



MINISTÈRE DE LA JUSTICE

*Liberté
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PRESS RELEASE

INFORMAL MEETING OF EU JUSTICE MINISTERS

On 4 February 2022, under the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, **Éric Dupond-Moretti, Keeper of the Seals and Minister of Justice**, met in Lille with his counterparts from the 27 EU Member States.

The justice ministers of the 27 EU Member States met on 4 February at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lille. Also in attendance were Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice; Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and Adrián Vázquez Lázara, Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) of the European Parliament and Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. They discussed the legislative work under way and certain aspects of the cooperation between EU Member States with regard to justice.

During the morning session, after joining in paying homage to the victims of the Holocaust, the ministers addressed the issue of combatting hate. After taking note of the evidence presented by the Director of the Agency for Fundamental Rights of a concerning rise in hate speech, in particular on social media, as well as physical attacks linked to hate speech against certain groups of people, the ministers emphasised the need to strongly reiterate the Union's values, which exclude any tolerance or trivialisation of hate speech or crimes. **During these initial informal discussions, they expressed the shared ambition to amend Article 83 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to include hate speech and crimes in the list of Eurocrimes defined at European level.**

The topic of online hate, and more specifically cooperation between digital stakeholders and the legal authorities of the Member States, was addressed during the meeting between the justice ministers and the representatives of digital technology companies – Kent Walker, President of Global Affairs & Chief Legal Officer at Google, and Markus Reinisch, Vice President for Public Policy Europe at Meta – joined by Laure Beccuau, Public Prosecutor at the Judicial Court of Paris. The participants were pleased with the constructive dialogue that was held on the subject and highlighted the progress achieved in the cooperation between digital technology companies and legal authorities as well as potential areas to further advance in the short and medium term. **They agreed on the need to quickly adopt a European legal framework making it possible to obtain electronic evidence in criminal matters.** They thus called for a rapid agreement between the European institutions on the regulation and directive on electronic evidence in criminal matters.

During the lunch, the ministers discussed the **benefits of better coordinating missing child alert systems in Europe.** Stressing the urgency of triggering these alerts immediately after the disappearance of a minor, they

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highlighted the advantage that could be gained, particularly in border areas, from the ability to trigger child abduction alerts in a simultaneous or coordinated manner. They considered the technological measures that could be implemented at European level to facilitate this coordination and proposed that the Council further develop the approaches under consideration.

Lastly, the ministers addressed the issue of **the mutual recognition of parentage between EU Member States**. Taking into account on one hand the contemporary evolutions of family structures and the various forms of parenthood, and on the other the diversity of national sensibilities when it comes to parentage and the need to respect national legislation on this matter, their discussions notably addressed how to maintain and recognise family ties and their effects in the case of persons moving within the European Union. The ministers exchanged views on the scope and opportunity presented by an initiative of the European Commission in this area.

Following their discussions, the justice ministers planned to meet in Brussels on 4 March 2022 for the next meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council.