

Message 901

Communication from the Commission - TRIS/(2026) 1285

Procedure for the provision of information EC - EFTA

Notification: 2026/9007/NO

Notification – Notification – Notifizierung – Нотификация – Oznámení – Notifikation – Γνωστοποίηση – Notificación – Teavitamine – Ilmoitus – Obavijest – Bejelentés – Notifica – Pranešimas – Paziņojums – Notifika – Kennisgeving – Zawiadomienie – Notificação – Notificare – Oznámenie – Obvestilo – Anmälan – Fógra a thabhairt

Does not open the delays - N'ouvre pas de délai - Kein Fristbeginn - Не се предвижда период на прекъсване - Nezahajuje prodlení - Fristerne indledes ikke - Καμμία έναρξη προθεσμίας - No abre el plazo - Viivituste perioodi ei avata - Määräaika ei ala tästä - Ne otvara razdoblje kašnjenja - Nem nyitja meg a késések - Non fa decorrere la mora - Atidėjimai nepradedami - Atlikšanas laikposms nesākas - Ma jiftaħ il-perjodi ta' dewmien - Geen termijnbegin - Nie otwiera opóźnień - Não inicia o prazo - Nu deschide perioadele de stagnare - Nezačína oneskorenia - Ne uvaja zamud - Inleder ingen frist - Ní osclaíonn sé na moilleanna

MSG: 20261285.EN

1. MSG 901 IND 2026 9007 NO EN 08-05-2026 NO NOTIF

2. Norway

3A. Royal Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
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3B. The Ministry of Children and Families
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4. 2026/9007/NO - SERV60 - Internet services

5. Draft Act introducing an age limit for social media use

6. Social media services, information society services.

7.

8. The draft Act introduces an age limit for the use of social media in Norway, so that children do not have access to social media until the year they turn 16.

The purpose of the Act is to protect children from the potential harmful effects of social media, see Section 2 in the impact assessment about the risks social media entails, as well as Section 1 of the draft Act.

Social media covered by the Act are information society services that allow users to create a profile and establish contact with other users, and that store and disseminate to the public content uploaded by users without editorial control over the content, see the definition of social media in Section 3.2 in the impact assessment and Section 2 of the draft Act.

Several exemptions from the age limit are being considered, including for services that mainly offer computer games, the purchase and sale of goods or services, closed groups related to education and leisure activities etc., and digital messaging services, see Section 3.4 in the impact assessment and Section 2(2) of the draft Act. The exemptions will be considered in during the EEA consultation process.

Two alternative proposals are being submitted for EEA consultation: One with and one without a harmfulness condition. The ministries are considering whether the age limit should only apply to harmful social media, see Section 3.3 in the impact assessment and Section 2(3) and Section 4 of the draft Act. If the ministries conclude that a harmfulness condition should be included, this may lead to changes being made to the exemptions set out in Section 2(2) of the draft act, as the need for such exemptions may be reduced.

The Act applies to social media services that are directed at the Norwegian market, or that are provided by entities established in Norway, see Section 3.7 in the impact assessment and Section 3 of the draft Act for the geographical scope of the Act.

No sanctions are proposed against children or parents for non-compliance with the age limit.

It is assumed that social media providers implement appropriate measures, including a privacy-friendly age verification solution that complies with EEA law, to ensure that the national age limit is complied with. There is a presumption that the age limit can be enforced via the Digital Services Act (DSA) when this regulation has been incorporated into the EEA Agreement and implemented into Norwegian law.

It is proposed that national authorities shall determine which social media according to the definition in the Act shall have an age limit under national law, as well as supervise these, see Section 3.8 in the impact assessment and Section 5 of the draft Act.

In the opinion of the Ministry of Children and Families and the Ministry of Digitalisation and Public Administration, the proposal is in accordance with EEA law, see Section 4 in the impact assessment.

9. The purpose of the Act is to protect children from the potential harmful effects of social media. It is part of the Norwegian Government's policy to protect children online, see report no. 32 to the Storting (2024-2025) for information about the Government's policy in this area.

The ministries believe that the introduction of an age limit for using social media until the year the child turns 16 is a suitable, necessary and proportional measure, and in accordance with EEA law, see Section 4 in the impact assessment.

9a. Suitable

The Norwegian Directorate of Health has made national screen advice for children. It follows from this screen advice that children under 18 years should follow age limits and limit the use of social media. Considering the risks associated with the use of social media as set out in Section 2 in the impact assessment, the ministries believe that it is not sufficient with screen advice and other educational measures. Today, many platforms operate with 13 years age limit. However, as they have little control over the user's real age, this is not sufficient to protect children.

The ministries believe that the introduction of a national age limit for using social media is an appropriate measure to protect children from the risk's social media entails. It will apply to all children under the age limit and be a more accurate and effective measure to protect children. Once the DSA has been implemented in Norwegian law, the platforms will have to ensure the age limit through the regulations in the DSA. The ministries believe that this will provide appropriate protection for children, even though technical tools may be used to circumvent the age limit. The ministries emphasise that an age limit itself is not sufficient to protect all children's rights on social media or the internet. Reference is made to abovementioned report no. 32 to the Storting (2024-2025) regarding the Government's policy in the area.

9b. The measure is necessary as other, less intrusive measures have proven to be insufficient. The platform companies have their own age limits today, but not sufficiently effective age controls. Information for parents, guidance in schools and demands on the platforms for better settings for children have not prevented many children under the recommended age from using social media anyway, see Section 2. Practice has shown that it is difficult for children and parents to resist the pressure to use social media when many peers use it. Screen use is extensive, and Norwegian children and young people ranks among the highest in the world when it comes to the use of screens, social media and digital technology.

The current situation entails an unacceptably high risk for children and young people, from which the state has positive obligations to protect them. Reference is made to Section 2 in the impact assessment about the risk's social media entails. The ministries therefore believe it is important to implement measures to ensure that all children have a safe upbringing in a digital world. Knowledge of how digital technology affects children is evolving rapidly, yet still lags behind the technology that characterizes children's everyday lives. The ministries therefore believe it appropriate to adopt a precautionary approach, ensuring that children growing up are not exposed to technology that can be harmful to them and their development.

The introduction of an age limit provides a clear framework for the use of social media. It will also support parents in restricting their children's use of social media, as the Act establishes clear limits that apply to everyone. The ministries therefore consider it necessary to introduce a statutory age limit to reduce the risk of the use of social media for children and young people.

9c. For the measure to be proportionate, the benefits of protecting children must be weighed against the disadvantages for both children, parents, platforms and others. The introduction of an age limit interferes with several of children's human rights, including the right to express themselves and the right to privacy. The ministries have therefore emphasised that the Act should not go beyond what is necessary to protect children.

Firstly, this has an aspect to what age limit should be set: The age limit must not be set higher than what is necessary to protect children. The age limit should be high enough to ensure that children have a sufficient degree of maturity to protect themselves from the risks posed by social media. There is little objective evidence to find the right level of maturity and development.

We have considered various ways of determining the age limit, including whether parental consent should be permitted. This entails a risk that the age limit is circumvented, and that there will be pressure on parents to give children who are not sufficiently mature access to social media because friends have gained access. We have therefore come to the conclusion that the most effective way to protect children is to have an absolute age limit.

We propose that the age limit be set to the year the child turns 16. This means that social media is postponed until the year in which one starts upper secondary school. By that time, children are generally more mature and better equipped to use social media. Setting the age limit by reference to the year in which one turns 16, rather than the exact date of birth, may help reduce exclusion among children within the same cohort.

To further ensure that the Act is proportionate, we are considering to include a condition that only harmful social media are covered by the age limit, See Section 3.3 in the impact assessment. This may help to ensure that the measure does not include social media with little or very little risk, such as social media where young people recommend films and books. Furthermore, several exemptions from the age limit are proposed to ensure that the measure does not go further than necessary, see Section 3.4 in the impact assessment.

The introduction of an age limit may potentially lead to unintended consequences, such as increased use of unregulated platforms or circumvention of age controls. However, the ministries consider it both appropriate and important to introduce an age limit, and that it may have a normative effect. Any disadvantages of introducing an age limit must also be assessed against the risk inherent in the current situation, and in the ministries' view take the view the risk young people are exposed to today is unsustainable.

The ministries assume that the platforms carry out age verification in a manner that safeguards privacy and otherwise complies with EEA law, and that this will not be unreasonably burdensome for the platforms to carry out.

10. References of the Basic Texts: No Basic Text exists

11. No

12.

13. No

14. No

15. Yes

16.

TBT aspects: No

SPS aspects: No

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