

Joint letter: Musk is holding us hostage on a site full of illegal deepfake porn, we must build European social media now

Brussels, 19 January 2026

Dear President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen,

Enough is enough. The ongoing Grok scandal – which has seen a wave of images of child sexual abuse material, and image-based sexual violence against women, published on X – is a disgrace. As you put it, ‘this is unthinkable behaviour’, and it is unthinkable that we do not respond.

Millions of European citizens are stuck on X, as there is no clear alternative, and no simple way for people to transfer their data and the connections they have built there.

Now is the moment to back European alternatives to the dominant social media platforms. The European Commission, and European governments, can support this build out by providing funding for private initiatives that encourage European social media innovation. We must also make sure that Europeans have portability rights that are not a burden on them but on the gatekeepers - so they can move their content and data easily to another platform and are never again locked-in to one platform and vulnerable to harm.

The European Commission, and European countries, must also robustly investigate and enforce our law, including any criminal laws which were violated. The creation of child abuse imagery is a crime. In many jurisdictions, the publication of image-based sexual violence - of the kind rampant on X - is also a crime.¹ Putting an instrument into the hands of users to depict women naked against their will is a systemic risk for gender-based violence.

X is no longer an open and balanced tool for political communication or journalism, since [algorithm changes](#) in the wake of Elon Musk’s takeover. It is not a ‘public square’ – it now resembles a deepfake pornography website, and a one-way broadcast system for Musk himself. The European Commission and national governments should not communicate on a platform where women cannot participate in the debate without risking image-based sexual violence.

¹ The directive to combat violence against women obliges member states to ensure that making accessible to the public, by means of information and communication technologies (‘ICT’), images, videos or similar material depicting sexually explicit activities or the intimate parts of a person, without that person’s consent, is punished as a criminal offence, where such conduct is likely to cause serious harm to that person. We are sure that all the women currently affected will confirm how serious the harm is.

Social media has become a central venue for debate and public communication in our societies. Our national security and democratic health depend on citizens being able to access and participate in open, inclusive debate, and without exposure to sexual exploitation. We can help Europeans build and join alternatives that can serve this function properly.

Signed,

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