[IE] Information Pack for election candidates

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On 23 May 2024, the *Coimisiún na Meán (*Irish media regulatory authority) published an Information Pack for candidates to the local and European elections, held on 7 June in Ireland. The aim of this pack was to provide information on the role of the Irish media regulatory authority and to offer guidance for candidates on what to do when they are faced with harmful and/or illegal content online. The Pack includes further information on the rights of users when their post is removed for allegedly going against the platform's community standards under the Digital Services Act (DSA).

The information Pack includes some of the following guidelines:

- Illegal content online should be reported on the platform. Content is illegal if it breaches the law of Ireland or another EU member state, or of EU law. The national police (Gardaí) should be contacted if fear for one’s safety.

- Harmful, but not illegal content, may be in breach of the platform’s rules or community standards and can be reported on the platform.

- Once harmful or illegal content is reported, the platform must provide a decision on how it has dealt with the report, setting out reasons for its decision in a timely manner.

- Notice must be given of any content restriction, removal, disabling or demotion.

- Appeals against platform decisions should be made clear and easy to find on the platform.

- Complaints can be addressed to Coimisiún na Meán if the platform has failed to provide these steps

The Information Pack also provides direct links to a list of platforms' procedures for reporting content that goes against the community's rules/terms and conditions and for reporting illegal content. These platforms include: Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, Linkedin, YouTube, Google and Bing.

Coimisiún na Meán recalled its role as a national regulatory authority to ensure platforms have complaint mechanisms in place and are operating them diligently.

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It does not carry out a content moderation role, act as an appeal body from decisions of providers of online services in relation to illegal content, or act as a judge in disputes between different parties or different users about illegal content. The regulatory authority however provides additional resources, support and information relating to online safety, including to Media Literacy Ireland and Be Media Smart.

Through this Information Pack, the regulator reaffirmed the importance of the Online Safety Framework, which is composed of the DSA, the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022 and the Terrorist Content Online Regulation (TCOR). The Framework makes digital services accountable for how they protect people from potential harm or exposure to illegal content online and consequently allows to impose sanctions, including fines.

Information Pack - Guidelines for candidates on keeping safe online during elections

https://www.cnam.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/20240528_ElectionCandidates_InformationPack_ENG_FINAL.pdf

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