Belgian, German, French, British and Cypriot media regulators form international working group on age verification

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On 24 March 2023, in order to meet the challenges of protecting young people in the media in the 21st century, media regulators from Belgium, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Cyprus set up an international working group on age verification, which will meet regularly to exchange information about topical issues related to youth protection in the media. They published a joint statement that sets out the main elements of their future cooperation.

The working group's current members are the French *Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique* (Arcom), the Belgian *Conseil Superieur de l'Audiovisuel* (CSA), the Cyprus Radiotelevision Authority (CRTA), the United Kingdom's Ofcom and the German *Direktorenkonferenz der Landesmedienanstalten* (DLM). The working group is a forum enabling the participating regulators to exchange information about their respective legal competencies and practical experience of taking enforcement measures, as well as technical aspects of youth protection. It focuses in particular on the proportionality and efficacy of age verification technologies and intends, as far as possible, to adopt a coordinated approach to platforms that provide content that can impair the development of minors.

In their joint statement, the regulators make particular reference to the obligations of video-sharing platforms (VSPs) under the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). VSPs are required to take appropriate measures to protect minors from videos that could harm their development. The AVMSD states that gratuitous violence and pornography should be subject to the strictest measures. The working group wants to ensure that VSPs take these requirements seriously, in particular by ensuring that those providing pornographic content take effective age verification measures. One key challenge is the fact that platforms are often not operated in the country at which their services are targeted. Additionally, many technological measures used to protect minors are new and have not yet been assessed from a regulatory point of view. The regulators concerned are committed to tackling these challenges through coordinated, independent and evidence-based regulation.

In Germany, the *Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz* (Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media – KJM), the central organ of the German

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Landesmedienanstalten (state media authorities) responsible for the protection of young people in the media, commissioned the Institute of European Media Law (EMR) to draft a report on the status and development of international measures to protect children and young people in the media. Published in early 2023, the report is based on a detailed comparison of the domestic legislation of different countries. It concludes that, although many states are facing very similar problems, they are tackling them in different ways from a regulatory point of view. According to the report, a knowledge- and science-based exchange of best practices between regulators could support the further development of international measures to protect children and young people in the media. The report is also designed to be a starting point for closer international cooperation for the KJM, for which the new working group is an important step forward.

Gemeinsame Erklärung der Internationalen Arbeitsgruppe zu Altersverifikation

https://www.kjm-online.de/fileadmin/user_upload/KJM/Ueber_uns/Positionen/IWG_Joint_Statement_Deutsch.pdf

International Working Group Joint Statement on Age Verification

https://www.kjm-online.de/fileadmin/user_upload/KJM/Ueber_uns/Positionen/IWG_Joint_Statement_Englisch.docx.pdf

Gutachten des EMR zu Stand und Entwicklungen des internationalen Kinder- und Jugendmedienschutzes

https://www.die-medienanstalten.de/fileadmin/user_upload/KJM/Publikationen/Studien_Gutachten/EMR_Stand_und_Entwicklung_des_internationalen_Kinder-_und_Jugendmedienschutzes.pdf

EMR report on the status and development of international measures to protect children and young people in the media

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