(English version)

Question for written answer E-001624/25
to the Commission
Dimitris Tsiodras (PPE)
(23 April 2025)

Subject: Protecting minors from online trends harmful to their health

Platforms and social media allow for the dissemination of content which may have a negative and irreversible effect on the health of minors. Such trends include the recent 'SkinnyTok challenge', which encourages minors to stop eating for a prolonged period of time and promotes the ideal of extreme weight loss. This trend is dangerous, given that it has the potential to harm the health and physical development of a large number of minors. At the same time, access to such content is spreading very quickly and is found in hundreds of thousands of posts.

In light of the above, can the Commission say:

1. What does it intend to do to tackle the proliferation and rapid spread of such social media phenomena?

2. Following on from the Digital Services Act ([1]), does it consider that such content constitutes a systemic risk and that very large platforms should therefore apply the DSA provisions on risk management, such as identifying, assessing and mitigating these risks?

3. How effective are platforms' efforts to ensure that minors have access to educational content on healthy eating and sources related to eating disorders?

Submitted: 23.4.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(16 June 2025)

The protection of minors online is a priority for the Commission. Under the Digital Services Act (DSA), ([1]) providers of designated Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs) ([2]) are required to conduct systemic 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 these.

These assessments should consider whether and how the design of the recommender systems may influence such risks. In addition, the providers of online platforms accessible to minors shall put in place appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security of minors.

The Commission has taken swift action in relation to DSA enforcement and opened formal proceedings against the provider of TikTok ([3]) to assess whether it may have breached the DSA in relation to the protection of minors online and to the functioning of the recommender systems.

The investigations are 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.

The Commission is developing guidelines on the protection of minors online under the DSA ([4]) as well as an Action Plan to counter cyberbullying. The Commission will also launch an EU-wide inquiry into the broader impacts of social media on well-being ([5]).

The European Strategy for a better Internet for kids (BIK+) ([6]) promotes a responsible use of technology by supporting children, their carers and teachers through the awareness and education activities organised by the Safer Internet Centres and the information and training material available in all language on the BIK platform ([7]).

---

1 [1]Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 on a Single Market for Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC.
([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://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-launches-call-evidence-guidelines-protection-minors-online-under-digital-services-act.
([5]) https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf.
([6]) COM/2022/212 final.
([7]) https://www.betterInternetforkids.eu.