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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council of 19 and 20 November 2026: Protecting Our Children, Building Resilience: Education Against Online Radicalisation *- Information from Slovakia, supported by Croatia, Spain, Germany, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Greece*

Over the past two years, two violent attacks in Slovak schools have taken the lives of four people, including children only 13 years old and teachers. The consequences reach far beyond those who lost their lives. Families and entire school communities are still living with them.

Schools must be safe places for learning and building relationships. They are also where young people learn to think independently and distinguish facts from manipulation. Education has an important role in preventing radicalisation. But teachers need to know what to do when they see a child being drawn towards violence, and they need professional support when the situation goes beyond what a school can handle.

Children encounter harmful narratives long before they are mature enough to recognize and resist them. Through social media, someone can gain a child's trust and gradually draw them into violence against others or themselves. Those who target children can remain in contact with them well beyond the school day, often without the adults around them knowing.

Protecting children online is therefore both a responsibility of education systems and a matter of regulating digital platforms. We must help children recognize manipulation and make informed decisions. At the same time, we cannot expect them to take full responsibility for their safety in an environment designed by some of the world's most powerful companies.

Slovakia welcomes the proposed EU KIDS Act. However, we see four priorities.

1. Enable Member States to protect children without delay.

Member States must retain the ability to introduce proportionate national measures, including restrictions on children's access to social media, consistent with EU law, while a common European solution is being developed.

Slovakia has proposed restricting the creation and use of social media accounts to people aged sixteen and under. We want a coordinated European approach, but negotiations on that approach must leave room for Member States to respond to risks they are already facing.

2. Enforce existing rules and hold digital platforms accountable.

The European Commission must fully enforce existing rules, including the Digital Services Act. Platforms must be held accountable when their systems expose children to content that encourages hatred or violence.

This responsibility extends to how their services are designed. If a recommendation system repeatedly directs a child towards harmful content, telling that child to be more careful is not an adequate response. The platform must address the risk.

3. Strengthen European cooperation against the manipulation of children.

Existing EU cooperation mechanisms must address not only terrorism and ideological extremism, but also other forms of manipulation that draw children towards violence, including violence against themselves.

We need faster information exchange between the relevant authorities and stronger cooperation in cross-border investigations. This work must also connect with schools. Education professionals may be among the first to notice worrying changes in a child's behaviour, but they need to know where to turn and how their concerns will be followed up.

4. Make education a cornerstone of prevention and invest in early support for children.

Slovakia has proposed an integrated system of protection focused on identifying risks early and coordinating support for children and young people. It would allow the professionals working with a child to assess the situation together and agree on a plan of help. Schools would have a clear route to specialist support, with the police involved where necessary.

But protection cannot begin only when a child is already at risk. It must start much earlier.

We must equip children from an early age with the ability to recognize manipulation and assess online information critically. They need to understand how social media can influence their thinking, including why particular content keeps appearing in their feeds.

Slovakia is strengthening this approach through its new curriculum, which places greater emphasis on critical thinking and responsible use of technology. The changes are being introduced gradually, starting with the first year of primary school.

This also means investing in our teachers. They need practical training to recognize warning signs and respond to harmful narratives in the classroom. We are strengthening specialist support in schools so that teachers have professionals they can turn to when a child needs help.

Schools cannot carry this responsibility alone. Cooperation with parents is essential, and specialist help must be available before a situation becomes a crisis.

Education alone cannot eliminate these threats. But it can help children recognize when they are being manipulated and give them the confidence to seek help. Our responsibility is to ensure that help is available and that the platforms through which children are targeted are required to act.