



Public Comment Appendix for

Case 2023-030-FB-UA, 2023-031-FB-UA

Case number

Case description

These two cases concern content decisions made by Meta, both on Facebook, which the Oversight Board intends to address together. The two pieces of content were posted by different users in Greece around the time of the [June 2023 General Election](#), the second set of elections to take place in the country that year following the failure of any party to secure a majority. Meta removed the two posts for violating its [Dangerous Organizations and Individuals Community Standard](#). For each case, the Board will decide whether the content should be allowed on Facebook.

In the first case, a Facebook user, who was a candidate for the Spartans party in Greece, posted an image of his electoral leaflet, accompanied by a caption in Greek describing the progress of his campaign ahead of the June 2023 elections. The leaflet also noted that Ilias Kasidiaris supports the Spartans. Mr. Kasidiaris, a Greek politician, was sentenced to 13 years in prison for directing the activities of Golden Dawn – a far-right political party, which in 2020 was [declared](#) a criminal organization responsible for hate crimes, including the [murder](#) of a Greek rap singer and violent attacks on immigrants and left-wing activists. Before being sentenced, he founded a new party called National Party – Greeks. In May 2023, the Greek Supreme Court [disqualified](#) National Party – Greeks from running in the June 2023 elections, so Mr. Kasidiaris [declared](#) his support for the Spartans from prison using his Twitter account.

In the second case, a different Facebook user posted an image of the National Party – Greeks’ logo, with the word “Spartans” in Greek as part of the image.

Both posts were reported to Meta, which determined the content in both cases violated Facebook’s [Dangerous Organizations and Individuals](#) Community Standard. Both Facebook users who posted the content appealed, but Meta confirmed its removal decisions were correct, also separately applying a severe

strike and 30-day restriction to both accounts, preventing them from creating content. The two users then separately appealed to the Board.

Meta informed the Board that Golden Dawn, National Party – Greeks, and Ilias Kasidiaris are designated as Tier 1 Hate Organizations and as a Tier 1 Hate Figure, respectively, under the Dangerous Organizations and Individuals policy. This policy “focuses on entities that engage in serious offline harms – including organizing or advocating for violence against civilians, repeatedly dehumanizing or advocating for harm against people based on protected characteristics, or engaging in systematic criminal operations.” Meta noted that the Facebook user in the first case praised a designated entity by speaking positively about Mr. Kasidiaris and aligning themselves with him. In the second case, Meta considered the sharing of the logo as praise for National Party – Greeks, another designated entity.

On August 29, 2023, Meta announced changes to its Dangerous Organizations and Individuals policy, including an updated exception for content in the context of social and political discourse that reports on, neutrally discusses or condemns dangerous organizations and individuals or their activities. Meta told the Board that the content in both cases would not benefit from this exception, prior to or following the August 29 changes.

The Board selected these cases to assess the impact of Meta’s Dangerous Organizations and Individuals Community Standard on freedom of expression and political participation, especially during elections when designated entities or persons associated with them may be active in political discourse, and/or are lawfully fielding candidates. The cases fall within the Board’s Elections and Civic Space and Hate Speech against Marginalized Groups [strategic priorities](#).

The Board would appreciate public comments that address:

- Trends in the use of social media platforms by organized hate movements in Greece and Europe, in particular in the context of elections, and related impacts on civic discourse and the rights of marginalized groups, including migrants.
- Views on how Meta should moderate content relating to proscribed political parties and hate organizations and figures, considering Meta’s values of “safety” and “voice,” and the company’s human rights responsibilities in relation to freedom of expression, freedom of association, equality and non-discrimination, and public participation.

- Insights into the effectiveness of Meta removing content praising, supporting or representing designated hate organizations and figures to reduce offline harm, and insights into alternative or additional measures to address these harms.
- The transparency of Meta’s designation list, in particular for designated hate organizations and figures who may be participating lawfully in elections.

As part of its decisions, the Board can issue policy recommendations to Meta. While recommendations are not binding, Meta must respond to them within 60 days. As such, the Board welcomes public comments proposing recommendations that are relevant to these cases.



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Case number

The Oversight Board is committed to bringing diverse perspectives from third parties into the case review process. To that end, the Oversight Board has established a public comment process.

Public comments respond to case descriptions based on the information provided to the Board by users and Facebook as part of the appeals process. These case descriptions are posted before panels begin deliberation to provide time for public comment. As such, case descriptions reflect neither the Board's assessment of the case, nor the full array of policy issues that a panel might consider to be implicated by each case.

To protect the privacy and security of commenters, comments are only viewed by the Oversight Board and as detailed in the [Operational Privacy Notice](#). All commenters included in this appendix gave consent to the Oversight Board to publish their comments. For commenters who did not consent to attribute their comments publicly, names have been redacted. To withdraw your comment, please email contact@osbadmin.com.

To reflect the wide range of views on cases, the Oversight Board has included all comments received except those clearly irrelevant, abusive or disrespectful of the human and fundamental rights of any person or group of persons and therefore violating the [Terms for Public Comment](#). Inclusion of a comment in this appendix is not an endorsement by the Oversight Board of the views expressed in the comment. The Oversight Board is committed to transparency and this appendix is meant to accurately reflect the input we received.

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20001
UA, 2023-031-FB-
UA

United States &
Canada

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Withheld

Withheld

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

In any regard to "left" and "right" in politics, these lines can be deliberately Skewed. Particularly in this region. The original offense could just as likely be a violation of the intent of the rule, because it deliberately squashed public comment by a right-leaning group (via imprisonment). While Facebook cannot directly interfere in unjust treatment of political rivals, I believe that we should not further the unjust treatment.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20005

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Panayote

Dimitras

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Greek Helsinki

Yes

Monitor

Organization

Response on behalf of organization

Full Comment

Several months ago, we have already asked Meta to include Spartans in its Dangerous Organizations and Individuals but, unfortunately, despite several reminders we have not received any reply. In the meantime, several reports we made of posts on Facebook or Instagram that show Spartans as supported by Ilias Kasidiaris or even using his name and picture in their profile pictures or other logos, as well as individual posts on their accounts have been removed by Meta. We believe that the present two cases are among the ones we had reported. However, our reports seeking the outright removal of their accounts as DOI were not accepted. Coincidentally, the day after the Oversight Board made the present announcement, in a historically unprecedented move, the Supreme Court Prosecutor announced that eleven of the twelve MPs of Spartans have been summoned to provide explanations as suspects regarding their potential involvement in electoral fraud during this year’s legislative elections. A request has already been made to Parliament to lift their immunity. As outlined in the prosecutor’s document addressed to the Speaker of Parliament, despite their official affiliation with the Spartans' party under the leadership of Vassilis Stigas (who was not summoned), it

appears that they were receiving support and direct guidance from Ilias Kasidiaris, who is currently incarcerated. As emphasized in the prosecutor’s document, “the aforementioned individuals effectively used the Spartans party as a front for a new political entity under Ilias Kasidiaris, thereby aiding him in circumventing the electoral restrictions imposed by election legislation.” That in itself is sufficient to confirm the correctness of Meta's two decisions under review here, and, if within the mandate of the OB, it may also recommend to Meta to add the Spartans and its members (who currently have scores of profiles in Meta) to the Tier 1 Hate Organizations and Tier 1 Hate Figures alongside Golden Dawn, National Party – Greeks, and Ilias Kasidiaris (see summary article in English here

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1223345/spartiates-mps-under-scrutiny-for-possible-electoral-fraud/> and the full Supreme Court document in Greek here

<https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/562691716/areios-pagos-os-ypoptoi-kaloyntai-11-voyleytes-ton-spartiaton-gia-exapatisi-eklogeon/>)

We add that all reports made for Golden Dawn, National Party – Greeks, and Ilias Kasidiaris were routinely accepted. However, since September, the contact we had at Meta that was helping implement this policy has left and we were instructed to use the anonymous Official Request Portal. As a result, we occasionally get odd replies, with the most extreme example being keeping the account of Golden Dawn's Women's Front leader and daughter of Golden Dawn's leader, which until last summer was removed.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20008

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Christos

Iliadis

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

ACTROM - Action
for and from the
Roma

Yes

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

Golden Dawn, the fir-tight political party/criminal organisation where Ilias Kasidiaris was a prominent member and an MP, actively persecuted migrants, refugees, and other minority and vulnerable groups like the Roma in Greece - both Greek citizens and third country nationals Roma. There were many cases recorded during the 2012-2014 period when members of the Golden Dawn (GD) persecuted Greek Roma. One incident was recorded in June 2012 when during a Golden Dawn rally a passing-by Roma was identified and persecuted before clashes between the local Roma and the members of Golden Dawn begun. In another case, in September 2012 in the Greek town of Mesologgi, a prominent local member of GD was arrested for setting on fire a truck belonging to a Roma. There were many more cases of hate speech against the Roma - called "Gypsies" - during an unidentified number of events and rallies. Slogans like "No gypsies in our villages", or get rid of the human garbage" were repeated during Golden Dawn rallies.

Ilias Kassidiaris was actively involved in at least one incident: During his speech in a rally of GD in 2012 he called the Roma "human trash" and asked the supporters of GD to "fight [...] if they wanted their area to become clean" - a direct call to violence against the Roma.

The Chief prosecutor, Mr. Vourliotis, in his final report for GD concluded that foreigners, the Roma, persons with disabilities, and all those that do not agree with their views, are considered by GD as subhuman. Violence is their message and not only the means for achieving their aims.

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20009

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Panagiotis

Christofis

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT
PROVIDE

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

Facebook regulation is AI based and this has its benefits as well as its setbacks. The main benefit is speed of action. A post that is supposed to be harmful or violent or supporting hatred is almost automatically regulated. This is totally the best action because it does not allow harmful content to be seen by viewers. This AI based tool though can be cheated. We have seen many posts that "escape" this tool and are freely communicated until someone reports it - but the damage is already done. In the specific case of Mr Kasidiaris and his attempts to participate with the one or another way in the previous elections we miss a crucial information. Mr Kasidiaris and Golden Dawn were not just far-right extremists, they were a Neo-nazi party that have organized an armed group that was acting on their command. In my understanding these extremists should be banned from social media for life because they are an active armed threat to the democratic community. My view is that we somehow must align the legal system with the SoMe regulating system. In the same manner that the legal system deprives the community freedom to a convicted criminal, in the same manner it should happen in the digital/virtual community. I can understand that this is really not feasible at the

moment because of the fact that we have international SoMe platforms where we do not have international regulative legal platforms. I believe it's time for an International Digital Magna Carta to be agreed upon, on some basic issues. Last but not least, in order to have a transparent regulative system on SoMe and especially Meta an independent intermediary institution should be created that will have a full access to meta's system and at the same time full state legal & police support. In this manner meta will be controlled and the state will not have direct access to any private property that is posted / shared in meta.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20011

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Withheld

Withheld

Greek

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

Από την πολυετή χρήση που κάνω του κοινωνικού δικτύου Facebook 1 ο. Έχω συναντήσει πολλές δημοσιεύσεις και σχόλια με υβριστικά, χυδαία, προσβλητικά λόγια η και εικόνες που προφανώς δεν θα έπρεπε να δημοσιεύονται στην παγκόσμια αυτή " διαδραστική εφημερίδα ιδίως όταν αφορούν υπαρκτά πρόσωπα εν ζωή. 2ο. Για το συγκεκριμένο πρόβλημα των δημοσιεύσεων από μέλη του κόμματος των Σπαρτιατών κατά την προεκλογική περίοδο των τελευταίων βουλευτικών εκλογών στην Ελλάδα, δεν μπορώ να εκφέρω γνώμη διότι δεν τις έχω δει. Πάντως ότι τους υποστήριξε κατά την προεκλογική τους εκστρατεία ο έγκλειστος και σε πρώτο βαθμό καταδικασμένος για εγκληματικές ενέργειες πρώην βουλευτής του ακροδεξιού νεοναζιστικού κόμματος " Χρυσή Αυγή" Ηλίας Κασιδιάρης αυτό δείχνει κάποια πιθανή σύγκλιση με τις ιδέες του κόμματος των "Σπαρτιατών " ή απλά και μόνο μια φιλική σχέση με κάποια από τα υποψήφια στελέχη (ή και σημερινούς εκλεγμένους Βουλευτές) του κόμματος. 3ο. Οι νόμοι που ισχύουν στην χώρα επιτρέπουν να εκφράζουν όλοι οι πολίτες ακόμα και οι καταδικασμένοι τις πολιτικές τους προτιμήσεις. Το αν εκτός από μια πολιτική υποστήριξη υπήρχε και κρυφά από το εκλογικό σώμα των ψηφοφόρων πολιτών , κάποια καθοδήγηση σαν να είναι ο Ηλίας Κασιδιάρης ο πραγματικός αρχηγός του κόμματος των "Σπαρτιατών " κι όχι ο κύριος

Στίγγας, αυτό σύντομα θα κριθεί από την Δικαιοσύνη στο Εκλογοδικείο. 4ο. Λαβαίνοντας υπ όψιν τα παραπάνω εφ όσον οι δημοσιεύσεις για τις οποίες "τιμωρήθηκαν" με παύση των λογαριασμών τους στο facebook δεν περιείχαν πρόσκληση για διάπραξη εγκληματικών ενεργειών βίας, η ύβρεις, ή προσβολές χυδαίες εκφράσεις εναντίον προσώπων , τότε δεν βλέπω -θεωρητικά πάντα μιλώντας - λόγο "τιμωρίας" τους. διότι εν κατακλείδι είμαι κατά της λογοκρισίας για θέματα έκφρασης πολιτικής ιδεολογίας και κομματικής ένταξης. Αυτό απαιτούν άλλωστε, οι δημοκρατικό θεσμοί που γεννήθηκαν στην Ελλάδα , ωρίμασαν κι απλώθηκαν σε όλο τον δυτικό μας κόσμο.

Link to Attachment

[PC-20011](#)

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20012

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Withheld

Withheld

Greek

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

Στέλνοντας το σχόλιο μου απο Ελλάδα, και έχοντας εμπειρία από τις πρόσφατες εκλογές τον Ιούνιο 2023 στην χώρα μου, οφείλω να παραδεχτώ ότι οι παράγοντες επιρροής στα social media διαμορφώνουν την κοινή γνώμη και επηρεάζουν την συμπεριφορά των ψηφοφορων. Οι επιδοκίμασιές ή οι επικρίσεις τους για τα κόμματα επηρεάζουν τους οπαδούς και τις αποφάσεις ψήφου.

Αναφέρομαι στην συγκεκριμένη ακροδεξιά ομάδα "Σπαρτιάτες", ένα κόμμα εντελώς άγνωστο που 'γεννηθηκε' και 'εξελιχθηκε' με την στήριξη και βοήθεια των social media. Η ακροδεξιά ήταν μεταπολεμικα απομονωμενη στο μεγαλύτερο μέρος της Ευρώπης, και ήταν παράνομο έως πολύ δύσκολο να οργανωθεί. Όμως, τα social media μειώνουν δραστικά το κόστος συντονισμού.

Το συγκεκριμένο άτομο, λοιπόν, ο Ηλίας Κασιδιάρης αν και παρουσιάστηκε σαν αρχηγός κόμματος, 'εθνικο κόμμα ελλήνων', το οποίο στην πορεία χαρακτηρίστηκε εγκληματική οργάνωση μετά από επικίνδυνες και καταστροφικές ενέργειες (δολοφονία Φύσσα, επιθέσεις, τρομοκρατία), οδηγήθηκε στην φυλακή, φυσικά διαλύθηκε το κόμμα

του , παρ'ολα αυτά, μέσα από το κελί του διαμόρφωσε εξελίξεις. Εφήρμοσε επικοινωνιακή τακτική, επιτυχημένη στρατηγική στα μέσα, προβάλλοντας την υποκρυπτομενη σχέση μεταξύ των οπαδων του ίδιου και των "Σπαρτιατών". Ως αποτέλεσμα το κόμμα των Σπαρτιατών κατόρθωσε να μπει στην ελληνική Βουλή εκφράζοντας τις θέσεις του 4,63% της ελληνικής κοινωνίας.

Βλέπουμε λοιπόν, ότι ο ρόλος των social media συμβάλλει στην προώθηση της ελεύθερης έκφρασης, ανεξάρτητα με το περιεχόμενο, σε facebook,instagram,twitter,κλπ όπως έγινε και στις ελληνικές εκλογές.

Η χρήση τους ανάλογα με το περιεχόμενο, μπορεί να επηρεάσει ιδέες, να μετατρέψει πεποιθήσεις, να προωθήσει ανθρώπινες αξίες όπως ισότητα,υπευθυνότητα,δημόσια συμμετοχή,μη διακριση ή και ακριβώς τα αντίθετα!

Έτσι, αναπτύσσονται οι αμυντικοί μηχανισμοί που τείνουν να καταργούν περιεχόμενα μίσους και επιβλαβή στοιχεία 'λογοκρινοντας' δημοσιεύσεις και αναρτήσεις με στόχο την προφύλαξη των παγκόσμιων ηθικών αξιών όπως ο σεβασμός, η αξιοπρεπεια ,ξ αλληλεγγύη, η τιμιότητα,η ηθική.

Κλείνοντας, θέλω να τονίσω ότι η ελευθερία λόγου και έκφρασης στο διαδίκτυο θα πρέπει να είναι εγγυημένη και να θεωρείται βασικό ανθρώπινο δικαίωμα που θα κινείται ανάμεσα στο "όλα είναι δυνατό να λεχθούν" εκτός από εκείνα που προσβάλλουν.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20013
UA, 2023-031-FB-
UA

United States &
Canada

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Withheld

Withheld

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

In both cases I agree with Meta and facebook to delete the comments. When a person is in prison they have forfeited their rights that the non-jailed people have. In addition there should clearly a statement that the "Greeks" and "Spartans" political parties being supported by Mr. Katsidiaris. There should be no confusion. We need to consider that the comments are being read by individuals that do not have the mentality to differentiate.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20015
UA, 2023-031-FB-
UA

Europe

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Withheld

Withheld

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

Views on how Meta should moderate content relating to proscribed political parties and hate organizations and figures, considering Meta’s values of “safety” and “voice,” and the company’s human rights responsibilities in freedom of association, equality and non-discrimination, and public participation.

An important feature of the state of play in Kasidiaris case is the inadequate legislation which stipulates a 'disqualification' of certain parties whose president, secretary-general, members of the steering committee, legal representative or the real leadership of the party (single-member or collective) have been sentenced to any degree of imprisonment for the crimes against state and political bodies, crimes against public order, etc. concerning only their ability to participate in elections while an individual candidate or a candidate in a coalition of independent candidates convicted of the previous offenses is not excluded. This insufficient legislation gives space for grey area where it is unclear whether or not a given piece of online speech content (like the content that was removed by the Meta) is hate speech and it is unlawful or illegal. Grey area cases are characteristically subject to a much higher level of discretion in

interpretation and reasonable disagreement. The status of grey area cases might be heavily contested among even highly skilled, well trained and experienced practitioners such as professional moderators and legal professionals. Meta could seek more mutual cooperation and collaboration with civil society organizations aiming to harmonize the definition of hate speech, increase the influence of less powerful stakeholders, facilitate innovation and creativity in the framing and solving of problems and produce governance that is more capable of dealing with grey area cases.

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20016

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Χρήστος

Κεχαγιάς

Greek

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT
PROVIDE

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

Καλησπέρα από την Αθήνα. Το θέμα που θίγεται είναι κρίσιμο και ύστερα από αρκετή σκέψη καταλήγω στο συμπέρασμα ότι δεν αποτελεί ορθή αντιμετώπιση ενός νεοναζιστικού μορφώματος η φίμωσή του. Μια πραγματική δημοκρατία πρέπει να δίνει χώρο ακόμα και στις ακραίες φωνές εντός της κοινωνίας και να αποδεικνύει στον λαό μέσω του διαλόγου την ένδεια των επιχειρημάτων τέτοιων μορφωμάτων. Εν προκειμένω, η διαγραφή των αναρτήσεων τους από το Facebook αποτελεί μιας πρώτης τάξης ευκαιρία να λαϊκίσουν και να ενεργοποιήσουν τους μηχανισμούς προπαγάνδας τους, παρουσιάζοντας τις πολιτικές τους ιδέες ως "αντισυστημικές" βγαίνοντας εν τέλη κερδισμένοι (όπως τελικά αποδείχτηκε με την εκλογή των Σπαρτιατών στην Βουλή των Ελλήνων).

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20017

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Vera

Tika

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Far Right Analysis

Yes

Network

Organization

Response on behalf of organization

Full Comment

Public Comment Vera Tika - Greek 2023 elections campaign

- Trends in the use of social media platforms by organized hate movements in Greece and Europe, in particular in the context of elections, and related impacts on civic discourse and the rights of marginalized groups, including migrants.

In Europe, extremist groups, particularly the far right, have been using mainstream social media for years as tools to develop, disseminate, and reinforce their ideologies. These platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp) offer them the ability to disseminate (false) information rapidly and to reach audiences that might not otherwise be exposed to such ideas in their daily lives. By capitalizing on the difficulty of verifying information's accuracy and to moderate hateful content, these groups manage to spread hate speech, conspiracy theories, and false information on a large scale.

This growing presence of far-right groups, currently embodied by a far-right political

party, the Spartans, is particularly concerning in Greece, where minorities, including refugees, migrants, and the LGBTQ+ community, are already particularly vulnerable due to a series of interconnected developments such as the economic crisis, the refugee crisis etc. In fact, hate groups have been able to take advantage of the distress of Greek society in the face of the economic crisis to emerge and develop by designating scapegoats (especially refugees, immigrants, and Roma communities). By exploiting the complex economic situation and social divisions, these hate groups have managed to build and disseminate a racist discourse presenting refugees and immigrants as criminals responsible for insecurity in the country and as threats to 'native' Greeks by seizing jobs and government aid. Consequently, these minorities are targeted on social networks where they are regularly the subjects of harassment campaigns and disinformation, and where multiple stereotypes and hate speech are relayed. They are also targeted offline, facing discrimination (in access to employment, health, education, etc.) at best, and violent physical attacks at worst. In 2022, the Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) documented 9 racist attacks involving racist violent groups, a figure that is likely underestimated due to victims' reluctance to report the violence .

The 5% electoral share of the votes of the Spartans party in the June 2023 parliamentary elections highlights how these ideas are beginning to emerge from the margins to the mainstream, and social networks are an integral part of the strategy of far-right groups. Legal far-right parties present in parliament are found on most platforms, including Facebook, such as the case of Spartans and its 4K likes. Needing this presence on social networks to ensure their visibility as a political party and to avoid being banned, their posts on Facebook, although linked to an extremist ideology, seem to remain relatively moderate. At least, they are when compared to the activity on social networks of other far-right and neo-Nazi groups, which are much more marginal and unknown but no less dangerous. These groups disseminate hate speech aimed at attacking and stigmatizing minorities, incite violence, especially against anti-fascist opponents, promote xenophobic, racist, ultra-nationalist ideas, as well as conspiracy theories. One can take the example of the group *Ιερός Λόχος*, which, in a tweet in July 2023, called for the mass deportation of non-white individuals from Western countries . These numerous extremist and violent groups, more or less linked to Golden Dawn, are active both online and offline, and their activity on social networks must be closely monitored. However, if these groups disseminate their messages more or less directly on platforms like X or YouTube, which have more flexible moderation rules, their use of Facebook or Instagram is different. On these platforms, supporters of Golden Dawn,

for example (but this is also the case for most extreme-right groups), are rather quickly banned in case of hate speech dissemination, in line with Facebook's terms of service. However, their impact extends beyond the direct visibility of their hateful messages to the wider public. Employing subtler strategies, these groups navigate Facebook's usage policies to defend and disseminate their ideas despite reports. On one hand, Golden Dawn supporters regularly launch virtual attacks by mass-flagging anti-fascist pages, exploiting Facebook's moderation rules to get posts denouncing hate and fascism removed. This strategy weakens voices opposing their detrimental ideas to Greek society. On the other hand, aware that direct messages of hate would be removed according to Facebook's moderation policies, they've adopted an alternative tactic. They routinely create false pages posing as anti-fascist groups, disseminating false information to discredit these movements among Facebook users, distorting the public's perception and indirectly spreading their hateful ideas (For example, by posting support for refugees who have been convicted of rape or other crimes) .

Here is a list of dangerous groups active in Greece, both online and offline, that should be monitored:

- Propatria (connected to Russia and advertised in the Russian VK Facebook https://vk.com/propatria_hellas)
- Hellenic Existence (IAXH)
- Εθνική Σοσιαλιστική Αντίσταση
- Ιερός Λόχος
- Εθνικιστική Νεολαία Θεσσαλονίκης
- Μύρος κρίνος
- Γαλάζια Στρατιά
- Combat 18 hellas
- Ανεταχτοι Μέανδροι Εθνικιστες

- Κρυπτεία
 - Θεματοφύλακες του Συντάγματος
 - Μέτωπο Νεολαίας- Μέτωπο Αντίστασης
 - Autonomous (active on Instagram)
- Views on how Meta should moderate content relating to proscribed political parties and hate organizations and figures, considering Meta’s values of “safety” and “voice,” and the company’s human rights responsibilities in freedom of association, equality and non-discrimination, and public participation.

The complex task for META is moderating posts from parties like the Spartans, which entered parliament through legal elections. Moreover, excluding dangerous parties from Facebook preventively, that is to say, as soon as they appear on the platform and even before any hate messages are posted, can also prove to be counterproductive and even advantageous for extremist groups. In fact, when they are excluded simply for existing on the platform without any concrete evidence of online hate incitement, it becomes easier for them to criticize this decision and leverage national legislations to turn the situation on their favor, as was the case with the organization CasaPound, which was compensated by Facebook in Italy. .

However, doing nothing and allowing these extremist groups to spread their messages and ideas with complete impunity on social networks is not a viable approach. In our case, even if the posts are made by members of Spartans, a democratically elected, far (but not extreme) right party, their direct affiliation with Golden Dawn might justify the removal of these posts on Facebook. Allowing such groups to express support for a criminal organization would mean rehabilitating the latter and giving it a legitimate place in the Greek political landscape. In both instances, these posts don't present neutral information about Mr. Kasidiaris and the National Party-Greeks but rather clearly associate them as allies of Spartans, even though they have been dissolved and condemned. Banning such posts wouldn't obstruct democracy but would be crucial to prevent Golden Dawn from using Facebook to resurge and rebuild a legitimate political image for when the political climate becomes more hospitable.

Such a preventative approach – as described above - aims to protect vulnerable minorities from a criminal organization that has previously posed direct threats to them (e.g. by the murders of Shahzad Luqman, a 27 years-old Pakistani, or Pavlos Fyssas, an anti-fascist hip-hop artist, in 2013). It involves not only removing Golden Dawn pages that support xenophobic and hateful ideologies but also pre-emptive examination of other strategies employed by this organization to circumvent established rules.

- Insights into the effectiveness of Meta removing content praising, supporting or representing designated hate organizations and figures to reduce offline harm, and insights into alternative or additional measures to address these harms

According to these two cases (e.g. Golden Dawn and the Spartans), Meta seems relatively effective in moderating and removing content directly linked to dangerous organizations openly promoting hate speech, mainly thanks to user reports. Any publication referencing hate groups by presenting them as allies or legitimate actors must be banned to prevent their rise to power and protect the minorities they target. However, the strategies of these hate groups are not limited to explicit and direct dissemination of their ideologies on Facebook, as previously mentioned, they also resort to alternative strategies such as disinformation campaigns and attacks against anti-fascist activists as a more indirect way of furthering their aims.

To counter these strategies, it's imperative for Meta to develop more sophisticated information verification mechanisms. Reducing the automation of report handling and opting for a more human-supervised approach could be a way to counter the tactics of far-right groups. This could help avoid situations like when Facebook removed a post denouncing the Holocaust (depicting partially unclothed camp prisoners) due to extremist reports, citing a violation of the platform's nudity rules . Recruiting and training moderators with Greek language specialism to detect false reports aiming to undermine anti-fascist content and to identify fake accounts created by the far-right to discredit their opponents' political ideas could be a relevant approach.

In addition to the work to directly counter hate speech and the promotion of extremist groups, it also seems essential that Meta supports non-political groups and organizations from civil society working on social networks to counter hate speech and disinformation campaigns. These activists indeed form an essential barrier against the growing influence of dangerous groups through monitoring social media posts, reporting, running awareness campaigns, and fact-checking. Furthermore, by

promoting the values of democracy, solidarity, freedom, and tolerance, numerous non-governmental organizations constitute an indispensable counterbalance to the violent discourses propagated by extremist organizations. It appears essential, therefore, for Meta to work on the one hand to ensure that these organizations can freely disseminate these values on social networks and on the other hand to develop partnerships and projects with them to enhance their influence and improve their effectiveness on social media.

- The transparency of Meta’s designation list, in particular for designated hate organizations and figures who may be participating lawfully in elections.

The Meta designation list establishes a classification that appears quite broad, enabling the encapsulation and moderation of content posted by various hate groups, not just the most dangerous or explicit ones. Relying solely on the criterion of the violence and dangerousness of these groups, rather than whether they are legal or not, helps limit the influence of hate groups involved in elections. Despite their legality, these groups remain conduits for dangerous ideas of hate that can translate into offline violent acts and should not enjoy online impunity simply because they are recognized political parties.

Furthermore, incorporating offline behaviors into the classification, not just what is posted on platforms like Facebook, is also a positive aspect. Some groups, aiming to attract followers and reach a wider audience, are sometimes more moderate online than in their real-world actions. Effectively countering their strategy of sanitization online thus appears essential by considering the entirety of their actions involving hate and violence, both online and offline.

Link to Attachment

[PC-20017](#)

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20019

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Charis

Papaevangelou

Greek

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT
PROVIDE

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

DID NOT PROVIDE

Link to Attachment

[PC-20019](#)

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20020

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Withheld

Withheld

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

No

Organization

Response on behalf of organization

Full Comment

The decision on whether sharing content related to banned hate organizations or individuals should be permitted or prohibited depends on the specific context of the post or comment. The allowance for content within the realms of social and political discourse, reporting on, neutrally discussing, or condemning dangerous organizations and individuals and their activities, aligns sensibly with the principles of freedom of speech. However, in recent times, various far-right political movements in Europe have adapted their behavior on social media platforms to circumvent content moderation or deplatforming efforts. As a result, content shared by such actors often falls into a legal grey zone, posing challenges concerning adherence to the platform's Terms of Service. Therefore, the context in which such content is shared plays a pivotal role in determining its permissibility.

Similar conduct has been observed among far-right groups in Slovakia, where the far-right SNS party has resorted to using coded language to disseminate their content to evade moderation and legal consequences (<https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/online-extremism-in-slovakia-actors-topics-platforms-strategies/>). When

such actors share seemingly neutral information about banned groups and organizations, the assessment must be conducted with utmost diligence to prevent the use of neutral language for the promotion of hateful acts or the proscribed organizations or individuals. This is also evident in the aforementioned examples, where proscribed individuals or organizations were used for propagandist purposes rather than to provide a neutral and informative account or condemn acts of hate and violence. This strategy is frequently employed by far-right actors, who selectively omit negative facts related to the violent history of these proscribed individuals or organizations, instead focusing on presenting them in a positive light. Furthermore, similar content may appear to condemn specific hateful actions but then introduces the word "but," leading to a subsequent attempt to relativize these acts of hate and violence.

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20021

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Withheld

Withheld

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

No

Organization

Response on behalf of organization

Full Comment

The Greek 2023 elections campaign case highlights an important challenge regarding the use of social media platforms by organized hate movements in different parts of the world. Due to the increase of such use, in particular, in the light of new capacities for spreading hate speech and manipulating public opinion with the help of automated content generation and dissemination, it is crucial to implement measures for limiting the impact of hate movements on the public sphere and prevent actions which can directly harm vulnerable communities targeted by these movements. However, the practical implementation of these measures, especially the ones that will follow the one-size-fits-all principle, is rather difficult. The difficulties relate to possible disagreements of what organizations shall or shall not be classified as hate movements and potential implications of content moderation policies for the right to freedom of expression. Specifically, I have three concerns regarding the consistency and sustainability of the current moderation policies, which I would like to discuss in this comment.

The first concern that I would like to focus on relates to the transparency of the operationalization of the organized hate movement for the Meta moderation policy. The current version of the Dangerous Organizations and Individuals Community Standard states that for defining these organizations, Meta relies both on the existing lists of organizations designated by the US government as, for instance, Foreign Terrorist Organizations and, assumingly, its own lists of hate and criminal organizations. However, the exact criteria for including or excluding the organizations in the latter lists are rather general and can be interpreted broadly. The vagueness of criteria is particularly concerning under the condition of the lack of a complete list of organizations included in the different tiers of the Standard; the presence of such a list, in my opinion, would be important for making the moderation policy more transparent.

The second concern relates to the consistency of the moderation policy application, in particular, due to it focusing primarily on non-state entities. For instance, the Standard's definition suggests that one of the criteria is that the organization is organizing or advocating for violence against civilians. Based on the definition alone, organizations and individuals affiliated with the political regimes pursuing aggressive wars and conducting attacks against the civilian population, as in the case of the Russian invasion in Ukraine, can be arguably treated as Tier 1 entities, albeit it is not necessarily the case. The problem is amplified by the increasing mainstreaming of radical political groups (which often also fit the criteria of organized hate movements), which can result in these groups becoming part of democratically elected governments. In my view, it will be important for the future versions of the community standards to consider to what degree it shall counter or limit support, praise, and representation of state entities that promote hateful ideologies and are increasingly recognized as perpetrators of war crimes.

The third concern relates to the moderation policy regarding the permission of content offering a neutral or critical stance on organized hate movements. While recognizing the importance of such content for the freedom of expression, I would consider whether even such materials can contribute to the exposure of individual Meta users to information about such movements and, under certain conditions, stimulate interest in their activity and messages, which can result in the subsequent radicalization. Similar to how debunking efforts (e.g., of journalistic media) can contribute to the exposure of individuals to conspiracy theories when such debunking is not done in an effective

manner (see, for instance, Lewandowsky et al., 2020), the exposure to criticism of the organized hate movements can potentially still serve the interests of these organizations. Under these circumstances, it is important to consider whether the lack of the intent to support or praise a specific hate organization is per se enough to prevent potential harm from it being mentioned on the platform and experiment with ways to decrease the potential negative consequences of such exposure.

References

Lewandowsky, S., Cook, J., Ecker, U., Albarracín, D., Kendeou, P., Newman, E. J., ... & Zaragoza, M. S. (2020). The debunking handbook 2020.

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment

CASE 2023-030-FB- PC-20022

Europe

UA, 2023-031-FB-

UA

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Withheld

Withheld

Greek

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

No

Organization

Response on behalf of
organization

Full Comment

Η νέα τάση κατα την οποία ακραία πολιτικά κινήματα κάνουν χρήση του Facebook για να κερδίσουν περισσότερους υποστηρικτές, αγγίζει τα όρια της μίστιγας στην Ελλάδα. Το αφήγημα αυτών των "οργανισμών" καλλιεργεί συστηματικά την ρητορική του μίσους εναντίον παρατυπων μεταναστών και της ΛΟΑΤΚΙ κοινότητας. Επιπλέον, οι ίδιοι υποψήφιοι βουλευτές παρουσιάζονται ως γνήσιοι κοινωνοί της αρχαίας ελληνικής κληρονομιάς, έχοντας τα εχέγγυα να σώσουν την χώρα απο την "καταστροφή" λόγω των πολιτικών που εως τώρα κυβέρνησαν την χώρα. Κατά την προσφιλή τους τακτική, δημοσιεύουν στο Facebook ιστορίες που κρύβουν ψήγματα αλήθειας ώστε να προκαλέσουν την κοινωνική κατακραυγή και να κερδίσουν υποστηρικτές. Βίντεο μεταναστών που υποτίθεται ότι καταστρέφουν χριστιανικές εκκλησίες κερδίζουν μεγάλη τηλεθέαση και προσανατολίζουν την κοινή γνώμη κατά των μεταναστών. Στην παρούσα φάση το Facebook εφαρμόζει οριζόντια κατασταλτικά μέτρα για να αντιμετωπίσει το φαινόμενο και κόβει την δημοσίευση πριν ακόμα δημοσιευτεί με ειδικά λογισμικά. Η meta νομίζω ότι θα πρέπει να περάσει από την φάση της καταστολής στη φάση της εκπαίδευσης των χρηστών σχετικά με τους κινδύνους που ελλοχεύει η επικράτηση αυτών των κομμάτων στο πολιτικό προσκήνιο έτσι ώστε οι ίδιοι (οι χρήστες) να αναπτύξουν την

κριτική τους σκέψη και να αντιληφθούν τη ρητορική του μίσους εν τη γενέσει της . Παράλληλα, η meta οφείλει να αναπτύξει ακόμα πιο συνεργατική σχέση όχι μόνο με την κυβέρνηση αλλά και με τους εκπροσώπους τόσο των ακραίων πολιτικών κινήματων όσο και με εκπροσώπους των κοινοτήτων που στοχοποιούνται . Με αυτό τον τρόπο, η εταιρεία θα είναι σε θέση να έχει μια πληρέστερη εικόνα της κατάστασης που επικρατεί στην Ελλάδα και θα μπορεί πιο αποτελεσματικά να χαρτογραφεί τα πολιτικά κινήματα που αναπτύσσουν ακραίες αντιλήψεις, ιδίως κατά την προεκλογική περίοδο όπου η πόλωση στην κοινωνία κλιμακώνεται και η ρητορική του μίσους κατά κανόνα υποτροπιάζει δραματικά ιδίως στην Ελλάδα λόγω και του Μεσογειακού ταπεραμέντου.

[Link to Attachment](#)

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