Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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# Right of the child to protection while using the internet

**Motion for a resolution**
tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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The internet represents tremendous opportunities for children as a source of knowledge, a tool for communication, and a springboard for creativity. However, with these opportunities come serious risks to children's safety and well-being. They can be affected physically, emotionally, and psychologically by harmful online content and behaviours such as cyber-bullying, harassment, glorification of violence and self-harm, hate speech or incitement to radicalisation. Information and communication technologies have also made child abuse images easy to create and distribute and can facilitate child sexual grooming.

Children tend to master new technologies ever sooner and faster than adults, they spend more time online, with less supervision, especially recently in the context of Covid-19 lockdowns. A gap has emerged between children and their parents, caregivers, and teachers, who often lack digital skills and are largely unaware of the children's online experiences and vulnerability.

The rapid pace of technological progress needs to be accompanied by an equally rapid development of child protection systems. Children and their carers should be made aware of the emerging dangers and promptly equipped with the knowledge and skills to address them.

The Parliamentary Assembly should consider the latest risks and threats in the online environment, examine the existing international standards, and make recommendations on how to find a balance between the right to protection from all forms of violence and abuse, and the rights to information, freedom of expression and association, privacy and non-discrimination as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with the focus on the best interests of the child.