Comments on the Concept Note for a General Comment on children’s rights in relation to the digital environment

On May 18, 2017 the Government of Sweden presented a digitalisation strategy. The strategy outlines the focus of the Government’s digital policy with the vision of a sustainable digital transformation in Sweden.

Sustainable digital transformation is about Sweden being a country where everyone is a part of, and has trust in, the digital society. It is a long-term commitment where the benefits of digitalisation are harnessed and risks connected to it are being handled. It is also about enabling and stimulating new solutions and supporting the spread and scaling of these solutions.

To achieve the goal of the digitalisation strategy, goals are set in five areas: Digital Skills, Digital Security, Digital Innovation, Digital Leadership and Digital Infrastructure.

The digitalisation strategy sheds light on the necessity of a democratic approach as a foundation when transforming into a digital society. Being able to take part of digital information and services provided from the public and to participate in society in an equal way, all people should be given the same opportunities, skills and abilities needed regardless of age, gender, physical ability or social background. Furthermore, the strategy points out the importance of a digital environment where everyone can trust and feel safe enough to use the digital services provided.

The Government points out that the same rights that apply for all humans offline also should apply online. In a Swedish context this also includes the rights of children.

It’s relevant to bear in mind that children seldom express their world as divided between on-/and offline. Being online (or digital) is a natural default for the youth of today. This underlines the importance to discuss how to mainstream Children’s Rights on-line with our broader work and to avoid a single (digital) track by focus on resilience in the work on Children’s Rights in a digital era.

In the context of the current issues, it is important to consider research on the relationship between mental illness and the use of social media.