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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.6.2025)

The Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health¹ aims to support children and young people. Under one of its flagship initiatives the Commission collaborates with UNICEF to develop a prevention toolkit as a guidance tool for Member States' policymakers on how to improve children's health, including the impact of digital tools and social media.

The President of the Commission announced as one of the Commission's priorities to address the impact of social media and excessive screen time, especially on young people, and their wellbeing and mental health². To have an evidence-based discussion on this, an EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media on wellbeing will be carried out. The exact format, content, and timeline are currently being discussed.

The Digital Services Act obliges providers of online platforms to ensure high privacy, safety, and security on their service. It is supported and complemented by the Better Internet for Kids strategy (BIK+)³. Additionally, the upcoming Digital Fairness Act, planned to be proposed in 2026 will address consumer protection, tackling issues such as unfair influencer marketing⁴.

The Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems⁵ calls on Member States to act to protect children's physical and mental integrity by strengthening child protection systems and providing comprehensive support, including prevention and psychological support.

These combined efforts aim to foster a nourishing environment for young people, mitigating mental health challenges from social pressures, including fast fashion. The Commission remains devoted to comprehensive strategies addressing youth mental health issues.

¹ 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.

² Political Guidelines (p. 20): https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf

³ The BIK platform and network of Safer Internet Centres across EU aims to raise awareness on online risks including on mental health of young people. More information at: <https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en>.

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/707d7404-78e5-4aef-acfa-82b4cf639f55_en?filename=Commission%20Staff%20Working%20Document%20Fitness%20Check%20on%20EU%20consumer%20law%20on%20digital%20fairness.pdf

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32024H1238>.