

META'S MAJOR SETTLEMENT IN AMERICA

written by Nathalie Schlenker | September 8, 2026



In 2023, twenty-nine American states launched a joint action against Meta before the federal court in Oakland, California. Alongside this federal case, separate proceedings were also pending in several states. In August, the trial brought by California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey began.

Broadly, the claim is that Meta took no measures to prevent young people from becoming addicted to social media.

Why is Meta settling?

The jury was shown internal documents and heard from current and former Meta employees. They testified, among other things, about safety features that were not enabled by default because stricter settings could harm usage figures.

A settlement was ultimately reached. The company admits no wrongdoing. It does not admit that Instagram was designed to be addictive. It also had it expressly recorded that the agreement *does not constitute a precedent* outside the American states concerned.

How much must Meta pay?

Meta will pay up to **17.1 billion dollars** to the participating states and territories. Including the separate agreement reached with Texas, the total amount comes to approximately 18 billion dollars.

What else has Meta promised?

The settlement with the American states provides that Meta will build in new precautionary measures for minors on social media — in America only:

- a maximum of two hours per day;
- no access to the feed between midnight and 6 a.m.;
- fewer notifications during school hours;
- the option to choose a non-personalised feed;
- mandatory breaks while scrolling.

Why only in America?

Meta accepts measures intended to curb problematic use, but apparently only where sufficient pressure is exerted through litigation.

What about our Belgian youth?

Young people in Belgium are not yet protected and continue to have fully unrestricted access to the most addictive version.

What happens now?

It nonetheless seems written in the stars that European pressure will follow. After all, if a time limit, a night-time lock and a less intrusive feed can protect American teenagers, why would young people in Antwerp or Brussels not receive that same protection?

Do you have questions about digital regulation, platform liability or the protection of minors online? Please do not hesitate to contact us at info@studio-legale.be or www.studio-legale.be.

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