

EU to press Internet giants over online extremism

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The European Union will ask major US technology companies including Facebook, Google and Twitter to help tackle online extremism at a meeting on Wednesday, officials said.

The dinner meeting in Luxembourg comes amid rising concerns about

the use of the Internet to radicalise young European Muslims who have travelled to fight in Syria and Iraq.

Interior ministers from the 28 EU countries and officials from the European Commission will meet representatives from Internet search giant Google, [social media](#) leaders Facebook and Twitter, and software pioneer Microsoft, a commission spokesman told AFP.

"In particular participants will touch upon the challenges posed by terrorists' use of the Internet and possible responses, and they will discuss the tools and techniques to respond to terrorist online activities," the spokesman said.

Social media has become a powerful tool for jihadis, with the Islamic State group posting several videos online in recent weeks showing the grisly beheadings of western hostages.

But US Internet firms have sometimes been uneasy about blocking extremist material, seeing themselves as platforms rather than publications, and worrying about the implications for free speech.

The participants at the Luxembourg meeting would not discuss any specific measures but would instead look at how private companies and governments could cooperate to tackle online extremism, the commission spokesman said.

The need for the meeting was reinforced given the "background of the flow of so-called foreign fighters as well as calls for 'electronic Jihad' that the EU is facing", the spokesman said.

Around 3,000 Europeans have travelled to fight with the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq, the EU's counter-terrorism coordinator told AFP in September.

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