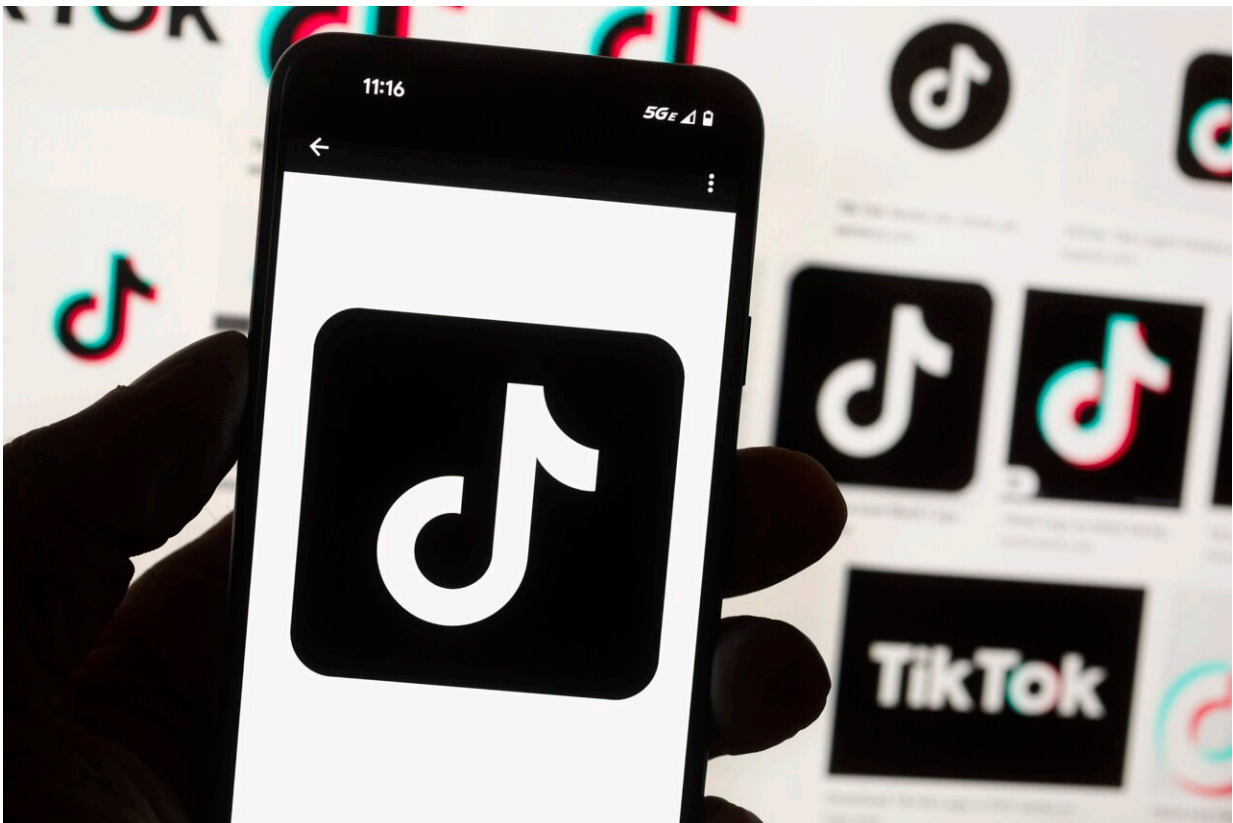


TikTok boss meets European officials as scrutiny intensifies

January 10 2023, by Kelvin Chan



The TikTok logo is seen on a cell phone on Oct. 14, 2022, in Boston. North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper's administration said it is reviewing the use of TikTok on state government devices, as the popular social media app is a growing source of security concerns from politicians in Washington and other states. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer, File

TikTok's CEO met Tuesday with European Union officials about [strict new digital regulations](#) in the 27-nation bloc as the Chinese-owned social media app faces growing scrutiny from Western authorities over data privacy, cybersecurity and misinformation.

In meetings in Brussels, Shou Zi Chew and four officials from the EU's executive Commission discussed concerns ranging from [child safety](#) to investigations into [user data](#) flowing to China, according to European readouts from two of the meetings and tweets from a third.

TikTok is wildly popular with [young people](#) but its Chinese ownership has raised fears that Beijing could use it to scoop up user data or push pro-China narratives or misinformation. TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company that moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020.

U.S. states including Kansas, Wisconsin, Louisiana and [Virginia](#) have moved to ban the video-sharing app from state-issued devices for [government workers](#), and it also would be prohibited from most [U.S. government devices](#) under a congressional spending bill.

Fears were stoked by news reports last year that a China-based team improperly accessed data of U.S. TikTok users, including two journalists, as part of a covert surveillance program to ferret out the source of leaks to the press.

There are also concerns that the company is sending masses of user data to China, in breach of stringent European privacy rules. EU data protection watchdogs in Ireland have opened two investigations into TikTok, including one on its transfer of personal data to China.

"I count on TikTok to fully execute its commitments to go the extra mile in respecting EU law and regaining trust of European regulators," Vera Jourova, the commissioner for values and transparency, said after her

meeting with Chew. "There cannot be any doubt that data of users in Europe are safe and not exposed to illegal access from third-country authorities."

Caroline Greer, TikTok's director of public policy and government relations, said on Twitter that it was a "constructive and helpful meeting."

"Online safety & building trust is our number one priority," Greer tweeted.

The company has said it takes [data security](#) "incredibly seriously" and fired the ByteDance employees involved in improperly accessing user data.

Jourova said she also grilled Chew about child safety, the spread of Russian disinformation on the platform and transparency of paid political content.

Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager, who's in charge of competition and antitrust matters, met with Chew to "review how the company is preparing for complying with its obligations under the European Commission's regulation, namely the Digital Services Act and possibly under the Digital Markets Act."

The Digital Services Act is aimed at cleaning up toxic content from [online platforms](#) and the Digital Markets Act is designed to rein in the power of big digital companies.

They also discussed privacy and data transfer obligations in reference to recent [news reports](#) on "aggressive data harvesting and surveillance in the U.S.," the readout said.

Chew also met with Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders and Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson.

Reynders tweeted that he "insisted on the importance" of TikTok fully complying with EU privacy rules and cooperating with the Irish watchdog.

"We also took stock of the company's commitments to fight [hate speech](#) online and guarantee the protection of all consumers, including children," he said.

Chew is scheduled to hold a video chat with Thierry Breton, the commissioner for digital policy, on Jan. 19.

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