

VP Schinas meeting with Tik Tok CEO

On terrorist content online and child sexual abuse

Scene setter:

- *TikTok has increased its activities to protect users from harmful content. Tik Tok cooperates with international partners to tackle child sexual abuse, hate speech and violent extremism/ terrorist content online. While Tik Tok is cooperating on many fronts to combat harmful content, recent research found that Tik Tok promoted disinformation related to the war in Ukraine (see background).*
- *Tik Tok is also interested in the legislative developments impacting online platforms, including the Terrorist Content online regulation, the digital services act and the recently adopted child sexual abuse regulation. The last meeting between CAB Johansson and Tik Tok took place in June 2021.*

Topic 1: Terrorist Content Online

- *Tik Tok has taken part in the workshops organised by the Commission to prepare for the application of the TCO regulation on 7 June 2022, and most of their concerns have related to the technical aspects of the electronic platforms developed by Europol (PERCI¹) which will be used for transmitting removal orders from competent authorities to online platforms.*
- *Tik Tok became member of the EU Internet Forum in November 2021, and will participate in the upcoming Senior Officials Meeting on 24 June 2022, where discussions will focus on the challenges faced in response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine and actions taken by platforms.*
- *TikTok for example has taken out livestreams from Russia and Ukraine being recommended in the "For you" page and upgraded its consideration of Azov and Misanthropic Division from hate speech to violent extremism, and removed content that incites, facilitates or finances recruitment, or advising on travelling to Ukraine (i.e. from groups like Boogaloo and White Lives matter and 3percenters).*
- *The Vice-President could ask for an update on the type of content they see online from Russia/Ukraine and about additional measures taken by Tik Tok to ensure that content that could lead to radicalization/ recruitment is not recommended.*

Topic 2: Child Sexual Abuse Material

- *TikTok makes efforts to incorporate safety-by-design elements during the development of their application and appears committed to making sure that children's safety and well-being is prioritised on the app.*
- *On 4 November 2021 TikTok organised a virtual tour of their Transparency Centre in Dublin where they informed about measures they take to ensure digital well-being. TikTok became a member of the EU Internet Forum in November 2021 and also intervened at the meeting. Tik Tok was also one of the companies Commissioner Johansson met during her mission to the Silicon Valley in January 2022.*
- *On the proposed Regulation on preventing and combating child sexual abuse: TikTok welcomes the concept of an EU Centre: it would be important that the*

¹ PERCI is the EU Platform for addressing Illegal Content Online, developed by Europol, to send legally binding removal orders on terrorist content to online platforms, and get the feedback from platforms on whether or not they removed that content.

companies participate in the discussion on how to set up the planned EU Centre to prevent and combat child sexual abuse.

Main messages

Sub-Topic 1: Terrorist/violent extremist content

- I welcome that TikTok joined the EU Internet Forum last year to step up the fight against terrorist and violent extremist content.
- In the context of the ongoing Russian military aggression in Ukraine, which led to an increase in dissemination of violent extremist content, TikTok's commitment to fight the dissemination of illegal and harmful content is ever more important.
- We acknowledge the additional challenges that the ongoing situation poses to tech companies' content moderation efforts and welcome the measures that TikTok has put in place to stop the dissemination of illegal and harmful content.
- In this light, I am interested to hear if TikTok has come across any new type and pattern of harmful content?
- In addition, I am curious to learn if TikTok has undertaken any additional measure to protect its users and prevent the misuse of its platform in this regard?
- I would like to assure you that in the framework of the EU Internet Forum we continue to work closely with companies to support them in their content moderation efforts, in particular of violent right-wing extremist and borderline content (content that is legal but harmful, such as conspiracies), targeted to recruit or radicalise.
- At the upcoming EU Internet Forum Senior Officials Meeting, we will further discuss the implementation EU Crisis Protocol, including better collaboration between platforms and law enforcement to notify cases of imminent threat of life to protect users and citizens online and offline.
- We welcome TikTok's participation in the workshops on the implementation of the Terrorist Content Online Regulation. We are positive that with the application of the Regulation on 7th June, we can jointly step up the fight against terrorist misuse of the internet.

Sub-Topic 2: Child Sexual Abuse Material

- I welcome TikTok's engagement on combating child sexual abuse, and am encouraged by TikTok's support for the proposed legislation.
- We need to guarantee security for all, both in the physical and digital environment, as we consider that the lines between them are increasingly blurred. The fight against child sexual abuse is a topic of key importance.
- On 11 May the Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation on preventing and combating child sexual abuse. This proposal is an opportunity to make a significant, long-lasting positive change in the fight against CSA in the EU (and globally, given the cross-border nature of the crime). It has the potential to be a game changer by notably 1) ensuring that companies do their part with a mandate to detect, report and remove child sexual abuse online, and 2) establish an EU centre to prevent and combat child sexual abuse.
- The proposal is technology neutral, in that it requires relevant providers to detect and, if needed, remove online child sexual abuse on their services, be they encrypted or not. However, this must be done without creating vulnerabilities on

such services that might be exploited for purposes other than online child sexual abuse.

- From our side, first, we will also continue to work with industry on solutions to technological challenges, such as end-to-end encryption, and to support the EU Internet Forum expert process on encryption, by funding further research in this area. We want to foster the development of tools that can operate at scale.
- We will also continue to work with you and other industry partners to make sure that together we have the tools and underpinning legislation to create a safer internet for children.

Defensives

The EU Centre to prevent and combat child sexual abuse will duplicate the existing reporting channels

- The negotiations of the interim derogation have shown that there is a need for an EU Centre, established in the EU, operating with EU rules.
- The EU Centre would also eliminate the need for international transfers of personal data of EU citizens, which the European Parliament also identified as a possible concern.
- Whereas initially there may be duplication of reporting, this should be a technical problem that could easily be solved by indicating in the reports whether they had also been submitted to the other Centre, and then filter them accordingly.
- Eventually, law enforcement in the EU would only receive reports from the EU Centre.

Background

Tik Tok safety features

- TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing and discovering short form videos, mostly used by young people. The app uses safety by design settings to protect minors, such as restricted messaging and sending of photos among minors; family pairing and help for parents to navigate. Limitations are also set on who children of different ages can interact with e.g. messaging options are disabled for children under 16. This and other measures help to decrease risks to children included spontaneous contacts with unknown individuals. TikTok's content moderation includes Artificial Intelligence to detect and remove content, while constantly overseen by human moderators, including experts to be aware of latest trends.
- TikTok signed the EU Code of Conduct on Illegal hate speech online, is a signatory to the EU's Disinformation Action Plan and a member of the EU Internet Forum to combat child sexual abuse and terrorist/ violent extremist content online. TikTok's Global Law Enforcement team, the Trust and Safety Hub as well as the Legal Hub are all located within the EU. The European Trust and Safety Team started off last year with 20 people with now over 1000 staff.
- TikTok organised a virtual visit to its European Transparency Centre in Dublin, which is open to regulators, to look at data flows, algorithms in a dynamic and secure setting and to learn about how TikTok handles content and what challenges they face.



REPORT_ virtual Tour
Tik Tok Transparency

Child Sexual Abuse Material

- TikTok prioritises child safety and have zero tolerance on CSAM. They are part of the Tech Coalition, and the We Protect Global Alliance and signatory to the voluntary principles on child sexual exploitation. Their community guidelines include not showing minors smoking or drinking and forbid sexual images of children.
- They use a combination of automated technology and human verification to remove harmful content. In the first half of 2021, TikTok removed 89 million videos worldwide, which represents less than 1% of the content. On minor safety, 97.1% removed proactively, and 98% of that removed within 24 hours.
- They also advocate safety by design, for example by designing direct messaging (no end-to-end encryption) to limit its use – it is impossible to send any video or image privately on TikTok, both parties have to mutually follow each other even if they are over 16. When sharing the content under 16s users cannot create the option for everyone to comment on their videos, only those that follow them can comment.
- TikTok reports child sexual abuse images to NCMEC (around 22,000 reports last year). AI technology can review imagery and take snap shots before they are uploaded. Some images are removed automatically, others are identified for further review. If a video has a certain view rate it will be sent back for another review.

Reports of shortcomings

- Recent reports suggest that there are challenges. In March 2022, research by Newsguard found that TikTok is feeding false and misleading content about the war in Ukraine to users within 40 minutes of their signing up to the app, regardless of whether they run any searches on the platform: [WarTok: TikTok is feeding war disinformation to new users within minutes - Misinformation Monitor \(newsweek.com\)](https://www.newsweek.com/war-tok-tiktok-is-feeding-war-disinformation-to-new-users-within-minutes-misinformation-monitor-1644444). TikTok has had meetings with the Commission to understand the issues highlighted and have said that the experiment does not mimic standard viewing behaviour and that they are partnering with [independent fact-checking organisations](#).

- The Institute for Strategic Dialogue released a report on the misuse of algorithmic amplification on TikTok to spread hate speech and violent extremist content:
[Hatescape: An In-Depth Analysis of Extremism and Hate Speech on TikTok](#)