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| **Council 2022 Geneva, 21-31 March 2022** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 1.5** | **Document C22/77-E** |
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| Contribution by Greece | |
| STRENGTHENING Efforts towards safety of children in the digital era | |

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| Summary  By illustrating the huge increase of access to digital services in Greece during COVID19 pandemic, this contribution describes the vital role of the Greek SIC (Safer Internet Center), its proactive participation in the IGF2021 Workshop and its close collaboration with ENISA.  Action required  This contribution invites the ITU Council to invite other Member States to share with the ITU Secretariat and WG-COP their experiences related to protecting children from the emerging risks in the digital space as well as implications of the pandemic requiring special action at the national, regional and global level. Additionally, the Greek government calls for ITU to strengthen cooperation with ENISA in this field, in particular focusing on the role of ITU COP Guidelines play in providing safety of children in the digital era worldwide..  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  The contribution from Greece submitted to the 15th CWG-COP meeting: [CWG-COP-15/INF/1-E](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=S19-CLCWGCOP15-INF-0001), as described in the [CWG-COP Report-19](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CLCWGCOP15-C-0003/en), that highlighted the activities of the Greek Safer Internet Center (SIC) and the several programs adopted at the national level in coordination with other partners. |

The mission of the General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post (GSTP) of the Greek Ministry of Digital Governance is the development and implementation of national policy and institutional framework to develop resilient broadband infrastructure, that serve as an enabler to strengthen the economy and enhance the accessibility of information to all citizens with emphasis on unhindered access to all digital public services. Additionally, the GSTP represents the Greek Government in ESOs and SDOs, coordinates the involvement of academia and stakeholders in standardization activities, supports national initiatives and undertakes liaison activities in international fora. One of these national initiatives concerns the Greek Safer Internet Center (SIC).

The Greek SIC networks at national level with all relevant stakeholders (Ministries, the Police authorities, ISPs, NGOs, Consumers’ Unions, etc.), bringing them together into a single united body, the Advisory Board of the Center, that meets up once a year. It handles a variety of issues, often as they emerge as important in an ad-hoc way (such as distance education, which emerged as a critical issue during lockdown, mental health problems and exposure of self-generated sexualized content as a consequence of the COVID19 lockdown). Some topics are in the permanent list of topics of the Center, while others are included as they emerge. Examples of topics of interest include, but are not limited to, are the following: Sexting, grooming, social media use, excessive use, cyberbullying, personal data protection, online reputation, webcams, phishing, online gaming, intellectual property rights, fake news, internet of toys, PEGI, media literacy, positive online content, inappropriate content, body image, cyber hygiene, online challenges, sextortion, online privacy, GDPR, cybersecurity, hate speech, online purchases, online fraud, online detox, 2FA, distant learning, online identity, password security, gender violence, etc. The list is endless and constantly enriched.

**Some of its top achievements were:**

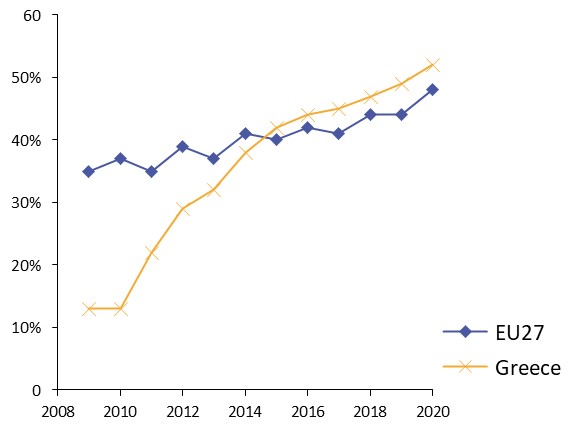
1. The realization of a large-scale informative campaign with the National Cybersecurity Agency of the Ministry for Digital Governance, about cyber safety and protection from online fraud. In this respect, SIC has already delivered and will continue to do so, several training seminars for cybersecurity (security of digital authentication methods, avoidance of online fraud, etc.) issues of importance during the COVID19 era. Furthermore, two short videos were created and released to promote the main messages of the campaign.
2. Close collaboration with the Greek Cybercrime Unit, participating occasionally in the Advisory Board meetings. Through its hotline, SafeLine, the Greek SIC collaborates with the Cybercrime Unit of the Greek Police and formulate reports about illegal internet content and activity.
3. Assisted in the IGF2021 Workshop “Mind the Gender Gap OR Mend the Gender Gap”, with contributions from Mrs. Maria Spyraki (member of the European Parliament) and a member of the Greek youth panel.
4. Since 2018, the Greek SIC is the national contact point for the realization of the campaigns for ENISA’s Cyber Security Month (ENISA ECSM).

**Main challenges**

Greece is a country that has transformed rapidly the last several years, emerging to an international business hub, which is the outcome of the government’s vision to make Greece a Smart Nation, so as to improve quality of life and make citizens happier. In December 2020, the Greek government signed the [Berlin Declaration on Digital Society and Value-Based Digital Government](https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/sites/default/files/cdr_20201207_eu2020_berlin_declaration_on_digital_society_and_value-based_digital_government_.pdf), thus re-affirming its commitment – together with other EU Member States – to foster digital transformation in order to allow citizens and businesses to harness the benefits and opportunities offered by modern digital technologies.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of our economies and societies and radically changed the role of digital services in our everyday lives. It enhanced the demand for connectivity services, with data traffic volumes exploding by nearly 70%, as people relied entirely on digital services to work and study from home, connect with family and friends or shop online. While COVID-19 posed a major threat to public health, as it caused significant morbidity and mortality to the population, the Greek government reacted spontaneously, converting crisis to an opportunity, by establishing new reforms for the digital transition of the country, removing administrative barriers, creating an investment-friendly environment, enhancing digital governance and adapting new technologies.

The following graph presents data for the latest Generic Information Society Indicators for Greece compared to the EU average. Statistical indicators reflect those of [Eurostat](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database) at the time the graph was prepared. In Greece, over 1,500 administrative processes have been digitized the recent years, subsequently resulting in 8.8 million transactions in 2018 and in 567 million transactions in 2021.



Percentage of individuals using the internet for obtaining information from public authorities in Greece.

Taking into considerations the above data that illustrates the huge increase of digital transactions, the Greek SIC has created a very strong campaign, that includes over 50 TV interviews in one year, over 600 articles on internet safety, over 200 multimedia educational material and the enhancement of collaborations with the Ministry of Digital Governance, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Civil Protection. Additionally, close collaboration of the Ministry of Digital Governance with the coordinator of the Greek SIC, that is an authorized representative from Greece at the European Commission's Expert Group for a Safer Internet for Children.

Child on Protection is a global challenge and Greece appreciates the ITU COP Guidelines, grasping the opportunity to build human capacity in the field, strengthen cooperation with national stakeholders while outreaching stakeholders of the European community and addressing implementation challenges for the safety of children and young people on the internet. In this respect, our first initiative, apart from our national strategy on the field, was to build the infrastructure, in order to connect every school to the Internet and every young person to information. To improve the level of connectivity of schools, the existing connections are gradually being upgraded to either VDSL or fiber connections, through the Greek School Network (GSN) operated by GRNET.

One of the stakeholders that may be engaged at regional level is ENISA, the specialized European Agency for Cybersecurity, whose offices are based in Athens and contributes to EU cyber policy, enhances the trustworthiness of ICT products, services and processes with cybersecurity certification schemes, cooperates with Member States and EU bodies and helps Europe prepare for the cyber challenges of tomorrow. ENISA has been an active supporter of Safer Internet Day for over nine years, and has launched several studies related to the subject matter, on privacy and security in personal data clouds and cyber hygiene practices.

At national level, through our collaboration with other communities, the main challenges were the following:

1. **Identify emerging trends**: In light of the COVID19 pandemic, the Greek SIC focuses on identifying emerging risks and trends due to the crisis. Main issues considered are: online overexposure and production of sexualized content, streaming of inappropriate or illegal content, excessive online use and gaming, mental health problems as a follow up of online technology use for long periods and from youngsters and other privacy issues. Material and training sessions are conducted for the aforementioned issues, aiming to simultaneously stress the benefits and opportunities offered by digital technology.
2. **Take actions to increase trust in digital services:** The COVID19 pandemic initiated a sudden and abrupt digital transformation, forcing people, children and parents, to take, literally overnight, a digital surge in their lives. This was even more abrupt in rural areas of Greece where society lacks digital maturity compared to urban and suburban areas. The Greek SIC takes actions to support trust in digital transformation and digital services, assisting people (especially in rural areas) to become more mature and responsible users of digital technology.
3. **Reach to the vulnerable groups, seek inclusion:** Although the Greek SIC has always been sensitized to the most vulnerable groups of the society, delivering specialized training sessions with a more restructured effort in different Municipalities and Regions, is the key to identify even more vulnerable groups that have not always received the proper attention.

**Proposal**

This contribution invites the ITU Council to invite other Member States to share with the ITU Secretariat and WG-COP their experiences related to protecting children from the emerging risks in the digital space as well as implications of the pandemic requiring special action at the national, regional and global level. Additionally, the Greek government calls for ITU to strengthen cooperation with ENISA in this field, in particular focusing on the role of ITU COP Guidelines play in providing safety of children in the digital era worldwide.

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