

EU to encourage influencers to have 'positive' impact

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Younger audiences increasingly get their information from influencers as they turn away from traditional media.

The EU announced steps Tuesday to encourage influencers to post content that has a "positive" impact on society, as concerns rise over

disinformation in a fragmented information landscape.

With online creators increasingly the preferred source of news and opinions for younger audiences in the European Union, Brussels said they needed to be helped to use their role wisely.

Ministers from EU countries responsible for culture, audiovisual and media issues approved a series of steps to support influencers and make them more aware of their responsibilities.

They called for member countries and the European Commission to educate [content creators](#) on EU laws that apply to them and "to understand the potential negative impact of sharing mis- and disinformation, [online hate speech](#), cyberbullying and other illegal or [harmful content](#)".

The ministers also said that influencers need to be involved in the writing of EU policies that could impact them, "including the increased use of AI".

Attention was also given to "kidfluencers"—influencers under the age of 18—and how their parents need to ensure they are abiding by online laws.

While influencers foster online communities and provide a sense of belonging on the internet, the content they produce "can potentially be harmful, both to individuals' mental health and at a societal level in areas such as democracy," the Council of the EU representing the member countries said in a statement.

It adopted its list of recommendations for influencers less than a month before EU elections that will decide the next European Parliament, and then indirectly the senior officials in the next European Commission.

Hidden advertising

Concerns have been rising in the EU over efforts to manipulate European public opinion through online platforms.

Russian outlets deemed propaganda tools have been banned, though they can still be found on the web, and officials are probing allegations that Moscow used EU lawmakers and aides to spread disinformation.

The European Commission has also upped scrutiny on online platforms to make sure they comply with new EU laws cracking down on illegal online content.

It has opened investigations into Facebook, Instagram, Elon Musk's X, TikTok and Chinese retailer AliExpress.

In the EU, influencers—who often make money through advertising, sponsorships, or selling through affiliated links to retailers—have to abide by consumer and advertising laws.

Several EU countries have found many have come up short.

French authorities, for instance, have found that, since 2021, 60 percent of [influencers](#) investigated did not properly comply, resulting in fines and, in some cases, forcing the creators to post Instagram stories setting out their violations.

In Spain, the consumer affairs ministry last year conducted a sweep of popular [online platforms](#) and found that 78 percent of content contained undisclosed advertising.

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