



EU Children's Participation Platform

Findings from the consultation with
children on cyberbullying

6 November 2025

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in association with

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Executive summary

This report presents **findings from the consultation with children on cyberbullying**. Children's views will contribute to the **EU Action Plan against Cyberbullying**. This consultation was conducted under the **EU Children's Participation Platform** and guided by the Lundy model¹ of child participation. It was an online survey which children could complete between 3rd and 30th September 2025.

In total, **6,343 children and young people aged between 12 – 17 years from all 27 EU Member States and EU citizens living abroad participated in this consultation**. The largest number of participants were from Romania, Croatia, Lithuania and Greece, together accounting for nearly 74% of all consulted children.

Key findings:

- Children identified many behaviours as cyberbullying: The majority of children (82%) said that cyberbullying means 'saying mean or hurtful things in messages or comments, especially about someone being different because of who they are, how they look, or where they're from, or anything else'.
- Many children have seen and experienced cyberbullying: 39% of children had seen someone else being cyberbullied and a quarter of children (24%) said it had happened to them. Around one in three children had never seen or experienced cyberbullying (31%).
- Nearly half of children are familiar about people being mean online (49%).
- Half of children think that 'people who are different' are most likely to be cyberbullied (51%).
- Majority of children think that cyberbullying makes people feel sad (73%), hurt (65%) and lonely or left out (62%).
- Most children think some people cyberbully others 'for fun and attention' (70%) and 'to feel powerful' (62%).
- Most children would turn to 'a parent or carer' if they were cyberbullied (62%). Notably 11% said that if they were being cyberbullied, they 'wouldn't tell anyone'.
- Children suggest different ways to make reporting cyberbullying easier: Almost half of the children (45%) said that 'knowing something will be done' after they report cyberbullying would help the most. Many also said that having 'easy ways to report cyberbullying on apps or websites' (39%) would make a difference. Suggestions and recommendations from children what would make or help them feel safer when reporting cyberbullying included:
 - Make reporting easier.
 - Ensure follow-up.
 - Enforce the rules.
 - Provide emotional support.
 - Encourage openness.
 - Build resilience.
- Most children do not know if their school has anti-bullying rules or guidelines (57%).

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/lundy_model_of_participation_0.pdf

- Children identified a range of actions from schools and adults that could help stop cyberbullying: 55% said that ‘schools should have clear rules and consequences to help stop cyberbullying’. Educational and awareness actions were also seen as important, with 54% saying that schools should ‘teach students about it in class’.
- Nearly half of children have seen or taken part in something about stopping cyberbullying (45%). The majority of these children found anti-cyberbullying activities ‘very’, ‘quite’ or at least ‘somewhat’ helpful (in total 74%).
- Children want social media platforms to take reporting seriously and support victims to help stop cyberbullying: 54% said that social media platforms should ‘take the reporting seriously and inform about follow up’.
- Differences between **younger (aged 12) and older (aged 17) children**: Older children were more likely than younger children to say they had seen cyberbullying happen to someone else and children’s familiarity with people being mean to each other increases with age. Older children are more likely to turn for help to friends and less likely to tell parents or teachers compared to younger children.
- **Girls showed more awareness of cyberbullying compared to boys**: Girls were more likely than boys to identify the listed behaviours as forms of cyberbullying and were more familiar with people being mean to each other online. Children were also more likely to report that ‘girls’ (24%) are more likely to be cyberbullied compared to ‘boys’ (7%). Girls were also more likely than boys to want action from schools and adults and social media platforms.
- Children who were **disabled or had a medical difficulty** were more likely to experience cyberbullying compared to those who did not (43% vs 20%).

Children’s suggestions and recommendations to help stop bullying

Suggestions and recommendations are presented in order of prevalence.

- Make social media platforms take responsibility and act against cyberbullying.
- Make reporting easier and show that action is taken.
- Involve parents and encourage open conversations about cyberbullying.
- Raise awareness and education about cyberbullying, for example:
 - Build digital skills and promote online safety.
 - Build confidence and coping strategies and
 - Empower children and help building their resilience to deal with cyberbullying.
 - Encourage children to speak up.
- Create a culture of kindness, for example:
 - Promote kindness and positive online communities.
 - Build respectful school environments.
- Provide support and counselling for those affected by cyberbullying.
- Strengthen laws and consequences for cyberbullying.
- Limit access to social media for younger children.

1 Introduction

This report presents findings from the third consultation² with children conducted for the EU Children's Participation Platform. It has the following structure:

- Section 2, 3, 4, and 5 report on the consultation findings;
- Section 6 reports on the collated key recommendations from children;
- Annex 1 presents the consultation methodology, the characteristics of children participating in the consultation activities, and children's feedback.

1.1 Consultation theme, policy context, and aims and objectives cyberbullying

This third consultation of the EU Children's Participation Platform³ focused on **Cyberbullying**. It was conducted online between 3rd and 30th September 2025. In total, **6,343 children from 27 EU Member States and EU citizens living abroad participated in the online survey consultation**. The largest number of participants were from Romania⁴ (40%, N=2,536), Croatia (12%, N=764), Lithuania (11%, N=707) and Greece (11%, N=685), together accounting for nearly 74% of all consulted children⁵.

Children taking part in the EU Children's Participation Platform activities in 2023 and 2024 had asked that the Platform focus on **online safety and digital platforms**. This topic was linked to the European Commission's public consultation contributing to the **EU Action Plan against Cyberbullying**. The results of this child consultation provide valuable insights from children's perspectives about how to make the internet a safer and kinder place. They help the EU better understand the risks that children face online, and show what changes and actions are needed at both EU and national levels to address cyberbullying and support children better.

² The previous two consultations can be found here https://eu-for-children.europa.eu/childrens-voices_en.

³ The [EU Children's Participation Platform](#) aims to strengthen children's rights and participation across the EU. One of the ways the Platform promises to achieve this is through direct consultation with children.

⁴ The large number of respondents from Romania had no specific impact on the survey. There were limited differences between Member States.

⁵ Disclaimer: This document should be regarded solely as a summary of the contributions made by children to the consultation on cyberbullying. Responses to the consultation activities cannot be considered as a representative sample of the views of the EU population.

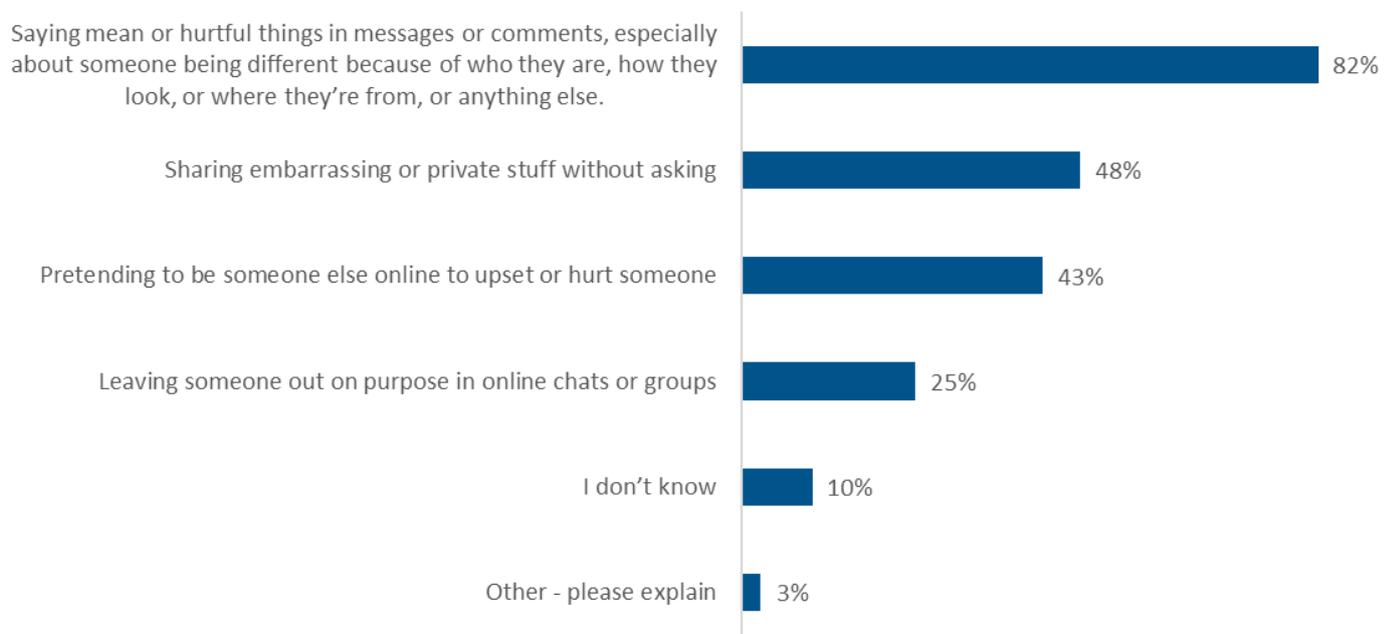
2 What children think about cyberbullying

2.1 Children recognised a range of actions as cyberbullying

When asked what cyberbullying means to them, children recognised a wide range of harmful online behaviours (see Figure 2.1). More than four out of five children (82%, N=5,177) said that cyberbullying means ‘saying mean or hurtful things in messages or comments, especially about someone being different because of who they are, how they look, or where they’re from, or anything else’. Around half of the surveyed children saw cyberbullying as ‘sharing embarrassing or private stuff without asking’ (48%, N=3,043) and ‘pretending to be someone else online to upset or hurt someone’ (43%, N=2,706). A quarter of children also said that ‘leaving someone out on purpose in online chats or groups’ (25%, N=1,565) is also a form of cyberbullying behaviour. Only a small number of children indicated that they did not know what cyberbullying means (10%, N=639), or gave other definitions (3%, N=175).

Girls were slightly more likely than boys to identify the listed behaviours as forms of cyberbullying. However, there were no major differences by different age groups or countries. An exception was Greece, where more children said they did not know what cyberbullying means (28%, N=190), and fewer identified the listed examples as forms of cyberbullying⁶.

Figure 2.1 Children identify many behaviours as cyberbullying (N=6,303)



Note: Q6: ‘What is cyberbullying?’ Multiple choice question.

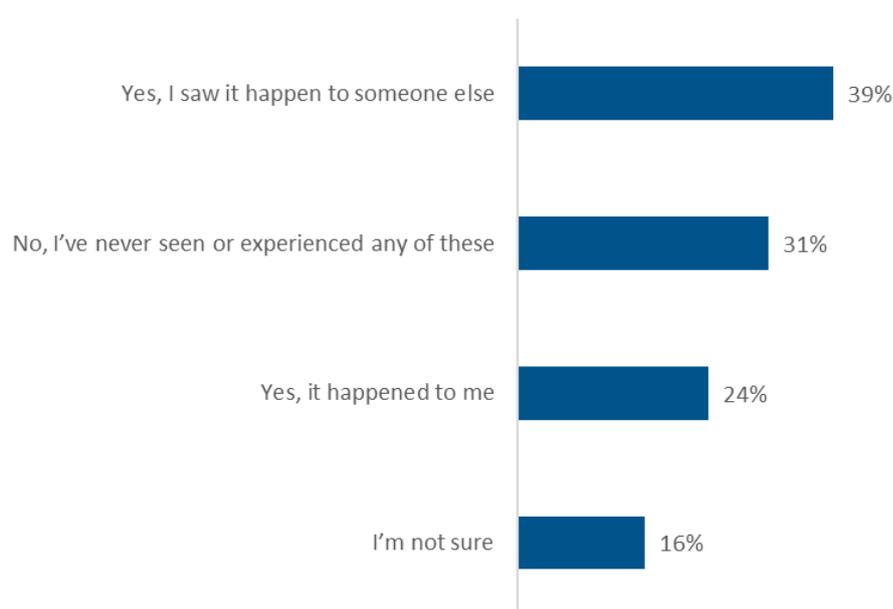
⁶ Please note that findings are reported only for Member States with at least 30 survey respondents and where the national result differs from the overall result for this question by at least 10%. This is a pragmatic threshold to highlight differences that might be meaningful in practice, even if they cannot be statistically validated. This approach applies to all analysis and findings presented in this report.

2.2 Many children have seen and experienced cyberbullying

When asked whether they have ever seen or experienced cyberbullying online, two in five children said that they had seen someone else being cyberbullied (39%, N=2,500) and a quarter of children said that it had happened to them (24%, N=1,510). Around one in three children reported that they had never seen or experienced cyberbullying (31%, N=1,985), while 16% of children were not sure (N=1,009) (see Figure 2.2).

Children's experiences differed across countries. Children from some countries were more likely to report having experienced cyberbullying themselves, including Hungary, Ireland and EU citizens living abroad. Similarly, children from Germany, Ireland, Poland and EU citizens living abroad were more likely to say they had seen cyberbullying happen to someone else. In contrast, children from France, Greece⁷ and Portugal were more likely to say they had never seen or experienced cyberbullying.

Figure 2.2 Many children have seen and experienced cyberbullying (N=6,303)



Note: Q6a: 'Have you ever seen or experienced any of these things online?' Multiple choice question.

Girls reported experiencing and seeing more cyberbullying. Slightly more girls than boys said that they had experienced bullying (25% girls, N=891, compared with 21% boys, N=532) and that they had seen it happen to someone else (43% girls, N=1,540, compared with 35% boys, N=874).

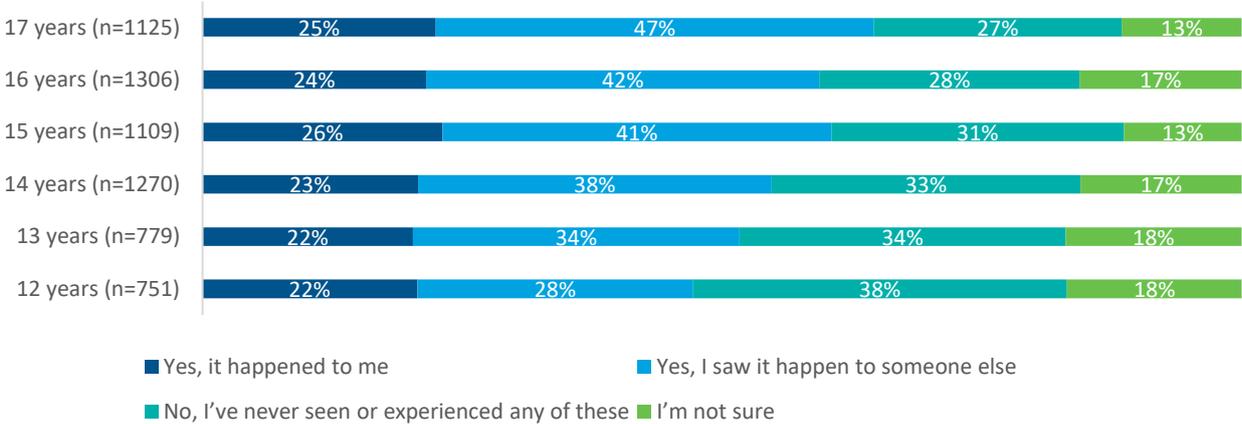
Around a quarter of children across all age groups said they had **experienced cyberbullying** (22% of 12-year-olds, N=166, compared with 25% of 17-year-olds, N=284) (see Figure 2.3). However, **older children were more likely than younger children** to say they **had seen cyberbullying happen to someone else**. Nearly half of 17-year-olds (47%, N=533) reported seeing cyberbullying happen to someone else, compared with just over a quarter of 12-year-olds (28%, N=213). Conversely, **younger children were less likely to notice or experience**

⁷ It is also interesting to note in section 2.1, a third of respondents from Greece did not know what cyberbullying means.

cyberbullying. 12-year-olds (38%, N=289) were more likely than 17-year-olds (27%, N=302) to say they had never seen or experienced cyberbullying.

Children who were disabled or had a medical difficulty were more likely to experience cyberbullying compared to those who did not (43%, N=244 vs 20%, N=983).

Figure 2.3 Children’s experience of seeing or experiencing cyberbullying varies by age (N=6,340)



Note: Q6a: ‘Have you ever seen or experienced any of these things online?’ Multiple choice question.

2.3 Nearly half of children are familiar about people being mean online

When asked whether they were familiar with people sometimes being mean to each other online, for example, in games or on social media, **nearly half of children said that they knew about ‘someone being treated mean online’** (49%, N=3,053) and about **‘a group of people being mean to someone online’** (47%, N=2,925).

In addition, **one in three children said they were familiar with ‘being mean to someone online’** (37%, N=2,294), while only a small number of children (17%, N=1,03) said that being mean online ‘doesn’t seem to happen much’ (see Figure 2.4).

Girls notice being mean online more often than boys. Girls were more likely than boys to say they were familiar with people being mean to each other online. The biggest difference was seen for ‘a group of people being mean to someone online’ reported by 52% of girls (N=1,817) compared with 40% of boys (N=986).

Figure 2.4 Children are familiar with people being mean online (N=6,230)

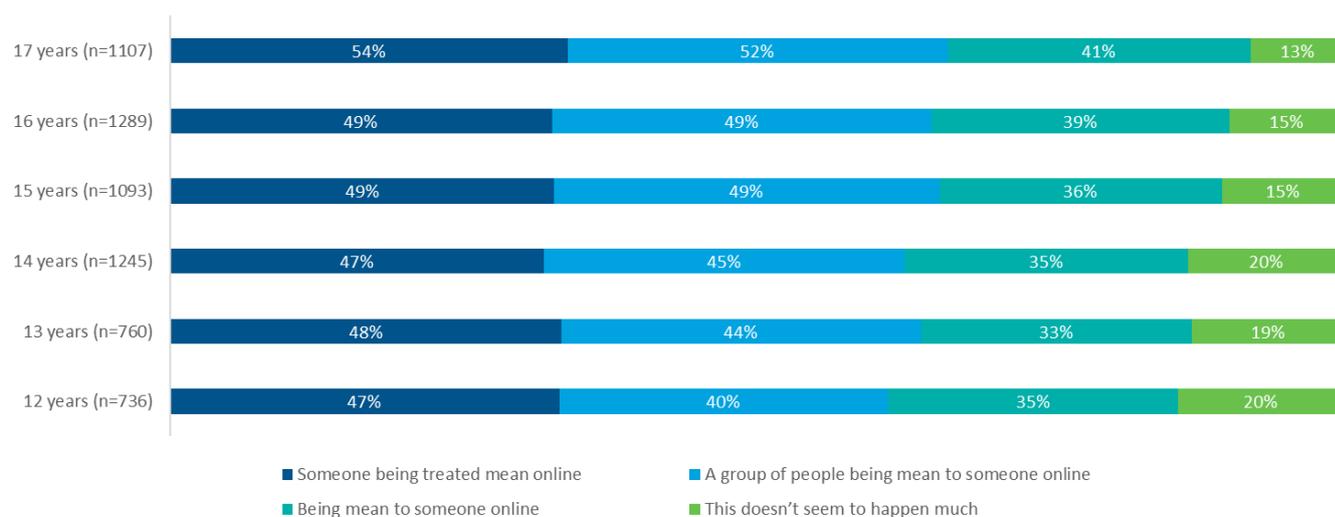


Note: Q7: 'Sometimes people are mean to each other online, like in games or on social media. Which of these sound familiar to you? Multiple choice question.'

Children's familiarity with people sometimes being mean to each other online increases with age (see Figure 2.5). Among 12-year-olds, 47% (N=346) said they were familiar with 'someone being treated mean online' compared with 54% (N=598) of 17-year-olds. Similarly, 40% (N=293) of 12-year-olds said they were familiar with 'a group of people being mean to someone online' raising to 52% (N=572) among 17-year-olds. There was also an age difference in familiarity with 'being mean to someone online', reported by 35% (N=258) 12-year-olds and 41% (N=456) 17-year-olds. Finally, younger children were more likely than older children to say that being mean online 'doesn't seem to happen much' (20% of 12-year-olds, N=148, compared with 13% of 17-year-olds, N=141).

Children's answers varied somewhat between Member States, but no consistent trend was observed.

Figure 2.5 Children's familiarity with people being mean online across age groups (N=6,230)



Note: Q7: 'Sometimes people are mean to each other online, like in games or on social media. Which of these sound familiar to you?' Multiple choice question.

2.4 Half of children think that 'people who are different' are most likely to be cyberbullied

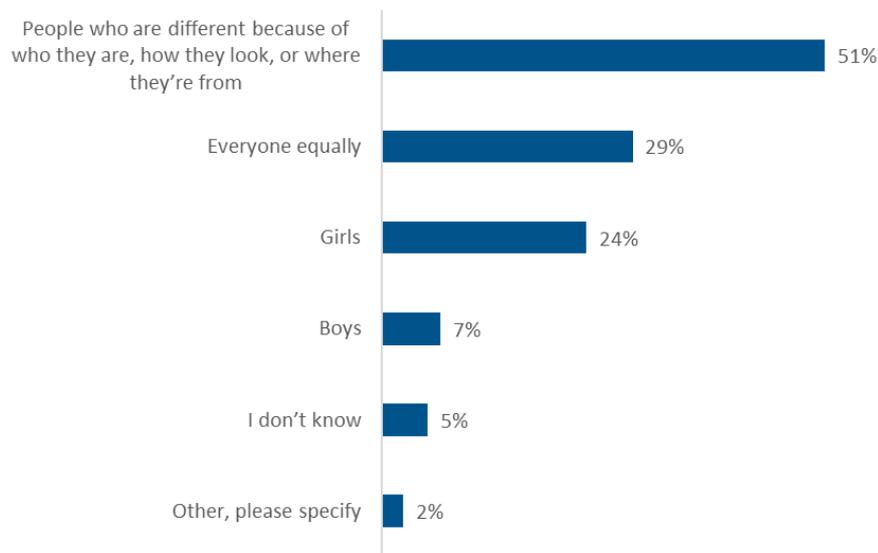
In total, **51% (N=3,221)** of children said that '**people who are different** because of who they are, how they look, or where they're from' **are most likely to be cyberbullied**. About three in ten children (29%, N=1,826) thought that 'everyone equally' is cyberbullied, while one in four (24%, N=1,488) said that 'girls' are most likely to be cyberbullied. Only 7% (N=424) of children said that 'boys' are most likely to be cyberbullied. A small number of children selected other people (2%, N=153) or said that they did not know (5%, N=332) (see Figure 2.6).

Compared with the overall results, girls were slightly more likely to say that 'people who are different...' (55%, N=1,947) and 'girls' (28%, N=987) are most likely to be cyberbullied. By contrast, boys were more likely to say that 'boys' (11%, N=276) are more likely to be cyberbullied.

Views differed across countries. Children in Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Poland, Spain and Sweden were more likely than average to say that 'people who are different...' are most likely to be cyberbullied, whereas in Hungary, children were more likely to say that 'girls' are most likely to be bullied. In Greece and Italy children were more likely to say that 'everyone equally' is likely to be cyberbullied.

There were no notable differences in responses between younger and older children.

Figure 2.6 Half of children think that 'people who are different' are most likely to be cyberbullied (N=6,307)

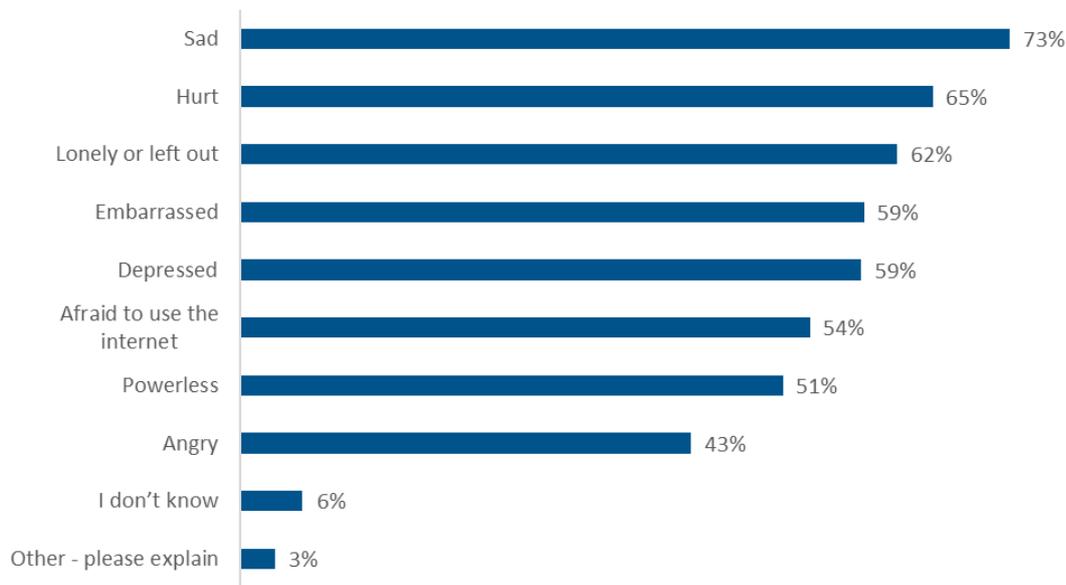


Note: Q8: 'Who do you think is most likely to be cyberbullied?' Multiple choice question

2.5 Majority of children think that cyberbullying makes people feel sad, hurt and lonely

Nearly three in four children said they think cyberbullying makes people feel 'sad' (73%, N=4,593), 'hurt' (65%, N=4,132), and 'lonely or left out' (62%, N=3,921). Many also mentioned feeling embarrassed (59%, N=3,724), depressed (59%, N=3,707), or afraid to use the internet (54%, N=3,399). About half (51%, 3,238) said it makes people feel powerless, and fewer (43%, 2,692) said it makes people angry. Only a small number of children said they did not know (6%, N=372) or gave another answer (3%, N=206) (see Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7 Majority of children think that cyberbullying makes people feel sad, hurt and lonely or left out (N=6311)

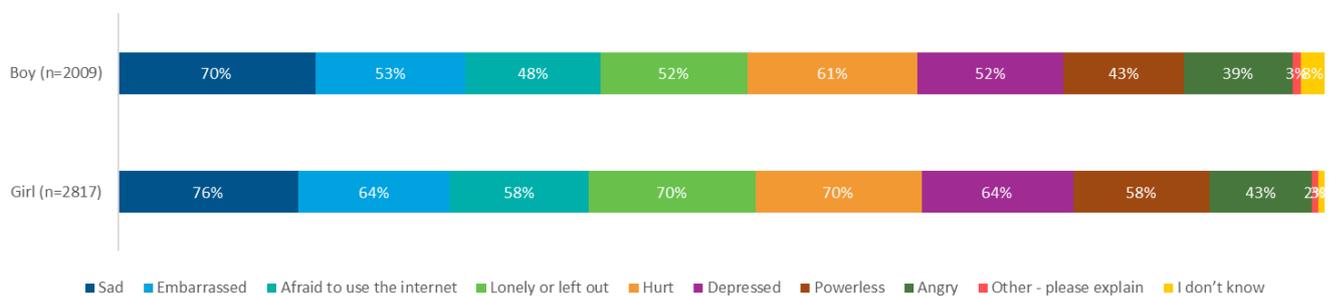


Note: Q9: 'How do you think cyberbullying makes people feel?' Multiple choice question.

Compared with overall results, **girls were more likely than boys to say that cyberbullying makes people feel the emotions listed in the question** (see Figure 2.8). The biggest differences between girls and boys were for feelings of 'powerless' (58% girl, N=2,056 vs 43% boys, N=1,063), 'lonely and left out' (70% girls, N=2,467 vs 52% boys, N=1,287) and depressed (64% girls, N=2,273 vs 52% boys, N=1,294).

There were some differences between Member States, but no clear pattern in how children answered this question. There were no notable differences in the answers of children from different age groups.

Figure 2.8 Girls were more likely than boys to say that cyberbullying makes people feel the emotions listed in the question (N=6311)

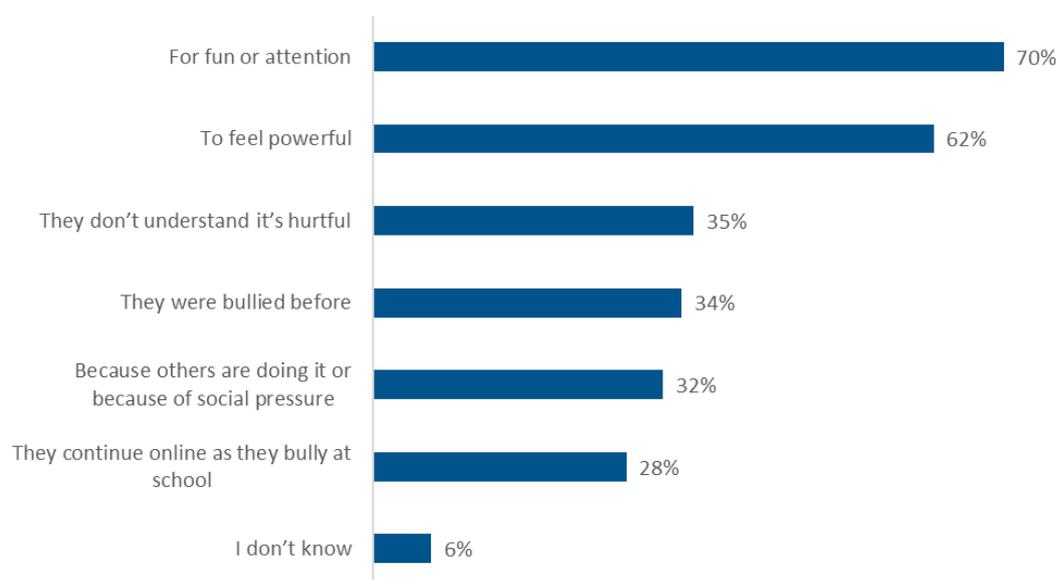


Note: Q9: 'How do you think cyberbullying makes people feel?' Multiple choice question.

2.6 Most children think some people cyberbully others ‘for fun and attention’ and ‘to feel powerful’

Most children said they believe that people cyberbully others ‘for fun and attention’ (70%, N=4,396) and ‘to feel powerful’ (62%, N=3,907) (see Figure 2.9). Around one in three children thought that people cyberbully others because ‘they don’t understand it’s hurtful’ (35%, N=2,234), ‘they were bullied before’ (34%, N=2,153) or ‘because others are doing it or because of social pressure’ (32%, N=2,022). A handful of children said they believe people cyberbully others because ‘they continue online as they bully at school’ (28%, N=1,766), while a minority said they did not know (6%, N=104) why people cyberbully others.

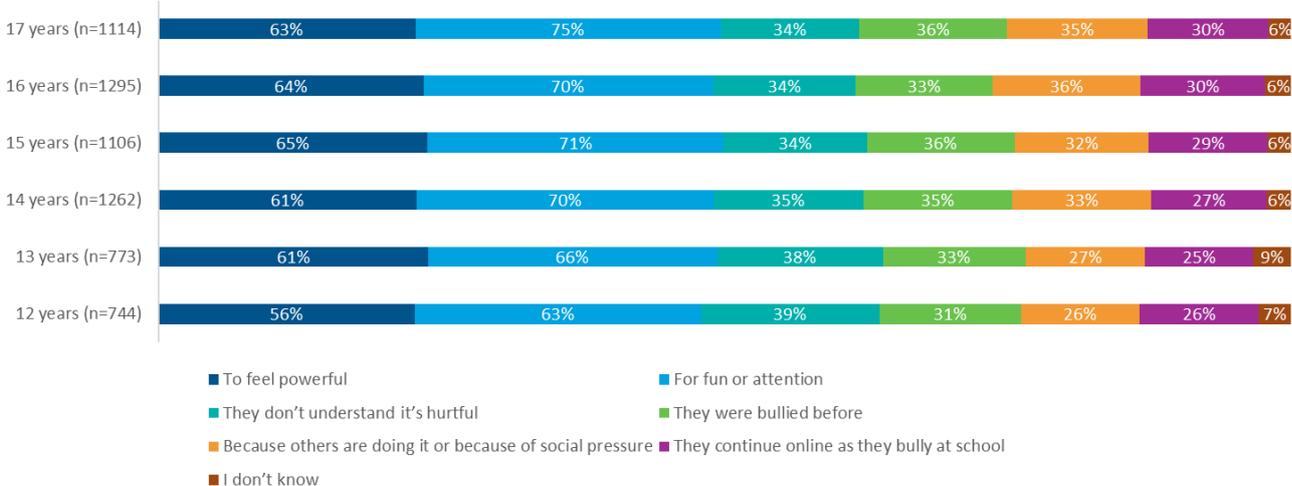
Figure 2.9 Reasons why children think some people cyberbully others (N=6294)



Note: Q10: ‘Why do you think some people cyberbully others?’ Multiple choice question.

Compared with the overall results, there were some differences between age groups. **Older children (aged 17) were more likely than younger children (aged 12) to say that people cyberbully ‘for fun or attention’ (75%, N=839 vs 63%, N=470)** (see Figure 2.10). There were no major differences in how children of different sex/gender answered this question, and while children across Member States gave mixed answers, there was no clear overall pattern.

Figure 2.10 Differences between age groups of children of why people cyberbully others (N=6,294)



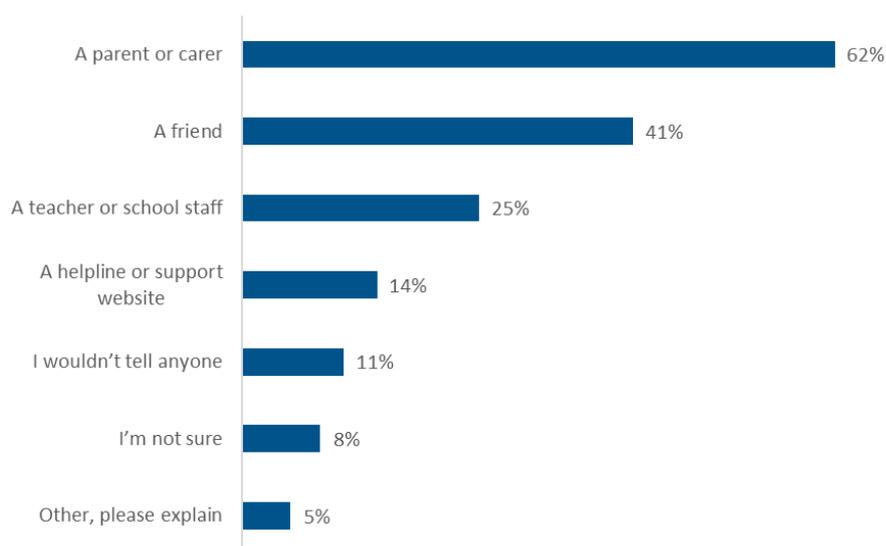
Note: Q10: 'Why do you think some people cyberbully others?' Multiple choice question.

3 Reporting cyberbullying and getting help

3.1 Most children would turn to ‘a parent or carer’ if they were cyberbullied

The majority of children (62%, N=3,880) said they would go to ‘a parent or carer’ if they were being cyberbullied (see Figure 3.1). Around four in ten children would turn to ‘a friend’ (41%, N=2,557) and a quarter would go to ‘a teacher or school staff’ (25%, N=1,550). Fewer children said they would contact ‘a helpline or support website’ (14%, N=883). Notably, **about one in ten children (11%, N=665) said that if they were being cyberbullied, they ‘wouldn’t tell anyone’.**

Figure 3.1 Children would typically turn to ‘a parent or carer’ or ‘a friend’ if they were being cyberbullied (N=6,306)



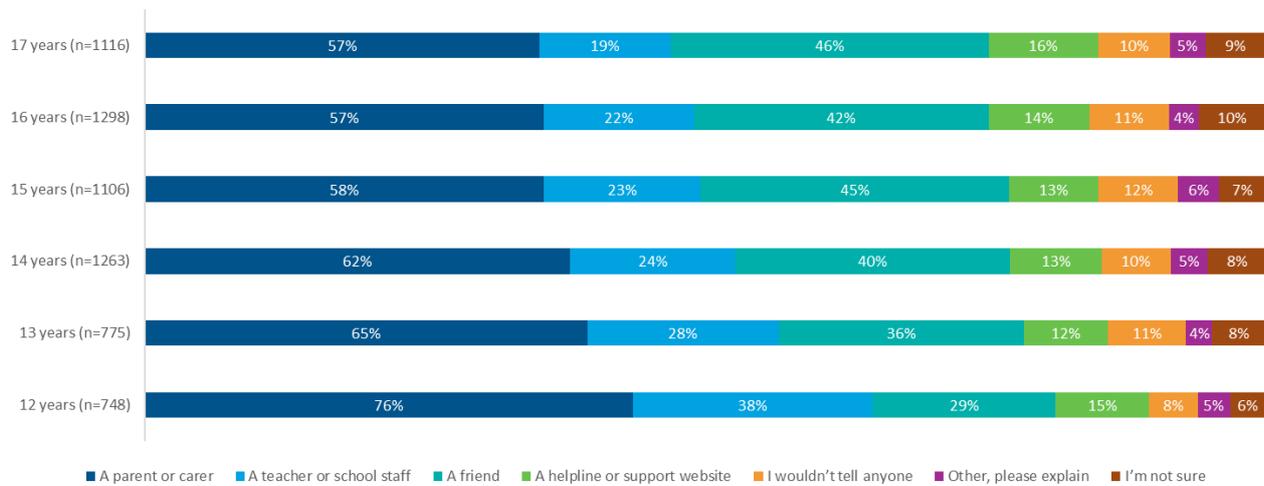
Note: Q11: ‘If you were being cyberbullied, who would you turn to for help?’ Multiple choice question.

Older children are more likely to turn to for help to friends and less likely to tell parents or teachers (see Figure 3.2). 17-year-olds were more likely to say they would turn to ‘a friend’ (46%, N=512) compared to 12-year-olds (29%, N=214). Older children were also less likely to go to ‘a parent or carer’ (57% of 17-year-olds, N=635), compared to younger children (76% of 12-year-olds, N=571), and to ‘a teacher or school staff’ (19% of 17-year-olds, N=212 vs 38% of 12-year-olds, N=281).

Girls were more likely to seek help from parents and friends. Girls were more likely than boys to say they would go for help to ‘a parent or carer’ (67%, N=2,370 vs 56%, N=1,397) and to ‘a friend’ (45%, N=1,592 vs 35%, N=876) if they were being cyberbullied.

There were some differences in responses between EU countries, but no clear pattern in how children answered this question.

Figure 3.2 If they were being cyberbullied, children turn to different people for help as they got older (N=6,306)

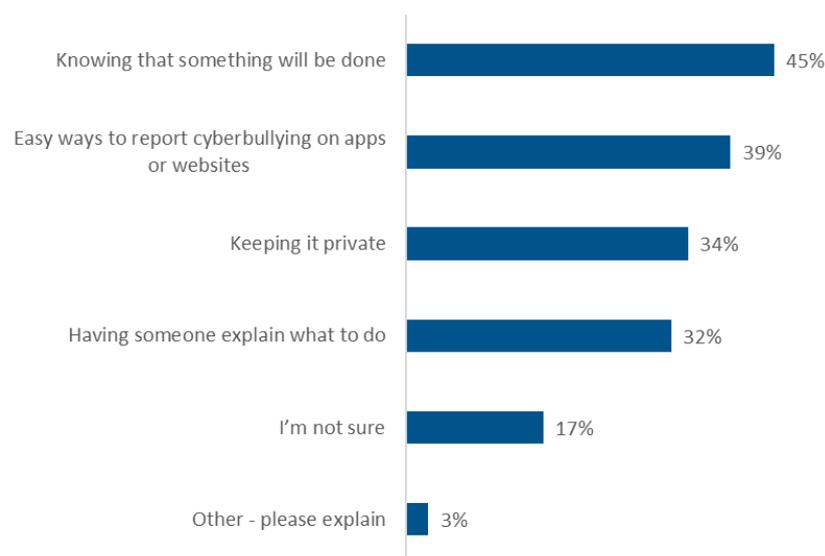


Note: Q11: 'If you were being cyberbullied, who would you turn to for help?' Multiple choice question.

3.2 Children suggest different ways to make reporting cyberbullying easier

Children were asked what would make them or help them feel safer when reported cyberbullying (see Figure 3.3). **Almost half of the children (45%, N=2,807) said that 'knowing something will be done' after they report cyberbullying would help the most. Many also said that having 'easy ways to report cyberbullying on apps or websites' (39%, N=2,471) would make a difference.** About one in three children said that 'keeping reports private' (34%, N=2149) and 'having someone explain what to do' (32%, N=2,022) would help them feel safer. A smaller number of children said they were not sure (17%, N=1,043) and gave other suggestions (3%, N=163).

Figure 3.3 Children suggest different ways to make or help them feel safer when reporting cyberbullying (N=6,260)



Note: Q12: ‘What would make you or help you feel safer when reporting cyberbullying?’ Multiple choice question.

Girls were more likely than boys to say that some actions would make them feel safer when reporting cyberbullying. Nearly half of girls (49%, N=1,736) said that ‘knowing that something will be done’ would make them feel safer, compared with 39% of boys (N=971). Girls were also more likely to want guidance on what to do, with 38% (N=1,353) selecting ‘having someone explain what to do, compared to 24% (N=599) of boys. 17-year-olds were more likely than 12-year-olds to say that they wanted to ‘keep it private’ (39%, N=438 vs. 26%, N=193). The distribution of responses varied across EU Member States, but there was no clear pattern.

In addition to selecting options from a list, children were able to submit an open text answer to this question (Q12). A total of 163 comments were received, of which 67 were valid⁸ and included in the analysis. Box 1 outlines the most common themes and recommendations provided in open text responses.

Box 1: Suggestions and recommendations from children what would make or help them feel safer when reporting cyberbullying

Platform and reporting improvements

- Young people want **simpler, more visible, and responsive reporting systems on social media**. The main requests include:
 - **Clear, easy-to-find reporting buttons and visible complaint pathways.**
 - **Automated detection tools** (e.g. bots) to identify harmful content and **report it proactively.**
 - **Anonymous and confidential reporting options** to reduce fear of exposure.
 - **Feedback mechanisms** confirming that reports are received, investigated, and resolved.
- There is **strong support for EU-level rules requiring platforms to provide updates to users about how reports are handled.**

“Clearer social media systems, more visible reporting buttons, detection of bad practices...” (Boy, 13, Spain).

“A bot to check the chat and report it to IP” (Boy, 12, Romania).

“That there is some anonymous website where you can report” (Girl, 16, Lithuania).

“A response that someone has actually received this message and is taking care of it” (Girl, 16, Germany).

“That the platforms be obliged by the EU to provide updates on our reports to find out what has been done” (Boy, 16, France).

Legal and policy recommendations

- **Older children** place more emphasis on **accountability and enforcement**. They call for:
 - **Stricter laws, visible consequences** for perpetrators, and **credible enforcement.**
 - They believe that justice or sanctions make victims feel safer to report.
- Findings highlights a **trust gap** between **young people’s expectations** and the **perceived response of authorities.**

⁸ A total of 97 responses were removed from the analysis due to containing non-substantive content (i.e. text identified as a non-response, malicious and/or trolling).

“Stricter laws with a team of people capable of enforcing the laws” (Boy, 16, Romania).

“Put the person in jail if he or she is over 18 and otherwise expel them from school or threaten to report them” (Girl, 14, Austria).

Support, communication, and emotional safety

- **Feeling safe** when reporting is linked to **trust, empathy, and reassurance** rather than technology alone.
- Children and young people, especially girls, highlight the need for:
 - **Non-judgemental emotional support** from adults, peers, and professionals.
 - **Opportunities to talk openly** with family or trusted adults.
 - **Reassurance** that they will be **believed, supported and not criticised**.
- **Collective support** is valued: knowing “I am not alone” helps children feel more confident about reporting.

“The fact that you feel comfortable saying it, confidentiality and efficiency” (Girl, 13, Spain).

“To be consoled, supported and never abandoned” (Girl, 12, Italy).

“Not to feel that I will be criticized” (Girl, 16, Cyprus).

“If only I knew I wasn’t alone in this” (Respondent, 16, Czechia).

Blocking and self-protection

- Blocking, muting, and withdrawal (e.g. logging off) are common ways young people deal with cyberbullying.
- However, children explain that these are **personal coping strategy** rather than long-term or systemic solution for safe reporting.

“Blocking that person” (Boy, 16, Croatia).

“Just turn off the Internet” (Boy, 14, Portugal).

Barriers and emotional resilience

- Key barriers to report include:
 - Distrust in authorities, platforms, or police to act effectively.
 - Fear of criticism, stigma, or retaliation after reporting.
 - A preference for self-reliance or avoidance, such as “ignoring it” or “turning off the computer”.
- These findings point to **the need to build confidence in reporting systems** and **strengthen emotional resilience** among young people.

“Reporting never works by the way” (Boy, 17, Ireland).

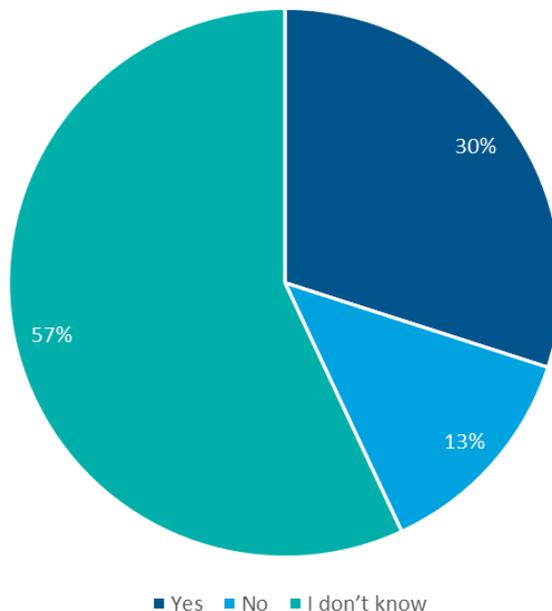
“I really won’t feel any safer because of that, the police only do things they feel like doing, they don’t solve anything properly” (Boy, 17, Belgium).

4 Role of schools to help stop cyberbullying

4.1 Most of children do not know if their school has anti-bullying rules or guidelines

Most children (57%, N=3,564) said they did not know if their school had any anti-bullying rules or guidelines, whereas about three in ten children (30%, N=1,877) said that their school did have anti-bullying rules and guidelines (see Figure 4.1). In addition, 13% (N=854) children reported that their school did not have any rules or guidelines for bullying.

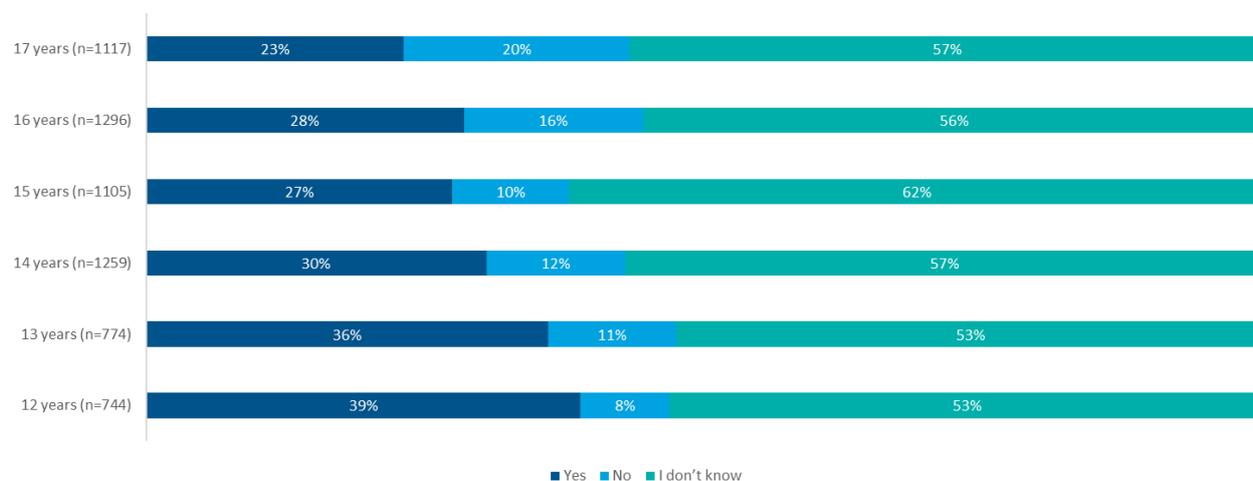
Figure 4.1 Most children do not know if their school has anti-bullying rules or guidelines (N=6,295)



Note: Q13: 'Does your school have anti-bullying rules/guidelines?' Single choice question.

Younger children were more likely to say that their school has anti-bullying rules or guidelines, with 39% of 12-year-olds (N=289) reporting this compared to 23% of 17-year-olds (N=257) (see Figure 4.2). There were no notable differences between boys and girls in their responses.

Figure 4.2 Younger children more likely to say to have anti-bullying rules or guidelines at school (N=6295)



Note: Q13: 'Does your school have anti-bullying rules/guidelines?' Single choice question.

Children in certain EU Member States were more likely to say that their school has anti-bullying rules or guidelines. This was most common among children from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Spain and Sweden.

4.2 Children identified a range of actions from schools and adults that could help stop cyberbullying

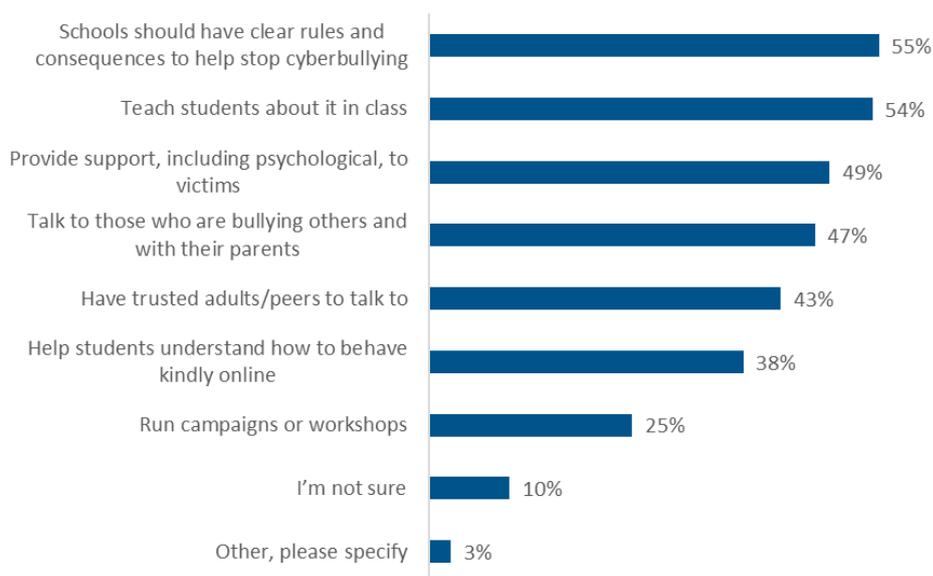
When asked what their school or adults should do to help stop cyberbullying, **more than half of children** (55%, N=3,448) said that **'schools should have clear rules and consequences to help stop cyberbullying'** (see Figure 4.3).

Educational and awareness actions were also seen as important. Over half of children (54%, N=3,397) said that schools should 'teach students about it in class', while 38% (N=2,410) wanted schools to 'help students understand how to behave kindly online', and 25% (N=1557) suggested to 'run campaigns or workshops'.

Support for victims was another key action, with 49% (N=3,067) of children wanting adults to 'provide support, including psychological, to victims', and 43% (N=2,696) wanted 'trusted adults/peers to talk to'. Many children (47%, N=2,956) also wanted **adults to take direct action** and 'talk to those who are bullying others and with their parents'.

A small share of children (10%, N=616) said they were not sure what schools or adults should do to help stop cyberbullying.

Figure 4.3 Children reported a range of actions from schools and adults that could help stop cyberbullying (N=6,289)



Note: Q14: ‘What should your school/adults do to help stop cyberbullying?’ Multiple choice question.

Girls were more likely than boys to say that schools and adults should take action to help stop cyberbullying. When asked what kind of support schools and adults should provide, 58% of girls (N=2,060) said they wanted support for victims, compared with 36% of boys (N=884). Similarly, 49% of girls (N=1,755) said they wanted to ‘have trusted adults or peers to talk to’, compared with 34% of boys (N=847). Girls were also more likely to call for clear rules and consequences at school, with 61% (N=2,174) agreeing that ‘schools should have clear rules and consequences to help stop cyberbullying’, compared with 46% of boys (N=1,149).

There were no notable differences between age groups in how children responded to this question, and some differed but not a clear pattern between responses from EU Member States.

Alongside the multiple-choice options, children could also share their own ideas in an open-ended response to this question (Q14). In total, 168 comments were submitted, with 107 considered valid⁹ and analysed. Box 2 summarises the main themes and suggestions that emerged from these written responses.

Box 2: Suggestions and recommendations from children what schools and adults should do to stop cyberbullying

Children shared many ideas about how schools and adults can help make the internet a safer and kinder place.

Take bullying seriously and act on it

Children recommended to **apply clear and consistent sanctions and follow-up actions** so that bullying is taken seriously and rules are not only “on paper.”

⁹ A total of 97 responses were removed from the analysis due to containing non-substantive content (i.e. text identified as a non-response, malicious and/or trolling).

- Children want schools and adults to show that bullying has real consequences.
- Rules and punishments should be clear, fair, and actually enforced, not just written on paper.
- Teachers and adults should step in quickly when bullying happens.

“Make it really punishable” (Girl, 14, Germany)

“Apply penalties and guidelines effectively (sometimes they are only on paper)” (Girl, 17, Poland)

“To take bullying more seriously and to punish bullies effectively and swiftly” (Boy, 17, Bulgaria)

Provide support and help for both the victims and the bullies

Children said that **both sides need help: victims** need care, **and bullies** need to understand why they hurt others. Children recommended to offer confidential psychological support to victims and therapeutic help for perpetrators so both can be helped to stop the cycle.

- Schools should offer psychological support, and adults should listen without judging.
- Provide timely, confidential counselling for victims.
- Offer rehabilitation/therapy for perpetrators to address underlying causes.

“There shouldn’t just be therapy for the victim, but also for the bully. People don’t do this for fun. Most bullies have low self-esteem and try to feel better by putting others down”¹⁰ (Girl, 13, Spain)

Teach kindness, empathy, digital skills and online safety

Children asked to build prevention into the curriculum through lessons on respect, internet etiquette, digital safety, and social-emotional learning.

- Learning how to be kind and respectful online is just as important as learning maths or science.
- Children want schools to teach practical digital skills: online safety, how to block bullies, and how to behave online.
- Avoid one-off sessions; integrate learning across school life so ideas stick.
- Lessons, plays, and creative workshops help children understand the effects of bullying.

“Teach children the rules of behaviour in normal and electronic life” (Girl, 16, Greece)

“Prioritise teaching about helping and respecting others, especially those who are different, and show the beauty in these differences” (Boy, 16, Portugal)

“Internet etiquette is what you would need to learn. However, such things are mostly learned as you use the internet and is an important experience of using online spaces. General rules and guidelines about internet safety is what should be taught, like not sharing private information, identifying scams, knowing how to block people, and so on” (Girl, 17, Lithuania)

“A friend (...) had a special class for anti-bullying and at one point they did an explanatory theatre with all the ways in which you can get bullied (...) and I thought it was a very good idea” (Girl, 12, Romania)

¹⁰ This quotation has been lightly edited for clarity while preserving the original meaning.

Make it easy and safe to ask for help

Children recommended making it easy and safe for children to report, ensuring confidentiality and guarantee timely follow-up by adults.

- Many children said they don't report bullying because they're afraid or not taken seriously.
- They want private, anonymous ways to ask for help and speak up safely.
- Ensure adults respond quickly and tell children what action was taken.
- Train staff to act confidentially and to avoid making victims feel exposed.

"Have an anonymous question box so we can ask questions and for help (...) without showing our face"¹¹ (Girl, 15, Lithuania)

"(Adults) should talk about it and not ignore it" (Girl, 14, Poland)

Increase practical protection in everyday settings

Children asked to combine practical measures, like supervision, blocking tools, device policies and school routines to reduce opportunities for harm.

- Schools should make sure teachers are present and paying attention, especially during breaks.
- Some children said clear phone rules or time offline could help.
- Adults should show they care and be there when things get difficult.

"Put your cell phone away" (Boy, 16, Germany)

"We need supervision in class and during the break (...). Bullies in class and during the break are swearing, most of the time hitting, punishing, annoying other children" (Boy, 12, Malta)

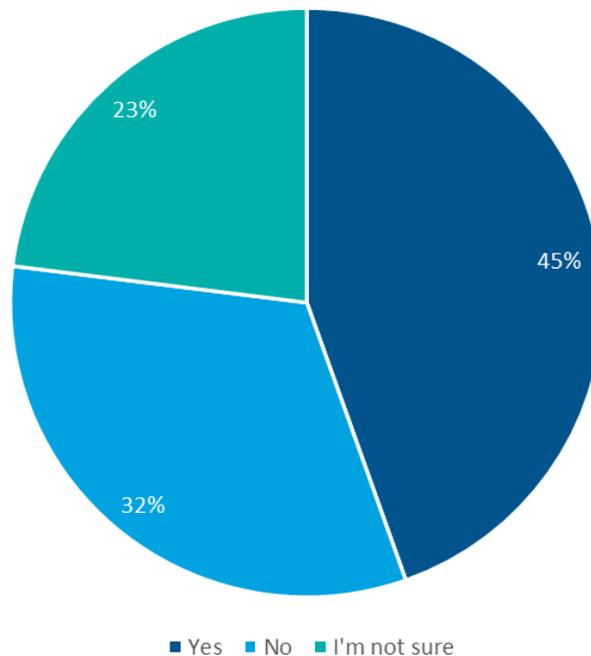
"Be more involved" (Boy, 12, Romania)

4.3 Nearly half of children have seen or taken part in something about stopping cyberbullying

Nearly half of children (45%, N=2,803) **had seen or taken part in something about stopping cyberbullying** (see Figure 4.4). About a third of children (32%, N=2,037) said they had not, while 23% (N=1,447) said they were 'not sure'.

¹¹ This quotation has been lightly edited for clarity while preserving the original meaning.

Figure 4.4 Nearly half of children have seen or taken part in something about stopping cyberbullying (N=6,287)

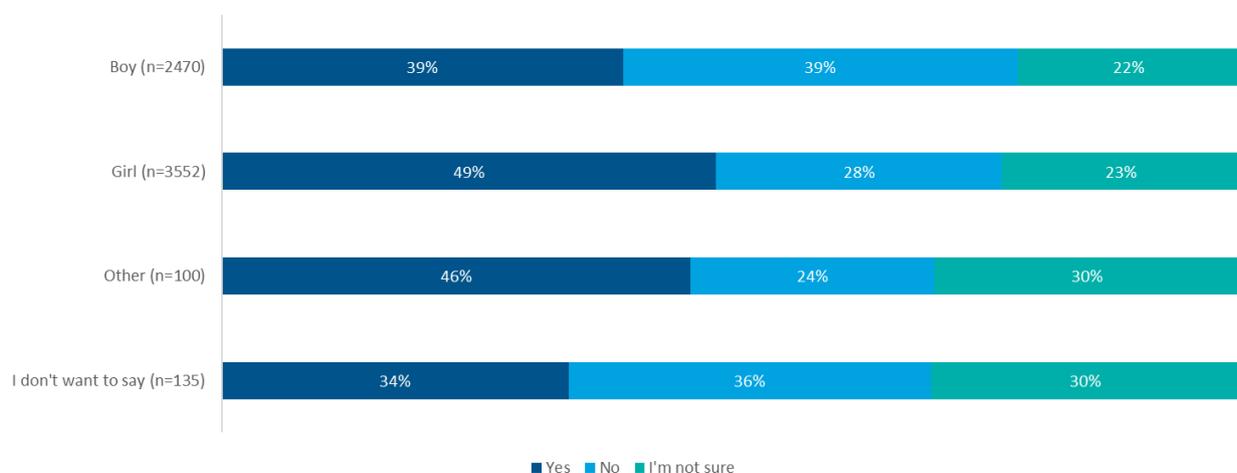


Note: Q15: 'Have you ever seen or taken part in something about stopping cyberbullying, like a lesson, project or campaign?' Single choice question.

Girls were more likely than boys to report seeing or taking part in anti-cyberbullying activities (49%, N=1,725 vs 39%, N=973) (see Figure 4.5). Children from Ireland, Spain and EU citizen children living abroad were more likely to say that they had seen or participated in anti-cyberbullying campaigns, while children from Belgium, Greece and Hungary were more likely to say they had not compared to the average.

There were no notable differences between age groups.

Figure 4.5 Girls were more likely to report taking part in something about stopping cyberbullying than boys (N=6,287)



Note: Q15: 'Have you ever seen or taken part in something about stopping cyberbullying, like a lesson, project or campaign?' Single choice question.

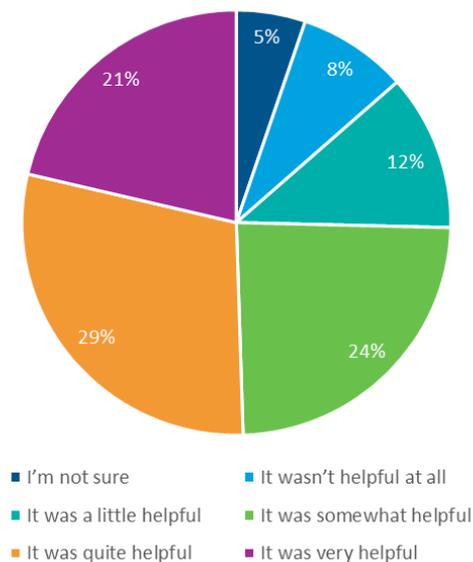
4.4 Majority of children found anti-cyberbullying activities helpful

Children who had taken part in activities to help stop cyberbullying were asked how helpful they found them (see Figure 4.6). Overall, **majority of children found the activities to help stop cyberbullying helpful.**

Just over one in five children (21%, N=594) said the activity was 'very helpful' and nearly three in ten (29%, N=813) said it was 'quite helpful'. Only a small number of children (8%, N=231) said that the activity 'wasn't helpful at all'. Children who were disabled or had a medical difficulty were more likely to report that the activity 'wasn't helpful at all' compared to those that did not (18%, N=45 vs 7%, N=149).

There were no notable differences between age groups.

Figure 4.6 The majority of children who had taken part in activities to help stop cyberbullying reported anti-cyberbullying activities very, quite or at least somewhat helpful (N=2,786)



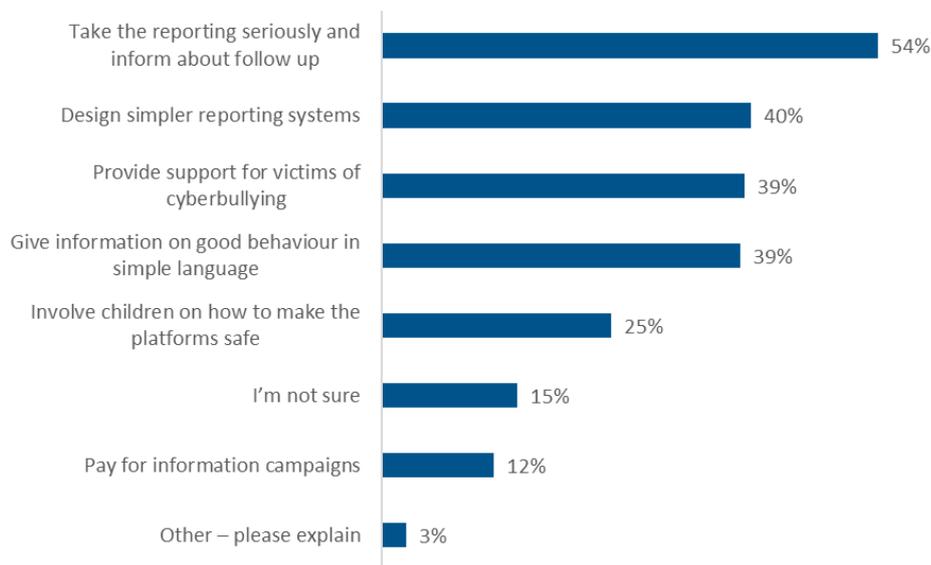
Note: Q16: 'You said that you have seen or taken part in something about stopping cyberbullying, like a lesson, project, campaign or an awareness week. Did you find it helpful?' Single choice

5 Role of social media platforms

5.1 Children want social media platforms to take reporting seriously and support victims to help stop cyberbullying

More than half of children (54%, N=1,868) said that social media platforms should 'take the reporting seriously and inform about follow up' (see Figure 5.1). Around four in ten children reported that platforms should 'design simpler reporting systems' (40%, N=1,392), 'provide support for victims of cyberbullying' (39%, N=1,367) and 'give information on good behaviour in simple language' (39%, N=1,351). About one in four children (25%, N=865) said that platforms should 'involve children on how to make the platforms safe'. A smaller share were 'not sure' (15%, N=510) what social media platforms should do and 12% (N=424) thought that social media platforms should pay for information campaigns. Finally, 3% (N=95) of children provided other suggestions.

Figure 5.1 Children reported a range of actions that social media platforms could do regarding cyberbullying (N=3,463)

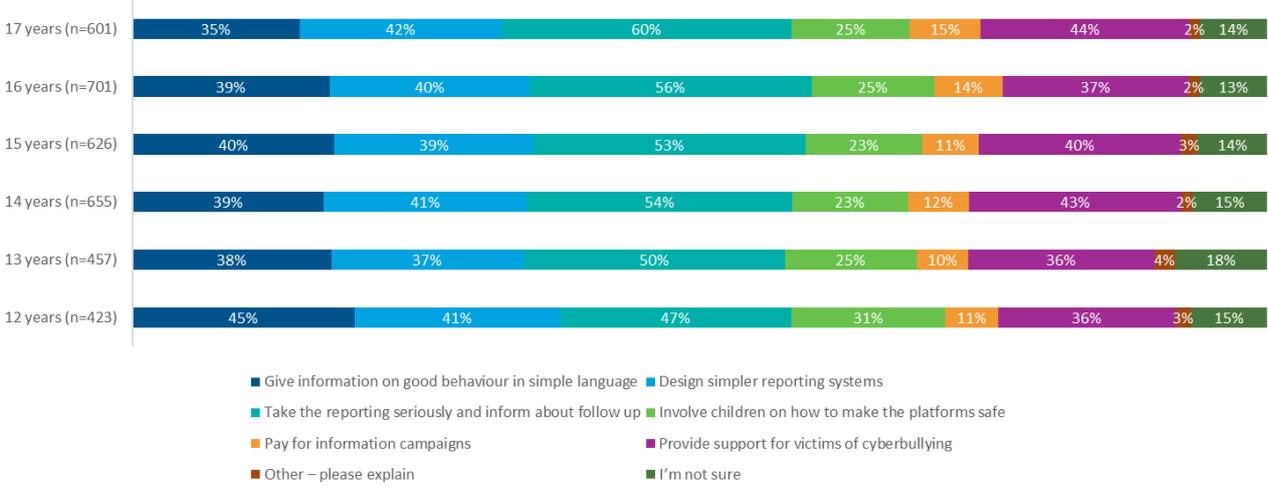


Note: Q17: 'What should social media/platforms do about cyberbullying?' Multiple choice question.

Preferences for what social media platforms should do differed by age groups, with younger children more often asking for guidance, while older children wanted social media platforms to take action (see Figure 5.2). Younger children (aged 12) were more likely to want platforms 'give information on good behaviour in simple language' (45%, N=189) compared with older children (aged 17) (35%, N=210). By contrast, older children (aged 17) were more likely to want social media platforms to take action and 'take the reporting seriously and inform about follow up' compared with younger children (aged 12) (60%, N=363 vs 47%, N=197).

Girls want stronger action and more support from platforms than boys. Girls were more likely than boys to want social media platforms to 'take the reporting seriously and inform about follow up' compared to boys (62%, N=1,117 vs 46%, N=681). Girls were also more likely to say that platforms should 'support for victims of cyberbullying' (45%, N=819 vs 33%, N=494).

Figure 5.2 Preferences for what social media platforms should do differed by age groups (N=3,463)



Note: Q17: 'What should social media/platforms do about cyberbullying?' Multiple choice question.

6 Children's priorities to help stop cyberbullying

Children were invited to give their own suggestions and recommendations on what might help stop cyberbullying through an open text question (Q18: *Do you have any other ideas or recommendations to help stop cyberbullying?*). A total of **4,101 open text responses** were received, of which **1,594 were valid**¹² and included in the analysis.

The most common themes from these responses are summarised below. They are presented by order of prevalence. Many comments were short and simple feedback, mostly repeating similar ideas and recommendations.

Make platform take responsibility and act against cyberbullying

- Many children said that social media platforms should take stronger action, take accountability, and implement technical solutions to stop cyberbullying and make users feel safe online.
- Children recommended:
 - **Banning or suspending accounts of offenders** who bully others, and IP/IMEI blocking repeat offenders.
 - **Using AI/bot/automated tools to find, moderate and remove harmful content quickly.**
 - Making sure that only the right people can use platforms through **stricter age checks.**

"If you receive a report that a certain person is bullying, you should take real action, e.g. freeze the account for a few days or weeks, or investigating into the whole situation."
(Girl, 14, Lithuania)

"When reporting an account for cyberbullying, you must directly block it from the platform, because this action is generally done late." (Boy, 17, Italy)

"Ban people as soon as they post... Platforms need to ban/suspend accounts, IP, IMEI bans." (Boy, 14, Denmark)

Make reporting easier and show that action is taken

- Some children suggested that **reporting systems** need to be **simpler, faster, and easier to find** both online and offline.
- Children also want **clear confirmation** and **quick responses** to show that reports are being taken seriously and that something is being done.

"Easier options to report bullies, online and at school/outside of school (e.g. in the city)"
(Boy, 12, Germany)

"An easier system to report people." (Girl, 14, Romania)

Involve parents and encourage open conversations

- Many children see **parents as key to preventing and responding to cyberbullying.**
- Children emphasised the importance of:
 - **Talking opening with parents** about online experiences.
 - **Teaching respectful and responsible online behaviour.**

¹² A total of 2,507 responses were removed from the analysis due to containing non-substantive content (i.e. text identified as a non-response, malicious and/or trolling).

- **Parents staying aware of what children do online**, while still respecting their privacy.
 - "Parents should help raise awareness, since those most likely to suffer cyberbullying are often younger people who don't dare to report." (Boy, 13, Spain)*
 - "Parents and legal guardians checking their child's online life is important." (Girl, 13, Spain)*
 - "More conversations between parents and children, teachers and students." (Girl, 17, Poland)*

Raise awareness and reach about cyberbullying and Build digital skills and promote online safety

- Many children said that **awareness raising and education are key to preventing cyberbullying**. In addition, children highlighted that it is **important to learn digital and media skills to stay safe online and understand online risks**.
- Children suggested:
 - **School programmes and awareness campaigns** to help everyone understand what cyberbullying is and how to stop it.
 - **Teaching young people how to navigate the internet safely** and make responsible choices online.
 - **Workshops and lessons on social and emotional learning** to build empathy and kindness online.
 - **Developing critical thinking skills** to recognise harmful content, scams, or fake information.
 - **Learning how to protect privacy**, such as using safe profile settings and strong passwords.
 - **Media campaigns** to show the real impact of cyberbullying and encourage respectful behaviour.
 - "More campaigns to stop cyberbullying. Providing competent professionals to tackle and prevent bullying." (Boy, 14, Bulgaria)*
 - "Education is very important! In a society where people generally respect each other, cyberbullying is less common." (Girl, 15, Germany)*
 - "Schools should organise regular lessons or workshops about online safety and respect." (Girl, 16, Lithuania)*
 - "That we all have private profiles and accepted friends only or acquaintances" (Girl, 13, Croatia)*
 - "Strong passwords and do not send personal information online" (Boy, 16, Croatia)*

Promote kindness and positive online communities

- Some children said it is important to build a culture of kindness, inclusion and empathy both online and offline.
- Children suggested:
 - **Peer-led projects and community events** that encourage respect among people and show the real impact of cyberbullying.
 - **Education on inclusion and intercultural understanding** to help create safer, more welcoming online spaces.

"Many people simply need to show more acceptance and respect to their fellow human beings." (Girl, 16, Germany)

"For young people to take action and support one another. Just be mindful and kind." (Boy, 13, Ireland)

Provide support and counselling for those affected by cyberbullying

- Some children said that access to support services is essential for both victims and those who bully others.
- Children recommended:
 - **Having access to helplines, counselling and peer support services** to offer help when it is needed.
 - **Ensuring confidentiality** and giving young people **a choice of counsellor**, including the option to speak with someone of the same sex/gender if they prefer.

"That specialised psychologists help the victim and that he/she chooses the sex of the psychologist to feel more comfortable." (Girl, 13, Spain)

"More counselling to help both victims and bullies understand what's happening." (Girl, 17, Romania)

"Anonymous helpline on the net for victims." (Girl, 15, Romania)

Strengthen laws and consequences for cyberbullying

- A smaller group of children said that **stronger laws and clear consequences and sanctions** are needed to stop cyberbullying.
- Children suggested:
 - **Stricter legal measures and sanctions** to deter people from bullying others online.
 - **School-level disciplinary action and parental involvement or notification** when bullying occurs.
 - In some cases, **penalties for parents or guardians** if they fail to address repeated bullying behaviour.

"Strong legal consequences as a deterrent." (Girl, 15, Germany)

"There should be serious consequences for those who cyberbully." (Girl, 13, Romania)

Build confidence and coping strategies and Empower children and help building their resilience to deal with cyberbullying

- Some children said it is important to **learn how to protect themselves and stay strong** when facing cyberbullying.
- They highlighted the value of:
 - **Knowing when and how to block, report or ignore bullies** to stay safe online.
 - **Building self-confidence, resilience and coping skills** so that victims feel more empowered and supported.

Encourage children to speak up and build respectful school environments

- A smaller number of children said that **schools should promote a positive and respectful culture with zero tolerance for cyberbullying**.

- Children highlighted the need to:
 - Encourage children to **report incidents** and **speak openly** about what happens online.
 - **Support classmates who are bullied**, helping to create a safer and more caring school environment.

“We should encourage children to tell the truth when they are cyberbullied, even if they are threatened because silence will make it worse! This is my opinion.” (Girl, 12, Romania)

“Provide safe spaces for students to speak up, and empower students to gain more self-confidence.” (Boy, 16, Portugal)

Limit access to social media for younger children

- A small number of children suggested that **restricting or delaying access** to social media and digital devices could help **reduce exposure to cyberbullying** among younger users. They felt that **children should only start using social media when they are old enough** to understand how to stay safe and behave responsibly online.

“I think that by limiting screentime children wouldn’t cyberbully [anymore]?” (Girl, 14, Romania)

“To prohibit the use of mobile phones and social networks for minors at a European level.” (Boy, 12, Spain)

Finally, some children gave general comments without specific solutions calling to end cyberbullying, harassment and online insults.

Annex 1 Consultation methodology and characteristics of children participating in the consultation activities

A1.1 Consultation methodology

Consultation design

Children’s contribution to EU-level consultation addresses the first objective of the Platform ‘to gather the views of and to consult children, across several EU Member States, on matters that concern them, including on future specific policy and legislative initiatives.’

The Platform consultations were designed to provide a meaningful, inclusive and safe space for children to share their ideas. The Platform’s consultations are implemented via online surveys, and online and in-person focus groups and interviews.

The consultation on Cyberbullying was carried out as an online survey and was guided by the principles of the Lundy model of child participation¹³. The survey questions were based on the European Commission’s public consultation contributing to the EU Action Plan against Cyberbullying¹⁴, and were adapted for a child-audience.

Outreach & recruitment

The survey was shared and promoted through social media channels, the Platform outreach (the Child Empowerment Officers (CEOs), Central Office Colleagues and Secretariat), the Platform’s website, the European Commission Rights of the Child’s newsletter and Safer Internet Centres. Several social media channels were used as well to disseminate the survey, including LinkedIn (EU-Rights), Instagram (EU Youth, Commissioner Micallef), Facebook and X as well as European School Education Platform, European Youth Portal, Learning Corner and Better Internet for Kids websites.

The CEOs encouraged a diverse participation to the survey by sharing information with underrepresented groups of children.

Challenges and limitations

This third consultation conducted under the EU Children’s Participation Platform built on the experiences of earlier consultations, addressing previous challenges and limitations. The survey was hosted on the Forsta platform, which improved its child-friendliness and overall design. However, the survey was open for only four weeks which limited outreach efforts. Despite this, the consultation achieved a high number of responses, though participation varied between countries.

Approach to survey analysis

Data cleaning

¹³ https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/lundy_model_of_participation_0.pdf

¹⁴ [Commission launches public consultation and call for evidence on cyberbullying | Shaping Europe’s digital future](#)

Prior to analysis all survey data underwent a rigorous data cleaning procedure, including the assignment and checking of unique identifiers against all responses, automated recoding of all responses into Boolean format, detection and removal of test, duplicate, blank, malicious/spurious replies. In total only two responses of the received 6,345 were flagged for removal (test responses). Due to the targeted nature of the survey's intended audience, influencing campaigns were not deemed relevant and by extent campaign detection was not performed on the dataset. Machine translations were performed using AI from the respondent's original language into English for consistent analysis.

Closed questions

The analysis of closed questions was performed using Microsoft Excel Power Query to define complex relationships between variables. The study team automatically extracted quantitative data using pivot tables, preventing human error in calculations, and allowing for dynamic cross-tabulation of results to multiple questions.

Open text questions

Thematic analysis was used as the primary method to assess open text responses (supported by the Perplexity AI tool). This included uploading cleaned data to the tool, producing formal coding libraries to act as an analytical framework. Coding libraries were heavily informed by the responses provided in the replies to each question, however the study team reviewed these for suitability prior to continuing the analysis. Therefore, the approach to coding is not a true 'grounded theory' approach. The AI tool was used to assign codes (themes and sub-themes) from the coding library against each response to produce an analytical trail. The study team then manually reviewed the coding for suitability against each response. AI was then used to produce a summary narrative of key arguments and recommendations against each question. The study team verified these through cross-checks of findings and quotes against the original data. The selection of suitable quotes was included for final reporting.

The final report includes an analysis of open-text responses to Questions 12, 14, 18 and 21.

A1.2 The survey in numbers

In total, 6,343 children aged between 12-17 years participated in the survey.

Respondent by gender:

Gender	N	%
Girl	3,568	57%
Boy	2,496	40%
I don't want to say	137	2%
Other	101	2%
Total	6,302	100%

Respondent by country:

Country	N	%
Romania	2,536	40%
Croatia	764	12%
Lithuania	707	11%
Greece	685	11%
Portugal	326	5%
Belgium	166	3%
France	155	2%
Poland	126	2%
Germany	109	2%
Austria	104	2%
Ireland	83	1%
Sweden	72	1%
Italy	63	1%
Spain	62	1%
Denmark	61	1%
Bulgaria	54	1%
Hungary	50	1%
I'm an EU citizen living abroad	43	1%
Estonia	28	0.4%
Netherlands	18	0.3%
Slovakia	14	0.2%
Malta	14	0.2%
Czechia	12	0.2%
Luxembourg	10	0.2%

Country	N	%
Cyprus	10	0.2%
Slovenia	9	0.1%
Latvia	9	0.1%
Finland	4	0.1%
Total	6,294	100%

Respondent by age:

Age (years)	N	%
12	751	12%
13	779	12%
14	1,270	20%
15	1,109	17%
16	1,307	21%
17	1,125	18%
Total	6,341	100%

Respondent by disability, or medical difficulty (a physical health condition, a learning difficulty like dyslexia, or a mental health condition):

Disability or medical difficulty	N	%
Yes	565	3%
No	4,961	78%
I don't know	611	10%
I don't want to answer	185	3%
Total	6,322	100%

Respondent by group (multiple choice):

Group	N	%
I don't know or I don't want to say	1,261	20%
Minority ethnic or religious group	531	9%
LGBTIQ+	370	6%
Asylum seeker and refugee (Someone who left their home country because it was not safe)	35	1%

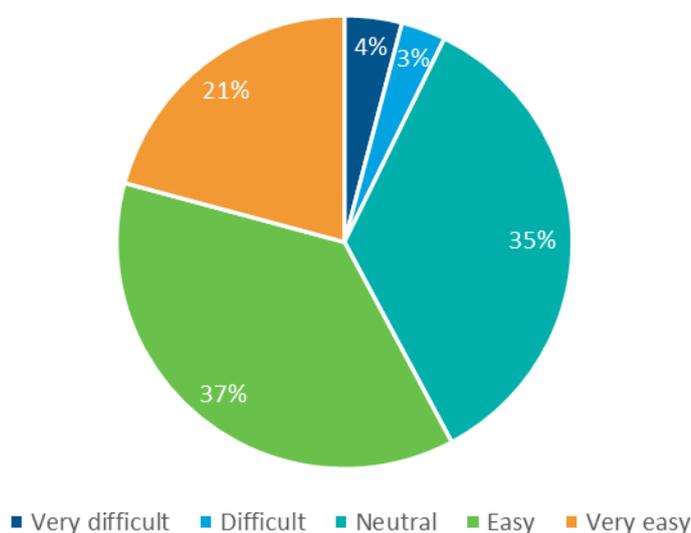
Group	N	%
Alternative Care (when a child lives somewhere else to be safe and cared for, like with another family (foster care), in a small group home, or in a children's home)	84	1%
Roma or Travellers community	94	2%
I/ my family/my community uses a different language than the official one / Linguistic minorities	244	4%
Other groups	441	7%
None of these	3,442	55%
Total	6,229	100%

A1.3 Feedback from children

A1.3.1 Majority of children found the survey easy to answer

Children were asked for feedback on how they found the questions in the survey (see Figure 6.1). The majority of children found the questions in the survey easy to answer with 21% (N=1,305) reporting that it was 'very easy' and 37% (N=2,321) reporting that it was 'easy'. 35% (N=2,195) reported that they were 'neutral' about the questions. Less than one in ten children found the questions hard with 3% (N=198) reporting that they were 'difficult' and 4% (N=255) reporting that they were 'very difficult'.

Figure 6.1 Children found the questions in the survey easy to answer. (N=6,274)



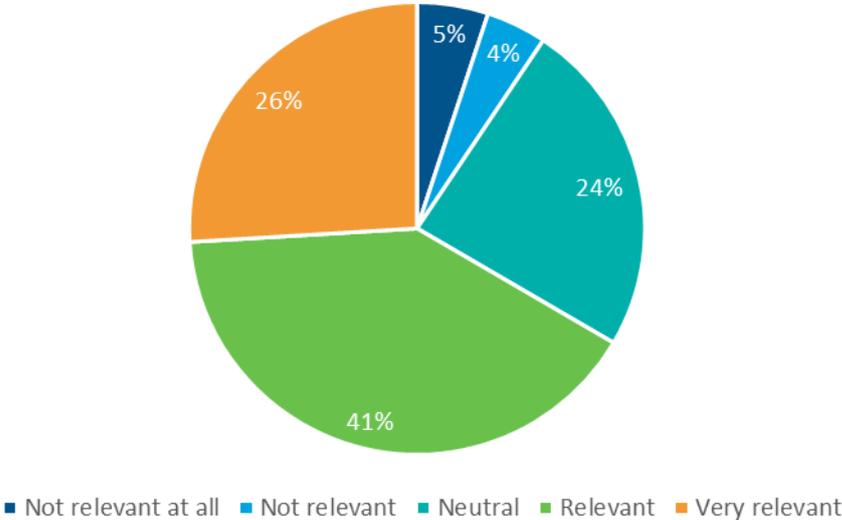
Note: Q19: 'How easy did you find the questions in this survey?' Single choice question.

A1.3.2 Two in three children found the theme of the survey relevant

Children were asked if they found the theme of the survey relevant (see Figure 6.2). Two in three children found the survey relevant with 26% (N=1,619) reporting that it was 'very relevant' and 41% (N=2,533) reporting that it was 'relevant'. Nearly one in four children reported that

they were 'neutral' about the theme (24%, N=1,503). A minority did not find the theme relevant with 4% (N=268) reporting that it was 'not relevant' and 5% (N=315) reporting that it was 'not relevant at all'.

Figure 6.2 Two in three children found the theme of the survey relevant. (N=6238)



Note: Q20: 'How relevant did you find the theme of the survey: "Action Plan on cyberbullying?" Single choice question.

A1.3.3 Final suggestions focused on support measures for children and survey technical improvements

Over 3,000 children provided further comments and suggestions (Q21). Across thematically focused ideas, children's recommendations most often focused on strengthening prevention and support systems. Many called for better education and awareness about online behaviour, including lessons on empathy and respect, as well as clearer reporting systems that ensure action is taken when bullying is reported. Others suggested technical measures, such as monitoring harmful content, banning repeat offenders, or tightening age controls. A smaller group of responses highlighted ways to improve the survey itself, recommending clearer questions, simpler language, and easier access for younger participants or those with limited digital skills.

