

# Commission: Code of Conduct with IT Companies to Tackle Hate Speech is Evolving Positively

## News

**Thomas Wahl**

On 4 February 2019, the Commission presented its [fourth evaluation](#) of the Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online. The Code of Conduct was launched on 21 May 2016 to ensure that requests to remove racist and xenophobic Internet content are dealt quickly by the major IT companies (see also [eucrim 2/2016, p. 76](#); for last years' evaluation, see [eucrim 1/2018, p. 18](#)). Currently, nine companies adhere to the Code: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Microsoft, Instagram, Google+, Dailymotion, Snapchat, and Webedia.

The evaluation report confirms that the Code of Conduct has delivered continuous progress. In the meantime, IT companies provide a swift response to illegal hate speech online about which they are notified. About 89% of the notifications are assessed within 24 hours. The IT companies fully meet the target of reviewing the majority of notifications within 24 hours. On average, IT companies remove almost 72% of illegal hate speech incidents notified to them by NGOs and public bodies participating in the evaluation. If it comes to serious cases of deemed illegal hate speech, such as calls for murder or holocaust denial, the average removal rate is even higher. Other major results of the evaluation include the following:

- There is no sign of over-removal;
- The actions to promote positive narratives of tolerance and pluralism were positive;
- More efforts are needed on transparency and feedback to users.

The Code of Conduct is a self-regulatory instrument and not binding. It must be considered an additional tool in the EU's and Member States' efforts to tackle the proliferation of hatred online.

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The project is co-financed by the Union Anti-Fraud Programme (UAFP), managed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

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ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://eucrim.eu>

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Co-funded by  
the European Union