



Baltic Engagement
Centre for Combating
Information Disorders

HOT REPORT

DIGITAL SERVICES ACT FAILS TO PROTECT BALTIC USERS FROM HARMFUL CONTENT

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THIS REPORT IS BASED ON AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED BY RE:BALTICA “NO VIOLATIONS FOUND.” EUROPE’S DIGITAL SAFETY LAW FAILS WHEN USERS REPORT CONTENT

WHAT’S HOT?

Social media platforms are failing to act on user reports of illegal and harmful content, despite obligations under the EU’s Digital Services Act (DSA). A test by Latvian think tank Providus found that none of 21 flagged posts – including hate speech, disinformation, and incitement to violence – were removed as a result of user complaints. Platforms only reacted (if at all) when contacted by state authorities.

What Do We See?

- Providus submitted **21 reports** to Telegram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube; none were properly addressed.
- Telegram’s reporting tool **didn’t function at all**.
- TikTok and Facebook responded with **automated “no violations found” replies**.
- YouTube confirmed receipt but **took no action** after a month.
- Only one Facebook post was removed – and the **user wasn’t notified**.
- **In sum:** The failure highlights a serious vulnerability for Russian-speaking populations in the Baltics who rely heavily on social media after the Kremlin’s TV ban.

Why Does It Matter?

The DSA was designed to empower users and protect democratic societies from online harms like hate speech and foreign disinformation. But this case shows:

- Platforms prioritize regulator over user complaints.
- Disinformation and extremist content remain online unchecked.
- With upcoming elections in Latvia and regional exposure to Russian influence, this poses a high risk to information security.

How Do the Baltic States Respond?

Latvia

- PTAC (Consumer Rights Protection Centre) is the DSA coordinator.
- Works with 12 agencies but struggles when platforms ignore requests.
- 288 takedown orders in 2025 (mostly about illegal gambling and advertising).

Estonia

- Consumer authority acts as both coordinator and enforcer.
- Staff actively monitor platforms and issue takedown orders.
- Achieved a rare success forcing Telegram to block 14 sanctioned Russian outlets – after 3 months.

Lithuania

- Communications Regulatory Authority is coordinator.
- Certified region's first "trusted flaggers" (Piraceymeter and Debunk EU).
- More proactive on AI-generated disinformation and campaign regulation.

Risk Assessment: HIGH

- DSA promises user empowerment, but implementation remains weak.
- Baltic states remain exposed to Russian-language propaganda.
- Lack of local platform offices and overloaded Irish authorities delay responses.
- Information war is intensifying ahead of national elections.

How to Respond?

For the Public:

- Be cautious with Russian-language content on social platforms.
- Report harmful content via official channels but manage expectations.
- Use fact-checkers like Re:Baltica and Delfi for verification.

For Public Institutions:

- Publish user guides: where and how to report content.
- Collaborate with and support trusted flaggers.
- Increase pressure on platforms via coordinated EU actions.

For EU and National DSA Coordinators:

- Hold platforms accountable under DSA obligations.
- Improve visibility and usability of complaint systems.
- Support local monitoring with more resources and legal tools.

FURTHER READING

- EDMO's report on DSA: [Freedom of Speech vs. Online Safety: Half of Europeans see the DSA as user protection, more than a quarter as a threat](#)
- CEDMO's report on disinformation: [The importance of the problem of disinformation](#)

What is BECID?

BECID – the Baltic Engagement Centre for Combating Information Disorders – brings together expertise in fact-checking, media literacy, and journalism across the Baltics. We conduct fact-checks in collaboration with Delfi/Delfi Meedia, monitor disinformation narratives and campaigns under the leadership of investigative journalism organisation Re:Baltica, and promote media literacy through the Baltic Centre for Media Literacy (BCME). We also develop methodologies to effectively counter disinformation. Learn more: becid.ut.ee

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