PREVENTING THE DISSEMINATION OF TERRORIST CONTENT ONLINE

Hans Das

Head of Counter-Terrorism Unit

DG HOME

European Commission

The challenge

- Overall terrorist threat picture
- Extensive use of online propaganda by the Islamic State
- Right Wing Violent Extremism and Terrorism on the rise
- The link between online propaganda and terrorist attacks?

EU Internet Forum

- December 2015: internet companies, Member States, Europol, RAN, and academics
- Two key objectives:
  1. Reduce accessibility to terrorist content online
  2. Increase alternative narratives online
- Voluntary initiative

Empowering civil society

- Empowering credible voices to challenge the terrorist narrative and provide positive alternatives;

- Civil Society Empowerment Programme launched in 2017;

- 250 CSOs trained so far to enhance technical expertise;

- Financial support provided;

- 17 projects funded.

Reasons for a regulatory approach

- Terrorist threat

- Continued accessibility of terrorist content online

- Insufficient engagement – potentially 360

- Insufficient response/transparency

- Need for a stable framework in the long term

Balance

- Single Market
- Public security
- Fundamental rights
  - Users' interests
  - Companies' interests

Terrorist Content Online PROPOSAL

MAIN ELEMENTS

Removal orders

- Instrument of binding nature towards the HSP

- Assessment by MS – removal by HSP – in **1 hour**

- Feedback to issuing authority

- Inform MS of jurisdiction when final – trigger proactive measures

Referrals

- Reinforced referral system

- Not only MS law enforcement but also Union bodies

- Removal voluntary against terms & conditions

- Obligation to assess + feedback

Proactive measures

- Overall requirement: be vigilant and assess the risks

- Step-by-step process for companies at risk:
    - Request to report on measures in place
    - Dialogue HSP – national authority
    - No agreement: decision imposing specific proactive measures
    - HSP request to revoke

Safeguards

- Specific safeguards on proactive measures: human, oversight

- Complaint mechanisms, legal redress

- Transparency:
    - to the public (Terms and Conditions, annual reports)
    - to authorities (Reporting under proactive measures)

Cooperation

- Cooperation on removal orders and referrals
- Cooperation on proactive measures and sanctions
- Dedicated tools and channels, possibly ensured via Europol
- HSPs to inform authorities of terrorist offences

Enforcement

- Legal representative

- Monitoring

- Penalties

  - Proportionate, gravity, previous breaches

  - 4% in specific cases

THANK YOU