



‘Setting a clear boundary’: French MPs vote to ban social media for those under 15

What France’s social media ban looks like

The bill proposes banning under-15s from social networks and “social networking functionalities” embedded within broader platforms, and reflects rising public angst over the impact of social media on minors. Lawmakers voted 116 to 23 in favour of the bill. It now passes to the Senate before a final vote in the lower house.



The French ban would require platforms to block access to young teenagers through age-verification mechanisms compliant with European Union law.

The French legislation also extends an existing ban on smartphones in junior and middle schools to cover high schools.

What Emmanuel Macron said

President Emmanuel Macron has pointed to social media as one factor to blame for violence among young people. He is urging France to follow Australia, whose world-first ban for under-16s on social media platforms including Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube, came into force in December. Macron wants the ban in place in time for the start of the next academic year in September.

Support for social media ban

There is broad political and public support in France for curbing minors’ access to social media. “With this law, we are setting a clear boundary in society and saying social media is not harmless,” centrist lawmaker Laure Miller told the chamber as she presented the bill.

“Our children are reading less, sleeping less, and comparing themselves to one another more,” she continued. “This is a battle for free minds.”

Far-right lawmaker Thierry Perez said the bill responded to a “health emergency”.

“Social media has allowed everyone to express themselves, but at what cost to our children?” Perez said.

Other countries, including Britain, Denmark, Spain and Greece, are also exploring an Australia-like social media ban for children.

Can social media ban be enforced?

The European Parliament has called for the European Union to set minimum ages for children to access social media, although it is up to member states to impose age limits.

While Australia has banned social media for those under 16, many have pointed out that enforcing it can be difficult.

Australia’s government acknowledged the rollout of its ban would be bumpy after children claiming to



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be under 16 flooded the country's social media feeds with messages gloating about their continued ability to access networks.



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