

Emmanuel Macron, Facebook's Zuckerberg Will Meet To Clamp Down On HATE SPEECH



AP Photo / Francois Mori

France has formulated draft legislation scheduled to hit Parliament's agenda in the coming months to compel platforms like Google, Facebook and Twitter to remove hateful content within 24 hours or face heavy fines.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is scheduled to meet with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Friday for talks amid increasing pressure on the social media giant to honour pledges to tackle hate speech and misinformation online.

The visit comes against the backdrop of regulators worldwide urging social media platforms to shoulder more responsibility for what their users post.

The encounter is also timed with Macron's EU campaign, with the May vote seen as the French President's first national test since becoming president two years ago on promises to transform France and revive a tired Europe.

Macron has been one of Europe's most vocal critics of social media giants, hitting out at them for not doing enough to tackle harmful content and warning that regulators will take action.



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Facebook's Zuckerberg meets Macron amid pressure to stanch misinformation, hate speech

Mark Zuckerberg himself recently admitted the need for greater oversight. As part of an experiment, Facebook in recent months has allowed French regulators to observe first-hand its efforts to stamp out extremist content.

“Facebook’s teams have really played along well,” France’s Digital Minister Cédric O told AFP last month.

An Elysee official confirmed the regulators’ findings will be presented Friday, and could be instrumental in guiding French and possibly European legislation on social media.

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France is currently debating laws that would require digital giants to take down unlawful posts within 24 hours of being reported or face heavy fines.

If these laws are passed, social media users might be obliged to provide identification before opening accounts, to stop anonymous users posting hateful content with impunity.

Draft legislation in France to tax digital giants is also up for debate, with lawmakers granting it initial approval last month.

The law would set a three per cent tax on digital advertising, the sale of personal data and other revenue from the largest tech companies.

Both draft tax and regulatory frameworks will likely dominate debates at the second “Tech for Good” summit, scheduled for 15 May and co-chaired by President Macron and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

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World leaders and tech executives are expected to agree on a pledge to fight the spread of terrorist content on the internet.

Ardern earlier denounced the “unprecedented” use of social media in the massacres at two Christchurch mosques last March, which saw the shooter broadcast his rampage live on Facebook.

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