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Civil Society Coalition Calls for Binding Transparency Rules for Online Platforms

Brussels / Berlin, 30 October 2020. A coalition of 46 civil society organizations and world-renowned academics join AlgorithmWatch and the European Policy Centre in calling for binding transparency rules for online platforms. In a statement published today, the signatories urge the European Commission to put meaningful transparency at the heart of its forthcoming Digital Services Act.

As the European Commission prepares for the publication of its much anticipated Digital Services Act, a broad coalition of civil society actors is highlighting the urgent need to commit internet platforms to a much higher level of transparency. To make transparency meaningful, the statement argues, the DSA must introduce comprehensive data access frameworks that provide watchdogs with the tools they need to hold platforms accountable.

The recommendations come at a critical time. With an overwhelming majority, the European Parliament adopted three resolutions on the DSA in their plenary session last week, all of which included enhanced transparency as a key component. During their plenary debate, parliamentarians emphasized the need to improve the transparency of algorithms so that citizens and elected officials can understand the rules governing platforms' algorithmic 'black boxes.'

"Too often, transparency is an empty buzzword," says Mackenzie Nelson, project lead for AlgorithmWatch's Governing Platforms Project. "These recommendations show how policymakers can operationalize transparency in practice."

The recommendations are the result of the Governing Platforms project, a year-long, civil society-driven dialogue series coordinated by AlgorithmWatch and the European Policy Centre with academic input from the Mainz Media Institute and the University of Amsterdam. They will present the statement to European policymakers, including European Commission Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager, at an [online event](#) on Friday October 30.

"The broad interest from partners in civil society and academia shows how important it is that the DSA succeeds in demystifying the algorithms behind these platforms," says Andreas Aktoudianakis, Policy Analyst at the Brussels-based European Policy Centre, "We will be following the legislative process and liaising with stakeholders in order to ensure that the EU institutions incorporate our recommendations into the Digital Services Act."

Available at <https://algorithmwatch.org/governing-platforms/>

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