

EUROPE DIRECT TO INFORM CITIZENS ON SAFER INTERNET USE***European parents, teachers and children can get free information on the safe use of Internet through a single contact point: EUROPE DIRECT***

Today, EUROPE DIRECT, the European Commission's free information service (through the toll-free telephone number 00800 6 7 8 9 10 11 or by [e-mail](#)), announces that it will help parents, teachers and children throughout the European Union to provide answers to questions about the safer use of the internet and new online technologies.

By doing so, EUROPE DIRECT is actively supporting the European Commission's Safer Internet *Plus* Programme which aims to promote a safer use of the internet and online technologies, particularly for children - a subject of concern to parents across the EU-25. In the latest Eurobarometer survey, 44% of parents declared they would like more information about how to protect their child from illegal or harmful content and contact.

THE SAFER INTERNET PLUS PROGRAMME

In 2005, the European Commission launched its Safer Internet *Plus* Programme, a 4-year programme aimed at making the internet safer for European children. The programme builds upon the work the European Union has been undertaking to promote a safer use of the internet and combat illegal and harmful internet content since 1996. It covers new online technologies including mobile and broadband content, online games, and all forms of real-time communications such as chat rooms and instant messages primarily with the aim of improving the protection of children and minors.

The Safer Internet programme supports two networks with national presence.

Hotlines allow citizens to report illegal content they have found on the Internet. In Ireland the hotline is run by the Internet Service Providers' Association of Ireland and accessible via www.hotline.ie.

Awareness nodes carry out actions (such as events, trainings, surveys) to inform the general public and run websites providing information on the safe use of Internet. In Ireland, the awareness node is run by the National Centre for Technology in Education and accessible via www.saft.ie.

EUROPE DIRECT & INTERNET SAFETY RELATED QUESTIONS

EUROPE DIRECT is a free telephone and e-mail service which citizens can use from anywhere in the European Union to find answers to questions they may have about the EU and EU-policies, such as those in the field of Internet safety. Parents, teachers and children from across the EU, who wish to be informed about safer internet practices can contact EUROPE DIRECT to ask questions on risks raised by the Internet (How do strangers contact the young people in a chat room and what are the dangers? What are the risks if my child sets up its own blog?) and other new technologies (what do I have to take into account when using a mobile phone camera?).

They can also obtain information on existing tools to protect their children (Is there a way to know if I buy the appropriate online game for my children? What kind of filters are available?), and how to get more help (I have come across racist content or child pornography on the Internet, to whom

shall I report this? Where can I get help if my child has been bullied through Internet or mobile phone?).

WHAT IS EUROPE DIRECT?

EUROPE DIRECT was launched during the UK Presidency in Cardiff in June 1998 by the European Commission President Jacques Santer and British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The service began operation in the EU-15 in 2000. Then on 1 May 2004, the single telephone number **00800 6 7 8 9 10 11** became accessible to citizens in the ten new member states and the service is now operational in all twenty official languages of the EU.

When contacting EUROPE DIRECT, either by e-mail (through the [website](#)) or telephone (single telephone number **00800 6 7 8 9 10 11**) users will receive an immediate response to their general queries. More complex questions may be signposted by the service's information agents to experts or specialised problem-solving services for follow-up. If and when appropriate, users will also be referred to other sources of information and advice on national, regional or local levels.

Calls and queries can be dealt with in any of the 20 official EU languages by EUROPE DIRECT's multi-lingual staff of forty communication agents who are based in Brussels. All agents undergo an extensive training programme which enables them to adequately deal with a wide range of issues. The service's performance is monitored on a daily basis by the Directorate-General Communication of the European Commission, which also handles questions of a politically-sensitive or extremely specific nature. All these elements combined enable EUROPE DIRECT to operate as a high-quality information service providing personalised answers to citizens' questions. For more information on the service, please visit: <http://europa.eu.int/europedirect/>.

For more information:

Pan-European media information and visits to contact centre in Brussels: Michelle Roverelli, Hill & Knowlton at +32 737 95 00 or email mroverel@hillandknowlton.com

European Commission information:

DG Communication, Unit B1 Europe Direct, Gisela Gauggel-Robinson at: Email- Gisela.Gauggel-Robinson@cec.eu.int

DG Information Society and Media, Unit E6 eContent and Safer Internet, Christine Kormann at: Email- Christine.kormann@cec.eu.int

For more information on the Safer Internet Programme, please visit: <http://europa.eu.int/saferinternet>

For practical information on Safe Use of Internet, please visit: <http://www.saferinternet.org>