



AI Act trilogues: the EU's last chance to protect children

BRUSSELS, 14 JUNE – The European Parliament, the EU Council and the European Commission today start interinstitutional negotiations on the AI Act. As a coalition of over 2000 children's rights, parents' and mental health stakeholder organisations representing some 200 million EU children, citizens and experts, **we call on negotiators not to miss this last chance to protect children and urge the Parliament rapporteurs and the Spanish Presidency to recognise their specific rights, needs and vulnerabilities, and ensure that AI in the EU is safe for them, by design and default.**

AI already mediates several aspects of children's lives and education, with substantial cognitive and developmental impacts. **Yet the current AI Act draft falls short of protecting children and recognise their specific vulnerabilities**, despite its commitment to a human-centric and ethical development of AI based on EU values and the public interests of health, safety and fundamental rights, including those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its General Comment 25.

Negotiators can still fix this. They can:

- Require AI systems intended to be used to shape the education or cognitive and emotional development of children to undergo due diligence by listing them as "high risk" under Annex III.
- Clarify explicitly that children are a specific group protected by the ban on AI systems exploiting vulnerabilities, as per the Commission's proposal, and ensure that the threshold and conditions to apply the ban, combined with the burden of proof to enforce it, consider children's needs.

The reports of children becoming collateral damage of the rise of AI are increasing. This damage will only accumulate if AI providers – even those designing products specifically for children's education or development – have no obligation to consider the risks their systems pose to children.

An AI Act that does not serve children is not fit for purpose. EU negotiators must correct their course and ensure the Act delivers on its promise to both this generation of innovators, and those to come.

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