



2024-03-07

Dnr: BO BO 2024-0023

ohchr-registry@un.org,
cc: helen.griffiths@un.org

Inputs for study on the solutions to promote digital education for young people and to ensure their protection from online threats

The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden is a government agency established in 1993 representing children's rights and interests on the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ombudsman is an independent national institution based on the Paris Principles that monitors the implementation of the Convention in municipalities, regions and government agencies. The Ombudsman identifies weaknesses in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, proposes changes to laws and ordinances, collects and disseminates knowledge and information about the situation of children and advocates and participates in the public debate.

The Swedish Ombudsman for children welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the High Commissioner's study on the solutions to promote digital education for young people and to ensure their protection from online threats and would like to provide the following information.

4) What are the main gaps and challenges to young people's protection from online threats in law, policy, and practice in your country and the impacts on young people's human rights? Please consider the specific situation of marginalized young people and those in vulnerable situations in your response.

In February 2023, the Committee on the Rights of the Child reviewed Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports, under the simplified reporting procedure. In preparation for the review, the Committee had asked Sweden to provide information on measures taken to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and investigating information and communications technology-related violations of children's rights.¹ Sweden responded, in its reply to the list of issues prior to reporting,² that the Swedish Police Authority had carried out a number of measures to put in place effective investigation operations for combatting sexual crimes against children and that the authority had introduced specialist investigation groups for internet-related sexual abuse of children within the regional IT crime centers.

In its parallel report to the Committee, **the Ombudsman for Children**³ highlighted that recent reports showed that major shortcomings are linked to the special investigation groups, including their level of training. The Ombudsman recommended that the work to protect children from online

¹ CRC/C/SWE/QPR/6-7 para. 16 (b)

² CRC/C/SWE/6-7 p.120 reply to para. 16 (b)

³ Supplementary report: The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden Sweden's sixth and seventh periodic report, submitted in August 2022.

offences and abuse must be prioritized and that the resource allocation should reflect the increased prevalence of such actions.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended in its 2023 Concluding observations⁴ that Sweden strengthen regulations and safeguarding policies to protect the rights and safety of children in the digital environment and that it must ensure that laws on access to information and the digital environment protect children from harmful content and materials and online risks.

6) Can you provide information on any programs or activities your organization has implemented regarding solutions to protect digital education for young people and to ensure their protection from online threats?

In 2020, the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, together with the Swedish Data Protection Authority and the Swedish Media Council together developed a stakeholder guide entitled "*The Rights of Children and Young People on Digital Platforms*".⁵ The aim of the handbook is to provide guidance to actors that create and operate digital environments on how to create safe and secure digital environments adapted to the needs and rights of children. The guide provides general support primarily from an integrity perspective (where the General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR, is a key piece of legislation) and a child rights perspective (based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child). The guide also contains advice based on the legislator's intentions in terms of protecting children from harmful media influences.

Erik Henriksson
Deputy Ombudsman for Children

Helen Ronen
Senior Legal Advisor

⁴ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7 para. 22 (a) and (b).

⁵ The English version of the guide can be found here:
barnombudsmannen.se/contentassets/fb1aeddcaae4431804960e2a68b9263/the-rights-of-children-and-young-people-on-digital-platforms_accessible.pdf