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Annual Report

Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre

(translation)

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Introduction

Bulgaria has been participating in the Safer Internet Programme of the European Commission since 2005 through its national Safer Internet Centre operated by several non-governmental organisations under the co-ordination of the Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC Fund), Sofia and co-financed by the European Commission.

ARC Fund has established and launched the Bulgarian Internet Hotline for fighting illegal and harmful for children content and conduct in Internet in May 2006. From June 2008, ARC Fund, in consortium with three other Bulgarian organisations - Association Roditeli (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.

ARC Fund is a full 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 network of some 50 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 and minor, for reporting spotted online content or conduct, which is illegal according to 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 abuse images and children grooming in Internet. Some of the risks for minors in Internet are arise as a result of the online actions and interactions of the minors themselves. Among these are cyber-bullying, e-violence and posting of illegal and harmful content in websites for image and video sharing and in social networking sites.

The European and Bulgarian experience proves that setting up a public Internet Hotline increases significantly the efficiency of the competent law enforcement authorities in their fight against illegal and harmful for minors content, conduct and contact in Internet. Most Hotlines are being 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.

Who are we

The Applied Research and Communication Fund (ARC Fund) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation in public interest, established in Sofia in 1991. Today ARC Fund is among the leading Bulgarian organisations working for building up a knowledge-based society, empowered by the might of information technologies and innovation.

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

- research and analyses aimed at formulation and implementation of adequate policies;
- activities aimed at achieving consensus by involving representatives of the government, industries and civil society, as well as by forming coalitions and public-private partnerships;
- capacity building of different professional groups through trainings and know-how transfer and good practices;
- disseminating innovative decisions for strategic development through initiating pilot projects which reveal the benefits of particular technologies for civil society and for creating a competitive business environment

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

Association Roditeli is:

- Member of EPA – European Parent Association
- Member of the National Network for Children
- Member of working groups of the National Council of Child Protection

- Member of the Public Council on Safer Internet Use
- Member of the Consultancy Board for Education of Sofia Municipality
- Member of the Consultancy Board "Children of Sofia"

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

Public Council on Safer Internet Use

In line with accepted European practice, the activities of the Bulgarian Internet Hotline for fighting illegal and harmful for children online content and conduct is being 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 popularizing 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 members. 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

1. Chair – **Galina Bankovska**, deputy chair of the parliamentary Commission on education, culture, children, youth and sports
2. Deputy-chair – **Dimitar Dereliev**- Deputy minister of Culture
3. Deputy-chair - **Teodor Zahov** - chairman of two major IT business associations - the Association for Electronic Communications and the Bulgarian Association on Information Technologies.
4. Ministry of Culture
5. Ministry for Education, Science and Youth
6. State Agency for Child Protection
7. Ministry of Interior
9. Executive Agency for Information Technology and Communications
10. Sofia Municipality
11. Bulgarian Association for IT /BAIT/
12. Cisco Systems- Bulgaria
13. Law and internet Foundation
14. Roditeli Association
15. Bulgarian Federation for Electronic Sport
16. Gender Education, Research and Technologies Foundation
17. Vivacom
18. Mobiltel
19. GLOBUL
20. Microsoft Bulgaria
21. Applied Research and Communications Fund
22. 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 adopted Hotline 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 officially signed in 2006.

When the content has been traced to the territory of a country 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 in case when there is a threat for the physical or psychological well-being of a minor.

The Bulgarian Hotline is reporting periodically to the Public Council on Safer Internet and to the general public in annual reports which are being regularly published on the Hotline website.

Hotline activities

In 2009, the Hotline has received 1,227 reports. 142 of the reports were about websites in Bulgaria and abroad which, according to the reporting persons, displayed content inappropriate for minors.

After being processed by the operators, the reports received during the year were classified by the type of content confirmed by the operator, as follows:

- child pornography – 36;
- pornography for adults easily accessible by minors – 4;
- racism and xenophobia – 1;
- violence against the individual – 37;
- grooming of minors via Internet – 3;
- terrorism – 1.

70% of the reports concerned content located in Bulgaria.

32 persons have contacted the Hotline with queries.

In reaction to the actionable reports received the Hotline has undertaken 135 actions, as follows;

- 33 reports have been transmitted to the competent law enforcement authority;
- 16 hosting organisations have been notified of inappropriate content;
- 61 website owners have been given a notice of inappropriate content;
- 18 reports have been transmitted to a partner Hotline in another country;
- 32 answers have been given to users' queries;
- 102 of the reporting persons who sent contact details have been informed about the the following actions undertaken on their reports.

Awareness Centre Activities

The Awareness centre has initiated and carried out a number of activities aimed at raising awareness among children, parents and teachers about online risks and providing information about Internet safety.

An important part of the Awareness centre's activities was the organisation of regular information and media campaigns, aiming to attract the public and media attention to the online risks for children and to raise the visibility and operating efficiency of the Bulgarian Hotline. Four awareness campaigns were organized in 2009.

Safer Internet Day 2009

On the 10th of February, for the fourth time in Bulgaria was marked the Safer Internet Day, which is carried out every second Tuesday of February on the initiative of the European Commission. The Safer Internet Day launches a several months' information and media campaign in all member countries of the European Union together with participation of many other countries of all continents. In 2009, for the first time in Bulgaria, more than 2,5 millions private subscribers of the three mobile operators Mobiltel, Globul and Vivatel received SMSs announcing the Safer Internet Day and

directing them to the website of the safer Internet Centre for more information. GLOBUL organised an additional campaign, dedicated to the children internet safety, placing online banners on several popular media websites, creating an awareness and information page on their corporate website and posting posters in public places around the capital Sofia. The unique SMS-campaign initiative was announced on 4th February on round table in the Information centre of the European Commission in Sofia.



The Safer Internet Day was marked by a round table in the National Press Club of the Bulgarian News Agency, co-organised by Microsoft Bulgaria and the State Agency for Child Protection. The pan-European TV spot against cyber bullying “Keep control” was presented to the media and was subsequently aired free by 12 television channels. During the round table children and parents panels were held to suggest most adequate rules for ensuring children’s safety online.

“Children Safe in Internet” campaign



From October 2008 a 7-month awareness campaign “Children safe in Internet” was launched. The campaign was organised for a second consecutive year on the initiative of Microsoft Bulgaria in co-operation with the children portal site Az-deteto.com and the Internet provider Evrokom with the support of the Public Council on Safer Internet. The aim of the campaign was to acquaint children aged 6-16 with the main rules for safe work and fun in Internet. A ‘Lesson for parents’ online competition for children was conducted and on 23rd of April ten winners who proposed the best

suggestions for online safety rules for parents were awarded certificates and digital cameras from Microsoft Bulgaria. The safety tips for parents proposed by the kids were printed in a brochure which was disseminated in schools.

“You Choose” campaign

The Safer Internet Centre and Partners Bulgaria Foundation, with the support of the members of European Parliament Mrs. Iliyana Yotova and Mrs. Filiz Hyusmenova, organised in April, May and June the campaign ‘You choose! (whether to be victim online)’ aimed at raising awareness among kids about the risks connected to posting personal data in Internet. The campaign was focused on a TV spot produced on the idea



of 17-year old Kaloyan Genkov who was also one of the actors in the clip together with his 11-year old brother Presiyan. The music of the clip was also created by a teen – 19-year old Mario Manev, student in the Sofia University “Kliment Ohridski”. The main media partner - the Bulgarian National Television was airing the TV spot during the campaign. The campaign “You choose!” included also spreading of 5,000 posters in the vicinity of dozens of Sofia schools and displaying billboards on 15 locations in Sofia. The campaign audio spot was aired by 10 radio stations popular among youngsters.

A second stage of the campaign was held in September, October and November with a number of publications in the media focused on the necessity to introduce online safety education in primary schools curriculum.

Initiatives for children

Bulgarian students with European awards

The National Awareness Node coordinated the participation of Bulgarian students in the pan-European competition for school children on the occasion of the Data Protection Day on 28th January. Stoyan Totin and Georgi Koemdjiev from “Dimitar Talev” High School in the town Gotse Delchev town won the third prize. The competition was announced in November 2008 and was addressed to students aged 15-20 from the 27 member states of the EU. The jury received 77 video-clips on the theme. At an official ceremony in Brussels Stoyan’s and Georgi’s video-clip “Little Betty” were awarded by Mr. Jean Bareaux, the Commissioner for

Transport. Stoyan and Georgi, dressed in their school uniforms received a diploma for third place and a cheque for 1,000 Euro for their school.

“Micky Mouse Magic” show and quiz “My Safe Internet” in 14 Secondary School in Sofia

On 15th April, pupils from 1 to 4 grade in Sofia’s 14 Secondary School “Prof. Asen Zlatarov” had



the unique chance to see live one of the greatest illusionists of the show “Micky Mouse’s Magic” of Disney Live – Brad Ross. The audience enjoyed the tricks and the children took pictures with the magician. The event was held under the motto “My safety in Internet” and the kids answered questions about safe use of Internet and main rules of safer online communication. Two of the pupils who gave the most detailed and well-founded answers received as a prize a pair of tickets each – one for a parent and one for the child – to attend the Disney Live Show of Brad Ross in the National Palace of Culture in Sofia.

My safe vacation in... Internet

On 30 and 31 March, the Nessebar Municipality and the Safer Internet Centre organised training meetings with school children and parents under the motto “My Safe Vacation in Internet” in four towns in the region. The training team of the educational project “Real and virtual violence: Prevention by interactive education” which is being implemented in 20 schools in Sofia by Association Roditeli and ARC Fund was invited by the Nessebar Municipal Council in order to share with students and parents their experience and knowledge about the online risks for children and the ways of their prevention. Pupils from 11 to 16 years of age and their parents were presented the main rules for children safety in Internet and were explained how to report to the Hotline illegal and harmful for children content and conduct in Internet.

Presentations for students and parents were organised in the towns Sveti Vlas, Orizare,

Nessebar and Obzor. The kids were very actively participating and discussing the



dangers in Internet. They shared personal online experience. Parents and teachers took part in the discussion presenting their opinions and suggestions how to make Internet a safer place for the children.

Children choose their hero - defender in Internet

In November the Safer Internet Centre and the children website Dechica.com launched an online competition for children. The participants competed

on the most appropriate name of the new animated hero of the Safer Internet Centre.



Silvia Ilieva is the name of the winner in the competition. She suggested the name Flashko (Flashboy) which was chosen by the competition jury as the best suggestion. The animated character is in the shape of a flash memory stick but in fact he is a super-hero who will help children to have fun, to play and work in Internet without risks and dangers. The award for Silvia is a set of educational software and games for children on CD.

Online video competition “Christmas in School”

In December, the Safer Internet Centre together with the Network of Teachers-Innovators and the children website Dechica.com launched an online video competition for children “How did we meet Santa Claus in our school / kindergarten”. 25 subscriptions for National Geographic KIDS magazine were distributed among participants in the competition “Christmas in school”.

For parents

Children and parents enjoy first Famillatlon

On the Day of Europe – 9th of May, Association Roditeli, Sofia Municipality and the Safer Internet Centre organised jointly the first Bulgarian Famillatlon – an outdoor event for family sports and healthy lifestyle under the auspices of the Czech



Presidency of the EU represented by the Czech Ambassador to Sofia H.E. Martin Klepetko. The holiday was carried out with the support of the private companies Vivacom-BTK and Voltaren Emulgel. The Famillatlon movement originated in France where it was initiated five years ago by a group of enthusiasts. The main idea is that the family sports is crucial for improving health, as described in the definition by the World Health Organisation of physical, psychological and social welfare. The event is focused on families but on the other hand, serves as an important tool for lobbying for the idea of creating favorable conditions for family sports and healthy lifestyle. Association Roditeli joined the Famillatlon Charter thus becoming the partner in Bulgaria of the French initiative. The Ambassador of France H.E. Etienne de Poncin as well as representatives of the French Famillathlon movement participated in the first event in Bulgaria.

The Famillathlon was launched by Mrs. Gergana Pasi, Minister of European Affairs, in front of the National Theatre in Sofia - the starting point of a bicycle tour for parents and children together.



Ambassador De Poncin with his wife and daughters joined the bicyclists as well as Ambassador

Klepetko with his family. The participants pedalled to the South Park in Sofia where dozens of various sport events were organised for the whole day.

There were demonstrations and open trainings for the participants in volleyball, proto-Bulgarian martial arts, capoeira, sport dances, hockey, rugby, as well as a rope garden and the photo exhibition "Letters around us". Several competitions for the public, including a quiz competition on Safer Internet rules, were held.

During the event there were stands with brochures and information materials provided by participating organisations all around the place. Awareness brochures of the Safer Internet Centre were distributed to parents and children.

Free parental control software Child Defender v. 3.0 released

The non-governmental Delfin Foundation developing the first Bulgarian software for parental control with the support of the Safer Internet Centre released for free downloading Version 3.0.0 of the programme Child Defender.

The upgraded version of Child Defender creates a profile with possibility to change the settings



for each Windows profile on a home computer. The settings are to be done by the administrator of the computer who can make the settings for each profile different profiles to be set without logging to each of them.

The main functions of Child Defender are two: first – to prevent children from opening pornographic and other inappropriate websites while surfing in Internet. It is done by filtering websites' content and blocking access to the ones containing inappropriate content. Secondly, Child Defender helps parents to control how their child is using the computer by setting time restrictions, blocking use of some programmes, etc.

The programme has options for monitoring of the visited websites, used programmes etc. A firewall defends the computer from viruses and malware. The programme has been downloaded more than 2,000 times from the Child Defender website.

First day at school with online safety rules

On the first day of the new school year, 15th of September, 10,000 handbooks for parents 'Parents, welcome to school!' were distributed to parents of 1-graders in 200 schools in the capital city of Sofia. The booklet for parents was included in the packages with the free textbooks for 1 grade pupils that they received at the beginning of the school year.

The booklet was prepared by Association Roditeli - member of the national Safer Internet

Centre with the financial support of the mobile operator Vivacom.

In the future the handbook for parents will be disseminated to parents all around the country at the start of every new school year. The initiative was supported by the Ministry of Education and Sofia Municipality who made a commitment to disseminate the booklet.

The handbook aims to encourage the dialogue between parents and children as well as the partnership between parents and school administrations in order to create safer environment for the first steps in the school of 1-graders. The handbook is the beginning of training on Internet safety of children in school.

Education

Real and virtual violence prevention during free classes in schools

On 10th July, a round table of experts in Sofia discussed the results and the new stage of the project "Real and virtual violence: Prevention by interactive education in schools".

Representatives of the Ministry of Education, Sofia Regional Education Inspectorate, Sofia Municipality, State Agency for Child Protection as well as school directors, teachers, pedagogues and school psychologists from Sofia schools took part in the discussion.



Association Roditeli and the Applied Research and Communication Fund – partners in the national Safer Internet Centre, have been implementing together the project "Real and virtual violence: prevention by interactive education in schools" since 2007. The project is supported by the Suisse OAK Foundation and the Safer Internet *plus* Programme of the European Commission.

In the first 3 months of the school year 2009/2010, educators who were trained on the course methodology approved by the Ministry of Education, have delivered more than 800 interactive lessons in the place of free classes

in 20 schools-volunteers. The course management is based on a unique online platform, sending requests via e-mail and SMSs to 60 educators.

In order to assess the impact of the educational course Vitosha Research Agency conducted two typological surveys among school students with approximately 350 respondents – about 60% boys and about 40% girls divided into three age groups. The first survey was conducted before the start of the course and the second one – after finishing the 25 lessons.

As to exposure to violence, the two surveys demonstrated roughly the same results proving that school children become extremely often witnesses of violence in different environment and through different media. Significant percentage of students admitted taking part personally in acts of violence – as initiators or victims.



The conclusion of the comparative analysis of the two surveys is that interactive training, inasmuch as it makes parallel between real life and virtual violence, is being accepted well by students and leads to raising awareness about a number of online dangers for children.

But in order to turn the recognition of dangers and of various forms of violence into behavioral changes obviously more systematic and long-term pedagogical work with the students is needed.

The participants in the round table assessed positively the results of the educational course and discussed opportunities not only for a new stage of the project but for enlarging its scope into more schools in the country too.

A number of specific suggestions were made in connection to administrative procedures and regulations that need to be taken into account for introducing the training in more schools.

6th National conference “IT in Education”

On 27th and 28th April, the Sixth National Conference “IT in Education - the necessary investment in the future of Bulgaria”, traditionally organised by Microsoft Bulgaria with support of the Ministry of Education and the State Agency for Information Technologies



and Communications was held in Boyana Residence in Sofia.

150 teachers from Bulgarian secondary schools, school principals, representatives of local and central education administrations, NGOs and private businesses took part in the forum.

The Safer Internet Center presented its educational programme for prevention of real and virtual violence by interactive education in schools. The online platform – system for managing the course was presented to the participants. The online system is taking requests for delivering lessons during free classes in schools and notifying the educators by e-mail or SMS and, on the other hand, the coordinators in schools which educator will be delivering the lesson. The following aims of the project were highlighted in the presentation:

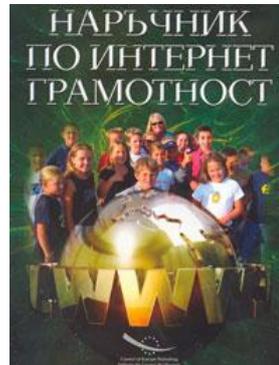
- to support personal development of children through raising awareness and understanding, through enhancing self-esteem and teaching skills for prevention of risks and violence in the virtual and real life;
- to develop a system for use of the existing resource of free classes in schools for personal development of the children.

Second revised and complimented edition of Internet Literacy Handbook presented

On 18 May, the Bulgarian translation of the second edition of the Internet Literacy Handbook of the Council of Europe was presented to the public and the media. The handbook was edited with the assistance of Safer Internet Centre. Students, teachers and principals from schools in Sofia, as well as representatives of Sofia Regional Education Inspectorate and media attended the event.

The new edition of the handbook of the Council of Europe was adapted for Bulgarian users including relevant Bulgarian websites.

In the second edition new texts were added concerning the future of Internet as a tool of social communication, the development of e-democracy and full-fledged socialization through Web 2.0



The last chapter informs in details where and how to find help in cases of illegal and inappropriate for children content and conduct in Internet. The Internet Hotlines members of INHOPE are listed, as well as the addresses of some helplines in Europe. The address of Bulgarian Hotline for fighting against illegal and harmful for children content in Internet is published, too.

International activities

In 2009 the team of the Safer Internet Centre took part in 8 international forums and conferences, devoted to online safety of children. Some of the major events were:

- Regional Conference of Safer Internet Centres in Madrid in July. A representative of Sofia Municipal Council – active partner of the Bulgarian Safer Internet Center, took also part in the forum.
- Annual Safer Internet Forum in Luxemburg. The national Safer Internet Centre organised the participation of two representatives of the Youth Panel of the Center – from the Youth Council of Oborishte District in Sofia, who contributed actively to the European Youth Panel. A primary school teacher from Bulgaria participated in the European Teachers Panel.
- At the end of July, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre held in Sarajevo 3-days seminar with some 30 local non-governmental organisations for establishing Safer Internet Centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For the training ARC Fund was awarded with a golden plate of honour by the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- On the request of the European Network of Safer Internet Centers the handbook for teachers “Real and Virtual Violence: Prevention by Interactive Education in Schools”

was translated in English in order to be adapted and to be used by all 27 European Safer Internet Centers for training in schools.

Conclusions

Visibility

The activities of the national Safer Internet Centre had wide response in the society. More than 350 publications in the media covered various activities of the Safer Internet Centre. The Centre experts were invited to take part in more than 10 national events – round tables, conferences, seminars and discussions. The increasing number of reports to the Hotline and of queries demonstrated the rise of public trust.

Portal website of the Safer Internet Centre



The portal website of the Safer Internet Centre has been regularly updated with news, information materials, tips for kids, teens, parents and teachers.

In 2009, the website and the online reporting facility of the Hotline for fighting illegal and harmful for children content and conduct in Internet were re-designed to make them more user-friendly. The reporting website provides help information at each step of filling a report.

The activities of national Safer Internet Centre in 2009 resulted in significant increase of awareness of online risks for minors in the whole society. The parents' vigilance to their children's actions in Internet is growing. More and more teachers, school and municipal administrations are getting aware of the need of constant education and actions for online protection of minors that can not be addressed only by periodic campaigns. In 2010, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre will enlarge the scope and outreach of its activities. A Helpline for minors and parents will be established to answer queries and give expert advice by phone, via online communication channels and when necessary by arranging face-to-face consultations with experts.