

Recommendation on online safety and empowerment of users and content creators

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On 8 April 2026, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)4 on online safety and empowerment of users and content creators. This recommendation was developed by the Committee of Experts MSI-eSEC under the authority of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (*Comité directeur sur les médias et la société de l'information* - CDMSI).

The online environment is now one of the main ways in which people can exercise their right to freedom of expression, including the right to receive information. Digital technologies have also increased the range and diversity of information individuals and groups can access. Taking into account these contextual factors, the recommendation states that online safety should be understood as a component of an enabling online environment for everyone, including vulnerable or marginalised groups.

In the current context of digitalisation, the recommendation therefore seeks to address the growing challenge of reconciling freedom of expression online and the need to protect individuals from harms such as disinformation, harassment, manipulation, unfair moderation, and biased algorithms.

The recommendation is structured around a set of principles addressed to states, platforms and content creators, as well as for legal frameworks on online safety and user empowerment and their implementation and enforcement. For example, it promotes the accountability of online platforms, especially those with significant influence over the online information ecosystem.

However, while the recommendation acknowledges that states have a positive obligation to effectively address the risk of harm online, it also recognises that: “*content rules and the enforcement of liability of users and platforms cannot alone address the problem at scale and can result in selective and arbitrary enforcement. They also risk introducing or incentivising excessive or otherwise disproportionate content restrictions and content moderation practices and adversely affect human rights, especially freedom of expression and privacy.*”

The recommendation therefore seeks to address the issue at stake not only through such measures, but also through principles that aim to promote an

enabling online environment for users and content creators. The recommendation therefore also provides measures for online user empowerment, highlighting the importance of “empowerment by design”, to ensure users have easy-to-use tools to shape and personalise their platform experience.

The recommendation is also accompanied by an explanatory memorandum, which provides insight into the aims and scope of its provisions.

Council of Europe, CM/Rec(2026)4 - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on online safety and empowerment of users and content creators, adopted on 8 April 2026

<https://search.coe.int/cm?i=09125948802b41e8>

