



Subject: Children’s rights in the General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR)

02 May 2022

Dear Members of the European Parliament and Council of Ministers of the EU,

The EU’s General Product Safety Directive has set a global standard that is critical to the trust and safety of all consumers and not least the most vulnerable such as children.

We – representing more than 2000 children’s rights organisations as well as parents’ and mental health stakeholder associations, and speaking on behalf of some 200 million children, parents and mental health professionals in the EU – urge you to maintain this high standard and ensure EU product safety law fully respects children’s rights, by providing them with a high level of protection across all the products that they use, including digital products.

A large proportion of consumer products are now either partially or fully digital, from connected devices to apps and software. Many of these products are not intended primarily for children but are widely used by them. There is extensive evidence of the risks a wide range of digital products pose to the health and safety of children.¹ Currently, few of these products undergo risk assessments regarding their potential impact on children’s health and safety. Due diligence requirements in the Digital Services Act and upcoming Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act will affect only a minority of digital products. Those falling through the gaps should be covered by the GPSR, which should ensure all digital products meet the highest standards of safety by design and default, with special consideration of risks to children’s physical and mental health and safety.

We call on the co-regulators to ensure the GPSR implements children’s rights as set out in EU and International law, notably the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and General comment No. 25 as regards the digital environment². The GPSR should:

- Maintain the current precautionary approach and ensure all products put on the EU market meet the highest available standards of safety, by design and default.
- Act as a full safety net by explicitly including in scope all digital products, including apps and standalone software, and including App stores as “online marketplaces”, “economic operators” and in some cases “importers”;
- Assess the safety of products with specific consideration to the following criteria:
 - o Whether they are likely to be accessed by or impact on children as consumers or end users;
 - o Risks to children, including mental health risks;
 - o Security, data protection and privacy risks of digital and connected products.
- Require manufacturers of products likely to be accessed by or impact children³ to conduct child risk assessments and ensure their products meet the highest available

¹ See for example 5Rights Foundation, See for example 5Rights’ reports [Disrupted Childhood](#); [Pathways: How digital design puts children at risk](#) (2021) or the interactive microsite [riskyby.design](#).

² [UNCRC General comment No. 25 on children’s rights in relation to the digital environment \(2021\)](#)

³ For product to be “likely to be accessed by or impact on children”, the possibility of this happening needs to be more probable than not. Whether a digital or connected product is “likely to be accessed by children” will depend upon whether the content and design of the system is likely to appeal to children, and any measures in place to restrict or

