

“Protecting young people from online harm in an open and safe public sphere”

**Concept and programme for the Norwegian Presidency conference
Oslo, 10 June 2026**

Background

Polarisation, disinformation and echo chambers are increasingly shaping the online environment in which children and young people grow up. At the same time, digital platforms are essential spaces for learning, culture, democratic participation and free expression. It is important, yet demanding, to balance considerations of democratic participation and freedom of expression against the right to be protected from online harm.

Norway's recent National Strategy for an Open and Enlightened Public Discourse¹ underlines that freedom of expression is not self-sustaining and that democratic resilience requires active safeguarding through infrastructure, expression culture encompassing participation, tolerance and inclusion, openness, measured responses to harmful speech, and counters to distorted discourse.

This is reinforced by Norway's Screen Time Guidelines from the Norwegian Directorate of Health (2026),² recommending no screens under age two, one hour maximum for ages two to five, and limited passive use for older children to protect digital well-being.

The conference

The conference in Oslo will explore how these policy goals can be achieved through coordinated regulatory action to protect minors from online harm, including disinformation, while preserving a vibrant, pluralistic and digital public sphere that respects rights.

Several thematics will be explored, including infrastructure-related/regulatory aspects and media literacy policies/initiatives.

Several introductory presentations will set the scene from different perspectives, followed by two panel discussions with participants both from the Executive Council and other experts, who will analyse the two sides of the coin: enforcement and empowerment.

¹ <https://wexfo.no/2025/09/23/norway-launches-national-strategy-for-freedom-of-expression/>.

² <https://borealtimes.org/screen-time-guidelines-children-protecting-digital-2026/>.

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A conference of the European Audiovisual Observatory under the Norwegian presidency, in cooperation with the Norwegian Media Authority (Medietilsynet)

Wednesday 10 June 2026, 15.00 – 17.35

Films Hus (The Norwegian Film Institute), Dronningens gate 16, Oslo

Networking (60 min)	
14.00 – 15.00	Finger food and mingling
Opening (5 min)	
15.00 – 15.05	Maja Cappello , Acting Executive Director, European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO) and Mari Velsand , Director General, Norwegian Media Authority (<i>Medietilsynet</i>), and President of the EAO
Session 1 - Enforcement across Europe	
<i>This session will explore how EU and CoE regulatory frameworks are enforced to protect young people from online harm, such as disinformation, echo chambers and harmful speech, focusing on the AVMS Directive, the DSA and the EMFA. Participants will discuss the practical implementation of these instruments, criteria for content moderation, and oversight mechanisms, while addressing the challenges of balancing protection with freedom of expression. The session highlights effective enforcement practices and ways to assess their impact.</i>	
National perspectives (15 min)	
15.05 – 15.15	Sophie Valais , Deputy Head of Department for legal information, EAO: An overview of national social media bans and the European toolbox.
15.15 – 15.20	Australian eSafety Commissioner (video recording): The Australian experience with social media bans (tbc)
Panel discussion (35 min)	
Moderator	Maja Cappello , Acting Executive Director, EAO
Panelists	Rowena Burke , Head of International Content Policy, UK media authority (<i>Ofcom</i>) Nils Fischer-Kerrane , Assistant Director, Irish media authority (<i>Coimisiún na Meán</i>) Inge Welbergen , Senior legal officer, Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
Fire-side chat with the European Commission (10 min)	
15.55 – 16.05	Anna Herold , Head of Unit 'Audiovisual & Media Services Policy', DG CNECT, European Commission
Coffee break (15 min)	
Session 2 – Empowerment – state of the art in the Nordic countries	
<i>This session explores how minors, families, and educators can be empowered to navigate the digital world more safely. Focus areas include status of media literacy in the Nordic countries, new research methods, media literacy policies and initiatives. The session also considers ways to include youth perspectives.</i>	
Introductory presentation (20 min)	
16.20 – 16.30	Martin Karlsson , Research officer, The Swedish Agency for the Media (<i>Mediemyndigheten</i>): The Nordic Media Literacy Index.
16.30 – 16.40	Maria Grande , Head of department for media literacy, The Norwegian Media Authority (<i>Medietilsynet</i>): Trapped in the feed: How design affects social media behavior.
Panel discussion (45 min)	
Moderator	Stian Barsnes-Simonsen , Head of Communications, The Norwegian Media Authority (<i>Medietilsynet</i>)
Panelists	Skúli Bragi Geirdal , Head of the Icelandic Safer Internet Center, The Icelandic Media Commission (<i>Fjölmiðlanefnd</i>) Martin Karlsson , Research officer, The Swedish Agency for the Media (<i>Mediemyndigheten</i>) Laura Mäkelä , Senior ministerial adviser, Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture Mari Velsand , Director General, The Norwegian Media Authority (<i>Medietilsynet</i>)
Closing takeaways (5 min)	
17.25 – 17.30	Maja Cappello , Acting Executive Director, EAO and Mari Velsand , Director General, The Norwegian Media Authority and President of the EAO