

Digital Services Act package: open public consultation

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The Commission recently [announced](#) a Digital Services Act package with two main pillars:

- first, a proposal of new and revised rules to deepen the Single Market for Digital Services, by increasing and harmonising the responsibilities of online platforms and information service providers and reinforce the oversight over platforms' content policies in the EU;
- second, ex ante rules to ensure that markets characterised by large platforms with significant network effects acting as gatekeepers, remain fair and contestable for innovators, businesses, and new market entrants.

T h i s c o n s u l t a t i o n

The Commission is initiating the present open public consultation as part of its evidence-gathering exercise, in order to identify issues that may require intervention through the Digital Services Act, as well as additional topics related to the environment of digital services and online platforms, which will be further analysed in view of possible upcoming initiatives, should the issues identified require a regulatory intervention.

The consultation contains 6 modules (you can respond to as many as you like):

1. **How to effectively keep users safer online?**
2. **Reviewing the liability regime of digital services acting as intermediaries?**
3. **What issues derive from the gatekeeper power of digital platforms?**
4. **Other emerging issues and opportunities, including online advertising and smart contracts**
5. **How to address challenges around the situation of self-employed individuals offering services through online platforms?**
6. **What governance for reinforcing the Single Market for digital services?**

Digital services and other terms used in the questionnaire

The questionnaire refers to **digital services** (or ‘information society services’, within the meaning of the E-Commerce Directive), as 'services provided through electronic means, at a distance, at the request of the user'. It also refers more narrowly to a subset of digital services here termed **online intermediary services**. By this we mean services such as internet access providers, cloud services, online platforms, messaging services, etc., i.e. services that generally transport or intermediate content, goods or services made available by third parties. Parts of the questionnaire specifically focus on **online platforms** – such as e-commerce marketplaces, search engines, app stores, online travel and accommodation platforms or mobility platforms and other collaborative economy platforms, etc.

Other terms and other technical concepts are explained in [a glossary](#).

H o w t o r e s p o n d

Make sure to **save your draft** regularly as you fill in the questionnaire. You can break off and return to finish it at any time. At the end, you will also be able to upload a document or add other issues not covered in detail in the questionnaire.

D e a d l i n e f o r r e s p o n s e s

8 S e p t e m b e r 2 0 2 0 .

L a n g u a g e s

You can submit your response in any official EU language. The questionnaire is available in 23 of the EU's official languages. You can switch languages from the menu at the top of the page.

About you

* 1 Language of my contribution

- Bulgarian
- Croatian
- Czech
- Danish
- Dutch
- English
- Estonian
- Finnish

- French
- Gaelic
- German
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Italian
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Maltese
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Slovak
- Slovenian
- Spanish
- Swedish

* 2 I am giving my contribution as

- Academic/research institution
- Business association
- Company/business organisation
- Consumer organisation
- EU citizen
- Environmental organisation
- Non-EU citizen
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Public authority
- Trade union
- Other

* 3 First name

Chris

* 4 Surname

BUCKRIDGE

* 5 Email (this won't be published)

chrisb@ripe.net

* 7 Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC)

* 8 Organisation size

- Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- Small (10 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250 or more)

9 What is the annual turnover of your company?

- <=€2m
- <=€10m
- <= €50m
- Over €50m

10 Are you self-employed and offering services through an online platform?

- Yes
- No

11 Would you describe your company as :

- a startup?
- a scaleup?
- a conglomerate offering a wide range of services online?

12 Is your organisation:

- an online intermediary
- an association representing the interests of online intermediaries
- a digital service provider, other than an online intermediary
- an association representing the interests of such digital services
- a different type of business than the options above
- an association representing the interest of such businesses

other

16 Does your organisation play a role in:

- Flagging illegal activities or information to online intermediaries for removal
- Fact checking and/or cooperating with online platforms for tackling harmful (but not illegal) behaviours
- Representing fundamental rights in the digital environment
- Representing consumer rights in the digital environment
- Representing rights of victims of illegal activities online
- Representing interests of providers of services intermediated by online platforms
- Other

17 Is your organisation a

- Law enforcement authority, in a Member State of the EU
- Government, administrative or other public authority, other than law enforcement, in a Member State of the EU
- Other, independent authority, in a Member State of the EU
- EU-level authority
- International level authority, other than at EU level
- Other

18 Is your business established in the EU?

- Yes
- No

19 Please select the EU Member States where your organisation is established or currently has a legal representative in:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Denmark
- Estonia

- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden

20 Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the [transparency register](#). It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

075577725582-66

* 21 Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Afghanistan | <input type="radio"/> Djibouti | <input type="radio"/> Libya | <input type="radio"/> Saint Martin |
| <input type="radio"/> Åland Islands | <input type="radio"/> Dominica | <input type="radio"/> Liechtenstein | <input type="radio"/> Saint Pierre and Miquelon |
| <input type="radio"/> Albania | <input type="radio"/> Dominican Republic | <input type="radio"/> Lithuania | <input type="radio"/> Saint Vincent and the Grenadines |
| <input type="radio"/> Algeria | <input type="radio"/> Ecuador | <input type="radio"/> Luxembourg | <input type="radio"/> Samoa |
| <input type="radio"/> American Samoa | <input type="radio"/> Egypt | <input type="radio"/> Macau | <input type="radio"/> San Marino |

- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar /Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland

- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States

- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

*22 Publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

Anonymous

Only your type of respondent, country of origin and contribution will be published. All other personal details (name, organisation name and size, transparency register number) will not be published.

Public

Your personal details (name, organisation name and size, transparency register number, country of origin) will be published with your contribution.

I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)

I. How to effectively keep users safer online?

This module of the questionnaire is structured into several subsections:

First, it seeks evidence, experience, and data from the perspective of different stakeholders regarding illegal activities online, as defined by national and EU law. This includes the availability online of illegal goods (e.g. dangerous products, counterfeit goods, prohibited and restricted goods, protected wildlife, pet trafficking, illegal medicines, misleading offerings of food supplements), content (e.g. illegal hate speech, child sexual abuse material, content that infringes intellectual property rights), and services, or practices that infringe consumer law (such as scams, misleading advertising, exhortation to purchase made to children) online. It covers all types of illegal activities, both as regards criminal law and civil law.

It then asks you about other activities online that are not necessarily illegal but could cause harm to users, such as the spread of online disinformation or harmful content to minors.

It also seeks facts and informed views on the potential risks of erroneous removal of legitimate content. It also asks you about the transparency and accountability of measures taken by digital services and online platforms in particular in intermediating users' access to their content and enabling oversight by third parties. Respondents might also be interested in related questions in the module of the consultation focusing on online advertising.

Second, it explores proportionate and appropriate responsibilities and obligations that could be required from online intermediaries, in particular online platforms, in addressing the set of issues discussed in the first sub-section.

This module does not address the liability regime for online intermediaries, which is further explored in the next module of the consultation.

1. Main issues and experiences

A. Experiences and data on illegal activities online

Illegal goods


1 Have you ever come across illegal goods on online platforms (e.g. a counterfeit product, prohibited and restricted goods, protected wildlife, pet trafficking, illegal medicines, misleading offerings of food supplements)?

- No, never
- Yes, once
- Yes, several times
- I don't know


3 Please specify.

3000 character(s) maximum


4 How easy was it for you to find information on where you could report the illegal good?

Please rate from 1 star (very difficult) to 5 stars (very easy)	
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5 How easy was it for you to report the illegal good?

Please rate from 1 star (very difficult) to 5 stars (very easy)	
---	---

6 How satisfied were you with the procedure following your report?

Please rate from 1 star (very dissatisfied) to 5 stars (very satisfied)	
---	---

7 Are you aware of the action taken following your report?

- Yes
- No

8 Please explain

3000 character(s) maximum

9 In your experience, were such goods more easily accessible online since the outbreak of COVID-19?

- No, I do not think so
- Yes, I came across illegal offerings more frequently
- I don't know

10 What good practices can you point to in handling the availability of illegal goods online since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak?

5000 character(s) maximum

Illegal content

11 Did you ever come across illegal content online (for example illegal incitement to violence, hatred or discrimination on any protected grounds such as race, ethnicity,

gender or sexual orientation; child sexual abuse material; terrorist propaganda; defamation; content that infringes intellectual property rights, consumer law infringements)?

- No, never
- Yes, once
- Yes, several times
- I don't know

18 How has the dissemination of illegal content changed since the outbreak of COVID-19? Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

19 What good practices can you point to in handling the dissemination of illegal content online since the outbreak of COVID-19?

3000 character(s) maximum

20 What actions do online platforms take to minimise risks for consumers to be exposed to scams and other unfair practices (e.g. misleading advertising, exhortation to purchase made to children)?

3000 character(s) maximum

21 Do you consider these measures appropriate?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

22 Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

B. Transparency

1 If your content or offering of goods and services was ever removed or blocked from an online platform, were you informed by the platform?

- Yes, I was informed before the action was taken
- Yes, I was informed afterwards
- Yes, but not on every occasion / not by all the platforms
- No, I was never informed
- I don't know

3 Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

4 If you provided a notice to a digital service asking for the removal or disabling of access to such content or offering of goods or services, were you informed about the follow-up to the request?

- Yes, I was informed
- Yes, but not on every occasion / not by all platforms
- No, I was never informed
- I don't know

5 When content is recommended to you - such as products to purchase on a platform, or videos to watch, articles to read, users to follow - are you able to obtain enough information on why such content has been recommended to you? Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

C. Activities that could cause harm but are not, in themselves, illegal

1 In your experience, are children adequately protected online from harmful behaviour, such as grooming and bullying, or inappropriate content?

3000 character(s) maximum

2 To what extent do you agree with the following statements related to online disinformation?

	Fully agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree not disagree	Somewhat disagree	Fully disagree	I don't know/ No reply
Online platforms can easily be manipulated by foreign governments or other coordinated groups to spread divisive messages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To protect freedom of expression online, diverse voices should be heard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disinformation is spread by manipulating algorithmic processes on online platforms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online platforms can be trusted that their internal practices sufficiently guarantee democratic integrity, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and gender equality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3 Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

4 In your personal experience, how has the spread of harmful (but not illegal) activities online changed since the outbreak of COVID-19? Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

5 What good practices can you point to in tackling such harmful activities since the outbreak of COVID-19?

3000 character(s) maximum

D. Experiences and data on erroneous removals

This section covers situation where content, goods or services offered online may be removed erroneously contrary to situations where such a removal may be justified due to for example illegal nature of such content, good or service (see sections of this questionnaire above).

1 Are you aware of evidence on the scale and impact of erroneous removals of content, goods, services, or banning of accounts online? Are there particular experiences you could share?

5000 character(s) maximum

The following questions are targeted at organisations.

Individuals responding to the consultation are invited to go to section 2 here below on responsibilities for online platforms and other digital services

3 What is your experience in flagging content, or offerings of goods or services you deemed illegal to online platforms and/or other types of online intermediary services? Please explain in what capacity and through what means you flag content.

3000 character(s) maximum

4 If applicable, what costs does your organisation incur in such activities?

3000 character(s) maximum

5 Have you encountered any issues, in particular, as regards illegal content or goods accessible from the EU but intermediated by services established in third countries? If yes, how have you dealt with these?

3000 character(s) maximum

6 If part of your activity is to send notifications or orders for removing illegal content or goods or services made available through online intermediary services, or taking other actions in relation to content, goods or services, please explain whether you report on your activities and their outcomes:

- Yes, through regular transparency reports
- Yes, through reports to a supervising authority
- Yes, upon requests to public information

- Yes, through other means. Please explain
- No, no such reporting is done

8 Does your organisation access any data or information from online platforms?

- Yes, data regularly reported by the platform, as requested by law
- Yes, specific data, requested as a competent authority
- Yes, through bilateral or special partnerships
- On the basis of a contractual agreement with the platform
- Yes, generally available transparency reports
- Yes, through generally available APIs (application programme interfaces)
- Yes, through web scraping or other independent web data extraction approaches
- Yes, because users made use of their right to port personal data
- Yes, other. Please specify in the text box below
- No


10 What sources do you use to obtain information about users of online platforms and other digital services – such as sellers of products online, service providers, website holders or providers of content online? For what purpose do you seek this information?

3000 character(s) maximum

11 Do you use WHOIS information about the registration of domain names and related information?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

13 How valuable is this information for you?

Please rate from 1 star (not particularly important) to 5 (extremely important)	
---	---

14 Do you use or are you aware of alternative sources of such data? Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

The following questions are targeted at online intermediaries.

A. Measures taken against illegal goods, services and content online shared by users

1 What systems, if any, do you have in place for addressing illegal activities conducted by the users of your service (sale of illegal goods -e.g. a counterfeit product, an unsafe product, prohibited and restricted goods, wildlife and pet trafficking - dissemination of illegal content or illegal provision of services)?

- A notice-and-action system for users to report illegal activities
- A dedicated channel through which authorities report illegal activities
- Cooperation with trusted organisations who report illegal activities, following a fast-track assessment of the notification
- A system for the identification of professional users ('know your customer')
- A system for penalising users who are repeat offenders
- A system for informing consumers that they have purchased an illegal good, once you become aware of this
- Multi-lingual moderation teams
- Automated systems for detecting illegal activities. Please specify the detection system and the type of illegal content it is used for
- Other systems. Please specify in the text box below
- No system in place

2 Please explain.

5000 character(s) maximum

The measures we have in place to monitor and address illegal content require human intervention by us and /or external parties. At the moment we do not rely on automated means for detecting illegal content posted by the users of our services.

Once we become aware that illegal content is found on any of the services that we host or provide, we will take actions to remove it and inform the notice provider (if any) and the offender that the post has been removed. How each of the services are monitored is described in more detail below.

The RIPE community is organised in working groups that discuss topics relevant to the RIPE community in dedicated mailing lists. Each working group has appointed chairs who are responsible for facilitating and moderating the community's discussions in line with the RIPE Mailing List / RIPE Forum Code of Conduct. According to this, the RIPE Chair and the working group chairs have the authority to moderate or ban disruptive community members if they decide this is necessary. Community members may also inform the relevant chair or the RIPE community Chair if they believe someone is behaving contrary to the Code of Conduct.

If content is reported as illegal or illegal content comes to the attention of the chairs of a working group in

some other manner, the RIPE Chair or the RIPE NCC, in cooperation with the working group chairs and the RIPE Chair (where appropriate), would evaluate the content and whether it is legal or not. If the content is deemed to be illegal, the RIPE NCC will remove it from the publicly available archives.

A similar process is followed for the RIPE NCC membership mailing lists with the only difference that the monitoring and the evaluation of the legality of a post is performed solely by the RIPE NCC. Again, if we deem the content to be illegal, we will remove it from the mailing list archives.

Regarding the publication platform we maintain (RIPE Labs), where researchers, network operators and others may post articles, the articles are reviewed before being published. Similarly, any proposal for a presentation at a RIPE NCC-organised event is reviewed by the responsible organising committee. This happens before the event takes place to verify it is within the scope of the topics that are relevant to the RIPE community.

Lastly, users of our meeting networking application are informed that they may report abuse to a dedicated email address. Upon receipt of a notice by a user that illegal content is being circulated, we would perform our evaluation in order to determine whether any action must be taken from our side.

3 What issues have you encountered in operating these systems?

5000 character(s) maximum

We have not experienced any issues.

4 On your marketplace (if applicable), do you have specific policies or measures for the identification of sellers established outside the European Union ?

- Yes
- No

5 Please quantify, to the extent possible, the costs of the measures related to 'notice-and-action' or other measures for the reporting and removal of different types of illegal goods, services and content, as relevant.

5000 character(s) maximum

Acting upon a notice of illegal content is a multidisciplinary exercise for us that requires the involvement of different stakeholders from across the organisation, RIPE community members (in certain cases) and perhaps external advisors.

The costs of such an exercise comprise the time spent by those involved as well as the fees of external advisors (where applicable).

6 Please provide information and figures on the amount of different types of illegal content, services and goods notified, detected, removed, reinstated and on the number or complaints received from users. Please explain and/or link to publicly reported information if you publish this in regular transparency reports.

5000 character(s) maximum

Since the beginning of 2020 we have received two requests for the removal of (allegedly) illegal content.

One case related to copyrighted material that was part of a presentation which remained publicly available on a RIPE NCC website. We complied with the request and updated the presentation accordingly.

The other request related to an allegedly defamatory post in one of the RIPE community mailing lists. As it could not be established that the content was illegal, no further actions were taken to remove it from the publicly available archives of that mailing list. We have informed the requester appropriately.

7 Do you have in place measures for detecting and reporting the incidence of suspicious behaviour (i.e. behaviour that could lead to criminal acts such as acquiring materials for such acts)?

3000 character(s) maximum

We do not have measures specifically for the detection and reporting of such types of behaviour. In line with our current internal escalation and review process, if we detected or were notified about such behaviour, depending on the context, we would handle this as required by the applicable law and our legal framework.

B. Measures against other types of activities that might be harmful but are not, in themselves, illegal

1 Do your terms and conditions and/or terms of service ban activities such as:

- Spread of political disinformation in election periods?
- Other types of coordinated disinformation e.g. in health crisis?
- Harmful content for children?
- Online grooming, bullying?
- Harmful content for other vulnerable persons?
- Content which is harmful to women?
- Hatred, violence and insults (other than illegal hate speech)?
- Other activities which are not illegal per se but could be considered harmful?

2 Please explain your policy.

5000 character(s) maximum

The Code of Conduct that applies to the RIPE community and some of the RIPE NCC membership mailing lists directs that people should treat each other with tolerance and respect. Demeaning, intimidating or harming other members is wrong. Especially behaviour that offends based on gender, sexual orientation, religion, race or ethnic origin or other perceived social, cultural or personal differences is not acceptable.

Attendees at a RIPE NCC-organised event are asked to treat each other with respect and tolerance.

With regard to the RIPE NCC networking application, users are required to not offend, abuse or harm any of the other users. This includes spamming, messages with harmful content or acting in a way that may not be received as acceptable behaviour.

3 Do you have a system in place for reporting such activities? What actions do they trigger?

3000 character(s) maximum

Violations of the Code of Conduct may be reported by any community member to the RIPE Chair, any chair of a working group or the RIPE NCC via the designated email addresses. Similarly a violation of the expected behaviour at a RIPE NCC-organised event may be reported to the RIPE NCC. Such a report would trigger a follow-up investigation from the party in charge; for example, the chairs of the working group where a harmful activity has taken place on that working group's mailing list, or the RIPE NCC in the case of an activity on a membership mailing list or at a RIPE NCC-organised event.

Users of the networking application may report any abuse incidents via the designated email address. Such a report would trigger further investigation from the RIPE NCC and, depending on the circumstances, the possible suspension of the offender from this service.

4 What other actions do you take? Please explain for each type of behaviour considered.

5000 character(s) maximum

In general, the purpose of the RIPE community and membership mailing lists is to facilitate open and transparent discussion on matters of interest to the RIPE community and the association respectively. To fulfil this purpose and for transparency reasons, the RIPE NCC has a mandate to keep a public archive of these discussions on its website. The RIPE NCC does not adopt or support comments and opinions expressed in these mailing lists by the various participants.

In the case of a post that is allegedly harmful towards one person but falls within the scope of the topics that are meant to be discussed on that particular mailing list, the RIPE NCC tries to offer alternatives to the requester; we encourage the requester to contact the author of the post and ask them to retract it and/or apologise, and/or make a public statement on the relevant mailing list stating their position on the matter.

If a post violates the Code of Conduct, it might be removed from the mailing list. Depending on the circumstances and if the offender keeps repeating the violation, any future posts by them might be placed under moderation.

5 Please quantify, to the extent possible, the costs related to such measures.

5000 character(s) maximum

The costs of this exercise entail the time spent to review the situation, evaluate what actions we may or may not take and, potentially, the expenses of external advisors on the matter.

6 Do you have specific policies in place to protect minors from harmful behaviours such as online grooming or bullying?

- Yes
- No

7 Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

Our services are not targeted to minors; therefore, we do not have specific policies in place for them.

C. Measures for protecting legal content goods and services

1 Does your organisation maintain an internal complaint and redress mechanism to your users for instances where their content might be erroneously removed, or their accounts blocked?

- Yes
- No

2 What action do you take when a user disputes the removal of their goods or content or services, or restrictions on their account? Is the content/good reinstated?

5000 character(s) maximum

As previously explained, we do not adopt or support comments and opinions expressed by participants in the mailing lists we host, and for transparency reasons we have the mandate to keep the archives of these lists publicly available.

We are very careful when required to intervene in discussions that take place between RIPE community or RIPE NCC members and would therefore not remove any content without solid proof that it is illegal. The same applies to posts on our publication platform, meeting networking application and our events' presentation and discussion archives.

If legal content was removed erroneously, we would reinstate it and, depending on the circumstances, inform the related parties accordingly.

3 What are the quality standards and control mechanism you have in place for the automated detection or removal tools you are using for e.g. content, goods, services, user accounts or bots?

3000 character(s) maximum

We do not use any automated detection or removal tools. We base our decision on the evidence received, the applicable legal framework and a risk assessment of removing certain content against freedom of speech and our right to conduct business.

4 Do you have an independent oversight mechanism in place for the enforcement of your content policies?

- Yes
- No

5 Please explain.

5000 character(s) maximum

In the case of the RIPE community mailing lists, we have the independent oversight of the RIPE Chair and the chairs of the various working groups. More specifically, it is they who promote the RIPE community's values and therefore oversee the moderation of the mailing lists. We do not have the authority to remove a post that is not illegal or a clear violation of the Code of Conduct, unless they ask us to do so.

D. Transparency and cooperation

1 Do you actively provide the following information:

- Information to users when their good or content is removed, blocked or demoted
- Information to notice providers about the follow-up on their report
- Information to buyers of a product which has then been removed as being illegal

2 Do you publish transparency reports on your content moderation policy?

- Yes
- No

3 Do the reports include information on:

- Number of takedowns and account suspensions following enforcement of your terms of service?
- Number of takedowns following a legality assessment?
- Notices received from third parties?
- Referrals from authorities for violations of your terms of service?
- Removal requests from authorities for illegal activities?
- Number of complaints against removal decisions?
- Number of reinstated content?
- Other, please specify in the text box below

4 Please explain.

5000 character(s) maximum

5 What information is available on the automated tools you use for identification of illegal content, goods or services and their performance, if applicable? Who has access to this information? In what formats?

5000 character(s) maximum

6 How can third parties access data related to your digital service and under what conditions?

- Contractual conditions
- Special partnerships
- Available APIs (application programming interfaces) for data access
- Reported, aggregated information through reports
- Portability at the request of users towards a different service
- At the direct request of a competent authority
- Regular reporting to a competent authority
- Other means. Please specify

7 Please explain or give references for the different cases of data sharing and explain your policy on the different purposes for which data is shared.

5000 character(s) maximum

As a Regional Internet Registry, we administer information relating to Internet number resources and the holders of those resources. Some of this information is publicly available, whereas other information about our contractual parties is confidential.

Aside from that, we collect and have at our disposal a lot of Internet-related data (e.g. Internet measurements) that we make publicly available, for the benefit of the RIPE community, on our website and via APIs, etc. On a case-to-case basis, and depending on the sensitivity of the requested information, we may enter into specific agreements with researchers and academic institutions to share Internet-related data that is not publicly available and is useful for research purposes. This is done in accordance with the relevant applicable framework (e.g. GDPR).

Regarding requests for information from competent authorities, we have established a procedure describing how and under what conditions we may share information with them. When publicly available information is requested (e.g. information that is accessible via the RIPE NCC website, records that are public via the RIPE Database, etc.), we will direct the relevant authority to this information. We provide non-publicly available information about our contractual parties to a competent authority only if we receive a Dutch court order or other legally binding order presented by a Dutch authority. More information on how we process these requests can be found here: <https://www.ripe.net/publications/docs/ripe-675>

The following questions are open for all respondents.

2. Clarifying responsibilities for online platforms and other digital services

1 What responsibilities (i.e. legal obligations) should be imposed on online platforms and under what conditions?

Should such measures be taken, in your view, by all online platforms, or only by specific ones (e.g. depending on their size, capability, extent of risks of exposure to

illegal activities conducted by their users)? If you consider that some measures should only be taken by large online platforms, please identify which would these measures be.

	Yes, by all online platforms, based on the activities they intermediate (e.g. content hosting, selling goods or services)	Yes, only by larger online platforms	Yes, only platforms at particular risk of exposure to illegal activities by their users	Such measures should not be required by law
Maintain an effective 'notice and action' system for reporting illegal goods or content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintain a system for assessing the risk of exposure to illegal goods or content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have content moderation teams, appropriately trained and resourced	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Systematically respond to requests from law enforcement authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperate with national authorities and law enforcement, in accordance with clear procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperate with trusted organisations with proven expertise that can report illegal activities for fast analysis ('trusted flaggers')	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Detect illegal content, goods or services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In particular where they intermediate sales of goods or services, inform their professional users about their obligations under EU law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Request professional users to identify themselves clearly ('know your customer' policy)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide technical means allowing professional users to comply with their obligations (e.g. enable them to publish on the platform the pre-contractual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

information consumers need to receive in accordance with applicable consumer law)				
Inform consumers when they become aware of product recalls or sales of illegal goods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperate with other online platforms for exchanging best practices, sharing information or tools to tackle illegal activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be transparent about their content policies, measures and their effects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintain an effective 'counter-notice' system for users whose goods or content is removed to dispute erroneous decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other. Please specify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2 Please elaborate, if you wish to further explain your choices.

5000 character(s) maximum

3 What information would be, in your view, necessary and sufficient for users and third parties to send to an online platform in order to notify an illegal activity (sales of illegal goods, offering of services or sharing illegal content) conducted by a user of the service?

- Precise location: e.g. URL
- Precise reason why the activity is considered illegal
- Description of the activity
- Identity of the person or organisation sending the notification. Please explain under what conditions such information is necessary:
- Other, please specify

4 Please explain

3000 character(s) maximum

5 How should the reappearance of illegal content, goods or services be addressed, in your view? What approaches are effective and proportionate?

5000 character(s) maximum

6 Where automated tools are used to detect illegal content, goods or services, what opportunities and risks does their use present as regards different types of illegal activities and the particularities of the different types of tools?

3000 character(s) maximum

7 How should the spread of illegal goods, services or content across multiple platforms and services be addressed? Are there specific provisions necessary for addressing risks brought by:

- a. Digital services established outside of the Union?
- b. Sellers established outside of the Union, who reach EU consumers through online platforms?

3000 character(s) maximum

8 What would be appropriate and proportionate measures for digital services acting as online intermediaries, other than online platforms, to take – e.g. other types of hosting services, such as web hosts, or services deeper in the internet stack, like cloud infrastructure services, content distribution services, DNS services, etc.?

5000 character(s) maximum

We believe that it is appropriate to keep the required duty of care of each stakeholder in the Internet chain equivalent to their level of involvement. In our opinion, the current safe harbour principle, under which certain online intermediary providers are exempt from liability in certain circumstances, should be preserved.

9 What should be the rights and responsibilities of other entities, such as authorities, or interested third-parties such as civil society organisations or equality bodies in contributing to tackle illegal activities online?

5000 character(s) maximum

10 What would be, in your view, appropriate and proportionate measures for online platforms to take in relation to activities or content which might cause harm but are not necessarily illegal?

5000 character(s) maximum

11 In particular, are there specific measures you would find appropriate and proportionate for online platforms to take in relation to potentially harmful activities or content concerning minors? Please explain.

5000 character(s) maximum

12 Please rate the necessity of the following measures for addressing the spread of disinformation online. Please rate from 1 (not at all necessary) to 5 (essential) each option below.

	1 (not at all necessary)	2	3 (neutral)	4	5 (essential)	I don't know / No answer
Transparently inform consumers about political advertising and sponsored content, in particular during election periods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide users with tools to flag disinformation online and establishing transparent procedures for dealing with user complaints	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tackle the use of fake-accounts, fake engagements, bots and inauthentic users behaviour aimed at amplifying false or misleading narratives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transparency tools and secure access to platform data for trusted researchers in order to monitor inappropriate behaviour and better understand the impact of disinformation and the policies designed to counter it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transparency tools and secure access to platform data for authorities in order to monitor inappropriate behaviour and better understand the impact of disinformation and the policies designed to counter it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adapted risk assessments and mitigation strategies undertaken by online platforms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Ensure effective access and visibility of a variety of authentic and professional journalistic sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Auditing systems for platform actions and risk assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulatory oversight and auditing competence over platforms' actions and risk assessments, including on sufficient resources and staff, and responsible examination of metrics and capacities related to fake accounts and their impact on the manipulation and amplification of disinformation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13 Please specify

3000 character(s) maximum

14 In special cases, where crises emerge and involve systemic threats to society, such as a health pandemic, and fast-spread of illegal and harmful activities online, what are, in your view, the appropriate cooperation mechanisms between digital services and authorities?

3000 character(s) maximum

We have done some analysis of the dynamics at work during the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to the development of Internet-related regulation. An article can be found here: <https://labs.ripe.net/Members/chrisb/covid-19-changing-the-internet-governance-landscape>

The article notes that there is a danger is that the urgency associated with crisis situations can lead to policy that is hastily conceived and implemented, under-researched, and difficult to roll back. Maintaining (and further developing) the connections established or solidified between governments and the technical community (including operators, researchers and administrative organisations) during this crisis periods will help mitigate that danger.

15 What would be effective measures service providers should take, in your view, for protecting the freedom of expression of their users? Please rate from 1 (not at all necessary) to 5 (essential).

	1 (not at all necessary)	2	3 (neutral)	4	5 (essential)	I don't know / No answer

High standards of transparency on their terms of service and removal decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diligence in assessing the content notified to them for removal or blocking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining an effective complaint and redress mechanism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diligence in informing users whose content/goods/services was removed or blocked or whose accounts are threatened to be suspended	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High accuracy and diligent control mechanisms, including human oversight, when automated tools are deployed for detecting, removing or demoting content or suspending users' accounts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enabling third party insight – e.g. by academics – of main content moderation systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other. Please specify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16 Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

17 Are there other concerns and mechanisms to address risks to other fundamental rights such as freedom of assembly, non-discrimination, gender equality, freedom to conduct a business, or rights of the child? How could these be addressed?

5000 character(s) maximum

18 In your view, what information should online platforms make available in relation to their policy and measures taken with regard to content and goods offered by their users? Please elaborate, with regard to the identification of illegal content and goods, removal, blocking or demotion of content or goods offered, complaints mechanisms and reinstatement, the format and frequency of such information, and who can access the information.

5000 character(s) maximum

19 What type of information should be shared with users and/or competent authorities and other third parties such as trusted researchers with regard to the use of automated systems used by online platforms to detect, remove and/or block illegal content, goods, or user accounts?

5000 character(s) maximum

20 In your view, what measures are necessary with regard to algorithmic recommender systems used by online platforms?

5000 character(s) maximum

21 In your view, is there a need for enhanced data sharing between online platforms and authorities, within the boundaries set by the General Data Protection Regulation? Please select the appropriate situations, in your view:

- For supervisory purposes concerning professional users of the platform - e.g. in the context of platform intermediated services such as accommodation or ride-hailing services, for the purpose of labour inspection, for the purpose of collecting tax or social security contributions
- For supervisory purposes of the platforms' own obligations – e.g. with regard to content moderation obligations, transparency requirements, actions taken in electoral contexts and against inauthentic behaviour and foreign interference
- Specific request of law enforcement authority or the judiciary
- On a voluntary and/or contractual basis in the public interest or for other purposes

22 Please explain. What would be the benefits? What would be concerns for companies, consumers or other third parties?

5000 character(s) maximum

23 What types of sanctions would be effective, dissuasive and proportionate for online platforms which systematically fail to comply with their obligations (See also the last module of the consultation)?

5000 character(s) maximum

24 Are there other points you would like to raise?

3000 character(s) maximum

II. Reviewing the liability regime of digital services acting as intermediaries?

The liability of online intermediaries is a particularly important area of internet law in Europe and worldwide. The E-Commerce Directive harmonises the liability exemptions applicable to online intermediaries in the single market, with specific provisions for different services according to their role: from Internet access providers and messaging services to hosting service providers.

The previous section of the consultation explored obligations and responsibilities which online platforms and other services can be expected to take – i.e. processes they should put in place to address illegal activities which might be conducted by users abusing their service. In this section, the focus is on the legal architecture for the liability regime for service providers when it comes to illegal activities conducted by their users. The Commission seeks informed views on how the current liability exemption regime is working and the areas where an update might be necessary.

2 The liability regime for online intermediaries is primarily established in the E-Commerce Directive, which distinguishes between different types of services: so called ‘mere conduits’, ‘caching services’, and ‘hosting services’.

In your understanding, are these categories sufficiently clear and complete for characterising and regulating today’s digital intermediary services? Please explain.

5000 character(s) maximum

Technically speaking, the Internet comprises many different layers, all of which play a role in its functioning. While the relevant liability regime is layered depending on the involvement of each player in the chain in making content accessible, it is crucial to have greater legal certainty and harmonisation on which services involved in this process are meant to be covered in the scope of the new framework.

Regarding the category of “hosting service provider”, and considering all the technological developments and the appearance of new types of services (e.g. social media, user-generated content platforms, online marketplaces) this category has transformed significantly, and it now encompasses a much larger set of services. A revision of the definition would be recommended to reflect the different roles hosting providers may have with regards to content generated by their users.

All in all, although the current digital intermediaries might involve more players than the ones meant to be covered by the e-Commerce Directive, extending the scope of this definition (“online intermediaries”) should be carefully reviewed. We believe it is crucial to preserve the current protection offered to the mere conduits and refrain from imposing obligations on other segments of the Internet that do not have any control over the dissemination of content online.

For hosting services, the liability exemption for third parties' content or activities is conditioned by a knowledge standard (i.e. when they get 'actual knowledge' of the illegal activities, they must 'act expeditiously' to remove it, otherwise they could be found liable).

3 Are there aspects that require further legal clarification?

5000 character(s) maximum

Regarding the duties of hosting providers, greater legal certainty and harmonisation is sought on what constitutes "illegal activities", what "actual knowledge" means (is it a court order, notice, or other?) and how "expeditiously" providers must act.

In our opinion, the duty of each hosting provider and the actions that they should be required to take should be proportionate to the level of control they have over the content hosted on their platforms.

Additionally, if online intermediaries will be asked to take action against harmful content, it is paramount to provide further guidance to the providers on what constitutes "harmful" content, how to perform such an evaluation, and the risks associated with removing such content.

4 Does the current legal framework dis-incentivize service providers to take proactive measures against illegal activities? If yes, please provide your view on how disincentives could be corrected.

5000 character(s) maximum

As the RIPE NCC, we monitor the discussions that take place on our mailing lists and blog posts, not only to understand if there is a need to reply from our side (e.g. correct factual information relating to the RIPE NCC or the RIPE community), but also to evaluate whether other actions are required from our side.

Although the current safe harbour principle does not dis-incentivize us from proactively keeping an eye on the content that we are hosting, this might differ per organisation depending on their size and available resources (human, financial, time, etc).

We believe the introduction of a "Good Samaritan" clause and taking a proactive approach to removing illegal content should only be promoted if it will not jeopardise the safe harbour principle, lead to excessive filtering of content online or deprive users and companies of other rights (e.g. freedom of speech, freedom to conduct business). In our position paper on the upcoming Digital Services Act (here attached) we explain further how the introduction of a Good Samaritan clause could have adverse effects on the operations of online intermediaries.

5 Do you think that the concept characterising intermediary service providers as playing a role of a 'mere technical, automatic and passive nature' in the transmission of information ([recital 42 of the E-Commerce Directive](#)) is sufficiently clear and still valid? Please explain.

5000 character(s) maximum

In our opinion, this concept no longer accurately reflects the wide spectrum of all online intermediaries and the different levels of control they exert over the content of their users.

Considering that, based on recital 42 of the e-Commerce Directive, the CJEU started making a distinction

between online intermediaries that have an “active” and “passive” role, this concept should be clearly defined to avoid any legal uncertainty and fragmentation.

At the same time, we believe that the protection offered to the mere conduit service providers is still valid and should be preserved.

6 The E-commerce Directive also prohibits Member States from imposing on intermediary service providers general monitoring obligations or obligations to seek facts or circumstances of illegal activities conducted on their service by their users. In your view, is this approach, balancing risks to different rights and policy objectives, still appropriate today? Is there further clarity needed as to the parameters for ‘general monitoring obligations’? Please explain.

5000 character(s) maximum

We endorse maintaining the prohibition on imposing a general monitoring obligation on online intermediaries. Implementing such an obligation on those who merely transmit, temporarily (or otherwise) store or host content, and have merely a passive role in the circulation of the content, would be highly disproportionate and burdensome.

7 Do you see any other points where an upgrade may be needed for the liability regime of digital services acting as intermediaries?

5000 character(s) maximum

III. What issues derive from the gatekeeper power of digital platforms?

There is wide consensus concerning the benefits for consumers and innovation, and a wide-range of efficiencies, brought about by online platforms in the European Union’s Single Market. Online platforms facilitate cross-border trading within and outside the EU and open entirely new business opportunities to a variety of European businesses and traders by facilitating their expansion and access to new markets. At the same time, regulators and experts around the world consider that large online platforms are able to control increasingly important online platform ecosystems in the digital economy. Such large online platforms connect many businesses and consumers. In turn, this enables them to leverage their advantages – economies of scale, network effects and important data assets- in one area of their activity to improve or develop new services in adjacent areas. The concentration of economic power in then platform economy creates a small number of ‘winner-takes it all/most’ online platforms. The winner online platforms can also readily take over (potential) competitors and it is very difficult for an existing competitor or potential new entrant to overcome the winner’s competitive edge.

The Commission [announced](#) that it ‘will further explore, in the context of the Digital Services Act package, ex ante rules to ensure that markets characterised by large platforms with significant network effects acting as gatekeepers, remain fair and contestable for innovators, businesses, and new market entrants’.

This module of the consultation seeks informed views from all stakeholders on this framing, on the scope, the specific perceived problems, and the implications, definition and parameters for addressing possible issues deriving from the economic power of large, gatekeeper platforms.

[The Communication 'Shaping Europe's Digital Future'](#) also flagged that 'competition policy alone cannot address all the systemic problems that may arise in the platform economy'. Stakeholders are invited to provide their views on potential new competition instruments through a separate, dedicated open public consultation that will be launched soon.

In parallel, the Commission is also engaged in a process of reviewing EU competition rules and ensuring they are fit for the modern economy and the digital age. As part of that process, the Commission has launched a consultation on the proposal for a New Competition Tool aimed at addressing the gaps identified in enforcing competition rules. The initiative intends to address as specific objectives the structural competition problems that prevent markets from functioning properly and that can tilt the level playing field in favour of only a few market players. This could cover certain digital or digitally-enabled markets, as identified in the report by the Special Advisers and other recent reports on the role of competition policy, and/or other sectors. As such, the work on a proposed new competition tool and the initiative at stake complement each other. The work on the two impact assessments will be conducted in parallel in order to ensure a coherent outcome. In this context, the Commission will take into consideration the feedback received from both consultations. We would therefore invite you, in preparing your responses to the questions below, to also consider your response to [the parallel consultation on a new competition tool](#).

1 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Fully agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree not disagree	Somewhat disagree	Fully disagree	I don't know/ No reply
Consumers have sufficient choices and alternatives to the offerings from online platforms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy for consumers to switch between services provided by online platform companies and use same or similar services provider by other online platform companies ("multi-home").	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy for individuals to port their data in a useful manner to alternative service providers outside of an online platform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is sufficient level of interoperability between services of different online platform companies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is an asymmetry of information between the						

knowledge of online platforms about consumers, which enables them to target them with commercial offers, and the knowledge of consumers about market conditions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy for innovative SME online platforms to expand or enter the market.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traditional businesses are increasingly dependent on a limited number of very large online platforms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are imbalances in the bargaining power between these online platforms and their business users.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Businesses and consumers interacting with these online platforms are often asked to accept unfavourable conditions and clauses in the terms of use/contract with the online platforms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certain large online platform companies create barriers to entry and expansion in the Single Market (gatekeepers).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Large online platforms often leverage their assets from their primary activities (customer base, data, technological solutions, skills, financial capital) to expand into other activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When large online platform companies expand into such new activities, this often poses a risk of reducing innovation and deterring competition from smaller innovative market operators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Main features of gatekeeper online platform companies and the main criteria for assessing their economic power

1 Which characteristics are relevant in determining the gatekeeper role of large online platform companies? Please rate each criterion identified below from 1 (not relevant) to 5 (very relevant):

Large user base	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Wide geographic coverage in the EU	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
They capture a large share of total revenue of the market you are active/of a sector	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Impact on a certain sector	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
They build on and exploit strong network effects	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
They leverage their assets for entering new areas of activity	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
They raise barriers to entry for competitors	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
They accumulate valuable and diverse data and information	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
There are very few, if any, alternative services available on the market	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lock-in of users/consumers	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Other	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

2 If you replied "other", please list

3000 character(s) maximum

3 Please explain your answer. How could different criteria be combined to accurately identify large online platform companies with gatekeeper role?

3000 character(s) maximum

4 Do you believe that the integration of any or all of the following activities within a single company can strengthen the gatekeeper role of large online platform companies ('conglomerate effect')? Please select the activities you consider to strengthen the gatekeeper role:

- online intermediation services (i.e. consumer-facing online platforms such as e-commerce marketplaces, social media, mobile app stores, etc., as per [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1150](#) - see glossary)
- search engines
- operating systems for smart devices
- consumer reviews on large online platforms
- network and/or data infrastructure/cloud services
- digital identity services
- payment services (or other financial services)
- physical logistics such as product fulfilment services
- data management platforms
- online advertising intermediation services
- other. Please specify in the text box below.

5 Other - please list

1000 character(s) maximum

Emerging issues

The following questions are targeted particularly at businesses and business users of large online platform companies.

2 As a business user of large online platforms, do you encounter issues concerning trading conditions on large online platform companies?

- Yes
- No

3 Please specify which issues you encounter and please explain to what types of platform these are related to (e.g. e-commerce marketplaces, app stores, search engines, operating systems, social networks).

5000 character(s) maximum

4 Have you been affected by unfair contractual terms or unfair practices of very large online platform companies? Please explain your answer in detail, pointing to the effects on your business, your consumers and possibly other stakeholders in the short, medium and long-term?

5000 character(s) maximum

The following questions are targeted particularly at consumers who are users of large online platform companies.

6 Do you encounter issues concerning commercial terms and conditions when accessing services provided by large online platform companies?
Please specify which issues you encounter and please explain to what types of platform these are related to (e.g. e-commerce marketplaces, app stores, search engines, operating systems, social networks).

5000 character(s) maximum

7 Have you considered any of the practices by large online platform companies as unfair? Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

The following questions are open to all respondents.

9 Are there specific issues and unfair practices you perceive on large online platform companies?

5000 character(s) maximum

10 In your view, what practices related to the use and sharing of data in the platforms' environment are raising particular challenges?

5000 character(s) maximum

11 What impact would the identified unfair practices can have on innovation, competition and consumer choice in the single market?

3000 character(s) maximum

12 Do startups or scaleups depend on large online platform companies to access or expand? Do you observe any trend as regards the level of dependency in the last five years (i.e. increases; remains the same; decreases)? Which difficulties in your view do start-ups or scale-ups face when they depend on large online platform companies to access or expand on the markets?

3000 character(s) maximum

13 Which are possible positive and negative societal (e.g. on freedom of expression, consumer protection, media plurality) and economic (e.g. on market contestability, innovation) effects, if any, of the gatekeeper role that large online platform companies exercise over whole platform ecosystem?

3000 character(s) maximum

14 Which issues specific to the media sector (if any) would, in your view, need to be addressed in light of the gatekeeper role of large online platforms? If available, please provide additional references, data and facts.

3000 character(s) maximum

Regulation of large online platform companies acting as gatekeepers

1 Do you believe that in order to address any negative societal and economic effects of the gatekeeper role that large online platform companies exercise over whole platform ecosystems, there is a need to consider dedicated regulatory rules?

- I fully agree
- I agree to a certain extent
- I disagree to a certain extent
- I disagree
- I don't know

2 Please explain

3000 character(s) maximum

3 Do you believe that such dedicated rules should prohibit certain practices by large online platform companies with gatekeeper role that are considered particularly harmful for users and consumers of these large online platforms?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

4 Please explain your reply and, if possible, detail the types of prohibitions that should in your view be part of the regulatory toolbox.

3000 character(s) maximum

5 Do you believe that such dedicated rules should include obligations on large online platform companies with gatekeeper role?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

6 Please explain your reply and, if possible, detail the types of obligations that should in your view be part of the regulatory toolbox.

3000 character(s) maximum

7 If you consider that there is a need for such dedicated rules setting prohibitions and obligations, as those referred to in your replies to questions 3 and 5 above, do you think there is a need for a specific regulatory authority to enforce these rules?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

8 Please explain your reply.

3000 character(s) maximum

9 Do you believe that such dedicated rules should enable regulatory intervention against specific large online platform companies, when necessary, with a case by case adapted remedies?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

10 If yes, please explain your reply and, if possible, detail the types of case by case remedies.

3000 character(s) maximum

11 If you consider that there is a need for such dedicated rules, as referred to in question 9 above, do you think there is a need for a specific regulatory authority to enforce these rules?

- Yes
- No

12 Please explain your reply

3000 character(s) maximum

13 If you consider that there is a need for a specific regulatory authority to enforce dedicated rules referred to questions 3, 5 and 9 respectively, would in your view these rules need to be enforced by the same regulatory authority or could they be enforced by different regulatory authorities? Please explain your reply.

3000 character(s) maximum

14 At what level should the regulatory oversight of platforms be organised?

- At national level
- At EU level
- Both at EU and national level.
- I don't know

15 If you consider such dedicated rules necessary, what should in your view be the relationship of such rules with the existing sector specific rules and/or any future sector specific rules?

3000 character(s) maximum

16 Should such rules have an objective to tackle both negative societal and negative economic effects deriving from the gatekeeper role of these very large online platforms? Please explain your reply.

3000 character(s) maximum

17 Specifically, what could be effective measures related to data held by very large online platform companies with a gatekeeper role beyond those laid down in the General Data Protection Regulation in order to promote competition and innovation as well as a high standard of personal data protection and consumer welfare?

3000 character(s) maximum

18 What could be effective measures concerning large online platform companies with a gatekeeper role in order to promote media pluralism, while respecting the subsidiarity principle?

3000 character(s) maximum

19 Which, if any, of the following characteristics are relevant when considering the requirements for a potential regulatory authority overseeing the large online platform companies with the gatekeeper role:

- Institutional cooperation with other authorities addressing related sectors – e. g. competition authorities, data protection authorities, financial services authorities, consumer protection authorities, cyber security, etc.
- Pan-EU scope
- Swift and effective cross-border cooperation and assistance across Member States
- Capacity building within Member States
- High level of technical capabilities including data processing, auditing capacities
- Cooperation with extra-EU jurisdictions
- Other

21 Please explain if these characteristics would need to be different depending on the type of ex ante rules (see questions 3, 5, 9 above) that the regulatory authority would be enforcing?

3000 character(s) maximum

22 Which, if any, of the following requirements and tools could facilitate regulatory oversight over very large online platform companies (multiple answers possible):

- Reporting obligation on gatekeeping platforms to send a notification to a public authority announcing its intention to expand activities
- Monitoring powers for the public authority (such as regular reporting)
- Investigative powers for the public authority
- Other

24 Please explain if these requirements would need to be different depending on the type of ex ante rules (see questions 3, 5, 9 above) that the regulatory authority would be enforcing?

3000 character(s) maximum

25 Taking into consideration [the parallel consultation on a proposal for a New Competition Tool](#) focusing on addressing structural competition problems that prevent markets from functioning properly and tilt the level playing field in favour of only a few market players. Please rate the suitability of each option below to address market issues arising in online platforms ecosystems. Please rate the policy options below from 1 (not effective) to 5 (most effective).

	1 (not effective)	2 (somewhat effective)	3 (sufficiently effective)	4 (very effective)	5 (most effective)	Not applicable /No relevant experience or knowledge
1. Current competition rules are enough to address issues raised in digital markets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. There is a need for an additional regulatory framework imposing obligations and prohibitions that are generally applicable to all large online platforms with gatekeeper power	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. There is a need for an additional regulatory framework allowing for the possibility to impose tailored remedies on individual large online platforms with gatekeeper power, on a case-by-case basis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. There is a need for a New Competition Tool allowing to address structural risks and lack of competition in (digital) markets on a case-by-case basis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. There is a need for combination of two or more of the options 2 to 4.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26 Please explain which of the options, or combination of these, would be, in your view, suitable and sufficient to address the market issues arising in the online platforms ecosystems.

3000 character(s) maximum

27 Are there other points you would like to raise?

3000 character(s) maximum

IV. Other emerging issues and opportunities, including online advertising and smart contracts

Online advertising has substantially evolved over the recent years and represents a major revenue source for many digital services, as well as other businesses present online, and opens unprecedented opportunities for content creators, publishers, etc. To a large extent, maximising revenue streams and optimising online advertising are major business incentives for the business users of the online platforms and for shaping the data policy of the platforms. At the same time, revenues from online advertising as well as increased visibility and audience reach are also a major incentive for potentially harmful intentions, e.g. in online disinformation campaigns.

Another emerging issue is linked to the conclusion of 'smart contracts' which represent an important innovation for digital and other services, but face some legal uncertainties.

This section of the open public consultation seeks to collect data, information on current practices, and informed views on potential issues emerging in the area of online advertising and smart contracts.

Respondents are invited to reflect on other areas where further measures may be needed to facilitate innovation in the single market. This module does not address privacy and data protection concerns; all aspects related to data sharing and data collection are to be afforded the highest standard of personal data protection.

Online advertising

1 When you see an online ad, is it clear to you who has placed it online?

- Yes, always
- Sometimes: but I can find the information when this is not immediately clear
- Sometimes: but I cannot always find this information
- I don't know
- No

2 As a publisher online (e.g. owner of a website where ads are displayed), what types of advertising systems do you use for covering your advertising space? What is their relative importance?

	% of ad space	% of ad revenue
Intermediated programmatic advertising through real-time bidding		
Private marketplace auctions		
Programmatic advertising with guaranteed impressions (non-auction based)		
Behavioural advertising (micro-targeting)		
Contextual advertising		
Other		


3 What information is publicly available about ads displayed on an online platform that you use?

3000 character(s) maximum

4 As a publisher, what type of information do you have about the advertisement placed next to your content/on your website?

3000 character(s) maximum

5 To what extent do you find the quality and reliability of this information satisfactory for your purposes?

Please rate your level of satisfaction	
--	--

6 As an advertiser or an agency acting on behalf of the advertiser (if applicable), what types of programmatic advertising do you use to place your ads? What is their relative importance in your ad inventory?

	% of ad inventory	% of ad expenditure
Intermediated programmatic advertising through real-time bidding		
Private marketplace auctions		
Programmatic advertising with guaranteed impressions (non-auction based)		
Behavioural advertising (micro-targeting)		
Contextual advertising		
Other		

7 As an advertiser or an agency acting on behalf of the advertiser (if applicable), what type of information do you have about the ads placed online on your behalf?

3000 character(s) maximum

8 To what extent do you find the quality and reliability of this information satisfactory for your purposes?

Please rate your level of satisfaction



The following questions are targeted specifically at online platforms.

10 As an online platform, what options do your users have with regards to the advertisements they are served and the grounds on which the ads are being served to them? Can users access your service through other conditions than viewing advertisements? Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

11 Do you publish or share with researchers, authorities or other third parties detailed data on ads published, their sponsors and viewership rates? Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

12 What systems do you have in place for detecting illicit offerings in the ads you intermediate?

3000 character(s) maximum

The following questions are open to all respondents.

14 Based on your experience, what actions and good practices can tackle the placement of ads next to illegal content or goods, and/or on websites that disseminate such illegal content or goods, and to remove such illegal content or goods when detected?

3000 character(s) maximum

15 From your perspective, what measures would lead to meaningful transparency in the ad placement process?

3000 character(s) maximum

16 What information about online ads should be made publicly available?

3000 character(s) maximum

17 Based on your expertise, which effective and proportionate auditing systems could bring meaningful accountability in the ad placement system?

3000 character(s) maximum

18 What is, from your perspective, a functional definition of 'political advertising'? Are you aware of any specific obligations attached to 'political advertising' at national level ?

3000 character(s) maximum

19 What information disclosure would meaningfully inform consumers in relation to political advertising? Are there other transparency standards and actions needed, in your opinion, for an accountable use of political advertising and political messaging?

3000 character(s) maximum

20 What impact would have, in your view, enhanced transparency and accountability in the online advertising value chain, on the gatekeeper power of major online platforms and other potential consequences such as media pluralism?

3000 character(s) maximum

21 Are there other emerging issues in the space of online advertising you would like to flag?

3000 character(s) maximum

Smart contracts

1 Is there sufficient legal clarity in the EU for the provision and use of “smart contracts” – e.g. with regard to validity, applicable law and jurisdiction?

Please rate from 1 (lack of clarity) to 5 (sufficient clarity)



2 Please explain the difficulties you perceive.

3000 character(s) maximum

3 In which of the following areas do you find necessary further regulatory clarity?

- Mutual recognition of the validity of smart contracts in the EU as concluded in accordance with the national law
- Minimum standards for the validity of “smart contracts” in the EU
- Measures to ensure that legal obligations and rights flowing from a smart contract and the functioning of the smart contract are clear and unambiguous, in particular for consumers
- Allowing interruption of smart contracts
- Clarity on liability for damage caused in the operation of a smart contract
- Further clarity for payment and currency-related smart contracts.

4 Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

5 Are there other points you would like to raise?

3000 character(s) maximum

V. How to address challenges around the situation of self-employed individuals offering services through online platforms?

Individuals providing services through platforms may have different legal status (workers or self-employed). This section aims at gathering first information and views on the situation of self-employed individuals

offering services through platforms (such as ride-hailing, food delivery, domestic work, design work, micro-tasks etc.). Furthermore, it seeks to gather first views on whether any detected problems are specific to the platform economy and what would be the perceived obstacles to the improvement of the situation of individuals providing services through platforms. This consultation is not intended to address the criteria by which persons providing services on such platforms are deemed to have one or the other legal status. The issues explored here do not refer to the selling of goods (e.g. online marketplaces) or the sharing of assets (e.g. sub-renting houses) through platforms.

The following questions are targeting self-employed individuals offering services through online platforms.

Relationship with the platform and the final customer

1 What type of service do you offer through platforms?

- Food-delivery
- Ride-hailing
- Online translations, design, software development or micro-tasks
- On-demand cleaning, plumbing or DIY services
- Other, please specify

2 Please explain.

3 Which requirements were you asked to fulfill in order to be accepted by the platform(s) you offer services through, if any?

4 Do you have a contractual relationship with the final customer?

- Yes
- No

5 Do you receive any guidelines or directions by the platform on how to offer your services?

- Yes
- No

7 Under what conditions can you stop using the platform to provide your services, or can the platform ask you to stop doing so?

8 What is your role in setting the price paid by the customer and how is your remuneration established for the services you provide through the platform(s)?

9 What are the risks and responsibilities you bear in case of non-performance of the service or unsatisfactory performance of the service?

Situation of self-employed individuals providing services through platforms

10 What are the main advantages for you when providing services through platforms?

3000 character(s) maximum

11 What are the main issues or challenges you are facing when providing services through platforms? Is the platform taking any measures to improve these?

3000 character(s) maximum

12 Do you ever have problems getting paid for your service? Does/do the platform have any measures to support you in such situations?

3000 character(s) maximum

13 Do you consider yourself in a vulnerable or dependent situation in your work (economically or otherwise), and if yes, why?

14 Can you collectively negotiate vis-à-vis the platform(s) your remuneration or other contractual conditions?

- Yes
- No

15 Please explain.

The following questions are targeting online platforms.

Role of platforms

17 What is the role of your platform in the provision of the service and the conclusion of the contract with the customer?

18 What are the risks and responsibilities borne by your platform for the non-performance of the service or unsatisfactory provision of the service?

19 What happens when the service is not paid for by the customer/client?

20 Does your platform own any of the assets used by the individual offering the services?

- Yes
- No

22 Out of the total number of service providers offering services through your platform, what is the percentage of self-employed individuals?

- Over 75%
- Between 50% and 75%
- Between 25% and 50%
- Less than 25%

Rights and obligations

23 What is the contractual relationship between the platform and individuals offering services through it?

3000 character(s) maximum

24 Who sets the price paid by the customer for the service offered?

The platform

- The individual offering services through the platform
- Others, please specify

25 Please explain.

3000 character(s) maximum

26 How is the price paid by the customer shared between the platform and the individual offering the services through the platform?

3000 character(s) maximum

27 On average, how many hours per week do individuals spend offering services through your platform?

3000 character(s) maximum

28 Do you have measures in place to enable individuals providing services through your platform to contact each other and organise themselves collectively?

- Yes
- No

29 Please describe the means through which the individuals who provide services on your platform contact each other.

3000 character(s) maximum

30 What measures do you have in place for ensuring that individuals offering services through your platform work legally - e.g. comply with applicable rules on minimum working age, hold a work permit, where applicable - if any?

(If you replied to this question in your answers in the first module of the consultation, there is no need to repeat your answer here.)

3000 character(s) maximum

The following questions are open to all respondents

Situation of self-employed individuals providing services through platforms

32 Are there areas in the situation of individuals providing services through platforms which would need further improvements? Please rate the following issues from 1 (no improvements needed) to 5 (substantial issues need to be addressed).

	1 (no improvements needed)	2	3	4	5 (substantial improvements needed)	I don't know / No answer
Earnings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility of choosing when and /or where to provide services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transparency on remuneration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Measures to tackle non-payment of remuneration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transparency in online ratings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensuring that individuals providing services through platforms can contact each other and organise themselves for collective purposes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tackling the issue of work carried out by individuals lacking legal permits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prevention of discrimination of individuals providing services through platforms, for instance based on gender, racial or ethnic origin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allocation of liability in case of damage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33 Please explain the issues that you encounter or perceive.

3000 character(s) maximum

34 Do you think individuals providing services in the 'offline/traditional' economy face similar issues as individuals offering services through platforms?

Yes

No

I don't know

35 Please explain and provide examples.



3000 character(s) maximum

36 In your view, what are the obstacles for improving the situation of individuals providing services

1. through platforms?
2. in the offline/traditional economy?

3000 character(s) maximum

37 To what extent could the possibility to negotiate collectively help improve the situation of individuals offering services:

through online platforms?	
in the offline/traditional economy?	

38 Which are the areas you would consider most important for you to enable such collective negotiations?

3000 character(s) maximum

39 In this regard, do you see any obstacles to such negotiations?

3000 character(s) maximum

40 Are there other points you would like to raise?

3000 character(s) maximum



VI. What governance for reinforcing the Single Market for digital services?

The EU's Single Market offers a rich potential for digital services to scale up, including for innovative European companies. Today there is a certain degree of legal fragmentation in the Single Market . One of the main objectives for the Digital Services Act will be to improve opportunities for innovation and '[deepen the Single Market for Digital Services](#)'.

This section of the consultation seeks to collect evidence and views on the current state of the single market and steps for further improvements for a competitive and vibrant Single market for digital services. This module also inquires about the relative impact of the COVID-19 crisis on digital services in the Union. It then focuses on the appropriate governance and oversight over digital services across the EU and means to enhance the cooperation across authorities for an effective supervision of services and for the equal protection of all citizens across the single market. It also inquires about specific cooperation arrangements such as in the case of consumer protection authorities across the Single Market, or the regulatory oversight and cooperation mechanisms among media regulators. This section is not intended to focus on the enforcement of EU data protection rules (GDPR).

Main issues

1 How important are - in your daily life or for your professional transactions - digital services such as accessing websites, social networks, downloading apps, reading news online, shopping online, selling products online?

Overall	
Those offered from outside of your Member State of establishment	

The following questions are targeted at digital service providers

3 Approximately, what share of your EU turnover is generated by the provision of your service outside of your main country of establishment in the EU?

- Less than 10%
- Between 10% and 50%
- Over 50%
- I cannot compute this information

4 To what extent are the following obligations a burden for your company in providing its digital services, when expanding to one or more EU Member State(s)? Please rate the following obligations from 1 (not at all burdensome) to 5 (very burdensome).

	1 (not at all burdensome)	2	3 (neutral)	4	5 (very burdensome)	I don't know / No answer
Different processes and obligations imposed by Member States for notifying, detecting and removing illegal content/goods/services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requirements to have a legal representative or an establishment in more than one Member State	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different procedures and points of contact for obligations to cooperate with authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other types of legal requirements. Please specify below	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6 Have your services been subject to enforcement measures by an EU Member State other than your country of establishment?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

8 Were you requested to comply with any 'prior authorisation' or equivalent requirement for providing your digital service in an EU Member State?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

10 Are there other issues you would consider necessary to facilitate the provision of cross-border digital services in the European Union?

3000 character(s) maximum

11 What has been the impact of COVID-19 outbreak and crisis management measures on your business' turnover

- Significant reduction of turnover
- Limited reduction of turnover
- No significant change
- Modest increase in turnover
- Significant increase of turnover
- Other

13 Do you consider that deepening of the Single Market for digital services could help the economic recovery of your business?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

14 Please explain

3000 character(s) maximum

The following questions are targeted at all respondents.

Governance of digital services and aspects of enforcement

The 'country of origin' principle is the cornerstone of the Single Market for digital services. It ensures that digital innovators, including start-ups and SMEs, have a single set of rules to follow (that of their home country), rather than 27 different rules.

This is an important precondition for services to be able to scale up quickly and offer their services across borders. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak and effective recovery strategy, more than ever, a strong Single Market is needed to boost the European economy and to restart economic activity in the EU.

At the same time, enforcement of rules is key; the protection of all EU citizens regardless of their place of residence, will be in the centre of the Digital Services Act.

The current system of cooperation between Member States foresees that the Member State where a provider of a digital service is established has the duty to supervise the services provided and to ensure that all EU citizens are protected. A cooperation mechanism for cross-border cases is established in the E-Commerce Directive.

1 Based on your experience, how would you assess the cooperation in the Single Market between authorities entrusted to supervise digital services?

5000 character(s) maximum

2 What governance arrangements would lead to an effective system for supervising and enforcing rules on online platforms in the EU in particular as regards the intermediation of third party goods, services and content (See also Chapter 1 of the consultation)?

Please rate each of the following aspects, on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

	1 (not at all important)	2	3 (neutral)	4	5 (very important)	I don't know / No answer
Clearly assigned competent national authorities or bodies as established by Member States for supervising the systems put in place by online platforms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperation mechanism within Member States across different competent authorities responsible for the systematic supervision of online platforms and sectorial issues (e.g.						

consumer protection, market surveillance, data protection, media regulators, anti-discrimination agencies, equality bodies, law enforcement authorities etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperation mechanism with swift procedures and assistance across national competent authorities across Member States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordination and technical assistance at EU level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An EU-level authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperation schemes with third parties such as civil society organisations and academics for specific inquiries and oversight	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other: please specify in the text box below	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3 Please explain

5000 character(s) maximum

4 What information should competent authorities make publicly available about their supervisory and enforcement activity?

3000 character(s) maximum

5 What capabilities – type of internal expertise, resources etc. - are needed within competent authorities, in order to effectively supervise online platforms?

3000 character(s) maximum

6 In your view, is there a need to ensure similar supervision of digital services established outside of the EU that provide their services to EU users?

- Yes, if they intermediate a certain volume of content, goods and services provided in the EU
- Yes, if they have a significant number of users in the EU
- No
-

Other

I don't know

7 Please explain

3000 character(s) maximum

8 How should the supervision of services established outside of the EU be set up in an efficient and coherent manner, in your view?

3000 character(s) maximum

9 In your view, what governance structure could ensure that multiple national authorities, in their respective areas of competence, supervise digital services coherently and consistently across borders?

3000 character(s) maximum

10 As regards specific areas of competence, such as on consumer protection or product safety, please share your experience related to the cross-border cooperation of the competent authorities in the different Member States.

3000 character(s) maximum






11 In the specific field of audiovisual, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive established a regulatory oversight and cooperation mechanism in cross border cases between media regulators, coordinated at EU level within European Regulators' Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA). In your view is this sufficient to ensure that users remain protected against illegal and harmful audiovisual content (for instance if services are offered to users from a different Member State)? Please explain your answer and provide practical examples if you consider the arrangements may not suffice.

3000 character(s) maximum

12 Would the current system need to be strengthened? If yes, which additional tasks be useful to ensure a more effective enforcement of audiovisual content

rules?

Please assess from 1 (least beneficial) – 5 (most beneficial). You can assign the same number to the same actions should you consider them as being equally important.

Coordinating the handling of cross-border cases, including jurisdiction matters	
Agreeing on guidance for consistent implementation of rules under the AVMSD	
Ensuring consistency in cross-border application of the rules on the promotion of European works	
Facilitating coordination in the area of disinformation	
Other areas of cooperation	

13 Other areas of cooperation - (please, indicate which ones)

3000 character(s) maximum

14 Are there other points you would like to raise?

3000 character(s) maximum

Final remarks

If you wish to upload a position paper, article, report, or other evidence and data for the attention of the European Commission, please do so.

1 Upload file

The maximum file size is 1 MB

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

2 Other final comments

3000 character(s) maximum

The RIPE NCC is a not-for profit membership association that serves as the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for Europe, the Middle East and parts of Central Asia and as such, we allocate and register blocks of Internet number resources to our members. Our membership includes Internet service providers (ISPs), governments, academic institutions, corporations and other organisations running large Internet networks. We also work to support the RIPE (Réseaux IP Européens) community and the wider Internet community.

Among others, we provide DNS coordination and support activities as well as reverse DNS services for the IPv4 and IPv6 address space that we manage. We also operate, as a public service, one of the 13 root name servers of the DNS (K-root). For reverse DNS (rDNS) associated with the address space managed by other RIRs, we provide secondary DNS services to support the reliability of reverse lookups. We also provide a secondary service for ccTLD operators who are in the start-up phase of their operations and meet specific criteria (<https://www.ripe.net/publications/docs/ripe-663>).

For the purpose of answering the questions related to tackling illegal content online, we have focused on our services where third party content is hosted. Namely, the RIPE community and RIPE membership mailing lists, which we maintain and the archives of which we make publicly available, our online publication platform where RIPE community members and network operators can publish their research and ideas (namely RIPE Labs) and our meeting networking app (RIPE Networking Application), which we provide to the attendees during our meetings in order to facilitate communication between them. Lastly, as part of supporting the RIPE community and facilitating the discussions among the key players in the Internet industry, we organise various events. The presentations and recordings of the discussions of these events remain publicly available on the meeting's website.

Useful links

[Digital Services Act package \(https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-services-act-package \)](https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-services-act-package)

Background Documents

[\(BG\) Речник на термините](#)

[\(CS\) Glosř](#)

[\(DA\) Ordliste](#)

[\(DE\) Glossar](#)

[\(EL\) á](#)

[\(EN\) Glossary](#)

[\(ES\) Glosario](#)

[\(ET\) Snastik](#)

[\(FI\) Sanasto](#)

[\(FR\) Glossaire](#)

[\(HR\) Pojmovnik](#)

[\(HU\) Glosszrium](#)

[\(IT\) Glossario](#)

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