

French MPs back giving online platforms 24 hours to remove hate speech

July 4 2019



French Member of Parliament of the La Republique En Marche party Laetitia Avia speaks during a session at the French National Assembly in Paris

French MPs on Thursday backed a proposal to give online platforms just 24 hours to remove hate speech or face hefty fines, the latest initiative in

Europe to tackle online racism, anti-Semitism, sexism and homophobia.

Members of the lower house of parliament voted by 31 in favour to six against to adopt the first article of a new law proposed by President Emmanuel Macron's party, which is modelled on a similar German law. Four MPs abstained.

Social media sites that fail to comply with the law risk fines of up to 1.25 million euros (\$1.4 million)

A final vote on the full text is expected next Tuesday.

Other parts of the [bill](#) include a proposal to create an identical button across all [social media platforms](#) and search engines enabling users to flag messages that are "obviously" hateful and illegal.

"We should not tolerate on the internet what we do not tolerate on the street," Laetitia Avia, the black MP who drafted the bill, told parliament on Wednesday, adding that she herself could no longer bear being racially abused by social [media](#) trolls.

Critics say the law places too much power in the platforms' hands by making them arbiters of online speech.

MPs debated the bill late into the night Wednesday to try to agree on what constitutes "obviously hateful" messages or videos.

They agreed to include condoning crimes against humanity, but not hateful comments about the state of Israel.

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Citation: French MPs back giving online platforms 24 hours to remove hate speech (2019, July

4) retrieved 10 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2019-07-french-mps-online-platforms-hours.html>

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