

# Commission Satisfaction with Application of Code of Conduct to Counter Illegal Hate Speech Online



## News

**Thomas Wahl**

On 22 June 2020, the Commission [released the results](#) of its meanwhile fifth evaluation of the Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online. The Code of Conduct was agreed on 31 May 2016 to ensure that requests to remove racist and xenophobic Internet content are dealt with quickly by the major IT companies (see [eucriM 2/2016, p. 76](#)). Currently, nine companies adhere to the Code: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Microsoft, Instagram, Google+, Dailymotion, Snapchat, and Jeuxvideo.com.

The platforms agreed to assess the majority of user notifications in 24h (respecting EU and national legislation on hate speech) and committed to remove, if necessary, those messages assessed as being illegal.

The evaluation is carried out on the basis of a common methodology involving a network of civil society organisations located in the different EU countries. These organisations test how the IT companies are implementing the commitments outlined in the Code.

The [fifth evaluation report](#) confirms the positive results of previous evaluation rounds (for recent evaluations, see [eucriM 1/2019, pp. 22-23](#) and [eucriM 1/2018, p. 18](#)):

- On average 90% of the notifications are reviewed within 24 hours (compared to 40% in the first year of the evaluation, 2016);
- 71% of hateful content is removed (in comparison to 28 % in 2016);
- On average, 83.5% of content calling for murder or violence against specific groups is removed, while content using defamatory words or pictures to offend certain groups is removed in 57.8 % of cases;
- Platforms respond to and give feedback on approx. 67 % of the notifications received. This is higher than in the previous monitoring exercise (65%).

As in last year's evaluation, the Commission concludes that the platforms need to further improve transparency for and feedback to users. Only Facebook informs users systematically. Divergences also exist in the consistent evaluation of flagged content.

The evaluation results will feed into the future Digital Services Act Package on which the Commission recently launched a [public consultation](#). The Commission is considering ways to prompt all platforms dealing with illegal hate speech to set up effective notice-and-action systems.

### AUTHOR

**Thomas Wahl**

Senior Researcher  
Max Planck Institute for the  
Study of Crime, Security and  
Law

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The Commission also announced that it will continue to facilitate the dialogue between IT companies and civil society organisations working on the ground to tackle illegal hate speech in 2020 and 2021. This includes content moderation teams, and a mutual understanding of local legal specificities of hate speech.

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