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Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
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The suspension of the social media accounts of the former President of the United States highlighted once again the urgency and the necessity of a clear legal framework for the online space.

Today, the lack of horizontal rules on platforms' terms and conditions and content moderation practices leaves users' rights unprotected.

The Commission's recent proposal for a Digital Services Act¹ aims to ensure that private content moderation is subject to clear principles, transparency and accountability. Under the proposed rules, tech companies would be required to apply their terms of service diligently and transparently, and users would have various ways to contest unjustified content removals and account suspensions, including internal complaint mechanisms, out-of-court dispute settlement and judicial redress.

Moreover, the largest online platforms would perform risk assessments and would be obliged to mitigate those risks.

The Commission is aware of the Polish plans, although no draft has yet been notified under the 2015/1535 procedure². Given that the reach and impact of online platforms go beyond national borders, the Commission considers that these matters can be addressed much more effectively at Union level – via the Digital Services Act - than by individual Member States acting alone and in a fragmented way.

Recognising that democracy requires more determined actions to preserve open democratic debate, the European Democracy Action Plan³ announced various actions to fight against hate speech, address disinformation and foreign interference⁴, developing accountability standards for online platforms in this regard and promote respect in the public debate.

¹ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Single Market for Digital Services (Digital Services Act) and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (COM/2020/825 final).

² Directive (EU) 2015/1535 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 September 2015 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical regulations and of rules on Information Society services (OJ L 241, 17.9.2015, p. 1).

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2250

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation/tackling-coronavirus-disinformation_en