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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.4.2025)

The protection of minors online is a priority for the Commission. Under the Digital Services Act (DSA),[1] designated providers of Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs)[2] are required to conduct risk assessments, considering inter alia actual or foreseeable risks to the protection of minors as well as a person's physical and mental well-being, and to put in place effective mitigation measures to address such risks. The risk assessment should take into account whether and how the design of their recommender systems may influence such risks. In addition, all online platforms accessible to minors are obliged to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security for them.

The Commission has taken swift action in relation to DSA enforcement and opened formal investigations against TikTok[3] and Meta[4] to assess whether they may have breached the DSA in areas linked to the protection of minors, recommender systems and data access for researchers. These investigations are currently ongoing. If the Commission establishes a breach of the DSA, a fine of up to 6% of global turnover of the provider may be imposed.

Moreover, the Commission is developing guidelines on the protection of minors online under the DSA[5] and will launch an EU-wide inquiry into the broader impacts of social media on well-being[6].

The Commission is also currently finalising the Delegated Act for Data Access[7] which will put into practice the researcher data access mechanism for *non-public* data used to study systemic risks in the EU.

As part of a broader and more integrated policy response, the Commission's Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health[8] supports the mental health of young people, including in the digital sphere[9].

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[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32022R2065
[2] https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/list-designated-vlops-and-vloses
[3] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_926
[4] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_2664
[5] https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-launches-call-evidence-guidelines-protection-minors-online-under-digital-services-act
[6] https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf
[7] https://algorithmic-transparency.ec.europa.eu/news/delegated-act-data-access-published-consultation-2024-10-31_en
[8] https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/comprehensive-approach-mental-health_en
[9] https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6317c605-5f5d-4d4f-9c8a-d5c93e869814_en?filename=ncd_tracking-framework-mh_en.pdf