

EU says Facebook, YouTube remove less hate speech

October 7 2021



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

The EU said Thursday that Facebook and YouTube took down less of the hate speech reported to them in 2021 than 2020 as pressure mounts to impose tighter regulation on social media platforms.

The EU's annual review of [social media platforms](#) that have signed up to its voluntary [hate speech](#) code—signatories also include Twitter, Instagram and TikTok—found that the overall removal rate had fallen below two-thirds.

Signatory platforms removed an average of 62.5 percent of content reported by 35 anti-discrimination groups from 22 member states between March and April.

This is lower than the 71 percent average over the same six-week period in both 2019 and 2020.

The code, which LinkedIn joined in June, is based on a voluntary approach, but the EU is currently preparing a wide-ranging regulation, known as the Digital Services Act, which would give the bloc beefed-up powers.

Once passed, social media companies would face hefty fines for turning a blind eye to illegal material, including hate [speech](#), as well as impose [greater transparency](#) on how specific posts were displayed in user feeds.

The law is under discussion between the European Parliament and the Council of the bloc's 27 member states.

EU officials said the plan to regulate was bolstered by the recent revelations of Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen.

"We need to provide rules and make platforms more accountable, not rely on voluntary schemes alone," said European Commission Vice President Vera Jourova, who is in charge of values and transparency, tweeted on Wednesday after speaking with Haugen.

Haugen told US lawmakers Tuesday that Facebook fuels division, harms

children and urgently needs to be regulated, drawing pledges Washington would take up long-delayed action.

The EU's annual review showed the removal of hate speech decreased on Facebook and YouTube and increased on Twitter and Instagram.

TikTok, which was evaluated for the first time, removed 80 percent of the content reported.

Hate speech based on [sexual orientation](#) and xenophobia were the most frequently reported, the EU said.

In total, some 4,500 reports were sent to platforms during the monitoring period this year, led by Facebook, followed by Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Jeuxvideo.com and TikTok.

© 2021 AFP

Citation: EU says Facebook, YouTube remove less hate speech (2021, October 7) retrieved 1 April 2023 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-10-eu-facebook-youtube-speech.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.