digitalt kompas

Recommendations to policymakers from the hearing

Decoupling from American and Chinese digital infrastructure

1. Europe must free itself from American and Chinese digital infrastructure. We need to build a Euro-stack that includes infrastructure, minerals, chips, AI systems, mobile networks, hardware, and clouds. Then we must create new social platforms where users can move their data from foreign platforms. This could be done through public-private partnerships (similar to how Denmark developed wind power and biogas) or through private actors. It could be an EU initiative, but also a national Danish effort. There are already Danish models and development opportunities that could be tested nationally. A coordinated initiative could be launched here.

2. We can build our own Danish AI trained on all Danish sources, data, the National Archives, book collections, libraries, encyclopedias, and other literature.

3. To begin with, it should be mandatory for Danish public institutions to fully disconnect from both American and Chinese software products and social media.

Strengthening traditional media

1. Traditional media are subject to media responsibility laws, which ensure a high degree of trust in their content. But they are under pressure from tech companies and the shift of advertising revenue to digital platforms. They must be strengthened. This can be done by:
   – Making media subscriptions tax-deductible
   – Making media subscriptions free for young people under 18

2. As traditional media weaken, investigative journalism also weakens. It also faces increasing opposition from powerful actors and lawsuits. A fund should therefore be established so investigative journalists have the resources to defend themselves in court.

Greater accountability for published content

1. The Ministry of Justice should assess whether a legal case could be initiated in Denmark or at the EU Court with the claim that (some) social media are not neutral platforms as outlined in Section 230C, but should be covered by media responsibility laws, since they exercise editorial control through algorithmic up- and down-ranking of posts and direct interference in elections, as for example Elon Musk does on X. When they claim they cannot regulate billions of posts every day, the counterargument can be that AI precisely gives them the ability to perform more effective editorial control of a large volume of content.

Protection of citizens' right to privacy

1. A direct ban could be imposed on the use of facial recognition and spyware.

2. All consumers should have a simple RIGHT to receive their data and have it deleted – including so-called "ghost" profiles aggregated across platforms. This should be possible through a simple request to, for example, local data protection authorities, not, as now, by having to contact platforms/search engines directly, which make the process extremely difficult.

3. An effective ban on cookies, allowing consumers – through a simple request to platforms/websites that place cookies – to have them deleted.

4. A simple complaints procedure should be established for defamatory, false, or harmful content, to be handled by a media Ombudsman empowered to enforce rules. The EU could also set up an internet Ombudsman with transnational competence.

5. A ban on harvesting data from individuals under 18.

Eliminating anonymity

1. Legislation should require users to identify themselves when posting on social media. Denmark should take the lead by requiring NemID verification to gain access. This would also reduce access for foreign agents using bots and fake profiles to influence democratic elections.

Protection of children and young people

1. Introduce a minimum age for children to access social media and pornographic content. The EU is working on an e-ID solution under the European Digital Identity Wallet initiative, which could be used. Denmark could go further and set a higher threshold, for example 18 years.

2. A future media Ombudsman could be tasked with assessing whether content shared online is harmful to children and, if so, sanctioning the platform and requiring removal. Denmark could potentially act unilaterally outside the EU by arguing that this is a public health risk and thus justify national regulation. At the same time, a rule could be introduced requiring platforms and search engines that allow harmful content to disclose how much profit they have made from it.

3. Transparency on algorithms used in children's content and a ban on retention mechanisms that keep children hooked in harmful ways in connection with gaming and social media.

4. Offer children an alternative to a life online: free membership fees for sports and cultural associations for young people.

Infringement of IP rights

1. It should be mandatory to pay for harvesting Danish data for training AI systems.

2. Both social media and search engines must pay to use traditional media's IP rights. A Danish model should be introduced following the Australian "Final Offer Arbitration Model," where companies are required to choose a mediation and compensation scheme and cannot simply refuse.

Enforcement

1. Although strong EU rules exist (DSA, DMA, GDPR, AI Act), they are not enforced effectively enough to deter tech companies or change their behavior. Much stronger monitoring and sanctions are needed. Fines should be increased, and rulings should be made far more quickly than the years-long court cases we see today.

2. Collective class actions could also be a way forward. In the Netherlands, SOMI is currently leading a number of class actions against tech companies for violating EU rules. Such opportunities should be available in all EU countries.