

Snapchat joins EU group fighting hate speech

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Snapchat has agreed to join an EU-sponsored group of US internet giants to combat hate speech and online extremism, EU officials said on Monday.

Snapchat, a multi-media messaging app, joins Instagram and the Google+ social network as well as founding participants YouTube, Microsoft, Twitter and Facebook in a "code of [conduct](#)" to look at suspicious content within 24 hours and remove it.

"I welcome Snapchat's commitment to tackle illegal online content," EU Justice Commissioner Vera Jourova said in a statement.

"The growing number of participants proves that the EU Code of Conduct is an efficient way to make the internet a safer place," Jourova said.

"This is particularly important as it will help protect the younger generations that use Snapchat."

The EU joined forces with US-based [internet firms](#) two years ago amid growing alarm in Europe over the use of social media as a recruiting tool, especially by the Islamic State group.

Issuing a report in January, Jourova said she would continue having the industry regulate itself under the code of conduct after hailing progress among the internet firms to remove threatening material.

The European Commission, the executive arm of the 28-nation EU, said at the time that IT firms removed 70 percent of the illegal speech notified to them in the few months before January.

That compared to 59 percent before May 2017, and 28 percent in the months after the code of conduct was launched in May 2016.

Jourova added that IT firms have also strengthened cooperation with civil society organisations, including training, to better detect and report suspected cases of [hate speech](#).

The leaders of EU states last year urged [internet firms](#) to do their utmost to combat [online extremism](#) or face the possibility of legislation if industry self-regulation failed.

The EU said it will decide whether further steps are needed in the next few months to fight hate speech.

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