

Open letter

Calling for EU protection in response to Meta's Policy Changes and Enforcing Compliance with European Union Regulations letter, 09/01/2025

Dear President Von der Leyen,

We are writing to you to express our deep concerns regarding Meta's recent announcement about the removal of their third-party fact-checking program and its replacement with Community Notes. We believe this policy shift may not adequately address the rigorous standards of protection required under European Union law, especially concerning disinformation and the potential for content to incite violence. The riots witnessed in France and Ireland in the past years, fuelled by misleading content, highlight the serious consequences of unchecked misinformation, which cannot be defended under the guise of freedom of speech.

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We would like to get reassurances that the European Commission will ensure Meta's policy ending third-party fact-checking will be rolled out in the EU only insofar as it is applied in a manner which is fully consistent with Meta's obligations under the Digital Services Act (DSA), particularly the requirement to perform robust risk assessments and implement effective risk mitigation measures. The Commission, under your first mandate, has already launched an investigation into the effectiveness of X's Community Notes in curbing disinformation, with a specific focus on inadequate risk mitigating measures. We take the opportunity of this letter to demand a public account of the state of play of such investigation against X (formerly known as Twitter), initiated in December 2023, for which we expect swift action to be taken, especially in view of recent developments: the DSA was proposed by the Commission with the promise of strong and timely action to protect civic discourse and electoral processes in the EU among others and we demand that this promise by the Commission as DSA enforcer is kept.

Concerning Meta's policy change, it is crucial that the risk assessment be conducted swiftly, and we urge you to make the results publicly available. Indeed, Meta's policy development is particularly concerning in light of the series of cases already ongoing against Meta platforms for compliance with the DSA, on which we also expect the European Commission to act swiftly.

In addition to the protection of the broader public, we are particularly worried about the potential impact of this policy change on minors. It is imperative that young users be afforded the highest level of protection from harmful and misleading content, for example to prevent radicalisation.

Finally, we would like to point out that this policy shift also conflicts with Meta's commitments under the European Union's Code of Practice on Disinformation, which you sponsored in 2022. As this Code is expected to be converted into a formal Code of Conduct under the DSA, any deviation from these commitments is highly concerning.

We expect the European Commission to take this matter seriously and to scrutinize Meta's adherence to its legal obligations. We expect the Commission to act without hesitation, using the full toolbox provided for under the DSA, including interim measures.

We look forward to your prompt and thorough response to these pressing concerns.

Sincerely,
Women Against Fascism

Article 19
Avaaz
Amnesty International
Corporate Europe Observatory
Defend Democracy
HateAid
Lie Detectors
LobbyControl
Media Monitoring Africa
"NEVER AGAIN" Association
Open Markets Europe
SOMO
The Good Lobby
WeMove Europe

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Namita Kambli, just transition advocate

Emre Kızılkaya, Journalist and editor

Nuria Köchling, Oxford Internet Institute

Maria Koomen, democracy and technology scholar

Prof. Stephan Lewandowsky, University of Bristol

Anna Marchese, Columbia World Projects

Paul Mason, Journalist, Author

Chloé Mikolajczak, environmental and social justice activist

Diego Naranjo, human rights advocate

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Adele Zeynep Walton, online safety campaigner

Matti Ylönen, University of Helsinki

Prof. Shoshana Zuboff, Harvard University

“Calling for EU protection in response to Meta’s Policy Changes and Enforcing Compliance with European Union Regulations letter” [open letter]. WomenAgainstFascism.com, 9.01.2025.

<https://womenagainstfascism.com/2025/01/09/open-letter-09-01-2025>