

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002673/25
to the Commission
Dan-Ştefan Motreanu (PPE)
(1 July 2025)**

Subject: Tackling digital threats to youth mental health

At the EU Health Council on 20 June 2025, ministers called for stronger action to protect the mental health of children and adolescents in the digital era. The conclusions emphasise the need for a safer and more age-appropriate digital environment, particularly given concerns over the impact of social media on young users.

France has proposed a ban on social networks for minors under 15, citing links to substance abuse and cyberbullying. Germany highlighted the harmful effects of ‘manipulative and addictive design’ in digital platforms, while Spain advocated for youth mental health to be prioritised in the upcoming 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework.

Despite broad agreement on the seriousness of the issue, there is still no unified EU strategy or regulatory framework to address these risks effectively.

1. Given the urgency, what policy measures does the Commission plan to introduce to curb harmful digital practices, ensure age-appropriate content and support the mental well-being of young users?
2. How will the Commission coordinate with the Member States to implement meaningful protections across the EU and ensure that digital platforms are held accountable for their impact on youth mental health?

Submitted: 1.7.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(25 September 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 and Very Large Online Search Engines ⁽²⁾ must conduct assessments of systemic risks to minors’ physical and mental well-being, and put in place effective mitigation measures. In addition, they must guarantee a high level of privacy, safety and security for minors.

The Commission recently adopted the guidelines on the protection of minors online under Article 28 of the DSA ⁽³⁾. The guidelines recommend the implementation of age assurance measures to prevent children’s exposure to age-inappropriate content.

Other measures include adjusting recommender systems to limit harmful content and disabling features that encourage excessive use or risky interactions.

The Commission has also opened formal investigations against the providers of TikTok, Meta, Pornhub, Stripchat, XNXX and XVideos to assess whether they may have breached the DSA in areas linked to the protection of minors, including on the assessment and mitigation of online risks posed to their physical and mental wellbeing ⁽⁴⁾. Those investigations are ongoing.

In parallel, the Commission opened a public consultation dedicated to combating cyberbullying ⁽⁵⁾ and is currently planning an EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media on mental health ⁽⁶⁾.

Furthermore, Member States have launched a coordinated action aimed at protecting minors from exposure to pornographic content through the European Board for Digital Services ⁽⁷⁾.

⁽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://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/commission-publishes-guidelines-protection-minors#:~:text=On%2014%20July%202025%2C%20the%20Commission%20has%20published,safe%20online%20experience%20for%20children%20and%20young%20people>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/list-designated-vlops-and-vloses>.

⁽⁵⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14791-Action-plan-against-cyberbullying_en.

⁽⁶⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf.

⁽⁷⁾ This joint initiative reinforces the Commission’s broader efforts to shield minors from harmful content online. It addresses both very large adult-content platforms under the Commission’s direct supervision and smaller platforms overseen by the national Digital Services Coordinators in their respective jurisdictions.