



Brussels, 13.02.2018

Dear President Juncker, Vice President Ansip, Commissioner Gabriel, Commissioner Bieńkowska, Commissioner Jourová, Commissioner King, Commissioner Avramopoulos

We the undersigned would like to urge the European Commission to uphold its promise to continue dialogues and exchanges with stakeholders on how best to tackle illegal content online.

At the end of September 2017, the European Commission published its Communication on tackling illegal content online which concluded with:

“The Commission will continue exchanges and dialogues with online platforms and other relevant stakeholders. It will monitor progress and assess whether additional measures are needed, in order to ensure the swift and proactive detection and removal of illegal content online, including possible legislative measures to complement the existing regulatory framework. This work will be completed by May 2018.”

Since then, to the best of our knowledge there have been no major incidents that could be used as a justification to speed up the already ambitious timeline set in the Communication. Despite the follow-up discussion with top industry representatives in January where the Commission confirmed its intent to continue dialogues and fact-finding, we have become aware of a new initiative to be released by the Commission as early as February 2018. Initially, the plan was for this to be a targeted instrument tackling the issue of terrorist content (without the evidence-base for this initiative being clear) - yet it has become known that other types of content will also be covered in what will now take the form of a European Commission Recommendation.

The aim to deliver a comprehensive, evidence-driven initiative by May 2018 was already very ambitious, but performing such task without a structured dialogue with the European Internet sector at large, including European SMEs and start-ups, and civil society would inevitably be detrimental to

maintaining a sturdy e-Commerce framework for the EU, and risks engendering a regulatory framework that is not properly tuned to sectoral dynamics.

We thus strongly urge the European Commission to refrain from proposing any new initiative in this area without first engaging into structured, targeted and multi-stakeholder dialogue.

We hope to have the opportunity to continue the dialogue and exchanges, involving both industry and civil society, with the Commission in the upcoming months,

Yours sincerely,

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