14 April 2024

**Synopsis: Intervention of Mr Henrik Sjölinder on 23 May 2024 before the Standing Committee for Justice and Security of the Parliament in the Netherlands; illegal content online**

* Illegal content such as terrorism content, child sexual abuse material and hate speech is present and disseminated in vast volumes in the online environment. In 2023, the Cyber Tipline of the US National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received 36,2 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation online. The aftermath of Hamas´ attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 saw a surge in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hate speech online.
* Curbing illegal content online requires new legal powers at national and EU-levels (administrative law rather than criminal law), cross-border cooperation and new functions in national and EU administrations. The EU can inter alia:
* provide common definitions of different types of illegal content;
* bring online platforms into the jurisdiction of the EU and set standards;
* facilitate cooperation and a common understanding among EU-institutions, national authorities and online platforms such as within the EU Internet Forum (EUIF) and the Code of Conduct on hate speech.
* While the online platforms by far remove most content themselves according to their terms of service, the present legal development includes:

- the TCO Regulation on terrorism content applicable as of 7 June 2022; application of both referrals and removal orders are surging in particular after Hamas´attack on Israel;

- the Digital Services Act (the DSA) into force on 16 November 2022 and fully applicable as of 17 February 2024; systemic risks of very large online platforms and search engines are being monitored by the Commission and national implementation is now taking place; obligations to establish points of contact and mechanisms for notice and action;

- The proposal for a Regulation on Child Sexual Abuse; Articles on reporting, notice and action, removal or disabling of access, blocking and delisting;

- The Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence adopted on 7 May 2024; Article 25 on removal or disabling of access of non-consensual sexual imagery, cyber stalking and cyber harassment.

* Establishing Internet Referral Units at national level including for the purpose to reflect the IRU at Europol set up in 2016 to combat terrorism content.
* Safeguarding fundamental rights, in particular the freedom of expression and information