

EN

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen
on behalf of the European Commission
(29.6.2026)

The Commission's work on the protection of minors is grounded in a comprehensive, ambitious, and rights-based EU framework¹, which combines strong legislative measures, such as the Digital Services Act², and rigorous enforcement with targeted policies to foster a safer and more empowering digital environment for children³.

This approach strikes a careful balance between protection and empowerment, while fully respecting fundamental rights, including freedom of expression and communication.

The Commission is not currently preparing an EU-wide ban, restriction, age limit, or mandatory identification requirement for virtual private network services.

Regarding age verification, the Executive Vice-President for Technological Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, has emphasised the need for effective mechanisms to prevent minors from accessing harmful content online. In her statements, she highlighted the limitations of self-declaration systems, particularly in the context of pornographic platforms, where such measures have proven insufficient to shield children from age-inappropriate material.

The Commission's privacy preserving EU-wide age verification system is designed to address this challenge, ensuring that minors are better protected from exposure to harmful or inappropriate content while upholding data protection and privacy safeguards⁴.

¹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/online-privacy>.

² Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act), OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, pp. 1–102.

³ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/strategy-better-internet-kids>.

⁴ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-age-verification>.