

Question for written answer E-002404/2024

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: Internet addiction

In November 2023, the Commission launched an investigation in connection with the protection of minors. It sent requests for information to all large online platforms with a significant number of children among their user base (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat), focusing in particular on the effects of these platforms on mental and physical health, such as addiction¹. On this basis, owing to alleged breaches of the DSA, it launched two non-compliance procedures in relation to algorithmic systems capable of causing behavioural addiction² and harm to mental health, prompting pledges from platforms to take down these problematic addictive systems³.

The Commission has mentioned plans to create guidelines on child protection, which will define the framework for the activities of platforms of all sizes in order to put an end to activities harmful to children.

1. What are the findings of the investigation carried out in relation to tackling behavioural addiction to online platforms?
2. Does the Commission have sufficient evidence to warrant more effective and further-reaching methods to tackle the scourge of social networks for the benefit of the mental health and intellectual development of children?
3. According to experts, the recommended minimum age for using social media is 16. Does the Commission intend to take the initiative to raise the minimum age requirements for creating social media accounts?

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¹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/list-designated-vlops-and-vloses>

² <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-opens-formal-proceedings-against-tiktok-under-digital-services-act>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_24_2290