(English version)

Question for written answer E-000859/25
to the Commission
Lara Magoni (ECR)
(26 February 2025)

Subject: Digital education: tackling cyberbullying by supporting schools and young people, particularly those living with disabilities

Though Italy celebrated its Day Against Bullying on 7 February, both Italian and EU data on this topic make for alarming reading. Bullying numbers are increasing: in Bergamo Province, one in five young people aged between 9 and 16 have been bullied, while WHO Europe reports that 15% of teenagers experienced cyberbullying in 2024.

In addition, pupils living with disabilities are 2% more likely than their peers to experience bullying and cyberbullying. Further amplified by social media, persistent bullying and cyberbullying can have devastating psychological and physical repercussions resulting in considerable social harm, particularly for a vulnerable group like pupils living with disabilities.

In the light of above:

1. How will the Commission support Member States in improving digital education, including through teacher training, to ensure that schools are properly equipped to deal both with digital and conventional forms of bullying?

2. Will the Commission back the creation of digital education programmes which help young people living with disabilities use social media in a safe manner?

Submitted: 26.2.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(28 April 2025)

The Commission is committed to the highest standard of protection and empowerment of children offline and online. Bullying is addressed through research, tools and training to support and guide policymakers, school leaders, teachers and educators.

The Commission fosters mutual learning among national policymakers, civil society and social partners through the Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training ([1]), including on topics such as bullying.

The Commission is preparing an Action Plan to combat the growing trend of cyberbullying, leveraging on the current legal, policy and funding measures which will be adopted in the first half of 2025.

Cyberbullying will also be addressed under the Guidelines on Art. 28 of the Digital Services Act (DSA) ([2]) in the summer of 2025. The Commission will also launch the first-ever EU-wide inquiry on the impact of social media on the well-being and mental health of young people in the second half of 2025.

In parallel, under the Better Internet Kids (BIK+) ([3]) strategy, the co-funded network of Safer Internet Centres, with the EU-funded BIK platform ([4]), develops campaigns and provides assistance on cyberbullying for children, parents and teachers in Member States. One example is the French helpline 3018 ([5]).

Moreover, the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) ([6]) aims to ensure that all learners, including those with disabilities, have the digital literacy skills to safely engage with online content and to recognise risks and can make informed, safe and respectful choices when online.

The Commission published Guidelines for teachers and educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training in 2022 ([7]).

Lastly, the Commission's digital education agenda is supported through Erasmus+ ([8]) and the European Solidarity Corps ([9]) programmes.

([1]) https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea/working-groups
([2]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R2065
([3]) COM/2022/212 final.
([4]) https://www.betterInternetforkids.eu
([5]) https://e-enfance.org/le3018/
([6]) https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan
([7]) https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a224c235-4843-11ed-92ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
([8]) https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/
([9]) https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en