

Where is the child in all this?

Reflections on eNACSO's intervention at the ICT 2015 conference, Lisbon, Portugal

20-22 October 2015

eNACSO European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online

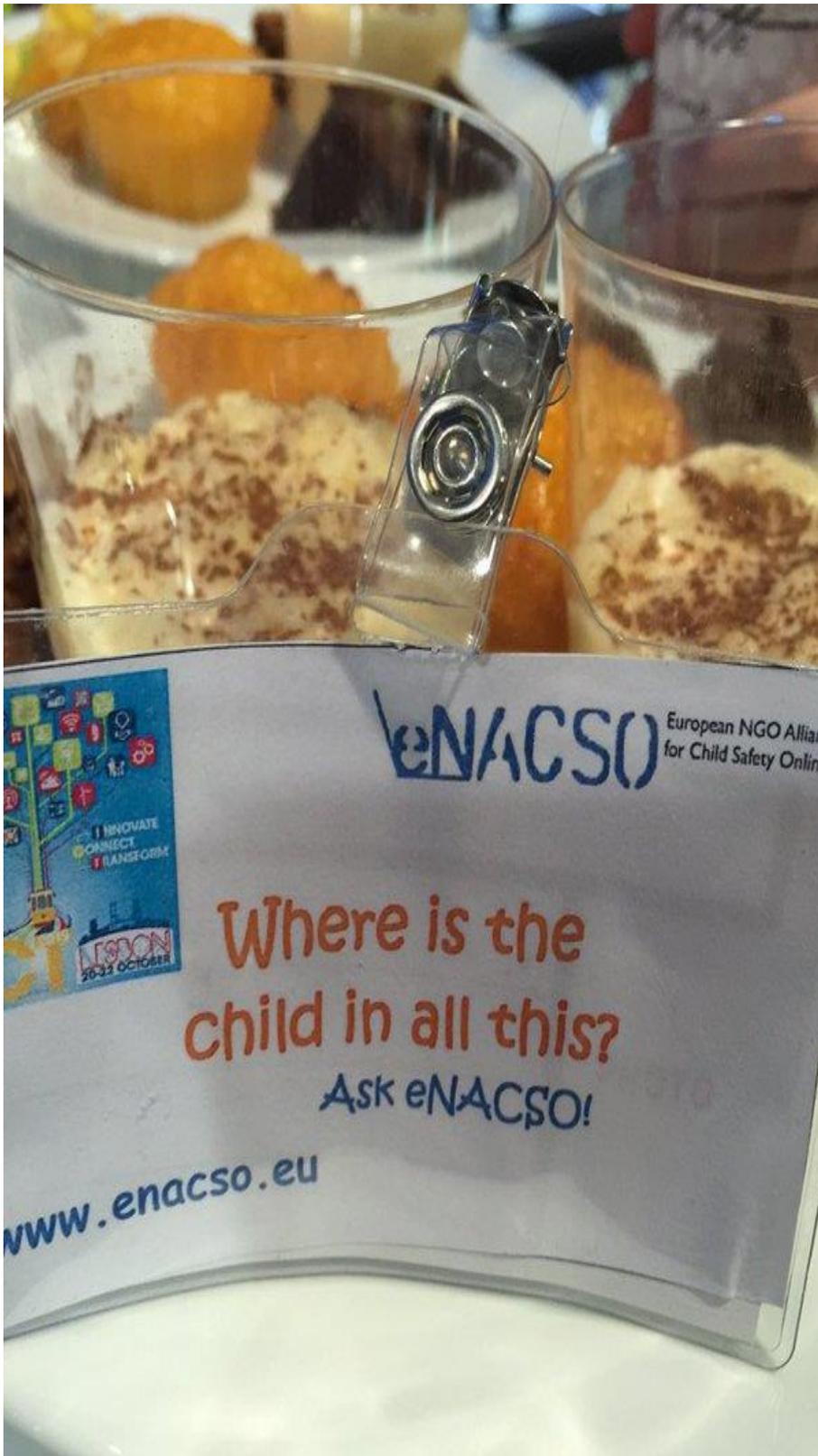


Photo credit: Jon K. Lange

Introduction to ICT2015

Innovate – Connect - Transform



This was the motto under which ICT2015 took place from 20 to 22 October 2015 in Lisbon, Portugal. It offered participants the possibility to 'Innovate, Connect, Transform' the digital world. The event was organised by the European Commission together with Portugal's Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, and offered several parallel activities:

- A policy conference;
- An interactive exhibition;
- Many networking opportunities;
- Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-2017 thematic sessions;
- Startup Europe Forum.

The main programme can be accessed here: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/events/cf/ict2015/conference-programme.cfm>

In numbers: ICT 2015 had two European Commissioners attending, 127 speakers in four plenary and 15 parallel sessions, 140 exhibition booths and 120 networking sessions.

The event had more than 6,000 participants, 23 videos, 23,000 tweets with #ICT2015 and 5,200 Twitter users that actively joined the online debate. The results of the ICT 2015 online survey were to be published in January 2016.

If you would like to find out more about the discussions, visit the recordings of the webstreams

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/webstreams-ict2015> . Some key moments of ICT2015 were captured in the [summing up video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vcTH1KRc-Q&index=3&list=PLyMUK47rPuqq6hHBStAAWyIDKPQ7yR6Zw) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vcTH1KRc-Q&index=3&list=PLyMUK47rPuqq6hHBStAAWyIDKPQ7yR6Zw>]

Impressions from the ICT2015 conference

The diversity of the topics addressed is illustrated by some randomly captured buzz words/phrases from throughout the event. They give a flavor of the considerations and key foci:

"All business is now digital" "Go beyond Europe" "Empowering the consumer"

"Scaling up – economies of scale; from start-up to scale-up!" [For eNACSO too, scale is critical; its work means there is no need to re-invent the wheel 28+times]

"Need for system regulation (cloud) – rationalization" "Disruption" "Start ups"

"Contradiction government invention and 'chaos' of invention, freedom"

"Economy AND digital" "Skills mismatch issue in Europe"

"We should not only rely on the European Commission regarding the digital market in Europe"

"Digitalisation and social partners – this is what the EU could promote (employers/Trade unions in Germany have included skills upgrading into their collective agreements)

"Job creation/job destruction" "Younger generation teaching the older ones"

"The problem is not technology" "Financial structure in EU digital market (eco-system)"

"Slow policy making in Europe"

Participants made recommendations to the Commissioner on how to move the single market forward:

- Talk about single market, not digital single market
- Skills are not to be barriers
- Need to support small businesses
- Financial services should have a more prominent role
- Embrace innovation
- Innovators should innovate; policy makers should not interfere too much
- Protect interests of both companies and workers – prevent slow and high speed trains
- Provide solutions that affect people's lives
- Speed and scale of change is phenomenal
- Policy makers, industry leaders and start ups each have a role to play

... and no mention of children and young people

eNACSO's input and impact

ICT2015 followed hard on the heels of the OECD PISA report* issued in September 2015 which was highly critical of the impact of ICT in schools. The Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection report said: "Schools have yet to take advantage of the potential of technology in the classroom to tackle the digital divide and give every student the skills they need in today's connected world." It states that "even countries which have invested heavily in information and communication technologies (ICT) for education have seen no noticeable improvement in their performances in PISA results for reading, mathematics or science. Ensuring that every child reaches a baseline level of proficiency in reading and mathematics will do more to create equal opportunities in a digital world than solely expanding or subsidising access to high-tech devices and services."

- <http://www.oecd.org/education/new-approach-needed-to-deliver-on-technologys-potential-in-schools.htm>

It adds an even greater emphasis on eNACSO's work in ensuring that children and young people's voices are heard and acted upon, at the highest policy making level.

eNACSO's intervention at ICT2015

After the announcement of the ICT2015 event, eNACSO was quick to submit a proposal in the Spring of 2015. Our proposal was to target a clear ICT objective that is relevant to one or several of the challenges or actions of Horizon 2020 and/or Juncker Commission's new objectives (Juncker's 10 priorities i.e. his 2014 political guidelines 'A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change') and in Commissioner's Ansip, Katainen and Oettinger's mission letters.

Following the call/invitation for participating organisations to plan a networking session at ICT2015, eNACSO named it 'Where is the child in all this?' The Board decided that eNACSO advisor Dr Ute Navidi should scope out and lead the preparation for the organisation's participation, from making the online proposal right through to planning the interventions. At the conference, she was joined by Flaminia Frinchi, eNACSO Network Coordinator. Five eNACSO member organisations supported the intervention, notably Astrid Winkler of ECPAT Austria and Jon K. Lange of Save the Children Denmark, joined by Erna Petkute, Children Support Center, Lithuania, Alla Kulikova of e-Enfance, France, and Edoardo Guglielmetti, Child Focus, Belgium.

eNACSO Networking session 21 October 2015

Networking sessions at ICT2015 aimed to create new, lasting and productive links between participants with concrete and action-oriented implications. The proposals had to be submitted in accordance with the three qualitative criteria below and be suitable for the time slots (50 minutes) and venues available during the event. The European Commission then selected the most relevant proposals for the networking sessions – and eNACSO's was one of them.

The idea was to bring together people who don't usually interact with each other:

- Cross disciplinary or intercultural networking
- Downstream-upstream networking (e.g. bringing together basic and applied research)
- Inter-stakeholder networking (research – industry – policy – education – users-investors)
- Intergenerational networking (e.g. involving youngsters and/or the senior people)
- Networking across 'islands' with common interest (e.g. among projects, networks)
- Wider range of disciplines, not restricted to the 'traditional' ICT disciplines, including for example biology, psychology, neuroscience, anthropology, sociology, medicine, material science, etc.

eNACSO embarked on an extensive promotion activity involving a focus on advertising the session via social media, through individual invitations, and a leaflet distributed widely within the conference centre on the day.

The session was planned to start with a Video Why I'm In - children speak about participating in digital policy-making. But even at a high-tech event, the technology provided does not always work and we had to abandon this audio-visual introduction.



Some children, of a kind, had a presence at ICT2015, alongside eNACSO

Flaminia Frinchi gave an introductory speech which briefly focused on the need for children's advocacy. Participants were reminded of the short time allowed for the session and only briefly to introduce themselves, thus giving everyone a chance to contribute. The session was organised World Café style, with two groups taking turns to discuss a small number of questions at each table. The lively discussion spilled over into a follow-on more informal get-together.

WORLD CAFÉ TABLES

Each participant had an opportunity to take part in two World Café-style discussions on children participating in digital policy-making. The topics and questions had been carefully chosen by ENACSO so as to elicit the maximum amount of views from participants in a short timeframe.

Table 1 focused on Children & new technologies, and Table 2 on Detecting and addressing legislative gaps and advocating for the safety of children using new technologies.

The discussion at Table 1 was guided by Astrid Winkler with reporting support from Erna Petkute. "New technologies innovate and create social/cultural changes. They benefit children & young people but may also pose a threat to their safety." The three questions to be addressed were:

- * What is the impact of new technologies on children's lives?
- * Which instruments (political/ operational) exist at EU level to reduce/avoid risks?
- * How can we assess this impact?

Here are some of the views expressed by participants.

- **What is the impact of new technologies on children's lives?**

Digital tools change relations between parents and children.

Children have problems in attention concentration at school.

IT-illiteracy of parents and teachers is a problem: children are much more advanced in using technologies.

Smartphones should be used for teaching, for example for English language

One participant from Portugal reported about a school which does not use any IT tools for pupils up to the age of 10; „my daughter is at school which has no technologies at all. The school is like 50 years ago. This is very special approach. No digital tools are also allowed to bring with.

Discussion addressed pros and cons. Another approach could be to train teachers on the use technologies. The policy is 1 child – 1 tablet; they start at 13-14 years; some participants felt this is the better approach because to forbid things does not teach children anything („No parent throws a child into water to swim if they don't know how to swim, and the same – how to surf“).

Up to the age of 10, parents should be responsible for safe use of internet of their children; then schools.

There was agreement in the group that both parents and teachers are equally responsible to teach children how to navigate safely through the internet.

IT Technology helps getting autonomy but if not well monitored it can lead to addiction. Families should work together with education entities about new technologies. One participant reported about her project at a Lisbon hospital where she is leading a project focusing on avoiding addiction to the use of the internet.

There is shared responsibility: Teachers should teach how to use technology safely. Parents should educate children about what is allowed and what not.

Young children could be protected by teaching them to cross-examine information, because not all information is reliable.

It is important to help children to understand how they can take advantage of technologies for learning and training; they use is mainly for leisure. But use for education is key.

One problem identified was sexting of children, also by children. Parents are not much aware of it. New term „Digital Parenthood“ is still a challenge.

A representative from the EU reminded participants that children too are accountable. This was not so readily understood by participants. It was suggested that what was meant was that children as users of the internet need to be enabled to take care for themselves when using IT-technologies. This was potentially more important than than discussing who is more responsible, teachers or parents; and how to control children.

Other participants reacted and criticised the EU, stating that EU policies do not focus enough on competencies, more on development of new technologies.

- **Which instruments (political/operational) exist at EU level to reduce/avoid risks?**

The problem of different systems on data protection between USA and EU was identified (Safe Harbor, European Court Court of Justice Law on transferring data to the US).

Regulation for advertisement on internet targeting kids is important. There is research which shows that after six months' of children being exposed to some images, they start to recognise certain brands. A participant reported that in France, a girl of age 10 started to starve herself as a result of advertisement.

A big problem is also user generated content (i.e. websites which promote anorexia); regulation is needed also for that. More training on digital skills is needed for parents, teachers. Again, user generated content was addressed. It is connected with bullying and other ways of influencing children online, where parents lack the relevant knowledge.

It is important that countries have a national policy on e-safety in place, i.e. hotlines and that there is awareness raising on safety online.

Suggestions included: to develop EU child safety charter on new technologies and data protection, and to design an EU-program for teacher's training on safe use of IT.

- **How can we assess this impact?**

An example was given of a country where mapping of the use of IT-technologies of children is carried out annually.

Table 2 was guided by Jon K Lange with support from Alla Kulikova. The focus of this discussion was eNACSO's role. eNACSO aims to detect legislative gaps and advocate harmonisation of legal requirements for the safety of children using new technologies. We do this through developing policy and position papers, based on consultation with partners and evidence from children. The EC is responsible for ensuring children's safety online and is committed always to have this as a priority.

- * What are the gaps?

- * Who will fulfil this obligation after the eNACSO project ends?

- * How can you/your organisation collaborate with/support this work?

Participants shared their thoughts:

- **On legislative gaps between law and politics**

Google: we have States but we don't have common rules and laws

Copyright rules are an issue in the way this is treated worldwide

Media Literacy and data protection are an issue in a world based on the culture of images

Law reform: take children into account, not only large corporations

More than laws, we need to educate kids starting by values, showing the great value of ICT on entertainment, education, and hobbies

Support in educational activities. Verifying legal requirements, applicability.

There is a gap between policy and everyday life. Media literacy in schools.

Minimum age

Technology as a tool but not as an absolute ruler (educate children not to rely entirely on a piece of technology 'what if I lose my phone'?)

Ensure early education in media literacy not technical literacy. Where does the EU's focus on 'coding' fit in?

Verification and validation of user ID, e.g. age declaration box

- **Ways to explore to guarantee eNACSO's sustainability**

Crowd-funding for start-ups (usually governmental measure, probably applicable to NGOs)

Participation at ENISA (the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security)

Asking large companies through CSR (corporate social responsibility); CSR (corporate social responsibility) funds for eNACSO

There were questions about there being no legal requirement for safety online in [country]; Is there an eNACSO presence in [my country] – [there is an eNACSO representation in that country, i.e. lacks visibility]

Post funding: crowd funding for NGOs; merge with ENISA

Ask parents' associations for support for eNACSO

Driving science for internet

Face2Face

Apart from the networking session, there was a second opportunity for eNACSO to make new contacts and to increase its visibility, by participating in a 'speed dating'-like Face to Face meeting with potential new partners and supporters.

eNACSO chose one other conference participant which also focuses on advocacy among other things. The eNACSO team was well briefed and was looking forward to this brief encounter, but the participant failed to attend, though post-conference, this organisation was followed up and there is some potential to be explored, in terms of fundraising support.

A second organisation requested to meet with eNACSO, having chosen us from the list of those wishing to participate. It was a good meeting and the eNACSO team gained experience of making a short 'pitch' and to engage with a potential new partner. However, the remit of that organisation and its already developed plans left little point of connecting with eNACSO's mission and role.

“Truly, we were the only organisation there to inject children’s issues and rights into the discussions, albeit on a limited scale. It was the first such eNACSO intervention in recent years and valuable lessons were learned for the future.

“I realised that our session was very important and revealed that children’s issues representation in such event needs to develop and grow, because children are around 1/3 of the internet-using population so they need to be heard and represented.”

“eNACSO is a well-known and well-respected network and brand. And to keep that position it is key to be where the “action” is. During the event I also realized that eNACSO was seen as one of the innovators of new ideas and meanings – especially regarding the child focus. That is a huge benefit we as a network should prosper from.”

Suggestions for improving eNACSO’s next intervention and impact of this nature, and on this scale:

“My idea would be to create partnerships with other EU organisations representing children in the IT field and to develop a strategy/plan for having more sessions, maybe speak at a plenary, may be organise other activities.

“To improve impact, I think we should bring with us those whose interests we defend: children!! They themselves could tell the policy-makers and -creators how they grow up in the digital world, and about their hopes/fears with regards to emerging technologies. I know that we were supposed to show the video with children’s voices at our networking session. But I still think that having real children there would be quite a different experience for everyone!

“The networking session was very useful, although the time was limited and the room wasn’t completely equipped and functioning. The bar camp wasn’t set up according to our expectations.

“Wider partners’ involvement, more advertising, more forms in networking sessions to gather ideas and suggestions of others, to take up a stall in the exhibition area to showcase what we do.

“Strategically it would be important for eNACSO to select key events to be attended well in advance, and for each to have a very clear idea of expectations. The Board then would need to decide the level of resources to be made available, in the lead-up, during the event, and in the follow-up, and lay down a clear reporting and supplementary decision-making process to ensure full accountability.”

March 2016