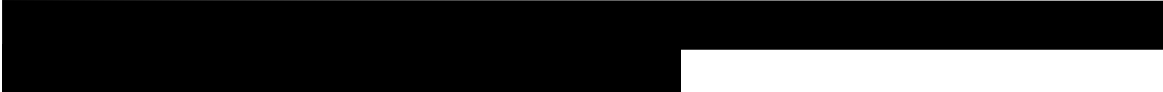**MINISTERIAL DINNER –**
WORKING WITH INDUSTRY TO RESPOND TO TERRORIST USE OF THE INTERNET

Speaking Points

- Welcome Ministers and Internet industry representatives.

- Acknowledge that the very fact that the meeting takes place is already a success in itself. On the other hand, the meeting itself will not solve the problem of the **spread of terrorist propaganda online**.

- Recall that the EU and the whole Western world are targeted by the message of hatred and violence. Terrorist groups use the Internet to strengthen their radicalising message and to spread terror. Worryingly, we can observe an astonishing **professionalisation** and speed of terrorist propaganda[1]. The terrorist organisations (such as ISIS) are being extremely effective in using the social media space to target much broader audience.

- Highlight the fact that the **Commission, Member States and the major Internet companies share the same goal** that is of a free and democratic society, which are at odds with the violent extremist ideologies. Emphasise that none of the stakeholders (i.e. the EU, Member States, private industry, civil society) can tackle the challenge effectively without the involvement and partnership of other actors. Recall the **Communication on preventing radicalisation** adopted in January 2014, proposing to establish a forum with key players in online industry to discuss the challenges posed by terrorist activities in the online environment.

- Explain that the **Commission's intention is to create a forum for a free dialogue**, exchange of ideas and information on how to best address the challenges posed by terrorist use of the Internet and social media, while fully respecting transparency of the process.

- Stress that the **Commission intends to support the process** of dialogue, cooperation and partnership between the stakeholders. It means that the Commission will strive to create an enabling environment for the main stakeholders to agree on concrete, applicable measures.

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[1] You may recall a Hollywood-style propaganda video – "**Flames of War**", released on 16 September 2014 by ISIS in response to US plans to deploy troops in Iraq.

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- Make clear that one cannot rely solely on one set of measures e.g. those that reduce the supply of illegal content such as flagging, take-downs, etc. In a free society, these measures are not enough. On the other hand there should be effective mechanisms in place ensuring that the illegal terrorist online content is removed rapidly.

- Underline that **we need to give a bigger strategy push in the counter-narratives space**. The battle is also about winning 'hearts and minds' and the Commission is ready to support the demand-reducing measures such as the development of counter-communication capacities and campaigns through the funding for the Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team and the Radicalisation Awareness Network.

- Stress however that the way Internet works is not straightforward. We need to use technology much more to assist with counter-narratives efforts. This is particularly true for civil society that can challenge extremist narratives, but also for law enforcement. Their actions could be more effective if their understanding of how the Internet and technology works could be improved.

- Highlight that the **Commission is also ready to support joint training and awareness-raising initiatives**. E.g. for law enforcement authorities on how to use flagging mechanisms and for the Internet companies staff on how to recognise and respond to terrorist use of their online space and services.

- Underline that the Commission favours such an integrated approach i.e. combining demand and supply reducing measures. To this end the Commission has reserved under the thematic I**SF-Police call for proposals 3 million EUR**, which can **support the work of Internet referral units**, specialised online hotlines to reduce the availability of illegal terrorist content. In addition, the call will **support the development and promotion of counter-messages**.

- More to that, under this year's ISF-Police Work Programme the Commission has reserved **1 million** to enhance Member States' **government, strategic communication capacities**.

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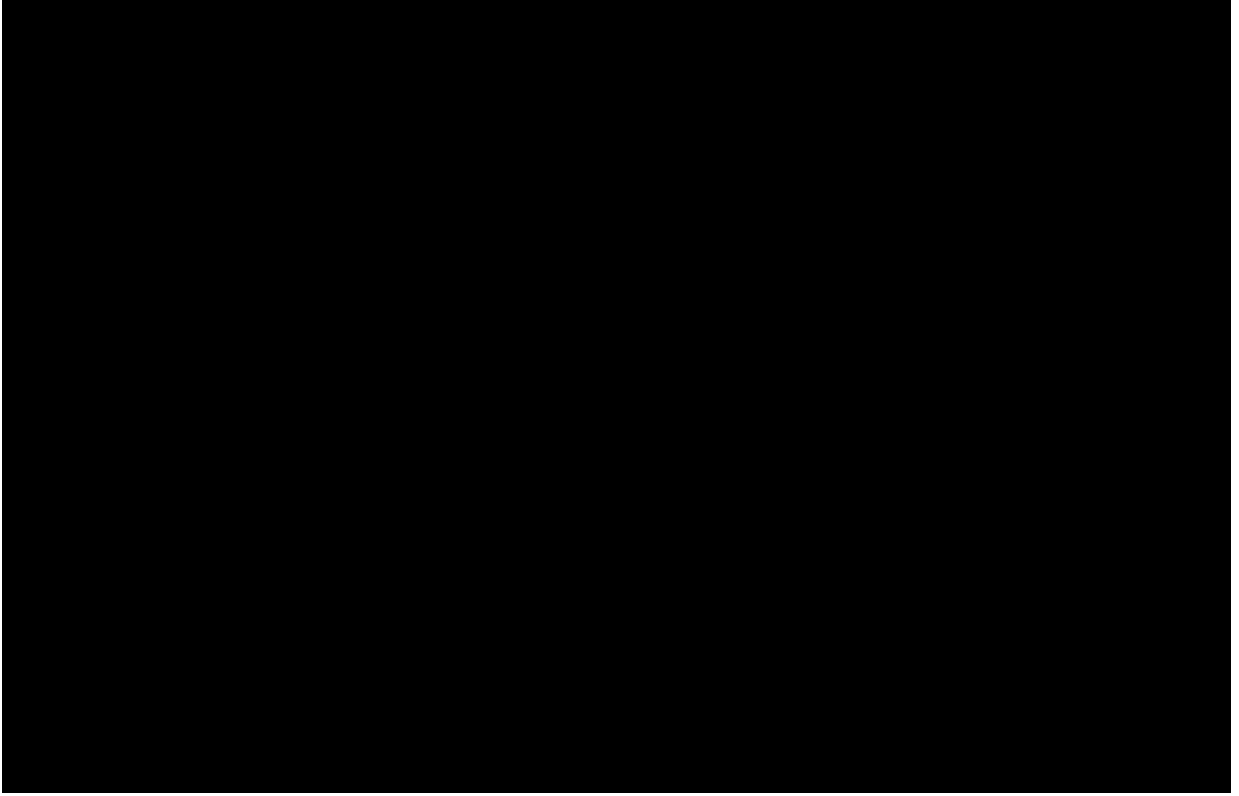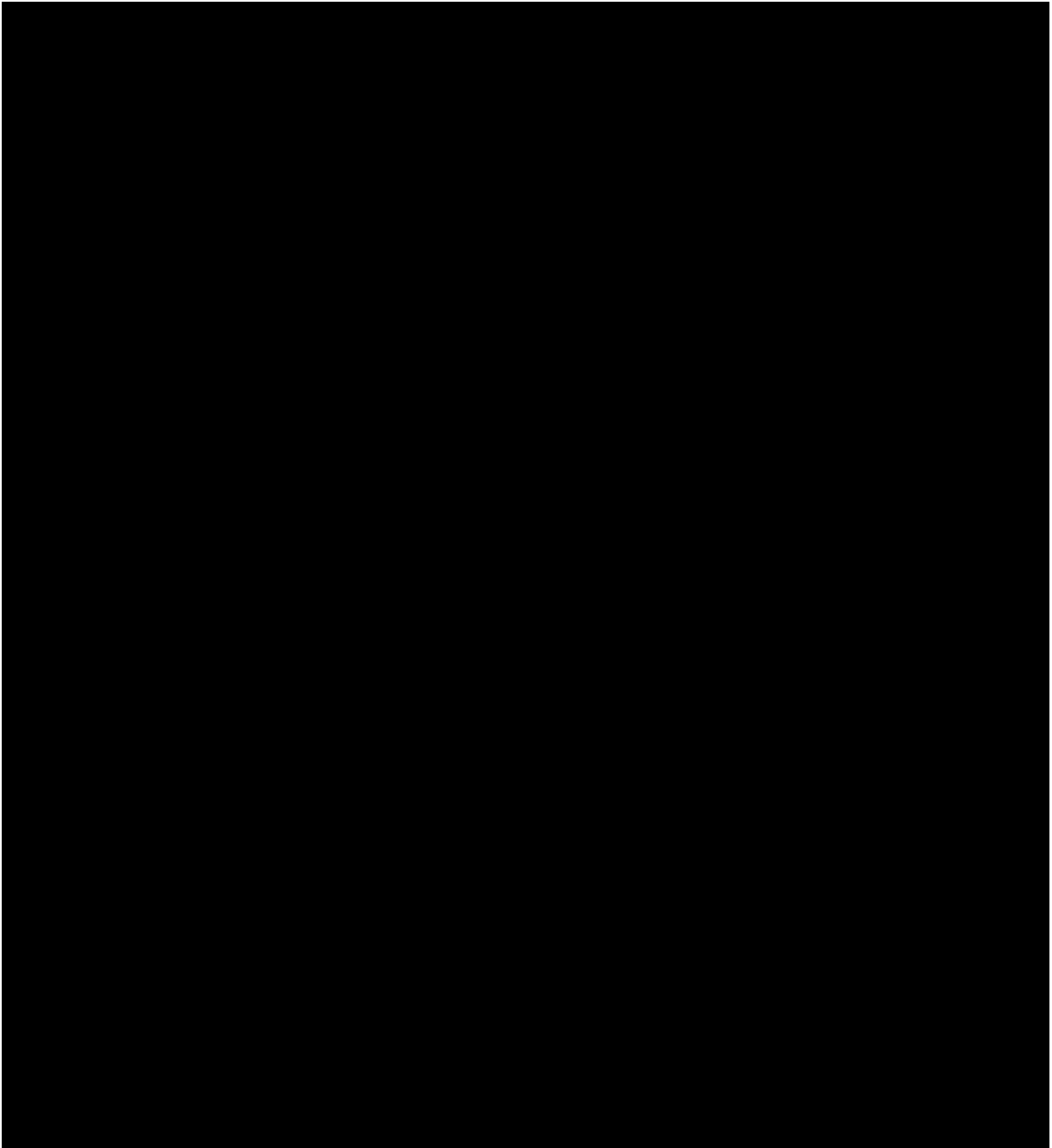
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Following the consultations with the Internet industry (on 2 February and 16 June 2014), it became clear that the industry have difficulties in responding to various requests for meetings and other cooperation with a wide range of officials, and that a more joined-up approach on the part of Member States would make it more likely that industry could participate in various initiatives. There are also a number of issues surrounding law enforcement requests for data, and methods of exchanging this information that could be improved by all parties.

Member States' governmental knowledge needs to be increased on technical issues and existing possibilities to cooperate with the private sector. On the other hand, Member States are in a position to help industry to better target work in this area, through explaining legislation and sharing knowledge of how terrorists use the online space to their advantage. They would value greater exchanges of information relating to measures taken by industry to address the problem of radicalisation online.

What can the Commission do?

The Commission can offer a framework for cooperation, dialogue and partnership between public, private and civil-society actors. This could be done through:

- organising joint training and awareness-raising workshops, bringing together law enforcement authorities and Internet industry referral units in order to learn about Industry-offered reporting mechanisms, clarifying existing legal framework, learning about how to recognise and respond to terrorist use of their online space and services,

- RAN and especially RAN@ Working Group to learn about how to prepare and conduct a counter-narrative campaign online.

In addition, the Commission can offer significant financial support (3 million EUR) through the ISF-Police 2014 call for proposals in order to:

- Enhance capabilities to identify and reduce availability of terrorist content online including through e.g. identification of best practices, supporting Internet referral units and hotlines,

- Develop media-training for moderate opinion-leaders who counter terrorist propaganda,

- Develop media campaigns, including the Interned-based campaigns, exposing and challenging terrorist propaganda.

The ISF-Police 2014 Work programme foresees also a direct award of up to 1 million EUR to the Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team (SSCAT) enhance Government communications and support messages countering terrorism. The Commission insists that the implementation period lasts 24 months with the total budget of 1 million EUR. More crucially, the emphasis should be put fist on the establishment of the SSCAT Network, which would then seek the specialised, consulting services from RICU (so-called 'SSCAT Advisory Team'), and not the other way around. **The Commission insists on clearly separating the establishment of the network from the services**, which would need to be delivered to the network.

Member States' position

Some Member States are very keen on further strengthening the supply-reducing measures.

NL called on the Internet industry at the High-Level Conference in June 2014, to keep the online space clean of terrorist propaganda. In addition, in 2013, building on the outcome of **Clean IT project**, the Netherlands initiated a new project called the **European Joint Initiative on Internet Counter Terrorism (EJI-ICT)**. The EJI – ICT, supported strongly by the UK, aims to reduce illegal terrorist content on the Internet by increasing cooperation between Member States. The EJI-ICT has set up a network of national focal points. This network focuses on joint work on cooperation with social media companies and analysis of existing legal frameworks. Currently 16 EU Member States are involved in the EJI-ICT.

EJI-ICT organised in London on 17 September 2014 a high-level meeting where *Guiding Principles for social media companies' response to terrorists' use of their platforms* (attached to the briefing) were presented and discussed. The meeting was attended mostly by senior representatives of BE, DE, ES, IT, LV, NL, PL, SE, UK (host), as well as AU, CA, NZ and US. The implicit objective of the meeting was to agree on the text of *Guiding Principles*. However, the discussion showed diverging views as regards the content, scope (terrorist vs. extremism content) and language (i.e. telling industry what to do) of the *Guiding Principles* as well as tactics of how to ensure sufficient buy-in from the industry side.

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Counter narrative campaigns

Google Ideas – Google's 'think-do-tank' has been co-leading the **RAN@ Working Group** together with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue. RAN @ seeks to develop frontline partnerships around creation and dissemination of counter-narratives through Internet. Members of the group comprise media, communication experts as well as NGO-based experts with compelling narrative countering terrorist propaganda. Since last year the group has been working on a counter-narrative campaign '**AbdullahX**', the concept of which has been proposed by **Fida Management/Munir Zamir**;

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The success of the counter-narrative campaign requires, apart from new episodes, a high online visibility of new content. This can be ensured through **'Ad-Words marketing'** – a Google mechanism that guarantees top positions among the search results. ██████████
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In addition, the Commission is supporting ***Counter Narrative Project – CNP****: films, education resources and training for teachers and youth workers*, which submitted by the ISD with YouTube, Google and Facebook as associate partners. The grant amounts to **351.549,18 EUR** (i.e. 90% of the total costs) and was awarded following the ISEC 2013 Targeted Call for proposals.

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[2] http://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en//grants/pdf/external-nonprofit-guide-2014.pdf

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ANNEXES

1. The formal invitation letter

2. List of confirmed participants

3. Draft Guiding principles developed by within the framework of the European Joint Initiative on Internet Counter Terrorism (EJI-ICT)

4. Draft statement to the press

ANNEX 1

INVITATION LETTER

Dear colleague,

The internet and social media play a profoundly positive role in our lives and societies. However, they are also used by violent extremists to advance their aims, whether through engagement, propaganda, radicalisation or recruitment. This is particularly true against the background of the flow of so called foreign fighters as well as calls for 'electronic Jihad' that the EU is facing.

The internet is largely operated by private companies, together with the civil society, they have the best internet expertise. Conversely, law enforcement agencies and intelligence services possess the best knowledge about terrorist activities. Public-private dialogue is therefore a necessary approach in identifying the best instruments to reduce terrorist use of the internet and social media.

In its Communication "Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response", the European Commission proposed to establish a forum with key players of the Internet industry to discuss the challenges posed by online terrorist propaganda, exchange experiences and explore opportunities for closer cooperation. Likewise, this proposal is included in the draft guidelines on combating violent extremism which will be submitted to the JHA Council on 9 October 2014.

There is strong interest from the European Union and the Ministers of Interior to enhance the dialogue with major companies from the Internet industry on issues of mutual concerns related to online radicalisation and to other aspects of the public-private relationship. Therefore, we will host a **ministerial dinner on 8th October 2014**. The objective of this meeting is to discuss the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us.

In particular, during the discussion we would like to touch upon the following issues:

- The challenges posed by terrorists' use of the Internet and possible responses: tools and techniques to respond to terrorist online activities, with particular regard to the development of specific counter-narrative initiatives; voluntary & self-regulatory measures (e.g. flagging and reporting mechanisms); law-enforcement-driven measures (e.g. referral units, investigations, etc.);

- Internet-related security challenges in the context of wider relations with major companies from the Internet industry, taking account due process requirements and fundamental rights;

- Ways of building trust and more transparency.

This invitation is addressed to the Member States' Ministers of Interior, the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and high-level representatives from major companies of the Internet industry.

The dinner will take place **on 8 October 2014 at 19:00 in Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre,** *Salle des repas ministériels***, LEVEL – 2, REM 1 & REM 2; Place de l'Europe 4, 1499 Luxembourg)** on the eve of the JHA Council meeting.

We would appreciate a confirmation of your participation **by 29 September 2014** to the following functional e-mail address: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xx.xxxxxx.xx

We look forward to welcoming you in Luxembourg on 8 October 2014.

Yours sincerely,

ANNEX 2

List of confirmed participants

European Commission:

- Matthias RUETE

- ██████████████████████████

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EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator:

- ████████████████

Internet industry

Facebook:

████████████████████████████

Google:

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Mirosoft:

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Twitter:

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ANNEX 3

Draft Guiding principles developed by within the framework of the European Joint Initiative on Internet Counter Terrorism (EJI-ICT)

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[3] This would include access to the appropriate language skills and legal advice.

ANNEX 4

Draft statement to the press

On 8 October 2014, the Commissioner Cecilia Malmström and Minister Angelino Alfano hosted an informal ministerial dinner, which brought together EU Member States' Ministers of Home Affairs and senior representatives of the major Internet companies. The event was part of the forum announced by the Commission in its Communication from 15 January 2014, to discuss the challenges posed by the terrorist propaganda on the Internet.

The timing of the meeting coincides with the heightened online propaganda efforts directed at the Western audience by terrorist organisations operating in Iraq and Syria.

The participants discussed various possible ways of addressing the challenge. It was agreed to organise a series of joint training and awareness raising workshops for the representatives of the law enforcement authorities, Internet industry and civil society.