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Press release | 20.01.2022

European Parliament votes on constitution for the internet

Digital Services Act

Today the European Parliament voted to determine its position on the Digital Services Act (DSA), after which the trilogue negotiations with the European Commission and Council will begin. The Greens/EFA have long campaigned for a fairer internet with less power in the hands of tech giants. The DSA is the EU's answer to the fact that a few large online platforms (such as Meta, Google, Apple, Amazon and Microsoft) control the digital ecosystem. The DSA will become the new framework for online services for the EU on how to deal with hate speech, disinformation, platform oversight, reporting procedures and surveillance-based advertising.

Alexandra Geese MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur in the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, comments:

"A digital constitution for Europe has been long overdue. The European Parliament enters the trilogue negotiations on the DSA with a strong position: Tech giants like Facebook and Google must no longer be able to monopolise control over our digital ecosystem. With this law, the EU manages to combat systemic risks while protecting freedom of expression. Platforms become liable for their own behaviour, not for the expressions of their users.

"The ban on surveillance advertising based on sensitive data such as a user's origin, political opinion or sexual orientation as well as the total ban on surveillance advertising to children and young people is a groundbreaking success. The Greens/EFA have successfully pushed for consistent prosecution of illegal content, protection against manipulation, new standards in the protection of minors and for independent audits. Particularly groundbreaking is the new right for NGOs and academic researchers to access data collected by major platforms. Recommendation systems currently promote extremist content and disinformation which endangers our democracy. In the future we will be able to study them and pass evidence-based rules that will make the internet a better place."

Kim van Sparrentak MEP, Greens/EFA member of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, comments:

"With the Digital Services Act, the European Parliament has taken steps towards a better internet and more power to the people online. With clear procedures and independent reviews, platforms will no longer be able

to arbitrarily delete user content and accounts, while also being required to show transparency around their algorithms. This puts the power over the freedom of expression back in our own hands. Furthermore, the EU has made a strong choice to ban manipulation of users' choices online with dark patterns and stop the collection of sensitive information about our health, sexuality and political preferences for ads.

"The Parliament still needs to be more ambitious on fundamentally tackling manipulative algorithms and divisive business models of Big Tech. Profiting from the promotion of hatred and disinformation cannot be tolerated. The DSA falls short when it comes to toxic personalised algorithms, which are still the default under this law. Transparency alone is a first step, but we need to act against the algorithms that are eroding our democracies. The Greens/EFA Group will continue the fight for EU-wide protection from online hatred and disinformation, in addition to a European regulator with strong supervisory powers."

More:

The outcome of the final vote is expected around 16:00.

In the upcoming negotiations with the Council and the European Commission, the European Parliament will push for a ban on personalised advertising based on sensitive data such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, political opinion or trade union membership, a total ban on profile-based surveillance advertising for children and young people, and a "Do not track me" default setting in the browser instead of cookie banners. Furthermore, according to the EU-Parliament's position, it will no longer be possible to deny access to content if users do not give their consent to data processing (so-called cookie walls).

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