

Press Release

Youth Work Ireland

September 16, 2026

”EU row back on social media bans is welcome, but action needs to be redoubled on the regulation of big tech”, says a leading youth organisation.

Youth Work Ireland today welcomed the EU's row back on proposed changes to social media for young people. The group says the ideal opportunity to do this work arises in the Digital Fairness Act, which will soon be proposed in Europe. The organisation has also highlighted the considerable lobbying by big tech platforms in Brussels and Dublin *on these laws ahead of the Irish EU presidency.*

“It is welcome that the EU has finally realised that crude social media bans for under-16s won’t work, are opposed by all major children's and youth groups and fly in the face of a recent ruling of the French Constitutional Court. The EU and member states, including Ireland, now need to finally regulate core elements of big tech platforms' business models, such as addictive algorithms, doomscrolling, and harmful content. Product suppliers must be held liable for any harm they cause and regulated appropriately. The time spent pursuing the young people who consume social media rather than those responsible for its harm now needs to be made up in the forthcoming Digital Fairness Act,” according to Michael McLoughlin of Youth Work Ireland.

“We also need to get to grips with the power and volume of lobbying by these firms. Meta, Google, Apple, Amazon, and others have been lobbying senior people such as the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Government Ministers, advisors, MEPs and key officials in recent times on this key legislation and similar matters. The proposed legislation will finally attempt to regulate the world of algorithms and doomscrolling, which have such a significant impact on people, particularly young people and children. We must ensure a wide range of voices are heard, not just the well-financed big tech lobby.

This issue is also playing out at the European level, with big tech platforms and associations lobbying the Irish Permanent Representation and MEPs. At very least, alternative views must be considered by decision-makers,” McLoughlin added.

ENDS

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