[DE] Media regulators block pornography platform because of breaches of youth protection rules

IRIS 2022-4:1/24

Christina Etteldorf
Institute of European Media Law

On 2 March 2022, the *Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz* (Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media – KJM), the German state media authorities' central supervisory body for the protection of minors in private broadcasting and telemedia, issued a blocking order against the xHamster pornography portal on account of breaches of the *Jugendmedienschutzstaatsvertrag* (Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media – JMStV). As a result, the five largest German Internet providers were the first to be required to block access to the website "de.xhamster.com" in Germany. The state media authorities responsible, on account of the locations of the Internet providers' headquarters, – the *Bayerische Landeszentrale für neue Medien* (Bavarian new media authority – BLM), *Landesanstalt für Medien NRW* (North-Rhine Westphalia media authority – LFM NRW), *Medienanstalt Berlin-Brandenburg* (Berlin-Brandenburg media authority – mabb) and *Medienanstalt Rheinland-Pfalz* (Rhineland-Pfalz media authority) – have issued corresponding decisions.

The decision forms part of longstanding proceedings against Hammy Media Ltd., the provider of xHamster, as well as other pornography platform providers. Following a KJM decision in March 2020, the LFM NRW had ordered the provider to operate the site in accordance with the law by introducing an age verification system for users. According to Article 4(2)(1) in conjunction with Article 4(2)(2) JMStV, pornographic content, unless it is absolutely unlawful – such as pornography featuring children, adolescents, violence or animals – is only permissible in telemedia services (online services that are not broadcasting services pursuant to the *Medienstaatsvertrag* (state media treaty) or telecommunications or telecommunications-supported services pursuant to the *Telekommunikationsgesetz* (Telecommunications Act)) in Germany if the provider has ensured that such content is only accessible to adults. This must be achieved by creating a closed user group based on an age verification system. However, despite the LFM NRW's demands, the xHamster platform had failed to take such measures. Instead, pornographic content could be freely accessed with just a few clicks without anything to prevent children and young people accessing it. This constituted an administrative offence under Article 24(1)(2) JMStV, which could be punished with a fine by the relevant state media authority via the KJM. However, since the Cyprus-based provider of the website had refused to bring its service into line with German legal requirements, the media regulators decided, as a last resort, to issue a blocking order. They took into account the fact that the site gave

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

children and young people unrestricted access to footage of extreme and disconcerting practices, including potentially dangerous bondage activities, that could seriously harm their emotional and sexual development.

Pressemitteilung der KJM

https://www.kjm-online.de/service/pressemitteilungen/meldung/kjm-beschliesst-sperrung-von-xhamster

KJM press release

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026