Brussels, 18 November 2021

Dear Sir,

Every year we see great shifts in the way we use technology to communicate and carry out our daily activities online. The Internet brings us together but also allows bad actors to plan, execute and conceal crimes online and disseminate their messages globally. During the COVID-19 pandemic child abusers have taken advantage of the increased presence of children online. Extremists and terrorists have exploited social dissatisfaction to reach out and propagate their ideologies leading to radicalisation. Lawful access to information is essential to effectively fight terrorism and criminality in a digital era.

The EU has chosen to regulate in order to tackle terrorist content online, and we are in the midst of preparing a new legal framework to fight against the sexual abuse of children. We are also committed to ensuring that regulatory efforts are complemented by collaborative action of the tech companies to enhance the safety of internet users globally.

The EU Internet Forum provides a space for discussion of new and emerging challenges and explore possible responses jointly with industry partners and member states. At this year’s annual high level meeting, it is both pertinent and timely to focus our discussions on safeguarding children, focusing on protecting them from recruitment and radicalisation and against child sexual abuse.

In contrast to the real world, children often navigate online without parental oversight and the time spent online increased considerably over the last year. We need to develop innovative ways and safeguards to protect children, to prevent them from being targeted by extremists and child sexual abusers and to prevent the dissemination of child sexual abuse material online. It is a fundamental responsibility, as failure to do so can have long lasting and far-reaching consequences for our societies. The EU Internet Forum is the right place to address these challenges jointly with internet platforms.

Mr Shou Zi Chew
CEO of TikTok
I would like to invite you to the seventh ministerial meeting of the EU Internet Forum to exchange views on these strategic priorities. The meeting will be held in hybrid mode (with some in-person capacity) on 8 December 2021 from 14:30 to 18:00 (CET Brussels). A draft agenda is enclosed. Interpretation will be provided to and from English, French, German, Italian, Slovenian and Spanish. Please register here.

I am very much looking forward to your participation and contribution to this important event.

Yours sincerely,

Ylva JOHANSSON
Commissioner for Home Affairs