Press release | 28.09.2017

Automatic filters are not the solution

Digital Summit

Ahead of tomorrow's first Digital Summit of Heads of State and Government (Friday, September 29, in Tallinn), the European Commission has presented its plans on how to deal with illegal content on the internet. The Commission approach echoes the stance recently taken by British Prime Minister Theresa May, that internet companies should use automatic filters to remove illegal content online.

Julia Reda, Greens/EFA spokesperson for digital policy, criticises the over-reliance on automated filtering tools:

"The European Commission's idea that complex questions of internet policy can be solved with automated filtering tools is misguided and dangerous. Subjecting everything users upload to the internet to surveillance by filtering algorithms erodes fundamental rights and is sure to lead to 'over-blocking' of legitimate content.

"The European Commission wants platforms to delete content without a judicial decision or administrative act. This would be fully automatic when content has already been classified as illegal in the past. However, this approach is known to regularly lead to blocking of legal content in areas where legality is dependent on context, such as copyright, and must be avoided."

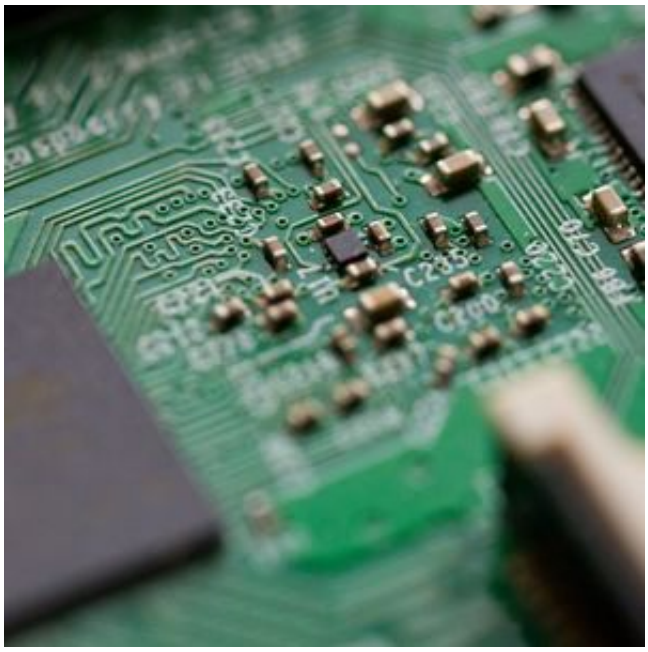
Jan Philipp Albrecht, Greens/EFA spokesperson for justice and home affairs, demands European mandatory standards:

"We need a coherent EU-wide approach to how platforms deal with criminal content. Upholding 28 national legal regimes towards platforms who act in the digital single market is not only absurd, it gives room for those companies to make their own principles and definitions. The EU must use its huge market power to set binding standards for online platforms, with strong protections for fundamental rights."

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