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The Christchurch Call at Almost Seven Years: Reflection and Future Outlook

Christchurch Call na prahu sedmi let: Reflexe a výhled

Abstract

The text presents the Christchurch Call, the role of the EU within the Christchurch Call and the EU engagement in fighting terrorism and violent extremism online, discusses the evolution and focus of the work in the framework of the Christchurch Call, reflects on the last Leaders' Summit and the evolution of the initiative since, examines the future outlook, and offers several recommendations for future work.

Keywords: Christchurch Call; New Zealand; Terrorism; Extremism; Online; International Cooperation; Security.

Abstrakt

Text představuje Christchurch Call, roli EU v rámci iniciativy a zapojení EU do boje s terorismem a násilným extremismem online. Text se dále zaměřuje na vývoj iniciativy a jejích pracovních postupů, reflexi summitů hlav států a následného posunu celé iniciativy, finálně představuje možný výhled do budoucnosti a nabízí dílčí doporučení.

Klíčová slova: Christchurch Call; Nový Zéland; terorismus; extremismus; online; mezinárodní spolupráce; bezpečnost.

1.   Introduction

The goal of the text is to acquaint the reader with what the Christchurch Call (further also referred to as "Call") is, how it fits into the global and European landscape of fighting terrorism and violent extremism online, and how it can further evolve into the future. The text could thus serve as a background material for further study or an overview of the Christchurch Call within the relevant context.

The text first provides the context of the genesis of the Call, then walks the reader through the initiative and its main tenets, proceeds to look into the role of the EU within the Call but also in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism online at large, namely in the areas corresponding with the Call's focus. It then proceeds to discuss the Leaders' Summits, with a specific attention paid to the latest one as of the date of

the submission of this text,[1] work since the latest summit, and lastly offers a critical examination of the future outlook and recommendations for future work.

Whilst there have been many initiatives on local, regional, and global levels to fight terrorism and violent extremism online, the author would argue that the Christchurch Call holds a specific place within this ecosystem: it emerged as the first truly global initiative of this kind soon after the first widespread livestreamed terrorist attack globally and the worst terrorist attack in New Zealand history, uniting governments, private sector, non-governmental sector, and civil society. As such, it serves not only as an example of good practice, but also an example of a multi-stakeholder global forum countering global harms in the world which still does not always see online harms in the global, but rather national or regional jurisdictional contexts.

2. Analytical Framework and Literature Overview

Whilst there is ample literature on examining New Zealand's approach to terrorism and violent extremism in the aftermath of the March 2019 attacks, which also tends to mention the Call, there is a certain gap in the literature specifically focusing on the Call, and namely so in the EU context.

In 2020 Willian James Hoverd, Leon Salter, and Kevin Veale published an article[2] aiming to "provide an integrated cross-disciplinary analysis of the implications of the limitations of the Christchurch Call." While they claim that "the existence of the Call helped change the conversation on the role played by online communication in hate, harassment and terrorism," they also mention where they believe the limits are, such as in shielding "social media platforms and other key figures from their existing responsibilities in producing insecurity on and offline." The text additionally points out the limitations related to the inability to "address the wicked problem of how to understand the social, communal and individual dynamics when the online expression of free speech turns to hate, and in turn, violence."

In 2024, Rachel Wolberts published a text examining the Call from the point of view of a multi-stakeholder initiative, building on the experience with internet governance, looking, *inter alia*, at content moderation, arguing, among others, for why this is the right format, and additionally proposing how to set the initiative on a self-sustaining path. Moreover, and similarly to this text, she argues for a focus on generative artificial intelligence.[3]

There are also several policy briefs, such as the 2020 CAIS report by David Bromell, which looks, *inter alia*, at the content work and when is a "state censorship

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[1] December 2024, reviewed in April 2025.

[2] HOVERD, William James; SALTER, Leon a Kevin VEALE. The Christchurch Call: insecurity, democracy and digital media - can it really counter online hate and extremism? *SN Soc Sci*. 09 November 2020, 1, 2. Available at https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-020-00008-2. [cit. 2025-04-12].

[3] WOLBERS, Rachel. *The Future of the Christuchurch Call to Action: How to Buikld Multistakeholder Initiatives to Address Content Moderation Challenges. JOURNAL OF LAW, TECHNOLOGY, & THE INTERNET*. 2024, vol. 15, issue 1, 114, 216-218. Available at z: https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1157&context=jolti. [cit. 2025-04-12].

justifiable."[4] Another report, by Priyal Pandey, published by the ORF foundation in 2023, looks at the Call's success in reshaping the digital landscape, whilst also pointing to the limitations.[5]

This text stands somewhere between theory and practice: it is written by a policy practitioner and covers the initiative from both theoretical but also practical points of view. The recommendations are also proposed with a view of covering both theory and practice. The overall goal thereby is to contribute to making the Call known and accessible to a wider and perhaps also a different audience, whilst still aiming to contribute to the practice.

3.   Christchurch Call: Context

The Christchurch Call to Action is an initiative aimed at fostering the cooperation of governments, tech sector, and civil society organisations to fight terrorist and extremist content online and against weaponizing the internet for such purposes.[6] It arose from the livestreaming of the terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March 2019,[7] in which the perpetrator, inspired among others by the Norwegian right-wing terrorist Anders Breivik and various conspiracy theories,[8] killed 51 people, injured 50 others, all the while livestreaming the rampage on Facebook. Two months later, on 15 May 2019, the Call was established by Jacinda Ardern, then the Prime Minister of New Zealand, and Emmanuel Macron, the President of France.[9] The commitment was signed at a meeting of government and tech industry leaders in Paris, with the goal to connect governments and the private sector to collaboratively fight terrorism and violent extremism on the Internet.[10]

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[4] BROMELL, David. *The Christchurch Call: Censorship, Regulation and Civility*. Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS), 2020. Available at: https://www.cais-research.de/wp-content/uploads/Bromell-2020-ChristchurchCall-CAIS-Report.pdf. [cit. 2025-04-12].

[5] PANDEY, Priyal. *One year since the Christchurch Call to Action: A Review*. 2023. Available at: https://www.orfonline.org/research/one-year-since-the-christchurch-call-to-action-a-review. [cit. 2025-04-12].

[6] *Christchurch Call to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online adopted*. Online. New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade. 16 May 2019. Available at: https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/christchurch-call-to-eliminate-terrorist-and-violent-extremist-content-online-adopted?m=683801#search:Y2hyaXN0Y2h1cmNoIGNhbGw=. [cit. 2023-11-05].

[7] *The Christchurch Call Story*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 15 May 2019. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/the-christchurch-call-story/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[8] TAYLOR, Adam. *New Zealand suspect allegedly claimed 'brief contact' with Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik*. Online. The Washington Post. 15 March 2019. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/03/15/new-zealand-suspect-allegedly-claimed-brief-contact-with-norwegian-mass-murderer-anders-breivik/. [cit. 2023-11-07].

[9] *The Christchurch Call Story*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 15 May 2019. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/the-christchurch-call-story/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[10] *GIFCT Story*. Online. Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. N/A. Available at: https://gifct.org/about/story/#may-2019---christchurch-call-to-action. [cit. 2024-12-07].

The Call comprises of 25 voluntary commitments[11] ranging from proper application of available legislative tools to "underlying drivers of terrorism,"[12] all the while making sure the steps taken are transparent, respecting human rights and free speech. The Call was also initially accompanied[13] by a nine-point plan[14] formulated by Facebook, Twitter, Google, Microsoft and Amazon, setting out concrete steps split into five individual and four collective actions. Until now, the Christchurch Call has been supported[15] by 55 governments across the world, the European Commission as well as 19 online service providers; there are also 12 partner organisations[16] and an Advisory Network counting over 50 organisations and individuals.[17]

As such, the initiative built on the momentum and managed to unite the private and public sectors globally, not least thanks to the very unique "kiwi approach" of sincerely caring about the community, thereby leading to a whole-of-society response, boosted also by the leadership of then-PM Ardern[18] in an area that at said time still had little formal regulation by legislative means. Ardern stated that, "There is recognition that this is a global challenge — and one requiring a strong, collaborative response. It is pleasing to see such a large number of new countries and organisations signing on to progress this work," while acknowledging that Christchurch Call is "not a traditional diplomatic initiative," as it created "an innovative, flexible coalition, dedicated to solving shared problems, that unites countries and tech companies."[19]

The Christchurch terrorist attacks were the first in many respects — the deadliest terrorist attacks in New Zealand, the first time an attack of this kind was live-streamed via a major online platform, and the first time it was done so with simulated *gamification* elements.[20] The attacker additionally published an online

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[11] *The Christchurch Call Commitments*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 15 May 2019. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/the-christchurch-call-commitments/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[12] Ibid*.*

[13] *GIFCT Story*. Online. Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. N/A. Available at: https://gifct.org/about/story/#may-2019---christchurch-call-to-action. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[14] *Facebook Joins Other Tech Companies to Support the Christchurch Call to Action*. Online. META. 15 May 2019. Available at: https://about.fb.com/news/2019/05/christchurch-call-to-action/. [cit. 2023-11-05].

[15] *Christchurch Call Supporters*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/supporters/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[16] *Christchurch Call Partners*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/partners/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[17] *Christchurch Call Advisory Network*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-advisory-network/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[18] Personal interview with Dr. Nicole Matejic, Principal Strategic Advisor with the Christchurch Call Foundation and Clare-Louise Chapman, Call's Strategic Communication Advisor, online, 7 November 2024.

[19] *Significant progress made on eliminating terrorist content online*. Online. The official website of the New Zealand government. 24 September 2019. Available at: https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/significant-progress-made-eliminating-terrorist-content-online. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[20] SCHLEGEL, Linda. *The gamification of violent extremism & lessons for P/CVE*. N/A. European Commission, 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/publications/gamification-violent-extremism-lessons-pcve-2021_en.

manifesto in which he discussed his motivation. As such, the Christchurch attacks and the streaming thereof started an infamous trend of "lone attackers" resorting to mediatising their acts online, be it by publishing a manifesto — although here Breivik's influence cannot be completely left out[21] – and/or streaming the attack and acknowledging the inspiration by the Christchurch attacker.[22]

According to Meta (then Facebook) — fewer than 200 people watched the attacks online and fewer than 4,000 accessed the footage before it was taken down by the company, with the "first user report on the original video [coming] in 29 minutes after the video started, and 12 minutes after the live broadcast ended."[23] However, soon after it became apparent what had happened, the video started proliferating heavily across platforms and media streams, with even some mainstream media and tabloids sharing parts of the footage, or even the footage in its entirety, thereby amplifying the terrorist content. Many online platforms also struggled to take the video down. Facebook reported to have removed 1.5 million videos globally, of which it said it had blocked more than 1.2 million at the point of upload within 24 hours of the attack,[24] while YouTube reported to have removed tens of thousands of videos and hundreds of accounts.[25] This alone points to the magnitude of the issue when terrorist content spreads online. In New Zealand, holding a copy of the manifesto or the video footage became a criminal offence.[26]

Tech Against Terrorism, an NGO engaged in fighting terrorism and violent extremism online, states that "the Christchurch mosque attacks demonstrate[d] that terrorist use of technology is a threat that affects the entire tech ecosystem and that tech platforms are often exploited in combination."[27] It further confirmed that "the use of internet technologies in this attack resembled the methodology of ISIS and al-Qaeda" [and that] "smaller file-sharing platforms were used with large platforms

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[21] NIPPERT, Matt. *Oslo terrorist manifesto, cited as 'inspiration' for Christchurch terrorist, banned*. Online. The New Zealand Herald. 17 December 2021. Available at: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/oslo-terrorist-manifesto-cited-as-inspiration-for-christchurch-terrorist-banned/SG2NTHEX4K6OTL55NY5GSHHD6I/. [cit. 2023-11-17].

[22] THORLEIFSSON, Catherine a Joey DÜKER. *Lone Actors in Digital Environments*. Online. N/A. European Commission, 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-10/ran_paper_lone_actors_in_digital_environments_en.pdf.

[23] *Update on New Zealand*. Online. META. 18 March 2019. Available at: https://about.fb.com/news/2019/03/update-on-new-zealand/. [cit. 2023-11-15].

[24] *Meta Newsroom*. Online. 17 March 2019. Available at: X, https://x.com/MetaNewsroom/status/1107117981358682112. [cit. 2023-11-12].

[25] *YouTubeInsider. Online. 18 March 2019.* Available at: *X, https://x.com/YouTubeInsider/status/1107645353673871360.* [cit. 2023-11-08].

[26] *Governments response to the 2019 Christchurch terrorist attack videos and manifesto*. Online. Te Tari Taiwhenua | Department of Internal Affairs. N/A. Available at: https://www.dia.govt.nz/Countering-Violent-Extremism-Governments-response-to-the-2019-Christchurch-terrorist-attack. [cit. 2023-11-09].

[27] *Analysis: New Zealand attack and the terrorist use of the internet*. Online. Tech Against Terrorism. 26 March 2019. Available at: https://techagainstterrorism.org/news/2019/03/26/analysis-new-zealand-attack-and-the-terrorist-use-of-the-internet. [cit. 2023-11-06].

as 'beacons'[28] guiding users to outbound URLs. 'Supporter networks' amplified terrorist propaganda by re-sharing and re-uploading material across an increasingly broad and fragmented range of smaller platforms."[29]

The *Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019* also underscored the role of the online sphere in terrorism, extremism and radicalisation, and included an entire section on *Online capacity and capability*.[30] The text confirmed that "the terrorist attack on 15 March 2019 highlighted the importance of the online capabilities and activities of the Public sector agencies with counter-terrorism operational responsibilities."[31]

Over the years, apart from the growing membership — in the EU also supported by and called for in the Council Conclusions 8868/20 of 16 June 2020,[32] and the engagement supported by the Council Conclusions 10179/22 of 20 June 2022,[33] the Call has ensured that three crisis protocols aimed at quick reaction in case of rapid spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online (one by the Christchurch Call community,[34] one by the European Commission,[35] and the Content Incident Protocol[36] by the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT)) are mutually

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[28] "Beacons act as centrally located lighthouses that signpost viewers to where content may be found, which is often done through outlinks posting to content stores. Terrorists and violent extremists often use these beacon platforms and have officials channels on them that signify their central communications." in *Transparency report: TERRORIST CONTENT ANALYTICS PLATFORM, YEAR ONE: 1 DECEMBER 2020 – 30 NOVEMBER 2021*. March 2022, p. 19. Available at: https://www.techagainstterrorism.org/hubfs/Tech-Against-Terrorism-TCAP-Report-March-2022_v6.pdf.

[29] *Analysis: New Zealand attack and the terrorist use of the internet*. Online. Tech Against Terrorism. 26 March 2019. Available at: https://techagainstterrorism.org/news/2019/03/26/analysis-new-zealand-attack-and-the-terrorist-use-of-the-internet. [cit. 2023-11-06].

[30] ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON CHRISTCHURCH MASJIDAIN ON 15 MARCH 2019. *Ko tō tātou kāinga tēnei Report: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019*. Online. Part 8 - Assessing the counter-terrorism efforts. 8 December 2020. New Zealand, 2020. Available at: https://christchurchattack.royalcommission.nz/the-report/part-8-assessing-the-counter-terrorism-effort/online-capacity-and-capability/.

[31] Ibid.

[32] COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. *Council Conclusions on EU External Action on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (8868/20)*. 16 June 2020. 2020. Available at: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8868-2020-INIT/en/pdf.

[33] COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. *Council Conclusions on Addressing the external dimension of a constantly evolving terrorist and violent extremist threat (10179/22)*. Online. 20 June 2022. 2022. Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57229/st10179-en22.pdf.

[34] *Responding to Crises*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/responding-to-crises/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[35] *A EUROPE THAT PROTECTS: The revised EU Crisis Protocol: responding to terrorist content online*. N/A. May 2023. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-05/EUIF_Factsheet_May_2023.pdf.

[36] *Content Incident Protocol*. Online. Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. N/A. Available at: https://gifct.org/content-incident-protocol/. [cit. 2023-11-18].

operational,[37] and it served as a catalyst for reform of GIFCT, which now exists as a standalone and independent organisation, instead of a virtual cooperation body.[38]

4.   Christchurch Call in Action

The outputs and work of the Call Community are guided by the commitments signed in 2019 and reflect endorsements by Leaders at the Summits. Currently, the Call community works on the following areas:

- **Building the Call Community**:[39] The multi-stakeholder community currently counts over 130 entities. It can provide "expert independent advice on implementing the Call commitments in a manner consistent with a free, open, and secure internet and with international human rights." The current priorities include *inter alia* the intention to grow the stakeholder pool, increase engagement amongst the existing stakeholders and develop a community platform, share best practice and hold regular dialogues on policy matters, leading to building an "innovative multi-stakeholder approach to countering terrorist and violent extremist content online."

- **Understanding Algorithms and Developing Interventions:**[40] Several commitments on algorithms are included in the Call as well as a cross-sectoral workplan,[41] which was endorsed at the 2021 Leaders' Summit, in order to improve understanding of "online user journeys and the role [algorithms] may play in radicalisation; how online and offline factors interact; [and] how content recommendation processes might be exploited and ways to mitigate this,"[42] on top of supporting the work on next generation community-led online interventions.[43] In 2022, a group of the Call supporters announced a new initiative on Algorithmic

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[37] *Joint communiqué issued by the President of the French Republic and the Prime Minister of New Zealand: Significant global progress made under Christchurch Call (13 April 2021)*. Online. France Diplomacy. 13 April 2021. Available at: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/digital-diplomacy/news/article/joint-communique-issued-by-the-president-of-the-french-republic-and-the-prime. [cit. 2023-11-15].

[38] *Next Steps for GIFCT*. Online. Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. 23 September 2019. Available at: https://gifct.org/2019/09/23/next-steps-for-gifct/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[39] The entire paragraph: *Building the Call Community*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/building-the-call-community/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[40] *Understanding Algorithms and Developing Interventions*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/understanding-algorithms-and-developing-interventions/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[41] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. *Algorithms & Positive Interventions Workplan 2021*. N/A. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/content/files/2024/06/Algorithms-and-Positive-Interventions-WorkPlan-1.pdf. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[42] *Understanding Algorithms and Developing Interventions*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/understanding-algorithms-and-developing-interventions/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[43] *Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes*. Online. In: The Christchurch Call. 22 September 2022. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-initiative-on-algorithmic-outcomes/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

Outcomes,[44] which strives to support a creation of new technology aiming to help understand how algorithms influence online experiences and overcoming challenges around "how to protect user privacy and proprietary information," "how to investigate impacts holistically across society," and "how to achieve reproducibility, affordability, and scale for independent researchers."[45] A first phase of this project has recently been delivered, which is discussed further in the text.

- **Responding to Crises:** This work stream goes back to the origins of the Call, with the main focus being on the "perpetrator or accomplice-produced content".[46] A lot has been achieved in this area, including inter-operationalisation of three different protocols and their use in real-life events, and organising several tabletop exercises within various frameworks. The current priorities stem from the Call commitments and the 2021 workplan[47] on crisis response. In December 2024, the Crisis Response Protocol was updated and the Foundation is foreseen to act as the coordination point for the Community in order to "quickly share information and awareness to build understanding of the incident and its impacts, on- and offline," "develop an overview of response actions, to help target and streamline them," and "identify gaps where the Call Community – including CCAN[48] – can help, whether on the potential impact on human rights or digital access and transparency."[49]

- **Increasing Transparency:**[50] The issue of transparency also figures in several of the original commitments and is implicit in the Call. It is important not only for users of online services, but also for ensuring human rights, research purposes, and also for regulators and legislators. It *inter alia* helps build trust, understand how things work, allows for improvements, and helps insure accountability. Separately, there is a specific workplan from 2021[51] aiming at improving transparency and reporting. The current priorities e.g. include being "actively involved in multistakeholder work on transparency in the GIFCT Transparency Working Group, the OECD, the Action Coalition for Meaningful Transparency and the Centre for International Governance

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[44] *Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes*. Online. In: The Christchurch Call. 22 September 2022. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-initiative-on-algorithmic-outcomes/. [cit. 2024-12-07]

[45] Ibid.

[46] Responding to Crises. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/responding-to-crises/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[47] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. Crisis Response Workplan 2021. N/A. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/content/files/2024/06/Christchurch-Call-Crisis-Reponse-Workplan-1.pdf. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[48] Christchurch Call Advisory Network.

[49] Christchurch Call community strengthens crisis response process. Online. The Christchurch Call. 3 December 2024. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-community-strengthens-crisis-response-process/. [cit. 2024-12-27].

[50] Increasing Transparency. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/increasing-transparency/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[51] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. Transparency & Reporting Work Plan 2021. N/A. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/content/files/2024/06/Christchurch-Call-Transparency-Work-Plan-2.pdf.

Innovation's Global Platform Governance Network," with the last one launching the Transparency Initiative Portal in October 2023.[52]

- **Cross-cutting Issues and Themes:** The current work in this area includes six sub-streams: adapting to new technology; smaller platforms (a new tool was announced[53] just around the 2023 Summit); gender-based hate and violent extremism; protecting a free, open and secure internet; related issues and initiatives; and young people.[54]

5. The role of the EU in the Christchurch Call and the EU engagement in fighting terrorism and violent extremism online in areas covered by the Call

In terms of the EU's engagement, apart from the European Commission being one of the first signatories joining at the very beginning of the initiative, the Call's activities fit into the EU's priorities and focus areas in fighting terrorism and violent extremism online. The aim of this section is not to dive exhaustively into all the areas where the EU is active on the front of countering terrorist and violent content online, but to look specifically into the areas where its work corresponds with and/or complements the work of the Call on the level of the EU.

The 2020 **internal security strategy** does not mention the Call specifically, however, it mentions the March 2019 attacks[55] and the need for international cooperation in addressing terrorism and violent extremism online.[56] The 2025 strategy, **ProtectEU**, goes one step further and mentions specifically the need for a continued engagement with the Call and in general the need of a multilateral and international cooperation.[57]

The ***Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU**: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect, Respond* of December 2020 clearly outlines several priority areas in the online domain, especially in the "Protect" pillar, such as making full use of the opportunities provided

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[52] Increasing Transparency. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/increasing-transparency/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[53] *New tool to help smaller online platforms*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 10 November 2023. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/new-tool-to-help-smaller-online-platforms/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[54] *Cross-cutting Issues and Themes*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/cross-cutting-issues-and-themes/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[55] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU Security Union Strategy*. 2020, 4. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0605. [cit. 2025-04-12].

[56] Ibid., 14.

[57] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on ProtectEU: a European Internal Security Strategy*. 2025, 23. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0148. [cit. 2025-04-13].

by the TCO regulation[58] once it would become applicable (which is the case as of June 2022[59]) and the Digital Services Act[60] (then still being prepared, but now applicable[61]). It highlights the role of the EU Internet Forum, the role of Europol's Internet Referral Unit[62] within ECTC — European Counter Terrorism Centre,[63] and specifically highlights the role of international cooperation, such as through GIFCT and the Christchurch Call.[64] The agenda will be updated in 2025.[65]

The **EU Internet Forum** (EUIF),[66] a public-private partnership launched in 2015, is the crucial outlet where a lot of the progress and discussions take place.[67] Among

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[58] Regulation (EU) 2021/784 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online (Text with EEA relevance). In: *EUR-Lex*. 2021. Available at z: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/784/oj.

[59] *Preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online*. Online. European Parliament Legislative Train Schedule. N/A. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-area-of-justice-and-fundamental-rights/file-preventing-the-dissemination-of-terrorist-content-online. [cit. 2023-11-08].

[60] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: A Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect, Respond,* 6-7. N/A. 2020. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0795.

[61] *The Digital Services Act package*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-services-act-package. [cit. 2023-11-18].

[62] *EU Internet Referral Unit - EU IRU*. Online. Europol. N/A. Available at: https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/european-counter-terrorism-centre-ectc/eu-internet-referal-unit-eu-iru. [cit. 2023-11-15].

[63] *European Counter Terrorism Centre - ECTC*. Online. Europol. N/A. Available at: https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/european-counter-terrorism-centre-ectc. [cit. 2023-11-12].

[64] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: A Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect, Respond,* 6-7. N/A. 2020. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0795.

[65] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on ProtectEU: a European Internal Security Strategy*. 2025, 24. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0148. [cit. 2025-04-13].

[66] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU Internet Forum EU Internet Forum at 10 YEARS: Celebrating the achievements of the first decade's cooperation to fight harmful and illegal content online*. N/A. 2024. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/0fb0be8a-c145-4948-a260-0a6be11ffc53_en?filename=EU%20Internet%20Forum%20Brochure.pdf. [cit. 2025-04-13].

[67] *European Union Internet Forum*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-union-internet-forum_en. [cit. 2023-11-07].

others, it developed the crisis protocol[68] and continually works towards tackling emerging threats online, such as violent right-wing extremism, threats stemming from the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI), and many other topics.[69] This is done, for example, by developing, "a list of VRWE groups, symbols, and manifestos aimed at facilitating online content moderation[70] for industry stakeholders,"[71] in 2021, and other guidance for the industry such as handbooks.[72] Already in 2015, it launched the **Civil Society Empowerment Programme** (CSEP)[73] "to support civil society organisations to fight against terrorist and extremist propaganda online, as well as to provide effective narratives to counter such propaganda."[74] Many of the EUIF activities correspond with the focus of the Christchurch Call, although the overall focus is much broader and also includes addressing other types of criminal activity online, such as child sexual abuse or trafficking in human beings and drugs.[75]

The EUIF Senior Officials Meeting of May 2019 focused intensely on the impact on the online threat landscape following the Christchurch terrorist attacks two months earlier, eventually leading to the development of the **crisis protocol**.[76] A lot of work on the protocol and its operationalisation took place in the following years, such as

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[68] *Fighting Terrorism Online: EU Internet Forum committed to an EU-wide Crisis Protocol*. Online. European Commission. 7 October 2019. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_19_6009. [cit. 2023-11-13].

[69] *European Union Internet Forum*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-union-internet-forum_en. [cit. 2023-11-07].

[70] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *A GRADUAL VOLUNTARY APPROACH FOR MODERATION OF VIOLENT RIGHT WING CONTENT*. N/A. 2022. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/Blueprint%20Reference%20List.pdf.

[71] *European Union Internet Forum*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-union-internet-forum_en. [cit. 2023-11-07].

[72] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU INTERNET FORUM MINISTERIAL MEETING hosted by COMMISSIONER YLVA JOHANSSON*. N/A. 2022. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP_EoZeUC4U.

[73] *European Union Internet Forum*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-union-internet-forum_en. [cit. 2023-11-07].

[74] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP)*. Online. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/civil-society-empowerment-programme_en. [cit. 2023-11-17].

[75] *European Union Internet Forum*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-union-internet-forum_en. [cit. 2023-11-07].

[76] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *Agenda Senior Officials Meeting of the EU INTERNET FORUM*. N/A. 2020. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/EUIF%20SOM%20May%202019%20agenda_en.pdf.

in 2021,[77] 2022,[78] in 2023 when the protocol was updated,[79] as well as 2024 when a table-top exercise took place.[80] It will be updated again "to ensure scalability and flexibility to respond to the growing online dimension of terrorist attacks."[81]

A related topic is **crisis communication**, such as on how to engage with those affected by crisis. In 2022, the EUIF also dealt[82] with this issue, holding an exercise as well as issuing guidance; in 2024, a working group within the Radicalisation Awareness Network worked on improving strategic communication within the framework of crisis response.[83] The original **Radicalisation Awareness Network**[84] has now been replaced by the **EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation**,[85] which also has a workstream – a thematic panel, on new technologies and the online dimension.[86]

Online gaming and risks related to terrorism and violent extremism also became a topic within the EU framework. In July 2020, there was one of the first noteworthy calls for a bigger focus on this area with a paper from the EU Counter-Terrorism

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[77] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU Internet Forum: Envisaged activities - 2021*. N/A. 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-11/EU%20Internet%20Forum%20activities%20in%202021_en.pdf.

[78] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU Internet Forum: Envisaged actions - 2022*. N/A. 2022. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/EU%20Internet%20Forum_Activities%20in%202022.pdf.

[79] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU Internet Forum Envisaged actions – 2023*. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/986abf8c-018c-4437-bfe8-c2dfc6c542f2_en?filename=EU%20Internet%20Forum%20activities%202023_en.pdf.

[80] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU Internet Forum - Activities – 2024*. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f767b42d-005f-4368-8952-84198f52c25e_en?filename=EU%20Internet%20Forum%20activities%202024_en.pdf.

[81] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on ProtectEU: a European Internal Security Strategy*. 2025, 23. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0148. [cit. 2025-04-13].

[82] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EUIF YEAR IN REVIEW 2022*. N/A. 2022. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/EUIF%20brochure_en.pdf.

[83] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU Internet Forum - Activities – 2024*. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f767b42d-005f-4368-8952-84198f52c25e_en?filename=EU%20Internet%20Forum%20activities%202024_en.pdf.

[84] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *RAN Practitioners*. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran_en. [cit. 2025-04-13].

[85] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation*. N/A. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/eu-knowledge-hub-prevention-radicalisation_en. [cit. 2025-04-13].

[86] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *Thematic Panel members for the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation*. N/A. Availabe at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/thematic-panel-members-eu-knowledge-hub-prevention-radicalisation-2025-01-15_en. [cit. 2025-04-13].

Coordinator.[87] Other initiatives followed[88] in the area of prevention[89] and mapping the state of play,[90] with a dedicated EUIF workshop[91] being organised in 2021. The topic of online gaming also featured at the 7th EUIF Ministerial meeting in 2021,[92] where, *inter alia*, a development of a bespoke game simulating the Christchurch terrorist attack was discussed.[93] In 2022, work on guidance and best practice sharing for the gaming industry took place,[94] with guidance developed by Radicalisation Awareness Network — Practitioners being available online.[95] One of the latest contributions in this workstream is a spotlight document by the Radicalisation Awareness Network — *Practitioners*, *Games, Gaming and Gamification*.[96] There is

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[87] EU COUNTER-TERRORISM COORDINATOR. *Online gaming in the context of the fight against terrorism (9066/20)*. 6 July 2020. 2020. Available at: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9066-2020-INIT/en/pdf.

[88] SCHLEGEL, Linda. *The gamification of violent extremism & lessons for P/CVE*. N/A. European Commission, 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/publications/gamification-violent-extremism-lessons-pcve-2021_en.

[89] SCHLEGEL, Linda. *Extremists' use of gaming (adjacent) platforms Insights regarding primary and secondary prevention measures*. Online. 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-08/ran_extremists_use_gaming_platforms_082021_en.pdf.

[90] LAKHANI, Suraj. *VIDEO GAMING AND (VIOLENT) EXTREMISM: An exploration of the current landscape, trends, and threats*. N/A. 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/EUIF%20Technical%20Meeting%20on%20Video%20Gaming%20October%202021%20RAN%20Policy%20Support%20paper_en.pdf.

[91] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU INTERNET FORUM MISUSE OF VIDEO-GAMING BY VIOLENT EXTREMISTS*. N/A. 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/EUIF%20Technical%20Meeting%20on%20Video%20Gaming%20October%202021%20agenda_en.pdf.

[92] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU INTERNET FORUM MINISTERIAL MEETING hosted by COMMISSIONER YLVA JOHANSSON 8 DECEMBER 2021*. N/A. 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6f4c2353-e0bf-48a8-9d09-74973f10dd59_en?filename=EUIF%20Ministerial%20December%202021%20agenda_en_0.pdf.

[93] *7th EU Internet Forum Ministerial: curbing harmful content online through joint efforts*. Online. European Commission. 24 February 2022. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20240701193632/https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/7th-eu-internet-forum-ministerial-curbing-harmful-content-online-through-joint-efforts-2022-02-24_en. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[94] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU Internet Forum: Envisaged actions - 2022*. N/A. 2022. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/EU%20Internet%20Forum_Activities%20in%202022.pdf.

[95] SCHLEGEL, Linda. *Countering the misuse of gaming- related content & spaces: Inspiring practices and opportunities for cooperation with tech companies*. N/A. 2022. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/whats-new/publications/countering-misuse-gaming-related-content-spaces-inspiring-practices-and-opportunities-cooperation_en.

[96] REGENI, Petra; LAMPHERE-ENGLUND, Galen; LANGE, Jon Kristian; PASSEY, Katie; COSTA, Susana et al. *SPOTLIGHT: GAMES, GAMING AND GAMIFICATION*. N/A. June 2023. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/spotlight_on_gamification_062023_en.pdf.

also an ongoing EU-funded project implemented by a consortium of academic, practitioner, and other entities called GEMS (Gaming Ecosystem as a Multilayered Security Threat) under the Horizon 2020 funding, "aimed at curbing the spread of extremism" within the gaming worlds, specifically looking into the recruitment elements.[97]

In late 2020, a paper by the Office of the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator discussed the issues related to the roles **algorithms** play not only in content selection, but also propaganda **amplification**.[98] Among others, the EU Internet Forum organised a dedicated workshop[99] in 2021, mapping the broad range of research and activities in this area, and continued in 2022 by commissioning "a study[100] on the impact of algorithmic amplification on the user's journey towards radicalisation […] looking into the effects of algorithmic amplification on the process of online radicalisation,"[101] as well as organising another workshop.[102] Thanks to the **Digital Services Act**, algorithmic transparency is now a key part of the efforts to protect citizens' rights online, with the European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency, launched in April 2023, helping in these efforts.[103,104]

Lastly, risks related to the misuse and abuse of **artificial intelligence** (AI) by malicious actors, as well as the opportunities brought by these modern technologies, were the topic of the 2024 EUIF Ministerial, exceptionally taking place in February.[105]

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[97] *Project GEMS.* Online. GEMS. N/A. Available at: https://www.projectgems.eu/. [cit. 2025-04-15].

[98] EU COUNTER-TERRORISM COORDINATOR. *The role of algorithmic amplification in promoting violent and extremist content and its dissemination on platforms and social media (12735/20).* N/A. 2020. Available at: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12735-2020-INIT/en/pdf.

[99] *EU INTERNET FORUM: WORKSHOP ON POTENTIAL RISKS RELATED TO THE MISUSE OF ALGORITHMIC AMPLIFICATION TECHNIQUES.* N/A. 2021. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/EUIF%20Workshop%20Algorithmic%20Amplification%20September%202021%20agenda_en.pdf.

[100] DG HOME; FINCONS; TREMAU a TRUST LAB. *Study on the role and effects of the use of algorithmic amplification to spread terrorist, violent extremist and borderline content: final report.* N/A. October 2023. Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6818e404-7217-11ee-9220-01aa75ed71a1.

[101] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EUIF YEAR IN REVIEW 2022.* N/A. 2022. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/EUIF%20brochure_en.pdf.

[102] *EUIF Workshop on misuse of content sharing algorithms, malicious behaviour and borderline content.* N/A. 2023. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/EUIF%20workshop%20on%20algorithmic%20amplification%20and%20borderline%20content-agenda_en.pdf.

[103] *European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency.* Online. N/A. Available at: https://algorithmic-transparency.ec.europa.eu/index_en. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[104] *About ECAT.* Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://algorithmic-transparency.ec.europa.eu/about_en. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[105] EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *EU INTERNET FORUM MINISTERIAL MEETING HOSTED BY COMMISSIONER YLVA JOHANSSON 29 FEBRUARY 2024.* N/A. 2024. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/67e85312-cac8-490c-bfca-434be3b0ef9c_en?filename=Agenda-9th-EUIF-Ministerial-Meeting_en.pdf.

It also heavily features in both the internal security strategies. Moreover, Europol's Innovation Lab looks into AI,[106] including by helping to build accountability principles for AI (AP4AI).[107] Additionally, there have been EU-funded projects implemented by external entities working with AI to counter violent extremist content and radicalisation online, such as CounterR.[108]

6.   The Christchurch Call Leaders' Summits between 2019 and 2022

The 2023 Leaders' Summit was already the fifth within the Christchurch Call framework:

- The **first Leaders' Summit** in May 2019 laid the basis for the Call — 17 governments, the European Commission and 8 online service providers committed to the pledge.[109]

- The **second meeting** took place on 23 September 2019 in the margins of the UNGA High Level Week in New York; during this meeting, 32 governments as well as international organisations joined the Call. This meeting's key achievements included the institutionalisation of the GIFCT, a launch of a new crisis protocol, and the establishment of a Christchurch Call Advisory Network. At that point, the Christchurch Call community counted 48 countries and 3 international organisations.[110]

- Due to the restrictions caused by COVID-19, the **third meeting** took place only on 15 May 2021 in an online format, with 34 governments, 8 online companies and 30 civil society organisations being represented.[111] The work under the *chapeau* of the Call had marked a significant progress in the two years of its existence and the leaders could approve four thematic work plans: "Building the Call Community",[112]

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[106] EUROPOL. *AI and policing – The benefits and challenges of artificial intelligence for law enforcement pdf*. 2024. Available at: https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/ai-and-policing. [cit. 2025-04-13].

[107] AP4AI. *AP4AI*. N/A. Available at: https://ap4ai.eu/about/who-we-are. [cit. 2025-04-13].

[108] *CounterR.* Online. Counter-Project. N/A. Available at: https://counter-project.eu/project/. [cit. 2025-04-15].

[109] *Christchurch Call to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist online content adopted*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 16 May 2019. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-to-eliminate-terrorist-and-violent-extremist-online-content-adopted/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[110] *Significant progress made on eliminating terrorist content online*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 2019. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/significant-progress-made-on-eliminating-terrorist-content-online/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[111] *Leaders' Summits*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/leaders-summits/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[112] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. *Community Work Plan 2021*. N/A. 2021. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/content/files/2024/06/Community-Work-Stream-Work-Plan-1.pdf.

"Crisis and Incident Response",[113] "Transparency",[114] and "Algorithms and Positive Interventions".[115] At this meeting, 7 new supporters joined the community. The statements of the leaders were also made available online.[116]

- The **fourth Leaders' Summit** took place again in New York on 20 September 2022 and provided the community with an opportunity to "consider the community's priorities, articulate their own priorities, and provide strategic direction for the coming year," as well as to take into account the challenges and opportunities the online space has been faced with.[117] As such, the discussion focused primarily on three key parts: incident response and the ongoing challenge of terrorist and violent extremist content; algorithms, radicalisation, and gender; the future focus of the Call, new technology, and youth.[118] The statements were again published.[119]

The 2023 Leaders' Summit

The fifth meeting took place on 10 November 2023 in Paris, with the agenda covering the core topics of the Call. The meeting took place in the midst of several armed conflicts that present challenges for the Call, including the spread of violent, antisemitic, and Islamophobic content relating to the conflict in Gaza and Israel.[120] The Leaders welcomed 11 new members and reaffirmed their commitment to the Call.[121]

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[113] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. *Crisis Response Workplan 2021*. N/A. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/content/files/2024/06/Christchurch-Call-Crisis-Reponse-Workplan-1.pdf. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[114] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. *Transparency & Reporting Work Plan 2021*. N/A. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/content/files/2024/06/Christchurch-Call-Transparency-Work-Plan-2.pdf.

[115] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. *Algorithms & Positive Interventions Workplan 2021*. N/A. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/content/files/2024/06/Algorithms-and-Positive-Interventions-WorkPlan-1.pdf. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[116] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. *Joint Statement by Prime Minister Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and His Excellency President Emmanuel Macron as co-founders of the Christchurch Call: Second Anniversary of the Christchurch Call Summit*. Online. N/A. 2021. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/leaders-summits/.

[117] *Leaders' Summits*. Online. The Christchurch Call. N/A. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/leaders-summits/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[118] Ibid.

[119] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. *Co-Chair Statement Christchurch Call Leaders' Summit: Joint Statement by Prime Minister Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and His Excellency President Emmanuel Macron on the occasion of the 2022 Christchurch Call Leaders' Meeting*. N/A. 2022. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/leaders-summits/.

[120] *Joint Statement: Christchurch Call Leaders' Summit 2023*. Online. Élysée. 2023. Available at: https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2023/11/11/joint-statement-christchurch-call-leaders-summit-2023. [cit. 2023-11-12].

[121] Ibid.

Five topical sections figured in the 2023 Leaders' Summit Joint Statement:[122]

- **New technology and its implications for terrorist and violent extremist content:** The leaders endorsed a range of activities that aim at continuation of multi-stakeholder exchanges, safety-tech sector engagements as well as engagement with providers of commercial and open source-tools. The work on risk assessment and red-teaming to mitigate the risk of AI misuse by terrorists and violent extremists, alignment of existing AI governance tools, while engaging the civil society as well as expertise of the technical community to ensure human rights and freedom of the Internet were equally endorsed.

- **Radicalisation and Algorithmic Outcomes:** The Leaders were briefed on the work with youth and on the reflection of these inputs into the work. A first Youth Engagement meeting took place, and the Youth Reference Group for the Christchurch Call was launched. A report on gender-based violence as a pathway for radicalisation was presented and the "Leaders [also] noted the importance of taking action to address anti-LGBTQIA+ violence and gender-based violence as vectors of radicalisation."[123] The Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes (CCIAO)[124] was joined by other stakeholders, with the Leaders endorsing "The development of new governance structure and ethics frameworks for CCIAO, to enable its further development; Continued work to build CCIAO into a global network that has a significant impact for the Call, for ethical and responsible deployment of AI, and for the public good; and Specific efforts to improve the online experience of young people, and to counteract online misogyny and anti-LGBTQIA+ hatred as a vector for violent extremism."

- **Next Steps for the Christchurch Call:** "Leaders considered options for putting the Call on a resilient long-term footing that will position it for success in an evolving technological, diplomatic, and international regulatory landscape, and for drawing on the advantages of the Call's innovative model to assist with related digital challenges" and endorsed several steps to allow proceeding with this initiative.

- **Crisis response and online content relating to the conflict in Gaza and Israel:** The Leaders endorsed a review of crisis response systems, agreed to update the Christchurch Call Shared Crisis Response Protocol, "consider and incorporate approaches for de-escalating tension and preventing on and offline hate and violence, including strategic communications and positive interventions, in the updated Crisis Response Protocol". They further endorsed building on earlier

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[122] Unless stated otherwise, the entire following section draws on: *Joint Statement: Christchurch Call Leaders' Summit 2023*. Online. Élysée. 2023. Available at: https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2023/11/11/joint-statement-christchurch-call-leaders-summit-2023. [cit. 2023-11-12].

[123] BUNDTZEN, Sara. *Misogynistic Pathways to Radicalisation: Recommended Measures for Platforms to Assess and Mitigate Online Gender-Based Violence*. Online. N/A. Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 14 September 2023. Available at: https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/misogynistic-pathways-to-radicalisation-recommended-measures-for-platforms-to-assess-and-mitigate-online-gender-based-violence/.

[124] *Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes*. Online. In: The Christchurch Call. 22 September 2022. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-initiative-on-algorithmic-outcomes/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

work to expand the toolbox and support for small companies, and to "continue working with all sectors to test and refine the system, to strengthen human rights protections and increase transparency."

- **Ongoing work in the Call Community:** On top of recognizing the progress that had already taken place under the Christchurch umbrella, the Leaders endorsed further work on issues of transparency, engaging "in dialogue on regulatory coherence," reinforcing "the role of the technical community in the Call," to keep evaluating the work and impact of the Call, and to continue building meaningful multi-stakeholder engagements.

At time of submission of this text, there has been no announcement of a sixth summit. Considering the last summit took place around year and a half prior to the reviewed submission of this text, it will be interesting to see how the Call maintains its momentum, especially now as an independent foundation, as is discussed below.

7.   Work Since the Last Summit

Following the Leaders' Summit in late 2023, the community took a decision how to continue the work of the Call, which led to an **establishment of the Christchurch Call Foundation**, by which the Call reemerged as an independent entity.[125] Ardern, who by that time had stepped down as Prime Minister of New Zealand and was already serving as a Special Envoy for the Call,[126] was appointed the Patron of the Call.[127] The Foundation was launched as of the beginning of July 2024, and has since been managed by a Secretariat, "run and funded by the non-governmental Foundation" and directed by Paul Ash, "who was formerly the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Cyber and Digital."[128]

Continuing with the work, the Call strengthened its crisis response processes in December 2024 by updating the Crisis Response Protocol.[129] The Call also continued its work auditing online algorithms by completing Phase 1 of the Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes (CCIAO); OpenMined, Microsoft, LinkedIn and Dailymotion participated in this exercise, supported by the "governments of France, New Zealand, and the US, and the Center for Security and Emerging

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[125] *Announcing the Foundation*. Online. The Christchurch Call. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-foundation-announcement/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[126] *Proactive Release: The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for the Christchurch Call*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 22 August 2023. Available at: https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/publications/proactive-release-prime-ministers-special-envoy-christchurch-call. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[127] *Announcing the Foundation*. Online. The Christchurch Call. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-foundation-announcement/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[128] *Dame Jacinda Ardern welcomes the Christchurch Call Foundation*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 1 July 2024. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/dame-jacinda-ardern-welcomes-the-christchurch-call-foundation/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[129] *Christchurch Call community strengthens crisis response process*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 3 December 2024. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-community-strengthens-crisis-response-process/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

Technology at Georgetown University," and X also contributed to the work.[130] Furthermore, the Community added 2 more organisations.[131]

Lastly, in February 2025, it was announced at the Paris AI Action Summit that the Call partnered with **ROOST (Robust Online Safety Tools)**, a non-profit consortium formed by Google, OpenAI, Roblox, and Discord to "make core safety technologies more accessible for companies and provide free, open-source AI tools for identifying, reviewing, and reporting child sexual abuse material," with the Call aiming to do the same for terrorist and violent content online.[132]

8. Future Outlook and Recommendations

Although the Christchurch Call was created in response to a crisis and initially aimed at crisis response, over the years it has grown into a well-respected multi-stakeholder global platform with significant global outreach and impact. A positive contributing factor was the empathetic leadership of Jacinda Ardern, who dealt with one of the biggest crises her country had then faced, during which she showed a deeply human approach, respect, and humanity rather than political stoicism, and reacted quickly and efficiently to take steps aimed at preventing a recurrence of such an attack and its impact online.

The scope of activities has also risen over the years, reflecting the ever-changing threat picture online, and also focusing on emerging issues. As such, the scope includes the growing threat of gender-based violence, which carries links to the far-right and lone attackers; the role of algorithms in radicalisation, and implications of AI and other emerging technologies vis-a-vis the possibility of terrorists and violent extremists exploiting such tools.

The power of the Christchurch Call — apart from its political power and global scope thanks to the multi-stakeholder model of the initiative – lies in its activities being directly targeted and working quickly and effectively towards reaching operable solutions. Among the most tangible results is the globalised focus on transparency and safety of solutions.[133] In that sense, the recent transition to being the Foundation and a standalone entity rather than being a government unit, can further help in putting the work on a sustainable trajectory, and also help in less bureaucracy that is inextricably a part of any public administration.[134] At the same time, it is important to ensure the new Foundation maintains its influence and relevance, given the change of format and

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[130] *Safe, Secure, Private: Research finds third parties can audit online algorithms*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 1 November 2024. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/safe-secure-private-research-finds-third-parties-can-audit-online-algorithms/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[131] *Growing the Call Community*. Online. The Christchurch Call. 12 April 2024. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/growing-the-call-community/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[132] *Christchurch Call partners with ROOST for open-source AI tools to tackle TVEC.* Online. The Christchurch Call. 12 February 2025. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/christchurch-call-partners-with-roost-for-open-source-ai-tools-to-tackle-tvec/. [cit. 2025-04-15].

[133] Personal interview with Dr. Nicole Matejic, Principal Strategic Advisor with the Christchurch Call Foundation and Clare-Louise Chapman, Call's Strategic Communication Advisor, online, 7 November 2024.

[134] Ibid.

less political weight compared to when it was a government unit with the Elysée and Wellington behind it, as well as in the light of the changed geopolitical climate, which has already influenced some of the content moderation and trust and safety approaches by some companies.

Further broadening of the scope is logical, considering the diversity of online tools, growing and varied supporter base, and ever-growing possibilities in the online space. At the same time, continuous expansion may also lead to diluted focus, splitting human and/or financial resources, and potentially risks becoming in time yet another forum with too broad a focus and too little practical impact. Similarly, the more stakeholders are involved, the more opinions and interests will have to be taken into account and balanced, which may lead to fragmentation and/or blunting of the impact of the targeted action. Avoiding duplications with other fora and activities should also remain one of the key priorities.

Nevertheless, there are other potential avenues the Call and the community might consider exploring in the future — or deepening / extending the focus of those already being examined, while keeping momentum and focus:

- **Artificial intelligence and emerging and disruptive technologies:** It is undeniably important to stay abreast of the developments in the AI domain. In that sense, the recent partnership with ROOST is an important step forward. It may be also worth considering joining forces with other international and regional players who have already started building capacities, including NATO, the UN, the EU, the G7, UNESCO, the OECD, and others. At each stage, important elements to consider would include not slowing down progress, whilst working towards protecting users from the abuse of such technology by terrorists and extremists, without impeding privacy when using AI for legitimate purposes.

  NATO has been developing its own extensive expertise in AI and disruptive technologies.[135] Naturally, NATO and its expertise are tied to the military and defence domains, and there may also be political pitfalls in engaging with a military entity. However, the exchange of general expertise, new findings, and establishing working cooperation with NATO may have numerous added benefits to the Call's expertise and portfolio.

  As for the EU, there has been a robust framework for building AI expertise dating back to 2018.[136] Most recently, the EU has opened a dedicated AI Office within DG CONNECT which is to serve as "the centre of AI expertise across the EU".[137] The legislative cornerstone is the "AI Act" which came into force in August 2024, the first parts of which became applicable within 6 months, others will become applicable in up to 36 months, and the majority within 2 years.[138] In the work of law

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[135] *Emerging and disruptive technologies*. Online. NATO. N/A, 08 August 2024. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_184303.htm. [cit. 2023-11-13].

[136] *European approach to artificial intelligence*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-approach-artificial-intelligence. [cit. 2024-12-08].

[137] *European AI Office*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-office. [cit. 2024-12-08].

[138] *AI Act*. Online. European Commission. N/A. Available at: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai. [cit. 2024-12-08].

enforcement and terrorism and violent extremism, there are numerous initiatives focusing on AI, including the Europol's sandbox testing environment and the activities of the Innovation Lab,[139] with the overarching goal of looking into the role of AI in curbing the spread of terrorist content online as outlined in the Counter-Terrorism agenda. Therefore, the expertise could become nicely diversified.

Other areas worth studying are the weaponization of AI for illegal use, including terrorism and violent extremism, as well as the risks of autonomous AI. To that end, the recent joining[140] of the Call by OpenAI and Anthropic is a good step forward. Specific sub-streams of this work could be a focus on developing effective watermarking[141] of AI-generated content, a general focus on the risks related to synthetic content,[142] and leveraging AI for fighting terrorist and violent extremist content, which is in line with the recent ROOST partnership.

- **Algorithms:** The Call has recently concluded Phase 1 of its pilot project on auditability of algorithms. The outcomes of the first phase show promising results into what could lead to a greater transparency of algorithms without impacting on business secrecy and proprietary information of the companies. The outcomes of the next phases will be very interesting to see, namely if they will shed more light on the widely discussed role of algorithms in potentially amplifying harmful content, including terrorist and violent extremist content online.

- **Gaming and gaming-adjacent industry:** The acuteness of engaging the gaming and gaming-adjacent industry became clear soon after the Christchurch terrorist attacks, as the attacker used the gamification mode of streaming the murders. Not too later, Twitch was misused for live-streaming of the 2019 Halle shooting[143] and the 2022 Buffalo shooting.[144] Gaming and adjacent platforms can be abused in multiple ways, ranging from misusing the streaming options, to recruitment, training, money laundering / terrorism financing, desensitisation to violence, and other phenomena, such as grooming. In light of this, the topic of online gaming has become more prominent in the CT / CVE area. Some think tanks,

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[139] *Documents from the Europol Innovation Lab concerning Artificial Intelligence*. Online. Europol. N/A, 7 November 2024. Available at: https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/publications/documents-europol-innovation-lab-concerning-artificial-intelligence. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[140] *Four new tech firms expand the Christchurch Call*. Online. In: The Christchurch Call. 10 November 2023. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/four-new-tech-firms-expand-the-christchurch-call/. [cit. 2023-11-12].

[141] MADIEGA, Tambiama. *Generative AI and watermarking*. N/A. December 2023. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/757583/EPRS_BRI(2023)757583_EN.pdf.

[142] Content either partially or fully generated by AI. In *Synthetic and Manipulated Content. Online. Partnership on AI. N/A.* Available at*: https://partnershiponai.org/workstream/synthetic-and-manipulated-content/.* [cit. 2024-12-07].

[143] *Germany shooting: 2,200 people watched on Twitch*. Online. BBC. 10 October 2019. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-49998284. [cit. 2023-11-03].

[144] *The Buffalo Attack and the Gamification of Violence*. Online. LAMPHERE-ENGLUND, Galen a WHITE, Jessica. Royal United Services Institute. 16 May 2022. Available at: https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/buffalo-attack-and-gamification-violence. [cit. 2024-12-07].

such as Royal United Services Institute, have dedicated research[145] into terrorism / extremism and gaming. In 2024, the GIFCT also had a dedicated working group on gaming.[146] Additionally, Extremism and Gaming Research Network[147] and Discord[148] have recently joined the Call. Roblox is also already a part of the Supporters' Network, Twitch is a subsidiary of Amazon (a member), but there is a marked absence of many other big names whose services are nevertheless immensely popular among users. As such, the shift towards engaging gaming-world related stakeholders should continue into the future, and having a greater focus within the Christchurch Call community would help get cutting-edge and necessary cooperation on a global scale.

- **Cooperation with media in reporting on terrorism and violent extremism:** The final 2021 Report[149] on the Christchurch Call Community Consultation identified media standards and frameworks as an area for cooperation, asking "What qualities of successful media standards and frameworks have been the most effective in managing instances of TVEC[150] being amplified by the media?". Working with the media is always very sensitive, particularly when recommendations are construed as top-down, and ensuring media freedom is essential. That being said, having a constructive dialogue with the media to clarify how reporting on terrorism may contribute to the amplification of terrorism,[151] the risk of threat and panic, affording notoriety to the attacker(s), as well as secondary victimisation of the survivors and their loved ones. The reaction of Prime Minister Ardern, who refused to use the name[152] of the attacker so as not to lend him notoriety and fame, served as an excellent example of soft political power and empathetic work with the media.

- **Minimal global standards for internet governance**: In September 2024, the Global Digital Compact was adopted at the UN, with the implementation period starting in 2025.[153] Whilst the Compact aims at committing "governments to [uphold] international law and human rights online and to [take] concrete steps to

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[145] ROYAL UNITED SERVICES INSTITUTE. *Extremism and Gaming*. Online. N/A. Available at: https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/projects/extremism-and-gaming. [cit. 2023-11-05].

[146] *Gaming Community of Practice: Supporting Gaming Tech Safety*. Online. Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. Available at: https://gifct.org/year-four-working-groups/. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[147] *Extremism and Gaming Research Network*. Online. N/A. Available at: https://extremismandgaming.org/. [cit. 2023-11-08].

[148] *Four new tech firms expand the Christchurch Call*. Online. In: The Christchurch Call. 10 November 2023. Available at: https://www.christchurchcall.org/four-new-tech-firms-expand-the-christchurch-call/. [cit. 2023-11-12].

[149] THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL. *Christchurch Call Community Consultation: Final Report*. N_A. 2021. Available at: https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2021-04/apo-nid311813.pdf.

[150] Terrorist and violent extremist content.

[151] ROYAL UNITED SERVICES INSTITUTE. *Terrorism and the Media*. Online. N/A. Available at: https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/projects/terrorism-and-media. [cit. 2023-11-07].

[152] BBC. *Christchurch shootings: Ardern vows never to say gunman's name*. Online. 19 March 2019. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47620630. [cit. 2024-12-07].

[153] *Global Digital Compact*. Online. United Nations. 2024. Available at: https://www.un.org/global-digital-compact/en. [cit. 2024-12-07].

make the digital space safe and secure", it did not pre-empt the discussion on many particularities of global digital governance. The Christchurch Call is ideally poised and well-respected to use its international reputation to press for global accountability when designing future tools and initiatives. Any such proposal, however, must be the result of multi-stakeholder and society-wide discussions. Furthermore, any work needs to be clear on the need to avoid duplication or any kind of shortcuts that could cause damage in the long-term.

9.   Conclusion

The goal of this article was to present the Christchurch Call, explain its genesis, show how it fits into the EU and global contexts of fighting terrorism and violent extremism online, show where and how initiative is unique, and lastly look into the future and offer recommendations for possible future work.

The Christchurch Call continues to be an influential global player in fighting terrorism and violent extremism online. It is a testament to how a tragedy can lead to large scale support in preventing history from repeating itself when the right people are in the right time at the right place and can mobilise the right community. The growing scope of the Call and the subsequent establishment of the Foundation attests to the success of the initiative as well as the ever-growing potential of technology.

Nonetheless, the Christchurch Call Foundation and the community need to balance taking onboard new and relevant topics, whilst maintaining its focus and decisive voice in fighting terrorism, violent extremism, and threats online (or beyond).

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