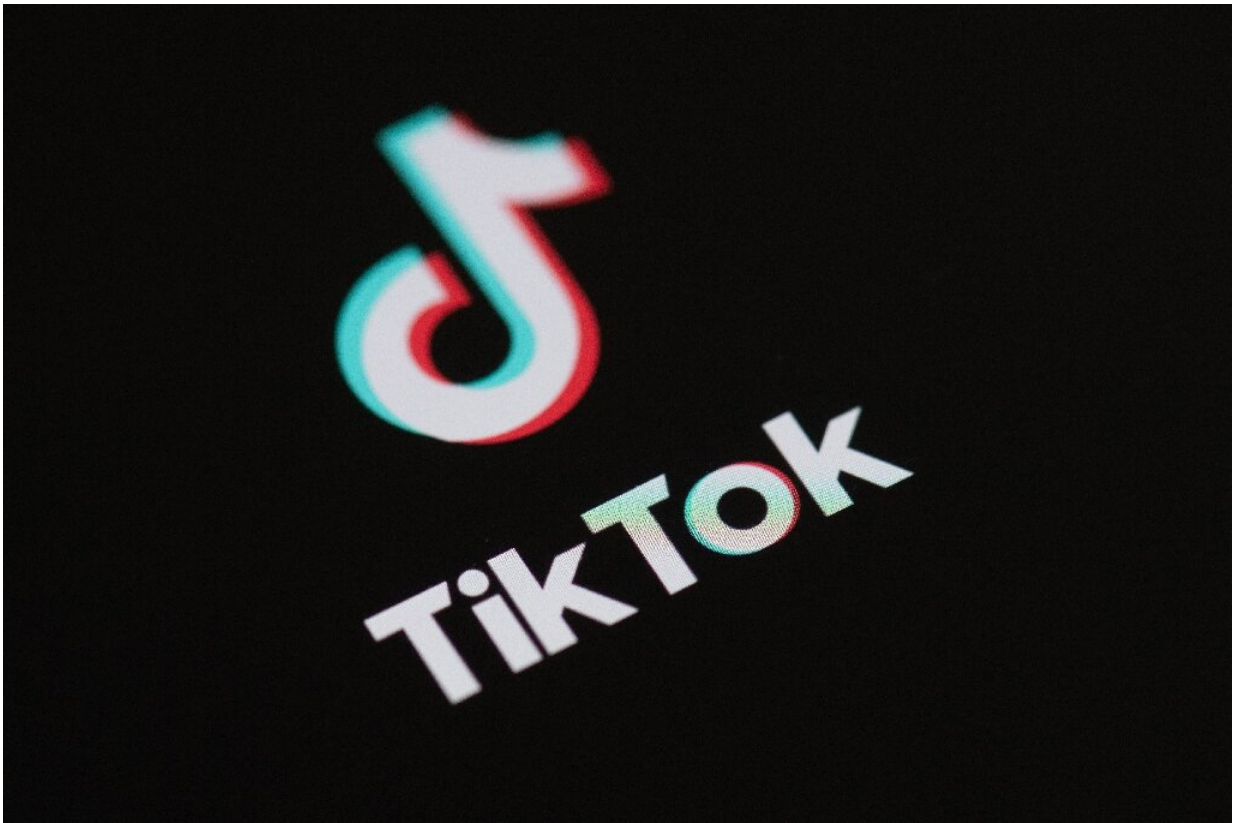


TikTok joins EU code of conduct on hate speech

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Chinese-owned TikTok has become a global social media sensation

The social media phenomenon TikTok joined the EU's code of conduct on Monday as tech giants seek to persuade Europe to back away from setting laws against hate speech and disinformation.

"We're proud to sign up to the ([code of conduct](#)) to play our part," said Theo Bertram, TikTok's director of government relations for Europe.

Facebook, Twitter and Google helped create the code of conduct in 2016 in which companies pledge to swiftly assess, flag and remove [hate speech](#) and other [illegal content](#) from their platforms.

The [tech giants](#) are eager to demonstrate the success of the code of conduct as they fear far more direct oversight by Brussels on the everyday operations of their platforms.

TikTok has become a global sensation with users sharing 15 to 60-second video clips on everything from hair-dye tutorials to dance routines and gags about [daily life](#).

"Today's announcement shows once again that internet companies take their responsibility seriously and are ready to play their part," said Siada El Ramly, head of the EDiMA big tech lobby in Brussels.

Chinese-owned TikTok joined the group just as the EU published the latest of its regular reports monitoring the implementation of code of conduct.

It showed that 90 percent of flagged content was assessed by the participants within 24 hours, a major improvement from just 40 percent in 2016.

It said that 71 percent of content confirmed as illegal hate speech was successfully removed, whereas only 26 percent was taken down in 2016.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, is currently preparing a Digital Services Act that could make inadequate handling of illegal content punishable by law.

The act "will make a difference", said EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders.

It could include "binding" measures for platforms to "clarify how they deal with illegal hate speech on their platforms," he said.

In their campaign to dissuade the EU from stricter rules, big tech companies were comforted when a new hate speech law in France was struck down in court last week for violating [free speech](#).

That law was widely seen as a potential model for the EU's Digital Services Act that once passed could become a widely followed example for regulating big tech worldwide.

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