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*Ion-Marcel CIOLACU
President of the Camera
Deputaților
Palatul Parlamentului,
Strada Izvor nr.2-4, sect.5,
RO-050563 Bucuresti*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — A Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+) {COM(2022) 212 final}.

The vision of the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+) is to foster age-appropriate digital services, with no one left behind and with every child in the European Union protected, empowered and respected online. The Commission is pleased that the Camera Deputaților supports the Commission's efforts to better protect children and young people across the EU.

The Commission agrees that cooperation with industry is crucial to empower young users and counter the risks they may face online. For this reason, it will continue the dialogue with industry to better protect minors online via the Alliance¹ - a multi-stakeholder initiative designed to improve the online environment for children and young people. It will also involve industry in the work on the first EU-wide comprehensive code of conduct on age-appropriate design. The code will aim to ensure the privacy, safety and security of children when using digital products and services. It will facilitate implementation of existing EU legal provisions on protection of minors online, such as those in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the General Data Protection Regulation and the most recently adopted Digital Services Act.

The Commission shares the views of the Camera Deputaților that education is key to ensure a safer and empowering digital environment. The Commission would like to stress

¹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/protect-minors-online>

that, while the EU supports Member States' efforts to provide the best education and training for their citizens, education remains an exclusive competence of the Member States. The Commission agrees that the modalities and purposes of internet use by children change rapidly and education of children should be adapted accordingly. Through the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027, it aims to ensure a sustainable digital transformation in education and enhance the digital skills and competences of children, teachers and educators.

Under the BIK+, the Commission will promote the exchange of good practices for national curricula on media literacy between Member States and amongst schools and educators across the EU, under the Structured Dialogue on digital education and skills and through relevant expert groups. It will also organise media literacy campaigns targeting children, teachers, parents and careers and develop and distribute teaching modules (MOOCs) for teachers via the betterinternetforkids.eu platform and Safer Internet Centers. Via the same channels, the Commission will develop awareness raising tools and activities on the risks children face as young consumers.

As part of the Digital Education Action Plan, the Commission launched ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence and data in education on 25 October 2022. The guidelines will help develop a better understanding of the applications and implications of artificial intelligence and related data in education and of how the potential of artificial intelligence can be better harnessed for innovative teaching and research. In addition, the Commission launched on 11 October 2022 guidelines for teachers and educators to tackle disinformation and promote digital literacy through education and training. The guidelines seek to support teachers in developing digital literacy of students and in better understanding disinformation in a dynamic digital world, and in turn address this in the classroom. Also, the Commission plans to establish in 2023 an expert group on supportive learning environments for groups at risk of underachievement and for supporting well-being at school. The expert group will address bullying in school educational settings, including cyberbullying.

The Commission shares the views that a multi-stakeholder approach to online safety based on the ongoing collaboration and cooperation as envisaged in the BIK+ strategy is necessary for a safer environment for children and young people in the digital space. The Commission will continue to work with different partners including industry, civil society, research community, academics, children and young people to provide solutions fit for purpose. The existing expert group on safer internet for children allows coordination and exchange with the Member States. Special attention is also given to the international dimension of the Commission's actions e.g., through the recently adopted Youth action plan under EU external action.

The BIK platform continues to provide information and resources on online safety and empowerment in all EU languages and coordination activities for the network of Safer Internet Centers. Under the Digital Europe programme, the EU continues to co-fund the network, which includes the Romanian Safer Internet Centre - Save the Children Romania with Ora de Net awareness center, [ctrl_AJUTOR](https://www.ctrl.ro) helpline and [esc_ABUZ](https://www.esc-abuz.ro) hotline. The Commission will also strengthen the support offered by the Safer Internet

Centers in the Member States to provide children in vulnerable situations with non-formal education and training, to address the challenges of the digital divide. In this context, the Commission invites Romania and other Member States to promote Safer Internet Centers as a one-stop-shop for trustworthy resources on media literacy and online safety for children, their families and teachers.

The protection of children and minors online is also an important element of the Digital Services Act². The Regulation harmonises rules across the EU, for example by requiring 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. In addition, providers of very large online platforms and very large online search engines are required to assess any actual or foreseeable negative effects of the design or functioning of their service and its related systems, including algorithmic systems, or from the use made of their services on minors, and adopt effective risk mitigating measures.

The Commission would also like to draw attention to the General Data Protection Regulation, which provides a framework for processing personal data with dedicated provisions on minors. Finally, it would like to refer to the provisions in the Digital Services Act forbidding digital service providers to present advertisements on their interface based on profiling using personal data of the recipient of the service when they are aware with reasonable certainty that the recipient of the service is a minor.

The Commission is already working on the implementation of the BIK+ strategy and will involve all relevant parties in this process. The Commission appreciates the Camera Deputaților's active engagement at this stage of the policy-making process and will take into account its Opinion and other contributions received while working on the implementation of the BIK+ strategy.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with it in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Thierry Breton
Member of the Commission*

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 L277, 27.10.2022, p.1-102