

EN

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.3.2026)

The AI Act¹ prohibits AI systems that employ subliminal or deceptive techniques or exploit vulnerabilities that distort behaviour, when this is likely to lead to significant harm². It also establishes transparency obligations for AI systems directly interacting with people³. As AI chatbots are being built on general-purpose AI (GPAI) models, the provider of GPAI models with systemic risks may also bear responsibilities. Harmful manipulation, which may include undue influence in highly sensitive contexts such as suicide detection, is explicitly identified as a systemic risk in the General-Purpose AI Code of Practice⁴.

The rules on enforcement of the AI Act will start to apply in August 2026. Therefore, enforcement of Article 5 or other rules cannot be initiated earlier neither on national nor on EU level.

The Digital Services Act (DSA)⁵ applies to AI systems integrated in online platforms and includes the obligation to ensure a high level of privacy, security and safety for minors on their service. Providers of very large online platforms and very large online search engines must also assess and mitigate systemic risks stemming from their services, including risks to physical and mental well-being, dissemination of illegal content and protection of minors⁶. The Guidelines on protection of minors recommend safeguards for AI features such as chatbots integrated in online platforms⁷.

The Commission has also launched an Action Plan Against Cyberbullying⁸ and is working towards an EU-harmonised approach to age verification⁹. The European Data Protection Board has outlined principles to design General Data Protection Regulation-compliant age assurance¹⁰.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj/eng>.

² Article 5(1)(a) and (b) of the AI Act.

³ Article 50 of the AI Act.

⁴ The Safety and Security Chapter of the General-Purpose AI Code of Practice: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/contents-code-gpai>.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj/eng>.

⁶ Article 34 DSA.

⁷ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C_202505519.

⁸ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cyberbullying>.

⁹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-age-verification>.

¹⁰ https://www.edpb.europa.eu/system/files/2025-04/edpb_statement_20250211ageassurance_v1-2_en.pdf.