Letter of 21 May 2025 to the President of the House of Representatives from the Minister of Justice and Security, David van Weel, containing a progress report on the Enhanced Approach Online to extremist and terrorist content

The online world is an integral part of our lives, offering unprecedented opportunities for communication, innovation and access to information. At the same time, this digital domain also has a darker side. Extremist and terrorist groups exploit online platforms to disseminate and sustain propaganda, recruit new members and even prepare attacks. Moreover, radicalisation now occurs predominantly online.[1] In this context, the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) has noted that young people between the ages of 12 and 17 increasingly pose a terrorist threat due to their jihadist or right-wing terrorist ideologies.[2] This picture is confirmed by recent arrests, which also involved minors.[3] The above underlines the need to remain constantly alert to the darker aspects of the online environment. It is vital to take appropriate measures to enhance our society's online and offline resilience to radicalisation and terrorism, especially when it comes to young people.[4]

The government remains committed to tackling online extremism and terrorism. In its letter outlining the Enhanced Approach Online (December 2023)[5] and its letter to Parliament on the further elaboration of the Enhanced Approach Online (December 2024),[6] the government provided the House with an overview of measures that have already been taken or planned. In this letter, written in conjunction with the State Secretary for Participation and Integration, I will address various matters, including the dialogue with the internet sector, the status of a pilot project involving the 'ReDirect' method, newly developed training programmes, the local approach, digital resilience, several EU initiatives relating to content moderation and the Netherlands' Online Content Moderation Project (PrOCoM). In addition, I will devote specific attention to the prevention of online radicalisation among young people. Finally, I will comment on various motions adopted by and undertakings given to the House of Representatives.

Social media platforms

A key part of the government's approach to preventing and combating online extremism and terrorism consists of a long-term national dialogue with the internet sector. In the framework of this dialogue, the government has so far conducted 17 meetings with different types of online platforms, ranging from large social media platforms to gaming (or gaming-related) platforms. This has allowed me to engage with platforms that are used by a majority of people in the Netherlands, particularly young people. During these meetings, I have expressed my concerns about the risks to young people and about certain platform-specific design and policy choices, including the downscaling of human content moderation in favour of automated content moderation. In doing so, I have repeatedly reminded online platforms of their responsibilities in these areas. In these meetings the government's operational partners, including the police, have also highlighted the specific threats they are observing on these platforms within the Dutch context. Additional agreements have been concluded in this area, such as one aimed at improving cooperation with requests for the purpose of criminal investigations. This agreement will enable operational partners to exchange investigative

1 Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands (DTN) 2023/02.
2 Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives, 2024-2025, 29754, no. 749.
3 See also Public Prosecution Service, '14 Arrests in Connection with Incitement to Terrorism on Social Media', press release, 22 April 2025 (in Dutch), https://www.om.nl/actueel/nieuws/2025/04/22/14-aanhoudingen-in-verband-met-opruiing-tot-terrorisme-op-sociale-media.
4 This refers to individuals between the ages of 10 and 22.
5 Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives, 2023-2024, 29 754, no. 690.
6 Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives, 2023-2024, 29 754, no. 735.

data more effectively with online platforms. Finally, it is worth mentioning the government's first meeting with X (formerly Twitter), at which it expressly drew attention to the aforementioned concerns. In this regard, X was explicitly called to account for the lack of Dutch-speaking content moderators. An adequate number of moderators is important in order to ensure that Dutch-language content is properly assessed from a linguistic and cultural perspective. The government noted that it expects X to bring the number of Dutch-language content moderators up to standard. I will monitor the forthcoming transparency report issued under the Digital Services Act to assess whether this is the case. In the meantime, the State Secretary for the Interior and Kingdom Relations is conducting a study of best practices for content moderation on very large online platforms, including X. The results of this study will be shared with the House of Representatives and the European Commission after the summer.

During one of the aforementioned meetings, the government concluded an agreement with a large gaming platform to jointly explore the scope for a pilot project on improved safety design. The aim of the project is to support the platform's efforts to tackle online behaviour by users that may indicate a tendency towards violent extremism, for example by providing better links to the relevant support services. I will update the House on this issue before the end of the year. In addition, the Research and Data Centre (WODC) of the Ministry of Justice and Security will soon launch a study on the workings of online recruitment for terrorist and extremist purposes on gaming and gaming-related platforms. This study will also examine the vulnerability of young people who are active on these platforms. I believe it is very important to devote specific attention to online gaming, as there are still many questions about how extremist groups approach young people on these platforms. In doing so, I am implementing one of the recommendations of the WODC's recent report on online recruitment, which advises the government to specifically investigate the role of gaming (or gaming-related) platforms.[7] This year, lastly, the WODC has launched a study on the feasibility of developing an assessment framework for extremist content, including borderline content and extremist memes.

ReDirect method

A key aspect of the dialogue with the internet sector consists of exploring opportunities to collaborate with online platforms on the development of practical tools to help combat online radicalisation. These meetings have led to the imminent launch of a pilot project employing the 'ReDirect' method. Individuals searching online for extremist or terrorist content will be presented with a notification window that redirects them to online help. Within the Netherlands, the project will be launched in collaboration with Meta on the online platforms Facebook, Instagram and Threads. Users will be redirected to a dedicated landing page of the National Support Centre for Extremism (LSE), where they will have the option of using an online chat function developed at the request of the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security (NCTV).[8] This chat function allows young people to communicate with experts in the field of radicalisation and extremism in an anonymous and accessible way. Where necessary, users will be offered early support, such as personal guidance or family assistance through the LSE. By implementing a pilot project based on the ReDirect method, I am complying with the motion submitted by MP Anne Kuik (CDA)[9] and the undertaking given to MP Derk Boswijk (CDA).[10] I am committed to working with multiple online platforms to broaden the implementation of such interventions and increase the opportunities for

---

7 Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR), Radical Promotion on Social Media: A Study of Online Recruitment by and for Extremist Groups, report commissioned by the WODC, September 2024, Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives 2023-2024, 29 754, no. 729 (English summary).

8 See also https://www.landelijksteunpuntextremisme.nl/chat/.

9 Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives, 2022-2023, 29 754, no. 658.

10 TZ202312-032.

early intervention. I will therefore continue to raise this issue in the dialogue with the internet sector.

Local approach

The local approach is an essential element of the government's efforts to combat radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, in which connection a tailored response is always required. Such customisation is particularly necessary when it comes to young people, as also highlighted by the AIVD in its recent publication.[11] In the following paragraphs, I will discuss several aspects of the government's online efforts under the local approach, with a particular focus on young people. Both nationally and locally, prevention plays a major role in this regard, for example by promoting the digital resilience of young people, parents and local professionals such as youth workers and teachers. These initiatives serve to implement the motion submitted by MP Don Ceder (CU) and MP Jesse Six Dijkstra (NSC), which calls on the government to develop an action plan on digital resilience in consultation with the NCTV to prevent radicalisation via social media.[12]

Municipalities are in charge of the local approach and are responsible for its development and implementation, in cooperation with relevant partners. Municipalities, in particular, have voiced a need for clearer guidance on potential courses of action within the online domain, for example regarding the powers available to them in response to signs of online radicalisation. For that reason, I am currently working on a supplement to the recently updated guidance on the local approach to tackling radicalisation, extremism and terrorism.[13] This supplement focuses on the options available to municipalities to act within the online domain in the context of extremism and terrorism. It outlines basic information on the online dimensions of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, and on municipal powers. In addition, it addresses potential interventions relating to the online domain within the local approach, for example with regard to promoting digital resilience.

Online radicalisation can take place quickly and relatively unnoticed. It is therefore important that local professionals — and society in general — possess the right knowledge and tools to recognise early warning signs so that effective action can be taken. I am currently in dialogue with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) on this matter. In addition, the National Government Training Institute for the Prevention of Radicalisation (ROR) will offer a workshop on 'online radicalisation' for local professionals. Among other issues, this workshop will examine the various dimensions of online radicalisation, the processes involved and potential courses of action for professionals.

Attention is also being paid to the local domain at European level, with efforts aimed at enhancing knowledge and scope for action when it comes to identifying and addressing online radicalisation. In collaboration with France and the European Commission, the Netherlands is leading a series of working groups this year within the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation. These working groups bring together frontline professionals to exchange local experiences at European level, with a view to developing practical tools. In terms of subject matter, they focus exclusively on online radicalisation among young people. The aim is to develop concrete and workable tools at EU level, with an emphasis on supporting professionals at local level. The Netherlands will host one of the three working groups in June 2025.

---

11 See also AIVD, 'A Web of Hate: The Online Hold of Extremism and Terrorism on Minors', 3 April 2025 (in Dutch), https://www.aivd.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/04/03/een-web-van-haat.

12 Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives, 2024-2025, 26 643, no. 1300.

13 See also NCTV, 'Vernieuwde handreiking Lokale Aanpak gepubliceerd' (Updated guidance on Local Approach published), press release, 5 September 2024, https://www.nctv.nl/actueel/nieuws/2024/09/05/nu-online-vernieuwde-handreiking-lokale-aanpak.

Strengthening digital resilience is a key pillar of the preventive approach to online radicalisation, in which appropriate and effective interventions at local level play a crucial role. I am working closely with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment in this area, including in the allocation of additional funds that municipalities can request to tackle radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. These funds support a range of interventions to help strengthen young people's digital resilience, such as municipal efforts to enhance media literacy. These lessons give young people insight into their own social media use and teach them to recognise the underlying mechanisms that make problematic online content so effective and appealing. In addition, municipalities are organising online activities that enable youth workers to reach young people who might otherwise be inaccessible. By focusing on fostering connections, these initiatives help combat loneliness and prevent young people from becoming socially isolated, which can increase their susceptibility to radicalisation.

Strengthening digital resilience is also a key component of the Action Agenda for Integration and an Open and Free Society. Through this agenda, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment seeks to increase awareness, provide knowledge and potential courses of action and stimulate effective interventions in the area of digital resilience. The agenda includes the commissioning of studies and the facilitation of evidence-based interventions and programmes aimed at strengthening resilience and countering extremism. In this context, specific attention is being paid to reinforcing cooperation between the social and security domains.

Finally, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is working on a public awareness campaign that targets parents and caregivers to improve their understanding of children's rights in the digital world. Offering parents possible courses of action and raising their awareness of online risks and rights will make them better equipped to guide their children in making safe and informed choices. In doing so, this campaign will help strengthen children's digital resilience and contribute to the government's broader efforts to prevent online radicalisation. The interior ministry is also developing a strategy for children's rights online that will set the course in this area for the coming years and leverage existing initiatives by civil society partners.

EU initiatives on content moderation

In accordance with the motion submitted by MP Ingrid Michon-Derkzen[14] and my undertaking to inform the House of Representatives about content moderation,[15] I will describe the EU's various initiatives in this area in the following paragraphs. In addition, in accordance with the aforementioned motion of Ms Michon-Derkzen, the present letter is accompanied by the findings of the Online Content Moderation Project (PrOCoM).

Firstly, the Digital Services Act (DSA) is a key piece of legislation. Since 17 February 2024, this EU regulation has applied to intermediary services, including providers of hosting services and online platforms. The DSA contains various provisions on content moderation. For example, all providers of intermediary services must include content moderation policies in their general terms and conditions and apply those policies rigorously. Providers of hosting services, including online platforms, are required to establish an accessible and user-friendly reporting system that allows users to report illegal online content, such as terrorist material. This system should facilitate timely and careful decision-making on incoming reports. Extremely serious criminal offences must be proactively reported to the competent authorities. In addition, the DSA obliges online platforms to establish policies for dealing with users who repeatedly disseminate illegal content.

14 Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives, 2024-2025, 29 754, no. 738.

15 TZ202412-152.

The DSA further requires online platforms to take measures to protect minors. Before the summer of 2025, the European Commission will publish guidelines on the protection of minors online, which will advise how online platforms can ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security for minors. The protection of minors is also an element of the formal proceedings that the European Commission has opened against Meta under the DSA.[16] Furthermore, providers of 'very large online platforms' are required to assess and mitigate the systemic risks stemming from the design or functioning of their services. Such risks include the dissemination of illegal content and the actual or foreseeable negative effects of such platforms on the protection of minors. Since February 2025, when the Dutch implementation act for the Digital Services Act came into force, the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM) and the Data Protection Authority (AP) have been officially authorised to monitor the compliance of Netherlands-based intermediary services with the DSA. The protection of minors will be a focus area for these supervisory bodies over the coming year.

A second key instrument in the area of content moderation is the EU regulation addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online (TCO Regulation). On the basis of this regulation, the relevant supervisory body – the Authority for the Prevention of Online Terrorist Content and Child Sexual Abuse Material (ATKM) – identifies and assesses online terrorist material. Providers of hosting services that are found to be hosting terrorist material online must remove it or disable access to it within one hour of receiving a take-down order from the ATKM. Additionally, online platforms are required to publish transparency reports indicating how many take-down orders they have received and how they were handled. When a supervisory body has repeatedly sent take-down orders to a specific online platform, it can impose an exposure order obliging the platform in question to take proactive measures to ensure that it doesn't continue to make terrorist content available in the future.

In compliance with my undertaking to Ms Michon-Derkzen, the ATKM has shared its policy recommendations on the subject of online terrorism.[17] As described in its annual report, the ATKM has focused, in the first stage of its operationalisation, on assessing online terrorist material of a jihadist or right-wing extremist nature. In doing so, it has frequently encountered material that cannot be classified as terrorist under the TCO Regulation but is nevertheless problematic in the wider context of online radicalisation and extremism among young people in particular. The ATKM thus envisions a more comprehensive approach to this online problem, under which its activities would complement the NCTV's broader efforts to combat online radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, with due regard for the ATKM's independent role.

As a relatively new supervisory body, the ATKM must be given the time and space to develop into a leading authority on the measures taken under administrative law to tackle illegal online content for which it is responsible. At the same time, I appreciate that we can use the ATKM's aforementioned findings to further shape our policy on online terrorism. We are in contact with the ATKM about how, in view of its supervisory role, it can contribute practically to this process within the existing legal framework. In my meetings with the ATKM, I have also expressed my growing concern about the rapid online radicalisation of young people. The use of right-wing extremist and jihadist memes and emojis has also been brought to the ATKM's attention.[18] I would like to express my appreciation

---

16 See also European Commission, 'Commission Opens Formal Proceedings against Meta under the Digital Services Act Related to the Protection of Minors on Facebook and Instagram,' press release, 16 May 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_2664.

17 TZ202412-151.

18 With this, I have complied with the motion submitted by MP Songül Mutluer (GL-PvdA). See also Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives 2024-2025, 29 754, no. 717.

for the valuable work that the ATKM has done so far, and I look forward to its continued efforts, in cooperation with my ministry, to intensify the fight against online terrorism.

Another EU policy instrument is the EU Internet Forum, a collaborative environment in which EU member states, EU institutions and online platforms work together to counter illegal and undesirable (e.g. borderline) content online. The forum facilitates the exchange of best practices and new insights regarding content moderation. Two codes of conduct are also relevant in this context. The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online stipulates that social media platforms must review notifications of hate speech and remove such content within 24 hours. Under the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation, the signatory online platforms have made additional undertakings to curb the spread of disinformation and tighten existing agreements. As of 1 July 2025, their compliance with these undertakings will be subject to an annual independent audit under the DSA. In addition to these EU initiatives in the area of content moderation, finally, the CounteR Project under the EU's Horizon 2020 programme also deserves a mention. This project develops advanced software that identifies and takes down online content promoting radicalisation at an early stage, while maintaining privacy and data protection safeguards.

I will continue to investigate potential problems in the relevant legislation by closely monitoring the European Commission's evaluation processes and actively contributing to them where necessary. Given that the TCO Regulation is about to be evaluated, I will instruct the WODC to explicitly identify potential areas for improvement and gaps in the legislation. Lastly, the Minister of Economic Affairs will closely monitor the European Commission's evaluation of the DSA in 2027.

Online Content Moderation Project (PrOCoM)
When it comes to tackling illegal content across the spectrum, it is important to mention the Netherlands' Online Content Moderation Project (PrOCoM), which has established a public-private cooperation mechanism for discussing issues relating to content that is criminal or otherwise unlawful or contains undesirable elements.[19] In addition, this project has expanded the potential courses of action available to victims of online transgressive behaviour to include the option of submitting a take-down request via Helpwanted (which is part of Offlimits, a charity that tackles online abuse), while providing mayors with an action framework for dealing with the online incitement of public order offences. Finally, the project has invested in efforts to enhance knowledge and expertise on internet-related issues within central government. The project's final report is attached as an annexe to this letter.

Conclusion
The digital world is evolving rapidly, giving rise to both opportunities and risks. In this letter, I have described the government's current efforts to counter online extremism and terrorism, with a particular focus on young people. Within this approach, it is important to strike a careful balance between measures aimed at safeguarding fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression, and measures designed to counter online radicalisation and promote safety online. Freedom and security are not mutually exclusive, but constant balancing and vigilance are required to ensure that the internet remains a space where abuse is prevented *and* fundamental rights are protected. In the autumn of 2025, I will provide a further written update on developments in efforts to tackle online extremism and terrorism.

[19] PrOCoM is an initiative of the Directorate for Law Enforcement and Crime Fighting (DRC) of the Ministry of Justice and Security's Directorate-General for the Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement (DGRR). It is supported by an interministerial steering group in which the NCTV is also represented.