



EU KIDS Act to restrict social media platforms' access to children in the EU

Strasbourg, 17 September 2026

Today, the European Commission has adopted the EU KIDS Act to enhance the online safety of children throughout the Union.

The proposal prohibits social media platforms from accessing children under the age of 13 and sets an **EU-wide minimum age** for minors to open an account of their own at the age of 15, thereby ensuring a gradual approach. The KIDS Act also reverses the burden of proof. Now, service providers will have to show that their **services are age-appropriate and safe by design**.

Commission President, Ursula **von der Leyen**, said: *"Today, our children are engaging with the most sophisticated technologies ever created. Technology that was never created with their wellbeing in mind. Our KIDS Act is reversing the burden of proof - it is for platforms to show they are safe by design. And we put parents back in the driving seat, giving them the tools to help their children navigate a safer online world."*

The proposed EU KIDS Act is structured around four pillars:

1. Social media delay

The EU KIDS Act proposes that children can create autonomous accounts on social media services, only from the age of 15.

For children between 13 and under 15, the proposal calls for parental control, enabling guardians to set up mini accounts that children can access through the guardian's account. This would allow them to access age-appropriate social media and video-sharing platforms. In addition, services available on the mini accounts must be designed with safeguards, such as limited social contacts and limited screen time up to one hour per day, recognising the role of guardians in supporting the autonomous and safe development of their children online.

Children between 3 and under 13 cannot access social media, but they can access specially designed child-friendly video-sharing services through accounts managed by their guardian. For that purpose, the platforms need to offer parents or guardians an easy-to-use tool to restrict the use of the adult's device to such child-friendly services, when it is passed on to children, and limit the child's exposure up to a maximum of one hour per day.

2. Safety-by-design

The EU KIDS Act imposes a number of obligations for all online services offering social media services, video sharing, online video games, AI companions and chatbots to users below the age of 18.

These include a ban on addictive features and profiling-based recommender feeds dragging minors into 'rabbit holes' of harmful content. It also includes prohibiting infinite scroll without stopping points, reward tricks, and push notifications during sleeping hours, as well as unsolicited contact from strangers. In addition, AI companions and chatbots must be turned off by default and cannot simulate interpersonal relationships in ways that create emotional dependency.

Profiles for minors must be private by default, with geolocation, camera and microphone access turned off. Online services must also offer easy ways for minors to block and mute users, effective time-management tools, and safe recommender systems that minors can control, tune and reset.

3. Privacy-preserving age assurance

Under the EU KIDS Act, online services and app stores must use age assurance tools. They can, for

example, use the EU age verification app, which does not retain identity documents or biometric data, thereby meeting the highest privacy-preserving safeguards. Member States will be closely involved in setting up this ecosystem.

In addition, providers of social media services and video-sharing platforms will be called to perform age verification when a user opens a new account.

When it comes to existing accounts, providers have to estimate the user's age based on reasonable proxies (e.g. account creation date, credit card details).

4. Effective enforcement

The proposal reverses the 'burden of proof', making the providers of very large online platforms responsible for proving that their services are 'safe by design'.

They will be obliged to submit a compliance plan to the Commission, and to an independent auditor that has to thoroughly assess the new service, feature or functionality. The Commission can request the provider to propose corrective measures if based on the auditor's report, it considers that the compliance plan contains any shortcoming.

The enforcement framework builds on the structures already in place under the Digital Services Act and the Artificial Intelligence Act, making use of established mechanisms and existing expertise. The proposal introduces expedited enforcement procedures against providers in case of noncompliance with the EU KIDS Act, where the Commission should conclude investigations within 90 days.

Next steps

The legislative proposal has been submitted to the European Parliament and Council, with a view to launching the legislative process for their examination and adoption. Considering the clear demand for urgent and comprehensive action at Union level, it is essential that the act is adopted swiftly.

Background

Today's proposal builds upon the report and recommendations of the Co-Chairs of the [Special Panel on Child Safety Online](#), Dr Maria Melchior and Prof. Dr. Jorg M Fegert. President von der Leyen convened the Special Panel to provide expert input on the EU's framework for child safety online.

The Special Panel, which was composed of more than 60 experts, including representatives of civil society organisations, youth representatives, parents, educators, child psychiatrists, public health specialists, neurologists, and tech specialists, was first convened in March 2026 and met three times ahead of the delivery of the report in July 2026.

Furthermore, the proposal reflects growing calls among Europeans for greater protection for children online, with 92% of Europeans considering the need to further strengthen children and young people's protection online as a top policy priority, whether from cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, addictive design or other risks, according to the [Special Eurobarometer on the Digital Decade 2026](#).

For more information

[EU KIDS Act proposal](#)

[EU KIDS Act factsheet](#)

[EU KIDS Act Q&A](#)

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Quote(s):

"Today, our children are engaging with the most sophisticated technologies ever created. Technology that was never created with their wellbeing in mind. Our KIDS Act is reversing the burden of proof - it is for platforms to show they are safe by design. And we put parents back in the driving seat, giving them the tools to help their children navigate a safer online world."
Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission - 17/09/2026

"With our EU KIDS Act, we make sure our children can enjoy their rights online - to learn, stay connected and explore. We also give parents the tools to accompany their kids to navigate a safe digital world. All of this by keeping the pressure high on platforms, because they must prove their services do not harm."

Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy - 17/09/2026

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Related media



[Press conference by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, on the EU Kids Act](#)