



Press release HateAid gGmbH

EU visit of Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen: Protest in Brussels against hate speech, dick pics, and online attacks

HateAid calls on the EU to intervene against digital violence

Unnoticed by many, the negotiations on the Digital Services Act (DSA) are entering a crucial phase. With a protest action in front of the European Parliament, HateAid is now increasing the pressure on the EU lawmakers negotiating the new EU internet law. A new [EU-wide survey](#) commissioned by HateAid and the Landecker Digital Justice Movement had just shown that violence on social media platforms is a massive problem across Europe - but platforms like Facebook and Twitter are doing little to combat it. EU parliamentarians are now to be directly confronted with the suffering of those affected in front of the EU parliament.

Berlin, 8 November 2021

Digital violence has become a sad reality for internet users across Europe. In a [recent survey](#), more than 80 per cent of Europeans criticised Google, Facebook, Twitter and platforms alike for not protecting them enough from hate speech, dick pics and other forms of digital violence. On the contrary, there is a growing fear of violence online. Every second EU citizen has not expressed his or her opinion on social media for fear of becoming a victim of digital violence.

Intimate images are manipulated or stolen and published on porn platforms without consent. According to the representative survey, 30 percent of all European women fear that their nudes are published online without their consent. Women's private addresses and telephone numbers are leaked. Hate speech and threats of rape are no longer uncommon. With a protest action in front of the European Parliament in Brussels, HateAid confronts EU politicians with the violence that women and girls experience in social media. Members of the European Parliament are invited to show solidarity with victims of digital violence.

In light of today's testimony of Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen in the European Parliament, HateAid emphasises the timeliness and importance of demand to make the internet safe. Whistleblower Haugen had expressed her solidarity with the organisation's demands at an [event with HateAid](#) in Berlin on Thursday, 5 November 2021. The former Facebook employee Haugen had only recently revealed internal information that the company is aware of the fatal and detrimental effects - such as depression and attacks on democracies - fuelled by the Facebook and Instagram platforms. She revealed that Facebook has known it but did not act, in own interest of maximising profits.

Anna-Lena von Hodenberg, executive director of HateAid:

"There is now a culture of fear on social media across the EU. People no longer dare to participate in public debates online or withdraw from these spaces. Only those who shout the loudest and are the most violent remain. People feel left alone by the platforms. Rightly so, as the revelations of whistleblower Frances Haugen show. Now it is up to the EU politicians not to leave people alone, to finally take responsibility and ensure their - and our - safety online: With clear rights for citizens and systemic obligations for the platforms. The EU must not allow the security and democratic participation of its citizens to take a back seat to the profit maximisation of social media corporations."

Shanley Clemot McLaren and Lisa Gauvin-Drillaud, co-founders of the French organisation Stop Fisha:

"Currently, we are helplessly watching an explosion of violence on the internet. The violence against women and girls that we see on the internet is an expression of systematic destruction and patriarchal control. The internet is a space where women are deliberately discriminated against, repressed and intimidated. That is why we are calling for effective measures at European level to protect against digital violence: better moderation of posts in social media, and stronger sanctions for sexualised violence online, with a special focus on the abuse of nude photos online."

Thousands of Europeans have already joined HateAid and the civil society alliance of 18 European organisations, including the French initiative Stop Fisha. Together, they are calling on the EU to make the internet a safer place for women and girls through the petition "[Stop digital violence against women! #makeitsafe](#)".

HateAid and the European alliance against digital violence [demand](#):

- **Take down stolen nudes!**
- **Remove illegal content!**
- **Let users decide what is displayed on social media!**
- **Make courts accessible to users!**
- **Provide easy contact options for users!**

More information

Photos of the action will be available at hateaid.org/pressemitteilungen from 2pm.

You can find the complete survey on our website hateaid.org/eu-survey, the petition can be found at hateaid.org/petition.

HateAid gGmbH

The non-profit organization HateAid gGmbH was founded in 2018 and is headquartered in Berlin. HateAid offers support for victims of digital violence: legal cost funding, emotionally stabilising initial, safety, and communication counselling. The founding managing director is Anna-Lena von Hodenberg. Advocating for victims of digital violence at the European level is part of the Landecker Digital Justice Movement of the Alfred Landecker Foundation.

For more information about HateAid gGmbH visit our website: www.hateaid.org

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