian	Ukrainian
Children involved	70	

## Annex 3. Non-governmental partner organisations and facilitators

### Croatia

Partners: Center for Missing and Exploited Children Osijek [www.cnzd.org](http://www.cnzd.org)

Facilitators: Mirna Ažić, Lidija Štelcer and Patricia Buconjić

### Cyprus

"Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center [www.uncrcpc.org](http://www.uncrcpc.org)

Facilitators: Konstantina Masia

### Czech Republic

Duha Participace (project National Parliament of Children and Youth) [www.npdm.eu](http://www.npdm.eu) and Lumos Foundation <http://czech.wearelumos.org/>

Facilitators: Michaela Doležalová, Zlata Brůžková

### Germany

Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V <https://www.dkhw.de/>

Facilitator: Else Engel

### Hungary

Hope for Children Hungary [www.remenytagyermekeknek.hu](http://www.remenytagyermekeknek.hu)

Facilitators: Zsuzsa Bene, Edina Tordai, Lilla Nedeczky

### Italy

Mine Vaganti NGO <http://minevaganti.org/en/>

Facilitators: Samanta Ombretta Sedda, Camila Bozzo

### Romania

Save the Children Romania [www.salvaticopiii.ro](http://www.salvaticopiii.ro)

Facilitators: Georgiana Rosculet, Irina Drexler

### Ukraine

Society Initiatives Institute [www.sii.org.ua](http://www.sii.org.ua)

Facilitators: Taras Repytskyi, Viktor Petrov, Vitalii Serhiichuk