

EN

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager
on behalf of the European Commission
(19.11.2024)

The Commission takes the impact that social media and excessive screen time can have on (young) people's well-being and mental health very seriously. It has already taken action, in particular by initiating proceedings under the Digital Services Act (DSA)¹ against TikTok², Instagram³ and Facebook⁴ to investigate whether these companies have infringed the DSA by failing to diligently assess the systemic risk associated with the algorithmic exposure to content that could potentially cause harm when encountered repeatedly and by failing to put in place reasonable, proportionate and effective mitigation measures that are tailored to this specific risk.

Moreover, the Commission is drafting guidelines to assist providers of online platforms that are accessible to minors to comply with their obligation to put in place appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security of minors, on their services. The new Better Internet for Kids Strategy also proposes concrete measures to address the risks and challenges children face in the digital sphere⁵.

Protecting the mental health of children and young people is one of the aims that the Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health⁶ addresses, which has a flagship initiative to promote 'healthy screens, healthy youth'.

Additionally, the Commission adopted an initiative on integrated child protection systems to encourage national authorities to put in place systemic solutions to tackle violence against children, online and offline⁷.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act), OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1–102.

² <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/list-designated-vlops-and-vloses#ecl-inpage-tiktok>

³ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/list-designated-vlops-and-vloses#ecl-inpage-metaplatforms>

⁴ See footnote 3.

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+), COM(2022) 212 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:212:FIN>

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a comprehensive approach to mental health, COM(2023) 298 final, https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/com_2023_298_1_act_en.pdf

⁷ Commission Recommendation on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child, C(2024) 2680 final, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/36591cfb-1b0a-4130-985e-332fd87d40c1_en?filename=C_2024_2680_1_EN_ACT_part1_v8.pdf