



Senior EU Official 'Uncomfortable' On Twitter Due To Russian Disinfo

Description

EU: A European Commission vice president championing a draft EU media freedom law said Wednesday she is “more and more uncomfortable on Twitter” because of the rise of Russian disinformation on the platform.

Twitter is one of 19 online platforms whose content the commission this week said will face enhanced regulatory scrutiny because of their reach, having over 45 million monthly active users in the EU.

Vera Jourova told journalists her growing discomfort was a “personal feeling”.

But she warned Twitter risked falling afoul of new EU oversight coming into force in August because of “unregulated Russian aggressive propaganda” on its feeds.

The list also includes TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and Google Search.

The upcoming scrutiny is legislated under a new EU Digital Services Act (DSA), which also requires annual audits and a duty to combat disinformation.

Jourova expressed concern that the sharp reduction in Twitter employees under billionaire Elon Musk, who bought the company six months ago, meant key counter-disinformation personnel were booted out.

“We were already disappointed by the data they delivered in January and of course we are also watching what they are doing with the capacities” left, she said in an interview organised by the European Newsroom which brings together agencies including AFP.

Earlier, Jourova tweeted that she believed “Twitter is falling short of its commitments to the anti-disinformation code”, a currently voluntary rulebook for online platforms that will become a firm benchmark when the DSA comes into force.

“I would compare the situation with driving on the highway,” she said.

“You drive on the highway and overstepping that speed (limit), you get a penalty — and one day you might be deprived of your driving licence.”

Jourova noted that the commission would be “enforcer” of the DSA, and stressed: “We want Google, Twitter and others to intensify their work against Russian propaganda.”

“There is still space for dialog. And I would really do wish to explain to Mr. Musk our philosophy that we are protectors of freedom of speech, protectors of freedom of expression... But freedom of speech in the EU is not unlimited.”

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