

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003017/25
to the Commission
Eleonora Meletti (PPE)
(21 July 2025)

Subject: Risks from artificial sun tanning and beauty standards on social media

Each year, more than 150 000 new cases of melanoma are recorded in Europe, with young women disproportionately affected. The use of artificial sun tanning devices before the age of 35 increases the risk of melanoma by 59%. In addition, more than 97% of women diagnosed with melanoma before the age of 30 had a history of sunbed use.

However, the practice remains popular — especially among teenage girls — due to societal beauty standards and the influence of social media, which present tanned skin as the ideal. In some countries, restrictions on artificial sun tanning have yielded proven benefits.

In the light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Will it consider adopting measures to protect young people and vulnerable groups? What evidence-based alternative measures will be promoted to reduce exposure to ultraviolet radiation?
2. Given that bans on the use of artificial sun tanning devices for minors encourage safer behaviour, does it intend to promote digital strategies, such as guidance for influencers, regulation of harmful content via algorithms and targeted information campaigns for vulnerable groups?

Submitted: 21.7.2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(17 October 2025)

Artificial tanning devices with a voltage rating typically of between 50 and 1 000 volts for alternating current, like sunbeds, must meet the Low Voltage Directive's ⁽¹⁾ (LVD) health and safety requirements. This covers cancer-related risks. The General Product Safety Directive ⁽²⁾ provides a general safety framework covering the safety risks which are not addressed by the specific EU legislation, such as the LVD.

In Europe's Beating Cancer Plan ⁽³⁾, the Commission indicated it would 'explore measures on exposure to Ultraviolet (UV) radiation, including from sunbeds'. The exploration has shown that more information is needed on the effectiveness of preventive and mitigation measures to understand how additional policy recommendations could lead to a better protection from health risks associated with the use of sunbeds, going beyond the LVD. Clear guidance on avoiding the use of sunbeds is already included in the European Code Against Cancer.

Under the Digital Services Act ⁽⁴⁾ (DSA), providers of very large online platforms and very large online search engines must mitigate systemic risks that may impact vulnerable recipients of the service, like minors (including by taking into account how algorithms could foster harmful or misleading content and by limiting targeted ads that may affect young users' well-being). Moreover, all platform providers have to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security of minors, assisted by the Commission guidelines ⁽⁵⁾ of July 2025. The DSA also supports transparency for influencer content and commercial communications.

Additionally, the Commission promotes media literacy and awareness campaigns ⁽⁶⁾ for young people.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/35/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/988/oj/eng>.

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-of-life/european-health-union/cancer-plan-europe_en.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj/eng>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/commission-publishes-guidelines-protection-minors>.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/media-literacy>.