The new EU Digital Services Act marks a significant shift in the digital space regulation, establishing – among many other innovations – the liability of major digital platforms in countering the spread of illegal online content uploaded by users.

However, the notion of "illegal content" is defined imprecisely in the Regulation, which simply refers to EU law and to the various Member States legislations.

The vagueness and potential breadth of harmful phenomena affecting individuals in the digital space raise significant interpretative issues in identifying users' criminally relevant conduct and in outlining the related platforms' obligations.

While framing some theoretical and regulatory foundations of ISPs' liability, freedom of expression and EU criminal law, the Symposium aims to clarify – in a comparative perspective – such boundaries of illegality concerning certain categories of online content among the different legal systems within the EU.

The meeting grounds on a research project funded by Alphabet/Google, entitled "Leveling the field. Clarifying the notion of illegal content under the EU's Digital Services Act", currently underway at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and the University of Bologna.

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Euregio Platform
on Human Dignity
and Human Rights

The Notion of *Illegal Content* in the EU Digital Age.

18 – 19 September 2025
Schwalbenvilla-Villa San Marco,
Meran-Merano (BZ)

Symposium
Agenda
↓

PROGRAMME
Thursday, 18 September 2025

9:00 – 9:15 WELCOME ADDRESS:
Cuno Tarfusser (President of the Academy Merano, Former Judge of the ICC) and Robert Simon (Coordinator of the Euregio Platform on Human Dignity and Human Rights)

9:15 – 9:30 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:
PI Kolis Summerer (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano) and Co-PI Matteo L. Mattheudakis (University of Bologna)

FIRST PANEL

9:30 – 10:00 PRESENTATION: The jurisdictional reach and challenges of the DSA, Julia Hörnle (QM University of London)

10:00 – 10:30 Discussant: Gaia Fiorinelli (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna di Pisa)

10:30 – 10:45 Debate

10:45 – 11:00 PAUSE

SECOND PANEL

11:00 – 11:30 PRESENTATION: The definition of illegal content. The role of criminal law in the context of the DSA, Esmeralda Dedej (EU Commission)

11:30 – 12:00 Discussant: Beatrice Panattoni (University of Verona; University of Luxembourg)

12:00 – 12:15 Debate

THIRD PANEL

12:15 – 12:45 PRESENTATION: Preventing and combating crimes committed through platforms in the DSA Regulation. Powers of the issuing judicial authority and notification obligations of the service provider, Michele Caianiello (University of Bologna)

12:45 – 13:15 Discussant: Clementina Salvi (University of Liverpool)

13:15 – 13:30 Debate

13:30 – 14:30 LONG COFFEE BREAK

FOURTH PANEL

14:30 – 15:00 PRESENTATION: Challenges of Definition and Harmonisation in the EU Directive on Violence Against Women and Girls, Clare McGlynn (University of Durham)

15:00 – 15:30 Discussant: Carlotta Rigotti (Leiden University)

15:30 – 15:45 Debate

FIFTH PANEL

15:45 – 16:15 PRESENTATION: The Rise of Digital 'Empires' of Internet Regulation – Finding the Right Balance in the Marketplace of Ideas, Johanna Rinceanu (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law, Freiburg im Breisgau)

16:15 – 16:45 Discussant: Alessandra Galluccio (University of Milan "La Statale")

16:45 – 17:00 Debate

17:00 – 17:15 PAUSE

SIXTH PANEL

17:15 – 17:45 PRESENTATION: Regulating the regulators? Election Disinformation and Digital Platforms, Jeremy Horder (London School of Economics)

17:45 – 18:15 Discussant: Emanuele Birritteri (University of Rome Unitelma Sapienza)

18:15 – 18:30 Debate

18:30 – 18:45 Conclusions and end of session

PROGRAMME
Friday, 19 September 2025

9:00 – 9:30 ROUND TABLE OPENING:
Comparative reports on the notion of illegal online content, Gian Marco Caletti and Paolo Beccari (University of Bologna)

FAKE NEWS

9:30 – 10:00 Elisa Hoven (University of Leipzig)
Report on Germany

10:00 – 10:15 Discussion

CYBERHARASSMENT

10:15 – 10:45 Linnea Wegerstad (Lund University)
Report on Sweden

10:45 – 11:00 Discussion

11:00 – 11:15 PAUSE

CYBERSTALKING

11.15 – 11:45 Patricia Faraldo Cabana (University of La Coruña)
Report on Spain

11:45 – 12:00 Discussion

CYBERBULLYING

12:00 – 12:30, Lora Briski (University of Ljubljana)
Report on Slovenia

12:30 – 12:45 Discussion

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY/SEXTING

12:45 – 13:15, Margareth Helfer (University of Innsbruck)
Report on Austria-Italy

13:15 – 13:30 Discussion

13:30 – 14:30 LONG COFFEE BREAK

IMAGE – BASED SEXUAL ABUSES

14:30 – 15:00 Marthe Goudsmit Samaritter (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law, Freiburg im Breisgau)
Report on Netherland

15:00 – 15:15 Discussion

SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXTREME OR VIOLENT PORNOGRAPHY

15:15 – 15:45, Camille Perrier Depeursinge (University of Lausanne)
Report on French speaking countries

15:45 – 16:00 Discussion

DEFAMATION AND HATE SPEECH

16:00 – 16:30 Arianna Visconti (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)
Report on Italy

16:30 – 16:45 Discussion

16:45 – 17:00 PAUSE

17:00 – 18:00 Final Roundtable

18:00 – 18:30 Closing Remarks