

EU wants more from Big Tech against disinformation

May 26 2021

The EU on Wednesday tasked tech giants such as Facebook, YouTube and TikTok to do more against disinformation and provide much better access to their algorithms as well as beef up fact-checking.

The proposal is the EU's effort to strengthen its existing [code of conduct](#) against disinformation, which was launched in 2018 after revelations that platforms had facilitated and amplified [false information](#) in the ramp up to the Brexit vote and elections in the US in 2016.

It was signed by Google, Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and in June 2020 by TikTok, as well as players in the advertising sector.

In the wake of the COVID pandemic, the EU executive is now asking the signatories to go even further in their commitments, which are non-binding and voluntary, at least for now.

The pressure on the companies to deliver is great, given that the EU is also hammering out its Digital Services Act (DSA) that will give Europe power to slap penalties on Facebook and others when they fail to demonstrate strong action against disinformation.

European Commission Vice President Vera Jourova said the stricter and more detailed code of conduct was necessary to better root out "systemic risks" on platforms.

Jourova said that it was time for big tech companies "to stop policing

themselves alone and stop allowing to make money on disinformation".

"After the DSA will come into force, this code of practice will become semi-obligatory," she warned.

Among the many proposals, the EU is calling for messaging platforms such as Facebook's WhatsApp to also be included, given the vast [disinformation](#) campaigns seen in in India and elsewhere.

The Commission is also asking platforms for regular reports with clear benchmarks to assess the measures put in place.

In addition, the EU executive is seeking to create a designated task force composed of the code's signatories, representatives of the EU diplomatic service and media regulators from the member states.

'Code works'

The proposals will be discussed with the signatories, who will have to submit a first version of the revised code late this year so that it can be operational by the beginning of 2022.

Marisa Jimenez Martin, Facebook's director of EU Affairs, said that "the reality is that we think the code works".

"It just needs to be now strengthened and we will work with the other stakeholders to make that happen in the next months," she told reporters.

The [code](#) is one of the many EU workstreams to limit the reach of Big Tech.

The DSA, along with a companion law, the Digital Markets Act, are currently under negotiation at the European Parliament and among the

27 member states in wrangling that could take at least another year.

Those proposals, when approved, will give the EU unprecedented powers on defining how Big Tech can operate and do business in Europe.

Brussels also plans to present by the end of the year a draft regulation on political advertising and the targeting of users based on their personal data.

© 2021 AFP

Citation: EU wants more from Big Tech against disinformation (2021, May 26) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-05-eu-big-tech-disinformation.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.