DOES TIKTOK PUT CHILDREN'S PRIVACY AT RISK? THE ITALIAN DPA CALLS FOR THE SET UP OF A EU TASKFORCE

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Antonello Soro, president of the Italian Data Protection Authority (DPA), sent a letter to the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) asking for the set up of a task force that investigates the risks for the privacy raised by TikTok. It is the mobile app that allows creating and sharing audios, videos, and pictures, already downloaded more than a billion times and very popular among the youngest sections of the population.

The Chinese social network, used by about 500 million users worldwide, in February 2019 had already been the focus of an investigation by the American Federal Trade Commission that fined the development company Bytedance for 5.7 million dollars due to the collecting of personal information (including names and e-mail addresses) of users under the age of thirteen had been collected without any parental consent.

After the FTC fine, an investigation of the English Information Commissioner's Office began, concerning not only the transparency tools for children but also the messaging system, which is completely open and allows any adult to get in touch with users under the age of thirteen.

The General Data Protection Regulation (EU Regulation no. 2016/679, well known as GDPR) states that children merit specific protection with regard to their personal data and that the processing of their personal data shall be lawful only if and to the extent that consent is given or authorised by the holder of parental responsibility over the child.

The president of the Italian DPA, Soro, therefore asked that the matter be brought to the attention of the next plenary meeting of the EDPB in Brussels which will bring together all the National DPAs in order to carry out the coordinated actions needed to protect children against the risks to privacy raised by TikTok.

One of the slogans of the Chinese social network is "Real people. Real videos ". But if the real people we're talking about are minors, often even under the age of thirteen, the attention of the developers in the processing of their personal data must always be very high.

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