



## Digital Services Act: Commission welcomes political agreement on rules ensuring a safe and accountable online environment

Brussels, 23 April 2022

The Commission welcomes the swift political agreement reached today between the European Parliament and EU Member States on the proposal on the Digital Services Act (DSA), [proposed by the Commission](#) in December 2020. The DSA sets out an unprecedented new standard for the accountability of online platforms regarding illegal and harmful content. It will provide better protection for internet users and their fundamental rights, as well as define a single set of rules in the internal market, helping smaller platforms to scale up.

European Commission President Ursula **von der Leyen** said: *"Today's agreement on the Digital Services Act is historic, both in terms of speed and of substance. The DSA will upgrade the ground-rules for all online services in the EU. It will ensure that the online environment remains a safe space, safeguarding freedom of expression and opportunities for digital businesses. It gives practical effect to the principle that what is illegal offline, should be illegal online. The greater the size, the greater the responsibilities of online platforms. Today's agreement – complementing the political agreement on the Digital Markets Act last month – sends a strong signal: to all Europeans, to all EU businesses, and to our international counterparts."*

Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, Margrethe **Vestager**, added: *"With the DSA we help create a safe and accountable online environment. Platforms should be transparent about their content moderation decisions, prevent dangerous disinformation from going viral and avoid unsafe products being offered on market places. With today's agreement we ensure that platforms are held accountable for the risks their services can pose to society and citizens."*

Commissioner for the Internal Market Thierry **Breton** further commented: *"With the DSA, the time of big online platforms behaving like they are "too big to care" is coming to an end. The DSA is setting clear, harmonised obligations for platforms – proportionate to size, impact and risk. It entrusts the Commission with supervising very large platforms, including the possibility to impose effective and dissuasive sanctions of up to 6% of global turnover or even a ban on operating in the EU single market in case of repeated serious breaches. EU institutions have worked hand in hand in record time, with determination and ambition to protect our citizens online."*

### A new framework for digital services

The new framework under the DSA is founded on European values, including the respect of human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. It will rebalance the rights and responsibilities of users, online intermediaries, including online platforms as well as very large online platforms, and public authorities.

The DSA contains EU-wide due diligence obligations that will apply to all digital services that connect consumers to goods, services, or content, including new procedures for faster removal of illegal content as well as comprehensive protection for users' fundamental rights online.

In scope of the DSA are various online intermediary services. Their [obligations](#) under the DSA depend on their role, size, and impact on the online ecosystem. These online intermediary services include:

- Intermediary services offering network infrastructure: Internet access providers, domain name registrars;
- Hosting services such as cloud computing and webhosting services;
- Very large online search engines with more than 10% of the 450 million consumers in the EU, and therefore, more responsibility in curbing illegal content online;
- Online platforms bringing together sellers and consumers such as online marketplaces, app stores, collaborative economy platforms and social media platforms;
- Very large online platforms, with a reach of more than 10% of the 450 million consumers in

the EU, which could pose particular risks in the dissemination of illegal content and societal harms.

Concretely, the DSA contains:

- Measures to counter illegal goods, services or content online, such as:
  - a mechanism for users to easily flag such content and for platforms to cooperate with so-called 'trusted flaggers';
  - new obligations on traceability of business users in online market places;
- New measures to empower users and civil society, including:
  - the possibility to challenge platforms' content moderation decisions and seek redress, either via an out-of-court dispute mechanism or judicial redress;
  - provision of access to vetted researchers to the key data of the largest platforms and provision of access to NGOs as regards access to public data, to provide more insight into how online risks evolve;
  - transparency measures for online platforms on a variety of issues, including on the algorithms used for recommending content or products to users;
- Measures to assess and mitigate risks, such as:
  - obligations for very large platforms and very large online search engines to take risk-based action to prevent the misuse of their systems and undergo independent audits of their risk management systems;
  - Mechanisms to adapt swiftly and efficiently in reaction to crises affecting public security or public health;
  - New safeguards for the protection of minors and limits on the use of sensitive personal data for targeted advertising.
- Enhanced supervision and enforcement by the Commission when it comes to very large online platforms. The supervisory and enforcement framework also confirms important role for the independent Digital Services Coordinators and Board for Digital Services.

## Next Steps

The political agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council is now subject to formal approval by the two co-legislators. Once adopted, the DSA will be directly applicable across the EU and will apply fifteen months or from 1 January 2024, whichever later, after entry into force. As regards the very large online platforms and very large online search engines the DSA will apply from an earlier date, that is four months after their designation.

## Background

The Commission made its [proposal](#) on the Digital Services Act on 15 December 2020, together with the proposal for the Digital Markets Act, on which the European Parliament and Council reached a [political agreement](#) on 22 March 2022, an updated Q&A document is available [here](#). The political agreements on these two files will work together to ensure a safe, open and fair online environment in the EU.

## For More Information

[Fact page on the Commission's proposal on the Digital Services Act](#)

[Digital Services Act: Questions and answers](#) on the Commission proposal

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