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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: AOB for the meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council on 5 December 2025: Outcomes of discussions during the informal meeting of Telecommunications Ministers (Horsens, 9-10 October 2025)  
- Information from the Presidency

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**Outcomes of discussions during the informal meeting of Telecommunications Ministers  
(Horsens, 9-10 October 2025)**

Meeting of the Telecommunications Council

Brussels, 5 December 2025

The informal meeting of ministers in charge of Telecommunications under the Danish Presidency took place in Horsens on 9-10 October. It was chaired by Caroline Stage Olsen, the Danish Minister for Digital Affairs, and it was also attended by representatives of 3 EFTA countries (Norway, Switzerland and Iceland).

The ministers held two debates on the topic of the **protection of minors online**, one on **age verification on social media**, and one on **measures to protect minors online**. 25 EU Member States and 2 EFTA countries signed up to **the Jutland Declaration Shaping a Safe Online World for Minors**, which sets a shared political direction towards future initiatives in this area, calling for a European legal requirement for effective and privacy-preserving age verification on social media. The declaration also calls for measures to create a safer online environment and to address harmful practices on digital services, such as addictive designs and dark patterns.

Prior to the debate **age verification on social media**, the ministers saw **a presentation on the age verification solution** implemented in Denmark, which was given by a representative of the Danish Agency for Digital Government. Denmark is one of the Member States that are introducing a user-friendly and privacy-preserving age verification method, compatible with the Age Verification Blueprint developed by the Commission. The solution allows users to prove they are over a certain age e.g. 15 or 18 without sharing any other personal information. Apart from being privacy-preserving, it is **fully interoperable with the future EU Digital Identity Wallet**.

The debate was introduced by EVP Virkkunen, who acknowledged that **digital opportunities for children online come with serious risks**, such as harmful content and addictive or manipulative design. The EU already has a solid framework for the protection of minors in the digital world (e.g. the Digital Services Act, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, Better Internet for Kids + programme), but more needs to be done. In this context, the EVP recalled that together with the Commission President she will convene **an expert panel** in order to reflect on the best ways to provide further protection for children from online harms.

Next, the ministers exchanged views on **how to effectively ensure implementation of age verification** and on the **potential need to establish a minimum age for social media access**. They also provided updates on the status of the technical aspects of the development of national age verification solutions in their respective countries.

The vast majority of ministers agreed that **voluntary measures are not enough** to ensure children do not access harmful content online and that it is **important to set the minimum age for social media access, which should be legally binding**. **Most support the idea of harmonising this age limit on the European level**, because it would be easier to implement, also for digital platforms, but there were some dissenting voices preferring to leave such decisions for the national level. Overall, the **digital majority age that has been suggested varies between 14 and 16**. There was also agreement in the room that technical solutions to ensure age verification should be based on the same standards and interoperable, ideally integrated into the eID architecture or based on the blueprint developed by the Commission. At the same time, several ministers stressed that whatever age verification solution is implemented, it is important **to ensure that privacy is not threatened** and personal data are not at risk.

During the second **policy discussion on the protection of minors online**, ministers exchanged national experiences regarding parental controls, the effectiveness of current protection measures, ongoing challenges, and potential new initiatives at European level.

EVP Virkkunen emphasised the significant risks that minors face from harmful online practices, including **addictive algorithms, excessive screen time, and exposure to harmful content**. She stressed the importance to **hold platforms accountable** for safeguarding minors online. In line with this, the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to combating cyberbullying, recalling the upcoming launch of **the action plan against cyberbullying in early 2026**, specifically targeting cyberbullying among minors and vulnerable youth. The Commission also announced future initiatives aimed at developing a deeper understanding of the impact of social media on mental health and well-being through evidence-based panels.

Ministers expressed their support for the Danish Presidency's focus on this critical issue and welcomed the Commission's efforts to set up concrete measures for online protection of minors, including the Digital Fairness Act and the revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. **There was broad consensus on the need to enhance parental control online and adopt stronger, complementary measures through a risk-based approach.**

Ministers called for a **better implementation of existing rules**, including the DSA, as well as a comprehensive EU framework to ensure online safety. The discussion highlighted **the importance of strengthening parental control programmes**, tackling addictive design features, promoting digital literacy, establishing robust age verification systems, raising public awareness, and assessing the risks that AI poses to children. Additional proposals included introducing binding instruments and imposing sanctions against platforms in case of non-compliance.

During lunch the ministers held **a debate on digital sovereignty**. To develop **strategic clarity on digital sovereignty in Europe**, the Presidency invited the ministers to reflect on what to focus on, which tools to use, and how simplification could help. The debate showed that despite differences in approach, all seemed to rally behind the same goals. When it comes to the strategic focus, many made **a plea for targeting those areas where it matters most (cloud, AI, interoperable data spaces, semiconductors, quantum, cybersecurity)**.

Nearly all mentioned **public procurement** – with a preference for trustworthy European products – as a key tool for promoting digital sovereignty, even though some interventions were more nuanced. In addition, **simplification of the regulatory landscape**, and the removal of unnecessary burdens, and ensuring that the Digital Single Market functions effectively, including for SMEs, got broad support from delegations – it was clear that the Digital Omnibus proposal was eagerly awaited across Europe.

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