France wants to fine Facebook over hate speech

On Thursday, French lawmakers approved a measure designed to force tech companies like Facebook and Google to remove content the French government deems “hate speech,” the *Associate Press* reported earlier today.

The provision, which is part of a larger internet regulation bill, was adopted by the lower house of the French Parliament on Thursday. If it were to be fully approved, it would create a 24 hour deadline for social networks to remove hate speech from their platforms once it’s flagged. According to the *New York Times*, the bill will move to the body’s upper chamber, their Senate, for discussion next.

The language included in the measure requires companies to remove any content that incites or encourages hateful violence or discrimination based on one’s race or religion, along with child pornography. If the platforms do not remove the content within that timeframe, they could face up to a €1.25 million fine.

Earlier this year, French President Emmanuel Macron proposed the measure, noting an increase in the number of anti-Semitic attacks and extremist language and behavior online. According to the *Associate Press*, French lawmakers were divided on how they define hate speech in the bill.

In 2018, Germany approved a similar law that officially went into effect on January 1st. This law requires platforms to remove content that is illegal under German law within the same 24 hour time frame, but bumps the potential fine up to €50 million.

Social media platforms have come under increased pressure to remove hateful content following the tragic mosque attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand earlier this year. Facebook, which the attacker used to broadcast the shooting, moved to make white nationalist and separatist content a violation of its rules.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/7/4/20682513/french-parliament-facebook-google-social-network-hate-speech-removal