

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002181/26
to the Commission
Nikos Pappas (The Left)
(29 May 2026)**

Subject: Ethics of media coverage of suicides and protection of vulnerable groups in the EU

Recent cases of suicide committed by minors in the EU, including in Greece, have been the subject of extensive, sensationalist media coverage. Scientific literature warns of the risk of copycat behaviour among vulnerable groups.

The EU framework enshrines the freedom of expression and independence of the media through the European Media Freedom Act and Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as the protection of minors and human dignity through Articles 1 and 24 of the Charter and Article 28 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. However, certain journalistic reporting practices appear to raise issues of compatibility with the spirit of the above provisions and the effective protection of minors.

In view of the above, can the Commission say:

1. How does it assess the adequacy of the current framework (Media Freedom Act and Article 28 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in protecting minors from the effects of media coverage of suicidal behaviour?
2. Does it intend to strengthen the common guidelines for journalistic coverage of suicides, in the interests of public health and preventing copycat behaviour?
3. How is the balance between press freedom and the protection of minors and vulnerable groups ensured in the context of Articles 11 and 24 of the Charter, the European Media Freedom Act and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive?

Submitted: 29.5.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(30 July 2026)**

Article 6 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) ⁽¹⁾ requires Member States to ensure that audiovisual media services provided under their jurisdiction respect and protect human dignity.

Articles 6a and 28b require that measures are put in place in both audiovisual media services and video-sharing platforms, respectively, in order to protect minors from content that may impair their physical, mental or moral development, as well as to protect the general public from content constituting criminal offences (such as child pornography).

In addition, Article 28 of the Digital Services Act (DSA) ⁽²⁾ obliges providers of online platforms accessible to minors to put in place appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety, and security of minors, on their service.

Moreover, the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) ⁽³⁾ underlines the role of self-regulation in ensuring ethical media coverage, notably regarding the content moderation safeguards laid down in Article 18 of the EMFA.

This Article deals with media content on very large online platforms designated as such under the DSA and requires that media service providers declare when they adhere to a widely recognised and accepted co-regulatory or self-regulatory mechanism governing editorial standards in order to benefit from such safeguards.

The Commission closely monitors the implementation of the DSA and AVMSD rules in the Member States, including those related to the protection of minors, and will further assess the latter during the upcoming review planned for the third quarter of 2026.

On 6 February 2026, the Commission also published guidelines on the protection of media content online under Article 18 of the EMFA ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services in view of changing market realities.

⁽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, p. 1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj>).

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act).

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/901/oj/eng>.