

# Public consultation on the Digital Fairness Act

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

## Public consultation for the Digital Fairness Act impact assessment

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### Introduction

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As a result of the development of EU consumer law over the last 50 years, EU consumers are among the most protected in the world, online and offline. EU consumer law aims at ensuring a high level of protection for European consumers and at contributing to the better functioning of the EU single market and the competitiveness of businesses. It protects consumers against unfair commercial practices, giving them the right to withdraw from contracts and be properly informed before purchasing goods or services, while harmonising such rules and providing a level-playing field for traders operating cross-border in the EU. With the rise of e-commerce, the development of new technologies and increasing use of AI, it is important to ensure that EU consumer law continues to provide a high level of consumer protection in the current digital environment.

In recent years, the EU has significantly reinforced its digital rulebook, with the Digital Services Act ('DSA'), the Digital Markets Act ('DMA') and the Artificial Intelligence Act ('AIA'), in addition to the Data Act and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive ('AVMSD'), amongst others. These instruments complement EU consumer protection laws and reduce the risks and harms associated with specific problems online. In particular, the DSA introduced new restrictions to several unfair practices occurring on online platforms. The Commission has actively exercised its enforcement powers to ensure compliance and issued guidelines, such as on the protection of minors online[1]. All in all, however, the application of consumer protection rules in the digital area in conjunction with other digital legislation, which provided rules on certain types of traders (e.g. online platforms) or technologies (e.g. AI systems), is complex and specific gaps remain.

In this context, in October 2024, the Commission published a "Digital Fairness Fitness Check" which evaluated three EU consumer law Directives[2], analysing whether the existing EU consumer protection legislation is still relevant, effective, efficient, in the view of the new digital challenges. In particular, consumers are too often exposed to practices such as deceptive or manipulative interface design (dark patterns),

addictive features, unfair personalisation practices that exploit consumers' vulnerabilities, misleading marketing by online influencers, as well as difficulties in managing digital contracts. The Fitness Check concluded the estimated financial detriment suffered by consumers as a result of the identified problems is at least EUR 7.9 billion per year. The Fitness Check also underlined the current lack of clarity and legal certainty regarding unfair commercial practices, pointing at the lack of enforcement, the existing regulatory gaps and market fragmentation. These problems have a negative impact on the Single Market and the level playing field for EU businesses, who face unfair competition from non-compliant competitors. Moreover, the exponential growth of ecommerce, in particular with non-EU traders, has raised many pressing challenges across different policy areas, including product safety and unfair marketing practices.

The aim of this public consultation is to gather citizens' and stakeholders' views on potential improvements in EU consumer law to strengthen the protection of consumers in general – and of minors as consumers in particular – in the digital environment and ensure a level-playing field for traders.

This public consultation **will be open for 12 weeks**[3] and respondents can reply in any EU official language [4]. The results of all consultation activities, including this public consultation, will inform the preparation of a possible Digital Fairness Act.

It will take you approx. 20 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. We recommend that you **regularly save a draft of the questionnaire** as you fill it in and submit the questionnaire ("Submit" button at the very end) before the end of the consultation period. You can download the questionnaire in PDF format to help you prepare or discuss the reply within your organisation and can download an electronic copy of your reply.

For the multiple-choice questions below, some of the answers are not combinable. If you wish to change your answer, please unselect your first answer by clicking on it again, then click on the answer(s) that you wish to select.

[1] Commission, Guidelines on measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security for minors online, pursuant to Article 28(4) of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065, C(2025) 4764 final.

[2] The Directives assessed under the Digital Fairness Fitness Check were: Directives 2005/29/EC, 93/13/EEC, and 2011/83/EU. To be noted that the Fitness Check was conducted prior to the entry into force of some acts, such as the DSA, DMA and AI Act and thus could not fully take into account their concrete application and enforcement.

[3] The 12-week period will begin once all the linguistic versions of the public consultation are available.

[4] The EU has 24 official languages: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

## About the respondent

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**\* 1 I'm replying as / on behalf of a:**

- ☐ consumer
- ☐ large company (above 250 employees)
- ☒ non-governmental organisation
- ☐ association representing minors or young persons
- ☐ small and medium-sized enterprise (SME)
- ☐ university
- ☐ association representing parents
- ☐ national business association
- ☐ research institute
- ☐ association representing teachers
- ☐ European-level business association
- ☐ other (please specify)
- ☐ national consumer association
- ☐ national consumer protection authority
- ☐ European-level consumer association
- ☐ another public body

**\* 7 Organisation name:**

epicenter.works

**\* 8 Please indicate your country of establishment:**

- ☒ AT - Austria
- ☐ FI - Finland
- ☐ LV - Latvia
- ☐ PL - Poland
- ☐ BE - Belgium
- ☐ FR - France
- ☐ LI - Liechtenstein
- ☐ PT - Portugal
- ☐ BG - Bulgaria
- ☐ DE - Germany
- ☐ LT - Lithuania
- ☐ RO - Romania
- ☐ HR - Croatia
- ☐ EL - Greece
- ☐ LU - Luxembourg
- ☐ SK - Slovak Republic
- ☐ CY - Cyprus
- ☐ HU - Hungary
- ☐ MT - Malta
- ☐ SI - Slovenia
- ☐ CZ - Czechia
- ☐ IS - Iceland
- ☐ NL - Netherlands
- ☐ ES - Spain
- ☐ DK - Denmark
- ☐ IE - Ireland
- ☐ NO - Norway
- ☐ SE - Sweden
- ☐ EE - Estonia
- ☐ IT - Italy
- ☐ other - other

**11 Transparency register number, if applicable.** Please check if your organisation is on the [transparency register](#), the voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

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**\* 12 Please specify which sector you operate in:**

- |                                                   |                                                  |                                                 |                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public order and safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical         | <input type="checkbox"/> Research                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile               | <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy                 | <input type="checkbox"/> R&D                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility and transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Media                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defence                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping                | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism                | <input type="checkbox"/> Telecoms                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education and training   | <input type="checkbox"/> Aerospace               | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing          | <input type="checkbox"/> IT                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental protection | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare provision    | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: please specify |

### 13 Other sector:

Fundamental Rights

### \* 16 **Publication privacy settings**

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you want your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

#### ☐ **Anonymous**

Your personal details entered in response to the following survey questions will not be published: name, organisation name and size, transparency register number. The rest of your replies (including type of respondent, country of residence) will be published.

#### ☒ **Public**

Your replies will be published in full, including the personal details that you entered in response to survey questions about your name, organisation name and size, transparency register number.

### \* 17 I agree with the Commission [privacy statement](#). (If you do not agree, your reply to the survey will not be taken into account and will be deleted.)

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

## Main Questionnaire

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## Section 1 - Dark patterns

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Dark patterns are unfair commercial practices deployed through the design of digital interfaces that can influence consumers to take decisions they would not have taken otherwise. Examples of such practices may include but are not limited to: presenting choices in a leading manner (e.g. trader's preferred choice in colour, prominently displayed, other option(s) in black and white and difficult to find), using countdown timers to create urgency or asking misleading questions using double negatives.

**\* 1 Concerning dark patterns, do you think any new EU actions should be taken to improve the protection of consumers and the functioning of the Single Market? (Multiple answers possible.)**

- ☐ No actions are needed
- ☐ Yes, non-regulatory measures are needed (e.g. guidance)
- ☒ Yes, more effective enforcement by public authorities of existing rules is needed
- ☒ Yes, new binding rules are needed
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

**2 Please select from the list below the practices you consider to be a concern and require new EU action:**

- ☒ **Click fatigue** i.e. technique that forces consumers to click through too many steps in order to be able to make the desired choice
- ☒ Creating the **false impression** that the consumer does not have another option apart from the one (prominently featured) that's usually in favour of the trader
- ☒ **Nagging** i.e. repeatedly requesting or urging the consumer to make a particular choice
- ☒ **Pressuring** the consumer through urgency and scarcity claims (e.g. countdown timer) even when the respective offer or available stock is clearly limited in time
- ☒ **Confirm-shaming** i.e. pressuring the consumer towards a particular choice through emotive language or shaming
- ☒ **Sneaking into the online basket** i.e. adding new products or services to the shopping basket when the consumer is about to complete a purchase without them knowing or consenting

- ☒ Features leading to a **different result** than normally expected (e.g. button marked with “cancel the contract” would lead to a page showing the benefits of that contract)
- ☒ **Ambiguous language** in the presentation of choices to consumers e.g. using double negatives
- ☒ Presenting choices in a **leading manner**, for example, to prioritise an option for a given choice by using a brighter colour or larger font
- ☐ Other: please specify

**5 Please describe the specific EU actions (on enforcement) you support with respect to the above indicated dark patterns?**

More enforcement of the GDPR by the respective Authorities. Especially regarding the consent according Art 6 & 7 GDPR. A lot of those above described practices would infringe those Articles.

**6 Please describe the specific EU actions (new binding rules) you support with respect to the above indicated dark patterns?**

Update the UCPD Annex I to explicitly ban core deceptive design. Add a general clause that captures digital choice architecture which materially distorts autonomy, including adaptive/A-B-tested interfaces that personalise consent or pathways.

## **Section 2 - Addictive design**

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Addictive design features in digital products are those that make consumers spend more time and money online than intended, e.g. infinite scrolling (where a page loads content with no distinct end), content that disappears quickly (ephemeral stories), autoplay (that allows video or audio files to play without user's intervention), applying penalties for disengagement (such as breaking a streak) or recommender systems that are steered to increase the consumer's engagement.

**\* 1 Concerning addictive design, do you think any new EU actions should be taken to improve the protection of consumers and the functioning of the Single Market? (Multiple answers possible.)**

- ☐ No actions are needed
- ☐ Yes, non-regulatory measures are needed (e.g. guidance)
- ☐ Yes, more effective enforcement by public authorities of existing rules is needed
- ☒ Yes, new binding rules are needed
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

## 2 **Please select the actions you support:** (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Consumers should have more control over addictive design features, e.g. to be able to switch off the features they don't want or to choose the criteria for the recommendations they receive online (i.e. how the algorithm provides them with content)
- ☒ Addictive design features should be switched off by default, allowing consumers to opt in if they wish
- ☒ Addictive design features should be switched off by default for minors, allowing them, potentially with parental approval, to opt in if they wish
- ☒ Certain addictive design features should be prohibited for minors. Please specify which
- ☐ Other: please specify any additional or more specific actions you support

## 3 **Specific measures protecting minors:**

1.) Autoplay, Infinite Scroll & "Streak" Features Disable by default; activation only through explicit opt-in. Introduce clear time limits and "take-a-break" prompts to prevent excessive use. 2.) Notifications Implement rate limits for notifications and disable nighttime push notifications for minors. Set default mode to "summary notifications" rather than real-time alerts. 3.) Like Counts & Social Proof Mechanisms Hide or aggregate like counts and similar engagement metrics by default for users under 18. Avoid design features that "nudge" minors to re-engage compulsively. 3. Recommendation Algorithms Ensure transparency of recommendation systems and provide an easy switch to non-personalized content feeds. 4. Advertising and Profiling Prohibit behavioural advertising and profiling practices targeting minors.

## **Section 3 – Specific features in digital products, such as in video games**

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Specific concerns have arisen with regard to certain features in digital products, for example in-app purchases that include uncertainty-based rewards, imitating gambling (e.g. loot boxes), pay-to-progress and pay-to-win mechanisms, and in-app purchases offered in exchange for virtual currencies that blur the real-world value of those transactions.

### **\* 1 Concerning specific features in digital products, such as video games, do you think that any new EU actions should be taken to improve the protection of consumers and the harmonisation in the Single Market?** (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ No actions are needed
- ☐ Yes, non-regulatory measures are needed (e.g. guidance)

- ☐ Yes, more effective enforcement by public authorities of existing rules is needed
- ☒ Yes, new binding rules are needed
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

## 2 **Please select the actions you support:** *(Multiple answers possible)*

- ☒ The price of in-app purchases offered in exchange for paid virtual currencies (e.g. coins, diamonds) should also be expressed in the real-world currency, such as euro
- ☒ There should be more transparency concerning the odds of winning when buying virtual items with uncertainty-based rewards (e.g. loot boxes, card packs, access to levels with rare rewards)
- ☒ Consumers should have more control over certain features of digital products, such as video games, by having the ability to turn off features such as the sale of virtual currencies, virtual items with uncertainty-based rewards, pay-to-progress and/or pay-to-win mechanisms
- ☐ Certain digital product features should be prohibited for minors. Please specify which
- ☐ Other. Please specify any additional or more specific actions you support

## **Section 4 – Unfair personalisation practices**

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Consumers often find personalised offers and content useful (e.g. personalised advertising). At the same time, many consumers are concerned about how their personal data are used to personalise commercial offers, and many have the impression that information about their vulnerabilities (e.g. personal problems, financial challenges, or negative mental states) is used unfairly for commercial purposes.

### **\* 1 Concerning unfair personalisation practices, do you think that any new EU actions should be taken to improve the protection and the functioning of the Single Market?** *(Multiple answers possible)*

- ☐ No actions are needed
- ☐ Yes, non-regulatory measures are needed (e.g. guidance)
- ☒ Yes, more effective enforcement by public authorities of existing rules is needed
- ☒ Yes, new binding rules are needed
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

## 2 **Please select the actions you support:** (Multiple answers possible)

- ☒ Consumers should have more control over personalised advertising, e.g. to have a simple and effective way to refuse personalised advertising (opt out) or to have explicitly to agree to it (opt in)
- ☒ Consumers should have more control over personalised pricing, e.g. to have a simple and effective way to refuse personalised pricing (opt out) or to have explicitly to agree to it (opt in)
- ☒ Personalised advertising using information about vulnerabilities should be restricted, e.g. personalised advertising that uses special categories of personal data (i.e. sensitive data, such as racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or health data) or that uses information on consumers' individual vulnerability (e.g. age, emotional or financial distress)
- ☐ Personalised advertising that targets minors should be prohibited
- ☐ Personalised pricing based on personal data/profiling should be restricted when targeting vulnerable consumers, including minors
- ☒ Personalised pricing based on the personal data/profiling of particular consumers should be restricted in general
- ☐ Other: please specify any additional or more specific actions you support

## **Section 5 – Harmful practices by social media influencers**

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With the increasing importance of social media for consumer transactions, reports of problematic commercial practices have become more prominent. Concerns arise with regard to social media influencers, for example as regards hidden marketing and the promotion and sale of potentially harmful products.

### **\* 1 Concerning unfair influencer marketing, do you think that any new EU actions should be taken to improve the protection of consumers and the functioning of the Single Market?** (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ No actions are needed
- ☐ Yes, non-regulatory measures are needed (e.g. guidance)
- ☒ Yes, more effective enforcement by public authorities of existing rules is needed
- ☒ Yes, new binding rules are needed
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

## 2 **Please select the actions you support:** (Multiple answers possible)

- ☒ Influencers should disclose advertising clearly and prominently
- ☒ Brands and agencies should take measures to ensure that influencers comply with legal obligations
- ☒ Specific types of claims by influencers should be restricted to protect minors, e. g. claims about unhealthy foods, dietary supplements, plastic surgery, cosmetic procedures, tobacco/vaping, or promotion of unrealistic beauty standards (e.g. by means of retouched or AI generated images used in advertising where the body's shape, size or skin appearance has been changed)
- ☐ Other: please specify any additional or more specific actions you support

## Section 6 - Unfair marketing related to pricing

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Consumers may face unfair practices related to the marketing of the price, such as drip pricing (failing to disclose upfront mandatory and unavoidable costs and fees and adding them later in the course of the booking), advertising attractive “starting” prices whilst automatically applying dynamic price increases (rendering such starting prices unrealistic for a majority of buyers) and misleading practices regarding price comparisons based on vague reference prices that give a false impression of reduction of the selling price.

### \* 1 **Concerning unfair marketing related to pricing, do you think that any new EU actions should be taken to improve the protection of consumers and the functioning of the Single Market?** (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ No actions are needed
- ☐ Yes, non-regulatory measures are needed (e.g. guidance)
- ☐ Yes, more effective enforcement by public authorities of existing rules is needed
- ☒ Yes, new binding rules are needed
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

## 2 **Please select the actions you support:** (Multiple answers possible)

- ☒ “Drip pricing” – i.e. where mandatory costs/fees are not presented upfront but get added during the order – should be prohibited
- ☒ The advertising of “starting” prices should be restricted if the trader uses software that adjusts the final price to the demand in real time (dynamic pricing)

- ☒ When making price comparisons, the price advantage should be advertised in a percentage or absolute value only if the product is actually offered by other traders to consumers for purchase at the reference price used in the comparison
- ☐ Other: please specify any additional or more specific actions you support

## Section 7 – Issues with digital contracts

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Consumers may face issues with digital contracts, notably regarding the cancellation or renewal of subscriptions, or the conversion of free trials into paid subscriptions, and with automated contracts. In addition, consumers may not have the possibility to contact a person when trying to reach the customer service about their contract.

**\* 1 *Considering issues with digital contracts, do you think that any new EU actions should be taken to improve the protection of consumers and the functioning of the Single Market?* (Multiple answers possible)**

- ☐ No actions are needed
- ☐ Yes, non-regulatory measures are needed (e.g. guidance)
- ☒ Yes, more effective enforcement by public authorities of existing rules is needed
- ☐ Yes, new binding rules are needed
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

**2 *Please select the actions you support:* (Multiple answers possible)**

- ☒ Consumers should have an easy functionality (such as a cancellation link or a button) on the trader's interface to exercise their right to cancel the online contract
- ☒ Consumers should benefit from more transparency, e.g. always be reminded before their subscription is automatically renewed or a free trial is converted into a paid subscription
- ☒ Consumers should have more control over their contracts, e.g. by having the possibility to terminate an automatically extended digital subscription any time with a short notice (e.g. one month) or by having to approve explicitly the renewal of a subscription or the conversion of a free trial into a paid subscription
- ☒ Consumers should have a right to request to communicate with a person in case of a problem with their contract, not only an automated chatbot

- ☒ Specific measures should be taken to protect consumers online in the context of automated contracting (Automated contracting refers to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for autonomous conclusion of contracts, such as via digital assistants or smart devices.)
- ☐ Other: please specify any additional or more specific actions you support

## Section 8: Simplification measures

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Any possible legislative change proposed in any of the areas above should contribute to enhanced consumer protection and simplification of the regulatory environment. In addition, the Digital Fairness Act could also address other issues with a view to further reducing compliance costs while improving effective consumer protection. The Digital Fairness Fitness Check has identified potential for targeted simplification and burden reduction for traders, specifically in the area of information requirements and the right of withdrawal.

**\* 1 In your view, are there any concrete measures to simplify consumer laws that could reduce the burden for businesses while maintaining the same level of consumer protection?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

**4 Do you think certain types of information should be provided to consumers solely in digital form?**

- ☐ Yes. Please describe concretely which information
- ☒ No. Please explain
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

**6 Please explain:**

Non-digital forms are necessary to ensure that everyone can access essential information and maintain proof in case of disputes, including individuals with limited connectivity or specific accessibility needs.

**7 In your view, in which of the following areas would EU actions reduce single market fragmentation that may currently exist due to diverging national laws or interpretations by national courts or authorities?** (Multiple answers possible)

- ☒ Online interface design (dark patterns, such as presenting choices in a leading manner)
- ☒ Addictive design (features that make consumers spend more time and money online than intended, e.g. infinite scrolling)
- ☒ Features in certain digital products, such as video games (e.g. loot boxes or pay-to-progress or pay-to-win mechanisms)
- ☒ Personalised commercial practices (such as advertising and pricing based on personal data/profiling)
- ☒ Commercial practices by social media influencers (e.g. lack of disclosure of the commercial intent, harmful claims about certain products or services)
- ☒ Pricing practices (e.g. adding unavoidable fees during the ordering process which makes the final price differ from the headline price initially advertised)
- ☒ Digital contracts (e.g. difficult exercise of the right to cancel subscriptions)

**8 Do you have specific suggestions, requests for clarification or concerns with regard to the interaction of cross-cutting EU consumer protection legislation with other existing EU legislation, including the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the Digital Services Act, the Digital Markets Act, the Artificial Intelligence Act, or the EU Digital Identity Framework? Please be specific and provide evidence to support your views.**

Non-derogation clause: Ensure the DFA cannot weaken or modify data protection or privacy rules. It must not create or serve as a legal basis for processing, profiling, or dark-pattern interfaces prohibited under the GDPR or ePrivacy Directive. Definitions and scope: Align terminology with the DSA, DMA, AI Act, and EU Digital Identity framework to prevent forum shopping. Mirror GDPR definitions of profiling and automated decision-making, and clarify that any personalisation involving or inferring personal data constitutes processing subject to GDPR standards. Evidence sharing and cooperation: Provide consumer authorities with read access to key GDPR and DSA documents (e.g. DPIAs, processing records, risk assessments, recommender system documentation, ad libraries, and DMA reports). Establish a secure, confidential channel for cross-regulator data sharing. AI Act alignment: Require that AI systems used for personalisation, pricing, content ranking, or contract automation comply with AI Act transparency and risk-control obligations. For high-risk systems, mandate user disclosure and an opt-out to non-personalised alternatives. AVMSD and influencer marketing: Align influencer and commercial communication rules with the AVMSD. Introduce consistent labelling across formats and languages, require publication of paid-partnership data in ad libraries, and impose a duty on brands and platforms to enforce compliance across the value chain. Digital identity and wallets: Prohibit conditioning access, discounts, or renewals on adopting EU digital identity wallets where this would distort user choice. Ban nudging designs that promote unnecessary identity sharing. Any identity-based personalisation must meet GDPR and ePrivacy standards and pass a proportionality test. Procedural clarity: Harmonise notice formats, timelines, and appeal rights across frameworks to streamline compliance. Require firms to maintain a single “compliance map” linking user-facing practices to their relevant GDPR, ePrivacy, DSA, DMA, and AI Act obligations.

## Section 9: Horizontal issues

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**\* 1 *In addition to the above, do you think that any further EU actions should be taken to improve the protection of consumers and the functioning of the Single Market in the digital environment in a more general way? (Multiple answers possible.)***

- ☐ No actions are needed
- ☐ Yes, non-regulatory measures are needed (e.g. guidance)
- ☒ Yes, more effective enforcement by public authorities of existing rules is needed
- ☐ Yes, new binding rules are needed
- ☐ No opinion / Don't know

**2 *Please select the actions you support: (Multiple answers possible)***

- ☐ Digital products accessible to minors that contain certain commercial practices should be subject to the mandatory use of age verification/age estimation tools
- ☒ Traders should ensure ‘fairness by design’ (i.e. take technical and organisational measures to incorporate consumer protection considerations at all stages of the product or service development)

- ☒ With a view to strengthening the enforcement of consumer protection law, the burden of proof should be reversed in cases where consumers/interested parties or authorities have disproportionate difficulty in obtaining information to prove a trader's wrongdoing
- ☒ The current definition of a consumer as someone who is reasonably well-informed, observant and circumspect should be amended to better reflect the reality of consumer behaviour in the digital environment (e.g. most people not reading Terms & Conditions or understanding how their personal data is used)
- ☒ Legislation should prevent commercial practices from targeting consumers' possible vulnerabilities of a temporary or permanent nature (e.g. socio-demographic, behavioural, financial or personal characteristics)
- ☐ Other: please specify any additional or more specific actions you support

**4 *Do you have further suggestions for improving consumer protection and enforcement in the digital sphere and contributing to a level playing field for traders in the EU?***

***Do you have specific suggestions concerning the protection of minors?***

Protecting Minors: Just Age Verification Alone Is Bad Policy We recognize the urgent need to strengthen the protection of minors in digital environments. However, relying solely on age verification is poor policy and fails to address the core issues: 1.) Vulnerability beyond age limits: Young people often remain vulnerable well beyond an arbitrary age threshold. Without a comprehensive protection framework that extends beyond a single cutoff date, the goal of safeguarding minors will not be achieved. 2.) Evasion and displacement effects: Age verification systems often lead young users to seek ways to circumvent them, which undermines the intended protective effect. 3.) Focus on platform responsibility: Instead of placing the burden on users, policy should target toxic and manipulative platform practices to ensure meaningful protection for minors. 4.) Impact on all users and trust in digitalization: Age verification affects everyone on an operational level. It can create disproportionate intrusions into privacy and, over time, erode public trust in digitalization. 5.) Empowering parental responsibility: A more effective approach would be to support parents and guardians, for example by enabling devices used by minors to be flagged so that usage settings and controls can be managed directly at the operating system level.

**5 *Would you like to submit documents? Please upload your file(s) here.***

**Contact**

[Contact Form](#)

