[NO] Norway Adopts Platform-Independent Law on Protection of Minors

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On 20 June 2014 the Government submitted a proposal to establish a new Act on the protection of minors (Lov om beskyttelse av mindreårige mot skadelige bildeprogram). The new law was enacted by Parliament on 15 December 2014 during a second reading, following the first reading on 10 December. The new law introduces a platform-independent approach, which means that provisions regarding the protection of minors against harmful content in audiovisual programmes are combined in one Act regardless of platform. The Act will come into force no earlier than 1 July 2015.

The scope of the Act includes linear television, on-demand audiovisual services (limited to on-demand services that are competing with traditional television broadcasts), screening at public gatherings in Norway (including at a cinema) and making videograms available to the public (including distribution of DVD/Blu-ray). Within the scope of the Act, the same protection tools will apply to all platforms.

The new Act states that all audiovisual programmes have to be classified according to age limit. The Act also introduces a duty to ensure the age limits are met and to inform the public about the age limit. The latter includes a duty to label all audiovisual programmes with a set age limit.

The Norwegian Media Authority (Medietilsynet) will still be responsible for setting the age limits for cinematographic works. For all audiovisual programmes, the age limits shall be set by the distributor of the programme, on the basis of guidelines drawn up by the Norwegian Media Authority. New age limits are introduced in the new Act: ‘All’, ‘6’, ‘9’, ‘12’, ‘15’ and ‘18’. The aim is to better reflect the stages of development of children and the youth. The previous age limits were: ‘All’, ‘7’, ‘11’, ‘15’ and ‘18’.

The new platform-independent law represents an important change and introduces new duties on distributors of audiovisual programmes. The Norwegian Media Authority will therefore conduct information campaigns aimed at the industry and the public during 2015 on the basis of regulations and guidelines for the implementation of the new provisions.

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Lov om beskyttelse av mindreårige mot skadelige bildeprogram, 15. desember 2014

https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Vedtak/Beslutninger/Lovvedtak/2014-2015/vedtak-201415-016/

Law on the protection of minors against harmful content in audiovisual programmes, 15 December 2014

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