

Terrorist content online: Council adopts new rules

The EU is working to stop terrorists from using the internet to radicalise, recruit and incite to violence. Today, the Council adopted a regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online.

The aim of the legislation is a swift removal of terrorist content online and to establish one common instrument for all member states to this effect. The rules will apply to hosting service providers offering services in the EU, whether or not they have their main establishment in the member states.



Radicalisation and incitement to violence through social networks and video platforms, the live streaming of attacks; these are becoming more and more frequent factors in recent terrorist attacks. With the new rules adopted by the Council today our law enforcement authorities will have an effective instrument to tackle this threat. Together, we send a strong signal to the internet companies: it is time for faster, more efficient action.

Eduardo Cabrita, Portuguese Minister of Home Affairs

Voluntary cooperation with the hosting service providers will continue, but the legislation will provide additional tools for member states to enforce the rapid removal of terrorist content where necessary. Competent authorities in the member states will have the power to issue removal orders to the service providers, to remove terrorist content or disable access to it in all member states. The service providers will then have to remove or disable access to the content within one hour.

Hosting service providers exposed to terrorist content will need to take specific measures to address the misuse of their services and to protect their services against the dissemination of terrorist content. The decision as to the choice of measures remains with the hosting service provider.

The legislation also provides for a clear scope and a clear uniform definition of terrorist content in order to fully respect fundamental rights. It also includes effective remedies for both users whose content has been removed and for service providers to submit a complaint.

The adoption of the Council's position at first reading follows a provisional agreement on the text reached between the Council presidency and the European Parliament on 10 December 2020. The legal act now needs to be adopted by the European Parliament at second reading before being published in the EU Official Journal. The regulation will enter into force on the twentieth day

following its publication and will start to apply one year later.