

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002014/24  
to the Commission  
Pascal Arimont (PPE)  
(10 October 2024)**

*Subject:* TikTok's problematic practices towards young people and consumer protection

On 8 October 2024, several states in the US filed lawsuits against TikTok in their respective courts. The actions relate *inter alia* to manipulative features on TikTok that exploit young people's psychological vulnerability, in particular the proposed beauty filters, which *inter alia* are suspected of reinforcing unrealistic beauty ideals, undermining users' self-confidence and causing body image disorders.

In addition, in March 2024 the competent Italian authority fined TikTok for breaches of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. The ruling also addressed questions as to the platform's responsibility for addictive design practices, in particular vis-à-vis young people.

In this context, the Digital Fairness Fitness Check published on 3 October 2024, which assesses the three consumer protection directives forming the EU consumer protection framework — on unfair commercial practices (2005/29/EC), on consumer rights (2011/83/EU) and on unfair terms in consumer contracts (93/13/EEC) — is of particular importance. For instance, the assessment makes express reference to problems faced by users in the digital environment, including the misleading and addictive designs and functions of user interfaces, which can only be partially covered by the consumer protection framework.

In the light of the above, what specific legislative measures is the Commission considering so as to safeguard young people more effectively against problematic practices such as beauty filters and digital dependency?

Submitted: 10.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission  
(17 January 2025)**

The Commission shares the concerns of the Honourable Member about how design choices made by online platforms may exploit young users' psychological vulnerabilities.

Under the Digital Services Act (DSA) <sup>(1)</sup>, the Commission, opened its first formal proceedings against TikTok over its potentially addictive design features and its effects on minors <sup>(2)</sup> as well as over the launch of TikTok Lite in France and Spain <sup>(3)</sup>.

In light of the Commission's stated intent to impose interim measures to suspend TikTok Lite's rewards programme in the EU, TikTok decided to suspend the feature's launch in the EU.

The Commission made TikTok's commitments to permanently withdraw from the EU TikTok Lite's Task and Rewards programme binding <sup>(4)</sup>. Recently, the Commission requested information from TikTok regarding its content recommendation algorithms and its role in amplifying systemic risks, including users' mental well-being, and the protection of minors <sup>(5)</sup>.

The Commission is developing guidelines to assist online platforms in applying the required high level of privacy, safety and security for minors on their services.

Moreover, under Article 34 of the DSA, providers of very large online platforms like TikTok must carry out annual risk assessments, including as regards systemic risks linked to a high-level of consumer protection and the well-being of young users.

The Digital Fairness Fitness Check analysed three EU consumer law Directives and pointed at targeted shortcomings regarding its application to digital commercial practices <sup>(6)</sup>.

A key element of the Commission's response to these challenges will be to develop a Digital Fairness Act to tackle unethical techniques and commercial practices related to the addictive design of digital services.

---

<sup>(1)</sup> 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 L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1-102.

<sup>(2)</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-opens-formal-proceedings-against-tiktok-under-digital-services-act>

<sup>(3)</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-sends-request-information-tiktok-regarding-launch-tiktok-lite-france-and-spain>

<sup>(4)</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/tiktok-commits-permanently-withdraw-tiktok-lite-rewards-programme-eu-comply-digital-services-act>

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-sends-requests-information-youtube-snapchat-and-tiktok-recommender-systems-under-digital>

<sup>(6)</sup> Press release, Commission evaluation shows the benefits and limitations of online consumer protection laws, 3 October 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_24\\_4901](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_4901)