

PROPOSTA DI DISCORSO PER 28/01/2025

Thank you. It is a pleasure for us to welcome you here in Rome, authorities, national and international representatives, experts, researchers and professionals, for the launch of this ambitious initiative.

For us, in quality of policy makers, it is crucial to keep pace and to be able to respond to the incoming, constantly evolving challenges. Nowadays, we are surrounded by technologies that certainly represent useful assets and forms of entertainment as well, but that can also pose threats to the health of our communities, and especially of the most fragile ones. This is why we must dedicate our efforts to the improvement of our knowledge in the field, to the dissemination of information, and to development, testing and implementation of new actions.

Children and students, digital natives, have a deep connection with technology and with the use of internet and social media, and they are of course vulnerable to the insurgence of related behavioral disorders. This is why we considered as necessary to address these two issues, which are online gambling and gaming, in order to understand these phenomena and to help safeguarding the mental health of the youngest ones, that are surely growing up in a digital world full of inputs and opportunities, but also full of risks and threats that sometimes we barely understand.

Therefore, we want to thank the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support of the European Commission for believing in this proposal and for selecting it among all the proposals that they receive every year. We have to thank as well the representatives of the other 8 countries that, as Italy, decided they wanted to participate in the initiative, sharing our interest in the issue and also our willingness to be proactive. Of course, we cannot forget the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, that in its role of implementing partner is granting the coordination of a multi-country project that brings together 9 different national realities.

And it is good to have so many different countries, because especially when exploring a fairly new field, confrontation and sharing of new practices is key, in order to identify possible responses: and today, we will have the occasion of listening inputs from experts and representatives from all across Europe.

Our hope is that this project will allow all the participating countries to reach higher levels of awareness about the phenomenon, and that it will provide precious information about the effectiveness of different actions and forms of interventions and communication, contributing to the reform process in all the involved Countries. Of course, the same responses cannot be applied to different national contexts, and it will be important to understand how to adapt them to local realities and legislations,

but we are confident that through a coordinated effort we will be able to address also this challenge.

Finally, as Italy, we want to use this occasion to reaffirm our commitment on the subject of behavioral addictions, that has been also included in the mandate of the Italian political authority with the mandate for drugs and addictions, the Undersecretary of State, Alfredo Mantovano, and in the mandate of the Department for Antidrug Policies as well. Other examples of the attention toward the topic are also the establishment in the budget law for 2025 of a specific fund for behavioral addiction of 500,000.00 euros, or, also, the inclusion of behavioral addictions in the last 5 million worth call for proposals aimed at Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces for prevention activities.

So, concluding, we are confident that this project will offer to Italy and to all the other involved States consistent inputs, and that it will support us all in our reform processes aimed at safeguarding the mental health of the young ones.

So, concluding, I wish you all a good work and a pleasant stay in our beautiful city.

Thank you, I give back the floor.