

Joint statement by trusted flagger organisations and IT companies for an action framework on enhanced cooperation – Annex to the Code of conduct



Demonstrating a shared commitment with the European Commission and EU Member States in tackling illegal hate speech online, IT companies signed the Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online in May 2016.

Since its signature, the Code has become an increasingly important tool in addressing online hate speech in the EU. After seven monitoring exercises, a series of expert exchanges involving civil society organisations (CSOs), as well as public authorities and IT companies, the Code has proven to be an essential tool for forging closer cooperation among key stakeholders in addressing hate speech. Throughout the years, IT Companies have developed partnerships with CSOs and trusted flaggers, and relied on their support to encourage the flagging of illegal hate speech and the submission of high-quality notices. The expertise of CSOs from the ground has proven essential to enhance the knowledge by the IT Companies' teams focused on trust and safety about the specificities of hate speech in local contexts or on specific grounds of hatred. The enhanced and continued exchange has led to progress on effective notice-and-action mechanisms. IT Companies have also intensified their work with CSOs to deliver best-practice training on countering hateful rhetoric and prejudice, and increased the scale of their proactive outreach to CSOs to help them deliver effective counter speech campaigns, such as the #WeDeserveBetter campaign ahead of the 2019 EU elections. The Code has also welcomed new signatories since its inception, such as Snap Inc., TikTok, LinkedIn, Viber, and Twitch.

Building on this past success as well as to face the challenges of persisting hatred online, IT companies and CSOs aim to build on their commitment to the existing Code through a set of actions outlined below.

- IT companies will further consolidate the dialogue with CSOs with regards to tackling hate speech on specific grounds, languages and national contexts, and promote human rights culture and narratives.
- IT companies and CSOs will jointly explore topics and themes on an ad-hoc, but regular basis, in order to facilitate the flow of best practices and expertise between relevant teams and organisations, including regarding CSO's early warnings in case of events which may cause sparks of hatred online.
- IT companies and CSOs will aim to further intensify their cooperation through regular meetings, training opportunities and roundtable discussions on topics such as specific manifestations of hatred, policy developments, hate speech content moderation or new flagging mechanisms, and by organising jointly with the European Commission an annual meeting at a rotating location to assess, evaluate and outline actions under the Code.
- IT companies and CSOs will increase the visibility of their efforts, such as campaigns, data, policy updates, transparency reports, CSO monitoring results, findings and research on tackling hate speech on an annual basis through a shared online knowledge hub to be hosted by the European Commission.

These actions aim to strengthen some of the existing commitments in the Code of conduct by reinforcing the existing cooperation between IT companies and CSOs, beyond the remit of the monitoring exercises. They also aim to enable flexible participation, support significant exchanges, create new synergies with a series of innovative, shared activities.