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## IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON ILLEGAL CONTENT ONLINE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION: MEMBER STATES

### **Introduction:**

Following the initial discussion with Member States at the EU Internet Forum (EUIF), the Commission would like to get more detailed views on possible actions to more effectively tackle terrorist content online as part of the ongoing work on the Impact Assessment on Illegal Content Online. These views will complement the Open Public Consultation (OPC, available [here](#)), as well as the data collection exercise based on the table of indicators.

The Commission started work on an impact assessment outlining potential problems, objectives and options in the attached Inception Impact Assessment (IIA). As part of the options to be considered, the Commission will analyse the current situation (baseline scenario) as well as actions to reinforce the voluntary measures as well as possible sector-specific legislation (including in particular on terrorism content online) as well as horizontal legislation applicable to all types of illegal content.

The measures presented in the Inception Impact Assessment<sup>1</sup> are initial ideas, and additional actions and options could be considered. The actions to be undertaken would be mainly addressed to online platforms, but could also require further action by Member States.

Member States are kindly requested to **reply to the questions below and provide any additional considerations in writing by 13 June 2018**. The results of this questionnaire will be presented and discussed at the **forthcoming meeting on 15 June**. In parallel, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology convened its expert group under the eCommerce Directive also feeding into the work of the impact assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-1183598\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-1183598_en)

## Questions

### I. Problem and baseline scenario

1. What are the **provisions, arrangements etc under national law addressing the removal of terrorist content<sup>2</sup> for preventive purposes** (e.g. do you have duty of care provisions<sup>3</sup>, specific notice and action procedures, provisions on transparency of companies' actions in relation to the removal of terrorist content, provisions on safeguards, etc.)? Please indicate below – where relevant – the applicable laws or other legal documents.

Notice and action procedures	<i>There is an ongoing procedure for amendment of the Terrorism Act, Law 110 (I) 2010, in order to include a relevant article for the immediate removal and blocking of terrorist content on the Internet in a way that is in line with the new European Directive 2017/541.</i>
Transparency rules	
Safeguards	

Do you have **specialised entities that notify/refer terrorist content** to hosting service providers? What is the **legal basis and benchmark for notification/referral** (illegality of content, terms of service of hosting service provider)?

*The Counter Terrorism Office and the Office for Combating Electronic Crime of Cyprus Police are active in the field by being members of the Europol IRU, since the Cyprus Police does not have a National Internet Referral Unit. The above mentioned offices are receiving on regularly basis, reports and information sent by EU IRU, which are analyzed and processed accordingly. Also in case of identify any suspicious content on the internet they will inform EU IRU and “Check the Web” for further analysis.*

Do you consider them **sufficient** in terms of preventing accessibility of terrorist content? What are the limitations?

*The most significant limitation is that there are no legal procedures yet, to report the web companies and fracture such content from the internet. The updated Act (Law 110/2010) is expected to be in action this year.*

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this questionnaire, "terrorist content" is defined as in the Commission Recommendation of 1.3.2018 on measures to effectively tackle illegal content online (C(2018) 1177 final).

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/commission-recommendation-measures-effectively-tackle-illegal-content-online>

<sup>3</sup> See recital 48 of the Directive on electronic commerce

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex:32000L0031>

2. Do you consider that the **amount of terrorist content online** in the last [two] years has overall

√	Decreased substantially
	Decreased
	Continued at the same level
	Increased
	Increased substantially

Please indicate the basis for your assessment. What do you think has contributed to this trend?

*Since the creation of the EU IRU, and the work achieved under the EUIF, the overall online terrorist content has decreased substantially.*

3. Do you see a **risk that removal by companies** on their own initiative could **interfere with investigations or intelligence gathering**? What would be the **mitigating measures** necessary to address any such risks?

*The removal of terrorist content by companies on their own initiative, could affect the investigations or intelligence gathering. This fact could be mitigated if the companies inform the interesting countries with special reports about the possible removals.*

4. Do you see a risk of **erroneous removal** by platforms of legal content (e.g. removal of content misidentified as illegal, removal of content disseminated for research, educational or journalistic purposes, "over-removal")? Are you aware of **any cases** of over-removal? What would be the **mitigating measures** necessary to address any such risks?

*There is always a small risk of removing by platforms of legal content. It should also be mentioned that we have not identified such cases.*

## II. Non regulatory options: reinforcing voluntary action

1. Do you think that the work under the **EUIF** as reinforced and complemented by the **Recommendation** is **sufficient** action at EU level to effectively tackle terrorist content online?

*The work achieved under the EUIF is assessed as a sufficient action to tackle online terrorist content at EU level.*

2. Do you consider that the **EUIF's work should be further developed** in order to reinforce action at EU level to tackle terrorist content online e.g. through a Memorandum of Understanding in which companies and possibly Member States would sign up to concrete commitments (see possible measures below)?

*As a first step, further effort should be exercised to companies that are not sufficiently respond to tackle online terrorised content before signing up any concrete commitments.*

3. Which of the following **possible elements** should in your view be addressed and further developed within a voluntary approach? Please indicate the need from a scale from 1 (unnecessary) to 5 (very necessary)

5	More specific objectives for companies' actions (e.g. request a certain percentage of content taken down within a certain time limit)
3	Stronger commitments in terms of internal processes and resource allocation (e.g. to have certain procedures in place, conduct risk assessments and establish mitigating procedures, content of Terms of Service, training, capacity to detect content in different languages)
5	Standardised working arrangements between companies, law enforcement and Europol to enhance understanding of how platforms are abused, to improve referral mechanism, avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts, facilitating requests from law enforcement agencies in relation to criminal investigations <sup>4</sup> .
4	Stronger commitment on specific proactive and preventive measures (i.e. further development and participation in industry-led schemes, such as the database of hashes developed in the context of the EUIF)
3	More detailed requirements on transparency and reporting
4	More detailed requirements to companies on safeguards against over-removal
3	Establishment of an external audit/monitoring mechanism
4	Establishment of contact points, both in companies and Member States, to facilitate referrals (and feedback) and requests from law enforcement authorities in relation to criminal investigations.
5	Additional support (e.g. by Europol) to referral capacities in Member States

<sup>4</sup> See point 40 of the Recommendation.

4. What other additional measures could be developed within a reinforced voluntary approach?

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5. Which further actions could be taken to secure participation from those **companies** who have **not engaged**?

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6. Which further actions could be taken to **support small companies** and start-ups in tackling terrorist content online effectively? Should these be taken by larger companies, public authorities or both?

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7. Do you think that the voluntary approach is **effective** and flexible enough to ensure that companies continue their efforts in the **long term**? Please indicate with which statement you would agree with:

	Yes
	No, it should be reinforced as presented above to obtain sufficient guarantees
√	No, it should be reinforced via legislation

### III. Legislative options

1. Why would you consider **legislation necessary at this time**? What would be the concrete benefits? What **risks** could legislation entail?

*Legislation will reinforced companies to tackled online content specially companies that do not cooperate to contribute to this effort.*

2. What should be the **material scope of legislation** (i.e. how should terrorist content be defined)? Do you consider that covering material inciting to commit terrorist acts (Article 21/Article 5 of the Terrorism Directive<sup>5</sup>) is sufficient or should the dissemination of material pursuing other terrorist purposes be included as well?

Material the dissemination of which pursues the following objectives should be included in legislative measures:

√	Recruitment for terrorism
√	Providing training for terrorism
√	Terrorist financing
	Other, please elaborate:

To what extent should material produced by UN/EU designated terrorist organisations be included?

***Material produced by UN/EU designated terrorist organisation should be included in a wide extent.***

3. Which **measures** (based in particular on the elements mentioned in the Inception Impact Assessment) do you consider as **necessary elements of legislation** to be impactful? Please indicate the need from a scale from 1 (unnecessary) to 5 (very necessary)

4	Definition of terrorist content ( <i>see question above</i> )
4	Requirements regarding the companies' terms of service
4	General requirement for companies to put the necessary measures in place to ensure that they do not host terrorist content (complemented by self regulation)
5	Specific requirements in terms of action upon referral (including time limit of one hour)
5	More explicit and detailed obligations to deploy specific proactive measures (including automatic detection)
4	Specific requirements to cooperate with other hosting service providers to avoid the dissemination across platforms
5	Sanctions in case of non-compliance
5	Exchanges of information with law enforcement to limit any interference with investigations and to feed into the analysis of terrorist material
4	Clarify that companies engaged in proactive measures benefit from the liability exemption (Good Samaritan clause)
4	Requirement to Member States to increase referral capabilities, quality criteria for referrals and for referral entities in Member States to provide relevant support to companies in case of doubt about qualification as terrorist content

<sup>5</sup> Directive (5EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JH5A  
<https://eur-lex4.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017L0541>

	(e.g. through points of contact)
5	Nomination of point of contact within Companies
4	Reporting obligations for companies <sup>6</sup>
5	Transparency requirements for companies vis a vis their users <sup>7</sup>
4	Compulsory safeguards, such as the ones in the general chapter of the Recommendation
4	The establishment of an external audit/monitoring mechanism for assessing compliance of companies.

Do you consider that minimum requirements could usefully be complemented by self-regulatory measures? And if so, which ones?

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4. What **other additional measures** could be developed within legislation?

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5. What should be the **personal scope of the legislation**? Only hosting service providers within the meaning of the Directive on electronic commerce or other service providers?

*The scope of legislation should not focused only on hosting service providers of the Directive on electronic commerce but to any other providers that may host online content to the public.*

6. Do you think **smaller companies** should be covered by all obligations or should they be exempted from some of the obligations (e.g. proactive measures) but obliged by others (e.g. time-limits after referral)? Which companies could be partially exempted and from which obligations?

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7. How do you see the **impact on fundamental rights** of the above-mentioned measures and which safeguards would be necessary to avoid undue interference with fundamental rights?

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<sup>6</sup> See point 41 of the Recommendation.

<sup>7</sup> See points 16 and 17 of the Recommendation.