



Public report

Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre

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2012



Introduction

Bulgaria has been participating in the Safer Internet Programme of the European Commission since 2005 through its national Safer Internet Centre (SIC) operated by Association Parents, DeConi Advertising Agency and ARC Consulting under the co-ordination of the Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC Fund).

ARC Fund established and launched the Bulgarian Internet Hotline for fighting illegal and harmful for children content and conduct in Internet in May 2006. In June 2008, ARC Fund, in consortium with three other Bulgarian organisations – Association Parents, the Bulgarian Federation for Electronic Sport and DeConi Advertising Agency – founded the National Awareness Centre, co-financed by the Safer Internet Plus Programme of the European Commission. The third component of the Safer Internet Centre services – a national Helpline acting as a consultation call centre for questions and concerns of young people, parents and teachers linked to minors' experiences online went fully operational in April 2011. Due to the good cooperation between ARC Fund and the three Bulgarian mobile operators, the Helpline telephone number 124 123 has a very low charge of 0.07 euro per call regardless of its duration. In 2012 ARC Consulting joined the consortium.

ARC Fund is a member of the International Association of Internet Hotlines (INHOPE), as well as of the European Network of Safer Internet Centres INSAFE. It is also a member of the National Network for Children – a Bulgarian network of some 90 non-governmental organisations, working in the field of children rights, child care, and children protection, which is a member of the Regional Network of non-profit organisations and UNICEF for children from Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic countries.

The aim of the Bulgarian Hotline is to provide a reporting facility, easily accessible by every citizen, including minors, for reporting online content or conduct, which is illegal according to the Bulgarian legislation or may have a traumatic or other harmful effect on the minor users of the web. The main priority in the Hotline activities is to fight dissemination of child sexual images and children grooming in Internet. The European and Bulgarian experience proves that setting up a public Internet Hotline significantly increases the efficiency of the competent law enforcement authorities in their fight against illegal and harmful for children content, conduct and contacts in Internet. Most Hotlines are run by non-governmental organisations thus simplifying the procedures for reporting illegal and harmful content and conduct and guaranteeing the anonymity of the reporting persons.

In its activities, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre seeks and relies on the close collaboration with government agencies, private companies and NGOs – the key stakeholders united in the Public Council on Safer Internet. The Public Council also serves as an advisory board for the SIC.

Who we are

The Applied Research and Communication Fund (ARC Fund) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation in public interest, established in Sofia in 1991. ARC Fund is among the leading Bulgarian organisations working for the development of a knowledge-based society that has mastered the power of information technologies and innovation.

ARC Fund has been actively involved in the efforts to formulate and implement policies for the development of information and knowledge-based society both on national and international level by:

- Conducting applied research and analyses that assist the development and implementation of public policies;

- Introducing new policy concepts and innovative policy-making tools (e.g. foresight);
- Promoting public policy consensus by bringing together the key actors in government, industry and civil society, and by forming coalitions and public-private partnerships;
- Building capacity in various professional groups by providing specialized trainings and facilitating the transfer of knowledge and international good practice;
- Designing innovative solutions to development problems by initiating pilot projects that demonstrate the values of technologies, including ICTs, in strengthening democratic governance, empowering civil society, and developing competitive businesses.

Association Parents was established in 2001 as a non-profit organisation in public interest, founded according to the law for non-governmental legal entities.

The mission of the Association is to encourage parents to be the best parents they can be and to support children to grow up into the best adults they can become. Its main aim is development and acknowledgement of parenthood as a main spiritual value of the society, and recognition of the family as a natural environment for raising and educating the children.

Association Parents is:

- Member of European Parents Association
- Member of the National Network for Children
- Member of working groups at the National Council of Child Protection
- Member of the Public Council on Safer Internet Use
- Member of the Consultancy Board for Education at Sofia Municipality
- Member of the Consultancy Board "Children of Sofia"

DeConi Agency is a marketing agency with nearly twenty year history of successful brand building and promotion. The Agency has introduced to the Bulgarian market international brands such as OMV, Jim Beam, Dunkin 'Donuts, KFC, JYSK, Prisun, Creditex, Lidl.

The agency specializes in corporate social responsibility, creating effective models of cooperation between companies, NGOs, government and international organizations with a lasting impact on sustainable development as well as specific communities on a local and regional level and the Bulgarian society as a whole., The team of the agency has successfully implemented a number of awareness and fundraising media campaigns concerning benefits of sport, reduction of CO2 emission from public transportation vehicles, for recycling and cleaner environment, for allowing guide dogs of blind persons into public places, and for furnishing houses for children without parents.

ARC Consulting is the consulting division of the Applied Research and Communications Fund. The company provides services in the areas of analysis and public policies on innovation and information and communication technologies in the European Union. It also works on the preparation and implementation of national and international projects under the EU Framework Programmes and Cohesive and Structural Funds. ARC Consulting develops and supports the capacity of ARC Fund for the implementation of its mission.

ARC Consulting is a member of two European professional networks:

- Enterprise Europe Network – the largest information and consulting network in Europe, which helps SMEs realize their innovation and technological growth potential and provides them with information and opportunities to do business on the Single European Market.
- ERAWATCH - provides information and benchmarking on European, national and regional research systems, policies, and programmes in the EU to support evidence based policy making in Europe and to contribute to the realisation of the European Research Area.

Public Council on Safer Internet Use

In line with the accepted European practice, the activities of the Bulgarian Internet Hotline for fighting illegal and harmful for children online content and conduct is supervised by an advisory board – the Public Council on Safer Internet Use, founded in April 2006. The members of the Public Council are representatives of the major stakeholders – public institutions, industry associations, private companies and non-governmental organisations involved in development of information technologies and knowledge-based society, which share the common mission of the project to make Internet a safer environment for minors.

At its regular meetings the Public Council discusses and approves the periodical activity reports and the annual public reports of the Hotline and the national Safer Internet Centre and gives recommendations for improving its work. It monitors abidance by the approved operational procedures of the Hotline and takes decisions to change them when the conditions in the country – legislative, social and economic – change. The Public Council initiates various activities for promoting Safer Internet rules and raising social awareness about risks for minors in Internet and the ways for their prevention. The member organisations of the Public Council play an active part in a number of initiatives of the Safer Internet Centre.

When an organisation or individual expresses willingness and has proven capacity in the area of safer Internet, the Public Council, in conformity with its Statutes, votes for new member. The new members must have the capacity to contribute to raising the efficiency of the activities of the national Safer Internet Centre and the Bulgarian Hotline for fighting illegal and harmful for children online content and conduct.

Members of the Public Council on Safer Internet Use

Chair – Galina Bankovska, deputy chair of the parliamentary Commission on education, culture, children, youth and sports

Deputy-chair – Kalin Kamenov – chairmen of the State Agency for Child Protection

Deputy-chair – Asen Totin – member of the managing board of the Bulgarian Association for Information Technologies.

1. Ministry of Culture
2. Ministry for Education, Youth and Science
3. Ministry of Transportation, IT and Communications
4. State Agency for Child Protection
5. Ministry of Interior
6. Sofia Municipality

7. Bulgarian Association for IT /BAIT/
8. Internet Society
9. Cisco Systems - Bulgaria
10. Law and Internet Foundation
11. Association Parents
12. Bulgarian Federation for Electronic Sport
13. Gender Education, Research and Technologies Foundation
14. Vivacom
15. Mobiltel
16. GLOBUL
17. Microsoft Bulgaria
18. Association for Consumer Protection
19. Partners – Bulgaria
20. Applied Research and Communications Fund
21. Center for the Study of Democracy

Hotline Operational Procedures

The operational procedures of the Bulgarian Hotline have been initially approved and afterwards amended by the Public Council on Safer Internet. The full text of the procedures is available at the Hotline website. The aim of the operational procedures is to ensure that the activities of the Hotline are efficient and fully transparent to the general public.

The procedures guarantee, according to the reporting person's choice, full anonymity. The Hotline uses a secure communication channel for transmitting the reports to the competent authorities, which are authorized to take the necessary measures.

After receiving a report, the Hotline operators trace the content to find out its physical location. When the content has been traced to a server or other computer in Bulgaria, the report is transmitted via a specially established communication channel to the Ministry of Interior in virtue of a framework Agreement for co-operation signed in 2006.

When the content has been traced to the territory of a country, which is a member of the International Association of Internet Hotlines INHOPE, the report is transmitted to the partner Hotline. When the content has been traced to a third country, the report is transmitted to the Ministry of Interior for taking further measures based on the international police co-operation procedures.

The Hotline operators answer queries by phone or by e-mail. If necessary, they direct the user to contact the Helpline psychologists in accordance with the internal procedures for reports transfer, adopted by the ARC Fund and Association Parents.

The Bulgarian Hotline periodically reports to the Public Council on Safer Internet Use. Its annual Public Reports are published on the Hotline website and are available to the general public.

Helpline Operational Procedures

The main objective of the helpline is to consult children and adults on problems and risks children may encounter online. The helpline works as a consultation centre that helps users to develop knowledge and skills to use Internet safely and responsibly. The helpline was built and is maintained by Association Parents in partnership with the national SIC, coordinated by ARC Fund.

The helpline offers four channels for communication to its clients: telephone, 2 chat platforms (Skype and live chat system, attached to the website of the helpline), and e-mail. All inquiries are stored in the database and this information is kept confidential.

A team of trained professionals answers the inquiries made to the Helpline by telephone, chat and email. The working hours of the helpline are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Monday-Friday). There are 2 consultants and one supervisor on duty. Consultants and supervisors are trained psychologists and educators, who are well prepared to evaluate the seriousness of the case and, if necessary, direct the child victim for further consultation and / or therapy to appropriate institutions. The centre works closely with the national hotline. At the discretion of the consultants, some reports are redirected to the hotline, where after initial assessment, if necessary, they are directed to the authorities for further investigation. The helpline works closely with institutions and organizations related to children's safety.

The clients of the helpline can remain anonymous by not providing personal information and contact details. Operators are obliged to request personal information when there is a real threat for the life or health of a minor and / or anyone else (in cases of likely violence, abuse, crime, sexual abuse). Such cases are redirected to the hotline and / or other relevant organization or institution.

Inquiries are referred to the hotline in cases of illegal or harmful content on the Internet – virtual sexual violence, grooming for sexual abuse, dissemination of child pornography, sexual exploitation of children, mental and physical abuse of children, promotion of racism, terrorism, xenophobia, racial and ethnic hatred on the Internet, online bullying, and Internet fraud.

In cases of serious threat to life and health of a minor, the consultant refers the case to the State Agency for Child protection, the relevant law enforcement agencies, school authorities and health care institutions. In these cases, the operators do not need the consent of the user to breach the confidentiality. The supervisor on duty takes all necessary steps to follow the case until its final resolution and records the process in the database.

Hotline Activities

In 2012, the hotline **Web112.net** received and processed a total of 914 reports. Of these, 581 have reported actual illegal or harmful content and conduct online. Due to several very extreme cases of grooming, the previous years' trend of decrease in such cases was reversed. A single case of online sexual abuse of a minor girl was reported 521 times in less than 12 hours. The large number of reports in this case showed that the hotline was known and trusted by the Internet users in the country.

In 2012, no cases of hosting of child pornography on national servers were identified. There was a decrease in the number of reports concerning racist and xenophobic content – from 50 in 2011 to 7 in 2012.

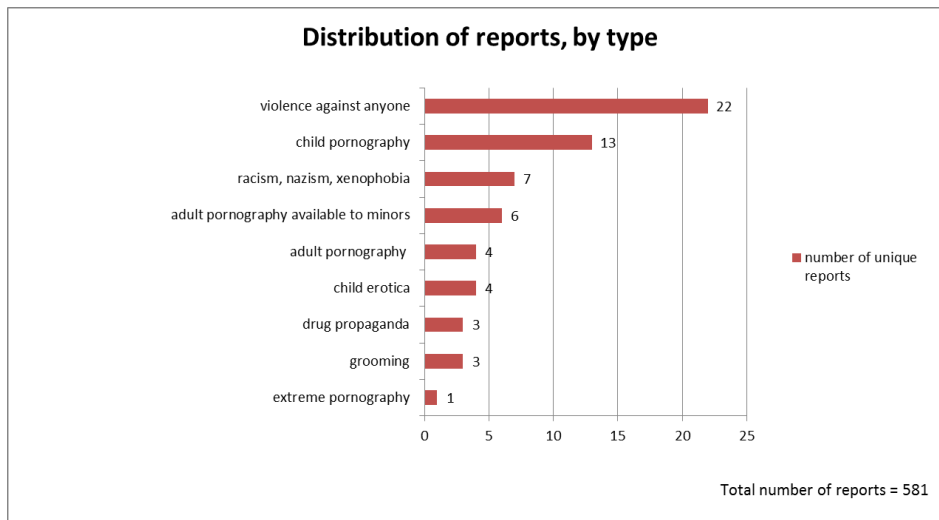
The total number of reports that matched the criteria for illegal and harmful for children content and conduct were classified as follows:

- Child pornography - 13;

- Child erotica - 4;
- Grooming - 524;
- Pornography for adults accessible to children - 6;
- Pornography for adults - 4;
- Extreme pornography - 1;
- Racism and xenophobia - 7;
- Promoting violence against the individual - 22;
- Promoting drugs - 3.

There were a total of 391 actionable reports. Among them:

- 12 were referred to the law enforcement agencies;
- 43 website owners/administrators were notified about the inappropriate content and the content has been removed;
- 14 reports were referred to partner hotlines in other countries;
- in 57 cases, various inquiries from customers were answered;
- in 469 cases, in which the senders of reports were not anonymous, they were notified of the action taken upon their reports.



Helpline activities

In 2012, the helpline received 305 enquiries. Enquiries were classified by the consultants in the following categories:

- Online safety rules and risks on the Internet - 31;
- Meeting face to face with a stranger from the Internet - 6;
- Online bullying - 33;
- Harmful and illegal content - 14;
- Grooming for sexual abuse - 12;
- Data protection / privacy - 38;
- Information about the services of the helpline -78;
- Excessive use of the Internet - 6;
- Internet fraud - 9;
- Other - 36 (love, drugs, sex, relationships, etc.).

A total of 191 inquiries were actionable. Of them:

- Consultation - 168;
- Information and referral to the hotline for follow-up - 15;
- Information about cybercrime.bg, a website run by the Ministry of Interior, and referral - 4;
- Referral to a partner organization - 4

Safer Internet Centre Activities

The awareness activities in 2012 were focused on the Safer Internet programme priorities: raising awareness of children, parents, teachers and professionals about positive, responsible and safe use of the Internet and mobile communications. Activities included campaigns and trainings, study of trends in the use of “new technologies” among children, development of information materials, promotion of cooperation between all stakeholders from public, private and NGO sector.

Safer Internet Day 2012: Connecting Generations

To celebrate the Safer Internet Day on 7th February 2012, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre organized a national competition for student playwrights on the theme of SID 2012 “Connecting generations and educating each other”, where young and old users are encouraged to “discover the digital world together...safely!” Over 150 children and 30 adults from 15 cities around the country participated in the challenge. The three best plays, selected by the jury chaired by Milena Damyanova – Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Science, were performed on stage in the Sofia Puppet Theatre on 7 February. Mr. Kalin Kamenov, the deputy chair of the State Agency for Child Protection, gave an opening speech to the audience. Then, they were greeted by Mrs. Galina Bankovska, deputy chair of the parliamentary Commission on education, culture, children, youth, and sports and chair of the Public Council on Safer Internet. Special guests of the event were Mr. Yavor Kolev, chief of the Cyber Crime Unit at the General Directorate for Combating Organized Crime at the Ministry of Interior, a long-term partner of the Bulgarian hotline, representatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications.

For the third year running, Varna Municipality organized an event to celebrate the Safer Internet Day.



This year the major focus was the award ceremony during which ten students received their Expert on Safer Internet Certificates. The certificates serve to signify successful completion of the distant online safety training, which was developed by Directorate of Preventions at Varna Municipality and the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre. The training is unique for Bulgaria in its emphasis on multiple safety skills, both technical and social, and their application in training of other young people to stay safe.

Submission of practical assignment, among other things, is required for completion of the training. The assignment includes setting up a team, planning peer training activities, assessing needs of target groups, and implementing the actual training. The ten trainees who fulfilled the requirements of the program received their certificates from Hristo Bozev, deputy mayor of the city of Varna. The newly certified experts were invited by SIC to join the team of the helpline as peer consultants.

SID 2012 was marked by various initiatives across Bulgaria. Over 60 schools from 20 cities received posters, brochures, games, sample lesson plans, presentations and other awareness raising materials provided by SIC and INSAFE. All mobile data users in Bulgaria received SID greeting by their mobile operator.

Famillathlon – a celebration of the family values

On May 12, the annual Famillathlon took place for the fourth time, organized by Association Parents, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre, the National Centre for Youth Programs and Initiatives and the Municipality of Sofia. The event was dedicated to the Day of Europe – May 9 and the International Day of the Family - May 15. Over 3,000 families participated in the numerous activities and competitions to celebrate family, sports, creativity and healthy lifestyle.

Official guests at the event were the Mayor of Sofia Yordanka Fandakova, the Chairman of the State Agency for Child Protection Kalin Kamenov, and the Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Science Milena Damyanova.

During the event the children and their parents were able to choose individual or group activities offered at the Market for Opportunities. Over 40 sport clubs performed demonstrations, contests and challenges for all visitors, including badminton, capoeira, aikido, paneurhythmy, karate, family games, robotics, relay reading, hiking, petanque, yoga, and many more...



The cycling enthusiasts took part in the Grand Bicycle March to tour the entire park. A special bicycle march was organized this year for the youngest participants.

Like in the previous years, there was an orienteering track called the Little Europe. The children were “traveling” across Europe to learn more about the culture and traditions of the different nations. They even had the chance to meet people from these nations as over 30 foreign volunteers participated in the planning and management of the event.

Flashboy, a fictional character created by the Safer Internet Centre, was also part of the Famillathlon. He presented the new game “Flashboy trainer” that aims to teach basic online safety to preschool children. The helpline at the Safer Internet Centre organized a special contest “Artware” for art pieces from computer parts. The winning project was a handsome eco-robot, created by the Ecology club at the 42nd

School in Sofia. Another initiative of the Safer Internet Centre was the flash mob, which aimed to promote the safe and responsible attitude towards handling online privacy and passwords.

Sofia Breathes Festival



This year, the SIC team took part in the street festival “Sofia breathes” for the second time. The experts were delivering open lessons outdoors for three weekends in a row. Through participation in two SIC vinyl games “Flashboy trainer” and “Flashboy in the land of Spammies”, children learned about safer online behaviour and had an opportunity to discuss the online risks and challenges they face. Children were awarded for their enthusiasm and curiosity with branded wristbands, board games and stickers. The experts talked also with the parents, who were given the SIC booklet “10 myths about the scary Internet”.

Expo4kids

The SIC team participated in the “Expo4Kids”, which took place from 17th to 18th March in the shopping centre “Gallery” in Plovdiv. Hundreds of children and parents attended the event. While parents were talking about child privacy and security in the Internet with the SIC experts, the children had the opportunity to learn online safety rules by playing “Flashboy in the land of Spammies” – an interactive game for children from 5 to 10 years. There were awards for the children and informational materials for parents such as the SIC booklet “10 myths about the scary Internet” and the Family contract for safe use of the computer.

3-D online game “Zone of Risk”

At the SID 2012 award ceremony on 7th February in Sofia the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre officially presented the brand new educational video quest game, developed in collaboration with Dechica.com. This marked the start of a month long student competition with attractive prizes, where SIC challenged all students to track down the teenage girl Marina, who was kidnapped as a result of a number of online and offline mistakes she had made. Within one month, over 6,000 pupils visited the website of the game, over 1,800 played the game and 684 managed to complete all the levels. The winner was awarded with a tablet, equipped with ESET Mobile Security at a special ceremony during Forum Key at the University of National and World Economy.



On an official ceremony on 28 July, the video game “Zone of risk” was named the best web product in the category “Science and education” by the Bulgarian Web Association. In addition, the game was nominated as a top online tool in a resource competition by the European network INSAFE.

E-safety family kit

With the support of the Raiffeisen’s corporate social responsibility campaign “Choose to support”, the Bulgarian SIC translated and produced hard copies of the **E-safety Family kit**, developed by INSAFE. The kit is aimed at families with children who are beginning to explore the Internet.

The kit includes practical assignments, exercises, materials for drawing and painting, golden safety rules, family contract, situational cards, stickers. Currently, the SIC is organizing trainings for parents in kindergartens, where online safety of the children is discussed and the kit is distributed.

Other awareness materials

Parents are the main target of another material developed by SIC: the booklet “**10 myths about the scary Internet**” that challenges some of the widely held misconceptions about children and new media.

Two resources, developed recently by the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre, won **the first and the third award** in the INSAFE resource marketplace, which took place in Budapest between 26 and 28 September. The marketplace is now a traditional part of the training meetings of the network of European Safer Internet Centres. The audience voted for winners in three categories: Games and video clips, Websites and tools and Offline resources (brochures, leaflets and publications). The Bulgarian SIC was awarded the first place in the section Offline resources for the interactive game “Flashboy trainer” and the third place for the booklet for first-graders “My First Memo Book”.

My First Memo Book has already been disseminated with the co-operation of the Ministry of Education to all 62,000 first graders in the country, together with the Handbook for Parents of First Graders by Association Parents and ARC Fund, which contains a chapter about safer use of Internet and mobile technologies.

One of the SIC trainings - a **distance learning course for online safety for students** was translated and adopted by the Safe the Children – Sarajevo. Supported by the Bosnia and Herzegovina’s ministry of education, the course is delivered in all schools.

Because the distance learning model proved successful, SIC and Varna Municipality developed a **similar distance learning course for professionals** – teachers and social workers. The first trainings started in October when all members of the local commissions for prevention of juvenile delinquency received their login details.

The Austrian Safer Internet Centre integrated in their new teacher handbook the interactive lesson plans from the “Real and Virtual Violence prevention methodology”, developed by SIC.

Regional conference “Prevention through interactive non-formal education”

On June 5, ARC Fund organized in Sofia the first regional conference on prevention through interactive non-formal education in order to bring together representatives of leading NGOs from the Balkan countries to share their expertise in non-formal learning, a very promising new development in the area of preventive services. It was attended by professionals from Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia including representatives of international organisations such as OAK Foundation and Save the Children. The conference was part of the project “Prevention of real and virtual violence through interactive education in schools”, co-financed by OAK Foundation and EC Safer Internet Programme and implemented by ARC Fund and Association Parents.

Online safety trainings for children, teachers and parents

Bulgarian SIC experts organised a series of trainings in towns in Northern Bulgaria, initiated by local public organisations and NGOs. More than 60 young people and 35 professionals, who work to promote the safe and responsible use of Internet and mobile devices participated in the sessions.

Invited by the Youth Information and Consultation Centre in Vratsa, SIC provided training to youth from the local school councils (groups of students elected to represent the views of all pupils and to improve their school). The students, aged 12 to 19, were introduced to the risks and opportunities in the Internet, as well as to the strategies to keep safe online. Also, they got familiar with peer education and training as useful approaches to raising awareness about online safety and teaching skills to prevent harm. In order to develop their trainer's skills, students designed their own training sessions such as quizzes, role playing, and forum theatre, and presented them in front of their peers for feedback.

In Shumen, SIC team participated in a forum, organized by the local Social Services Centre and the Youth Consultation and Information Centre. 45 students attended the event and learnt about most common online traps they can encounter while playing, communicating and shopping online, and how to protect themselves from becoming a victim online. During the forum high school students were handed awards for winning the competition for posters "Connecting generations: Exploring the digital world together and...safely", organized in Shumen to promote the Safer Internet campaign in 2012.

The final stop of the training tour was the town of Silistra, where the experts from the awareness centre and the helpline trained 20 teachers, school counsellors and social workers to deliver interactive lessons in class using the methodology "Preventing real and virtual violence through interactive education in schools". They were introduced to the practical aspects of the methodology as well as its theoretical foundations. The training was initiated and supported by the Municipality of Silistra. Upon completion of the training, the group was awarded their certificates by the Deputy Mayor of Silistra Mrs. Denka Mihailova.

At the initiative of the Yambol Regional Directorate of Interior and with the participation of the Safer Internet Centre, the International Cyber Investigation Training Academy and the Cybercrime Unit, a two-month online safety awareness and education campaign was launched on 6th November. During the campaign, lessons with the pupils and meetings with parents were organised in all 37 schools in the city and the region.



On 6th and 7th November, the representatives of the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre, the International Cyber Investigation Training Academy and the Cybercrime Unit of the General Directorate for Combating Organised Crime met with 200 pupils aged 11-15 and teachers at two schools in Yambol. With presentations, interactive discussions and games the children were acquainted with the main online risks and the basic skills to avoid and prevent them. They were advised to contact the Safer Internet Hotline and Helpline in case they felt threatened or uncomfortable with specific content or

conduct in Internet. The lessons with children and meetings with parents across the region run through November and December.

On 10th November, a round table on online protection of children was held in the city of Shumen with the participation of the regional governor, two members of Parliament, and representatives of the municipality, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre, the International Cyber Investigation Training Academy and the Cybercrime Unit of the General Directorate for Combating Organised Crime.

More than 200 teachers, university professors, social workers, parents and pupils participated in the event initiated by the director of the “Panayot Volov” secondary school. The school has prepared and sent to the Ministry of Education a plan for opening a special education on information protection with the cooperation of the Safer Internet Centre, the International Cyber Investigation Training Academy and the University of Shumen. These partnering organisations will develop a curriculum adequate to the age of the pupils and up-to-date with the latest online security trends.

Children and youth panels

In 2012, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre continued to work actively with the peer team at the Municipality of Varna. During the year, several face to face and online meetings with young people were organised to discuss the latest trends in the use of online technology by their peers, the risks they encounter online and the adequacy of the SIC campaigns and initiatives.

This year two other panels were started: a group of ninth graders at the French School in Sofia and a group of third graders in 26th school “Yordan Yovkov” in Sofia. They met every month to discuss the experiences of the children on the Internet, typical situations, difficulties and dilemmas.

SIC encouraged and supported the participation of young people from the panels in different European and national initiatives. Two representatives of the Youth Panel participated in the international safer Internet summer camp for young people from the EU in Romania, organized by the Romanian Safer Internet Centre.

Two representatives of the Youth Panel participated in the two-day meeting of the pan-European Youth Panel at the annual European Safer Internet Forum held in Brussels on 18 and 19 October. The father of one of the participants took part in the discussions of the European parent panel.

International activities

In 2012, Bulgarian SIC hosted a study visit by two representatives of NGOs from Croatia. They were acquainted with the principles and procedures of operation of the hotline and various events and campaigns organized in Bulgaria. In April and October, representatives of the Bulgarian SIC visited Spanish and Swedish Safer Internet Centre to exchange best practices within the European network INSAFE.

SIC presented its services and practices at several international conferences: “Freedom and Privacy on the Internet” in Skopje, Macedonia, the Conference of the International Research Consortium on Information Security in Sofia, Bulgaria, “Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online” in Warsaw, Poland; the Regional Forum on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime in countries of Southeast Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria, the Regional Cybersecurity Forum for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Sofia, Bulgaria, “Comprehensive Approach to the Safety of Children and Young People on the Internet” in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Representatives of SIC participated in 5 meetings organized by the INSAFE and INHOPE, as well as on the annual Safer Internet Forum in Brussels, where the initiatives of the Centre were presented.

The Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre thanks all of its partners and supporters, who helped with the realization of all activities in 2012!