TABLETOP EXERCISE AT EUROPOL ON TERRORIST CONTENT DISSEMINATION ONLINE

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Press Release

The EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU), EU Member States, third countries and online service providers (OSPs) are joining forces to strengthen global action in the fight against terrorism online.

On 11 September, the EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) organised a tabletop exercise with EU Member States' law enforcement authorities, third countries and online service providers (OSPs) at Europol's headquarters, in The Hague, under the umbrella of the European Commission-led EU Internet Forum.

The aim of the exercise was to inform and work on the development of an EU-led voluntary mechanism to enable a coordinated response to a cross-border massive abuse of the internet in the context of terrorism or violent extremism. The exercise was attended by a number of EU Member States (Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom), third countries (Australia, Canada, Jordan and New Zealand), OSPs (Facebook, Files.fm, Google, Justpaste.it, YouTube, Microsoft, Telegram and Twitter), Tech Against Terrorism (an initiative working with the global tech industry to tackle terrorist use of the internet), and the European Strategic Communications Network.

In the aftermath of the terror attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2019, the EU Internet Forum committed itself to supporting the Christchurch Call to Action, which aims to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online. The Christchurch attack highlighted the need for a coordinated cross-border response across OSPs and EU law enforcement in relation to terrorist or violent extremist incidents that include a significant online component.

It also demonstrated how an offline event in one country can have an immediate impact across the globe: the attack was livestreamed online and the video was immediately reproduced and shared at an unprecedented rate by both supporters of the attack and a variety of user communities, and mainstream media. The speed and volume of internet abuse during and in the immediate aftermath of the attack, and the vast number of OSPs' platforms and services that were misused and exploited highlighted the limitations of existing processes to address similar threats.

Since the creation of the EU IRU, Europol has enjoyed good cooperation with OSPs in tackling terrorist content online. The tabletop exercise, the first of its kind since the launch of the Christchurch Call to Action, marks a milestone towards closer cooperation between all parties involved in further improving the fight against terrorism online.

CRIME AREAS   Terrorism
TARGET GROUPS   General Public • Law Enforcement • Academia • Professor • Students • Researcher •
Press/Journalists • Other
ENTITIES   EU Internet Referal Unit (EU IRU)
ORGANISATIONS   Google • Microsoft
SUPPORT &   Operational coordination
SERVICES

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