[Fighting Terrorism Online: EU Internet Forum committed to an EU-wide Crisis Protocol](#)

Today, the participants of the 5th EU Internet Forum, hosted by Commissioners Avramopoulos and King, have committed to an EU Crisis Protocol – a rapid response to contain the viral spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online. The Commission, Member States and online service providers, including Facebook, Twitter, Google, Microsoft, Dropbox, JustPaste.it and Snap have committed to working together on a voluntary basis within the framework set out by the Crisis Protocol, while ensuring strong data protection and fundamental rights safeguards. The EU Internet Forum also discussed the overall progress made in ensuring the removal of terrorist content online since its last meeting in December 2018 as well as how to strengthen cooperation on other challenges, such as child sexual exploitation online.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"Since I launched the EU Internet Forum 4 years ago, it has gone from strength to strength, offering Member States and online platforms an effective framework to work together to tackle terrorist content online. We have managed to build a strong relationship of trust and mutual understanding with the internet platforms. I am pleased with the progress we are making and the remarkable results we have achieved. Today, we are taking this cooperation another step further with an EU Crisis Protocol. With this, we will be ready to act quickly, effectively and in a more coordinated way to stop the spread of terrorist content."*

Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** added: *"The events in New Zealand earlier this year were a stark reminder that terrorist content spreads online at a tremendous speed. While our response might be quick, it isn't quick enough. The Protocol is an EU response to contain the havoc created by such events – in a coordinated way."*

In the aftermath of the terror attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, government leaders and online platforms agreed on the [Christchurch Call for Action](#). On this occasion, President Juncker announced the development of an EU Crisis Protocol in the context of the EU Internet Forum. The EU Protocol will allow Member States and online platforms to respond rapidly and in a coordinated manner to the dissemination of terrorist content online in the event of a terrorist attack.

The EU Crisis Protocol endorsed by the EU Internet Forum today will:

- **Provide a coordinated and rapid reaction:** Member States' authorities, together with Europol, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) and online service providers will be able to respond quickly, in a coordinated manner to ensure that the spread of terrorist

or violent extremist content is swiftly contained.

- **Facilitate public and private sector cooperation:** In the event of a crisis, law enforcement authorities and online service providers will share relevant information on the online content (e.g., URLs, audio-visual media, and metadata) on a voluntary basis, in a secure way and in real time.
- **Facilitate a voluntary arrangement:** The Protocol does not replace national legal frameworks or existing national crisis management mechanisms. It should apply only to extraordinary situations where those national measures are no longer sufficient to coordinate a rapid and cross-border response.

The EU Internet Forum also discussed the overall progress made in ensuring the removal of terrorist content online since its last meeting in December 2018 and looked at the emerging challenges. This included, for the first time, a discussion on the global threat of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. Cooperation between public authorities and online platforms is key to fight against these horrible crimes effectively. Participants also took stock of the work to tackle the challenges presented by right wing extremism and the radicalising effect of violent political discourse.

Background

The EU Internet Forum was launched by Commissioner Avramopoulos in [December 2015](#) to address internet misuse by terrorist groups. It brings together EU Home Affairs Ministers, the internet industry and other stakeholders who work together voluntarily to address this complex issue. Since its creation, the EU Internet Forum meets annually to take stock of the progress made in removing terrorist content online and to discuss emerging challenges. In 2015, an efficient referral mechanism to flag and remove terrorist content online was created at Europol.

In [2016](#), at the EU Internet Forum, the industry announced the creation of the "database of hashes" to make removals permanent and irreversible. The database is a critical tool in stemming the spread of terrorist content online. Since its launch, the database has gathered over 200,000 hashes (pictures, videos, etc.) and has helped both large and small platforms to remove such content quickly.

President Juncker announced the development of the EU Protocol in Paris earlier this year when he attended a meeting of government leaders and CEOs of major online platforms that was co-hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

A first exercise to operationalise the Protocol already took place at Europol on 11 September 2019.

The EU Crisis Protocol will contribute to efforts undertaken at global level in the context of the Christchurch call, in particular the Crisis Response Protocol as announced in September at the margins of 2019 UNGA.

For more information

[Factsheet](#) – EU Crisis Protocol to remove violent content linked to a terror attack

[Press Release](#) – Fighting Terrorism Online: Internet Forum pushes for automatic detection of terrorist propaganda

[Press Release](#) – EU Internet Forum: Bringing together governments, Europol and technology companies to counter terrorist content and hate speech online

[Christchurch Call](#) to Eliminate Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content Online