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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Protection of minors online, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) and age verification
- Presidency background note

Delegations will find attached a Presidency background note on protection of minors online, the AVMS Directive and age verification with a view to the upcoming Audiovisual and Media Working Party meeting on 24 September 2025 (agenda item 4).

AVMWP 24 September 2025

Informal discussion paper on protection of minors online, the AVMS Directive and age verification



**Danish
Presidency**
Council of the
European Union

Children and young people are spending more and more of their time in digital environments and connected through the online world. On the one hand, this provides new opportunities and digital innovation generally has a great potential to drive European competitiveness, creativity and, to a certain extent, community. At the same time, it also brings new challenges related to the well-being, safety and privacy of digital users and minors in particular. Especially on social media minors are increasingly exposed to harmful content as well as addictive and manipulative designs.

Important steps have already been taken to address this across the EU and its Member States. The Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) together provide for a comprehensive framework regulating how online platforms, video-sharing platforms and media service providers are required to, among other objectives, protect minors from harmful content, assess and mitigate risks for minors and to provide for a safe digital and media environment. In 2022, the European Commission also adopted its Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+).

On the 14th of July 2025, the European Commission adopted new **guidelines on the protection of minors under DSA Article 28(1)** which clarify how platforms must take appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety, and security for minors, in particular by addressing the risks related to age-inappropriate content and harmful designs. The guidelines also recommend age verification to restrict access to adult content such as pornography and gambling, or when national rules set a minimum age to access certain services including specifically defined categories of social media.

At the same time, efforts are underway to ensure **technical tools for age verification**. For instance, in regard to the European Digital Identity (EUDI) Wallet¹, where the Commission has published a blueprint of a privacy-preserving and easy-to-use EU-harmonised age verification solution and several Member States have taken steps to launch fully operational technical tools.

Such voluntary publicly developed technical tools can help ensure a high level of privacy, provide a baseline for commercial alternatives and help ensure an effective uptake. At the same time, it remains the responsibility of the platform providers to ensure effective age verification in accordance with EU and national rules and in order to enforce their own terms and conditions.

The AVMSD provides a framework of specific rules that apply to all media service providers to restrict children's access to content that could harm their physical, mental or moral development. These rules concern all audiovisual content – both editorial content, audiovisual commercial communications and user-generated videos –. Importantly, the Directive extends the EU media content standards and the rules on the protection of minors to video-sharing platforms (VSPs), regardless of their size, including certain social media providers. (Article 28b AVMSD). In this framework, Member States are responsible to ensure that VSPs, where appropriate, take measures and require that the most harmful content is subject to the strictest measures. These include, for instance:

- Mechanisms for users to flag, report and rate harmful content as well as transparent and easy-to-use complaint systems for the users
- Age verification and parental control systems
- Media literacy and user awareness tools

The application of the rules is subject to the country-of-origin principle. Therefore, Member States in which minors are heavily using video-sharing platforms established in other jurisdictions must respect this principle with regard to enforcement.

The AVMSD will be evaluated and possibly reviewed by the end of 2026. The Council of the European Union has recently adopted Council conclusions on its assessment.

¹As laid out in the European Digital Identity (EUDI) Regulation.

In this regard, Council invited the Commission to examine whether existing rules still provide an adequately high level of protection of minors given the evolving market and consumption patterns and to assess the interplay between the DSA and the AVMSD.

At the same time, Council invited Member States to engage in closer cooperation to resolve cross-border issues and allow for effective cooperation between national regulatory authorities.

While the DSA and the AVMSD cover a broad range of actors within the media and digital environment, gaps might still appear. It therefore remains important to continuously assess whether current rules also adequately cover protection of minors on other types of services such as online video games, artificial intelligence chatbots, video-generators et cetera.

Follow up and discussions

On the 17th of July 2025, the Danish Presidency of the Council organised a discussion within the Council Working Party on Telecommunication and Information Society where the European Commission presented on matters related to the DSA article 28-guidelines, the technical solution for age verification as well as the upcoming cyberbullying action plan. Protection of minors will also be the central issue for the upcoming Informal Meeting of Telecommunication Ministers in Horsens, Denmark on the 9-10th of October 2025.

For the meeting of the Audiovisual & Media Working Party on the 24th of September 2025, the Presidency would like to invite delegations to exchange views on how these issues relate to the AVMSD and how protection of minors online could be strengthened as a whole.

Guiding questions:

1. To what extent have the AVMSD provisions on protection of minors on video-sharing platforms been implemented in your Member State? Which of the prescribed measures do you see as the most effective and do you see any major obstacles or gaps, including in their implementation?
2. Do you see a specific need to strengthen the current provision on age verification in the AVMSD? For instance, to require a broader uptake, to refer to the interplay with other rules, to provide more harmonisation or to specify when such measures are to be considered appropriate?
3. Which other tools and measures do you see as the most important to strengthen the protection of minors online?

Delegations are invited to also address any other priorities and concerns. Delegations are more than welcome to share input in written form after the meeting for future reference.

The Danish Presidency Media and Digital Teams

