

14 May 2021 - Seul le prononcé fait foi

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Introduction by French President Emmanuel Macron:

Prime minister, dear Jacinda, Your Majesty, Presidents and Prime ministers, ministers, dear friends, thank you very much, Jacinda, for your words.

Obviously, I do share what you've just said. Two years ago, together, we launched with leaders of governments and tech companies, the Christchurch call to action. We were in Paris. And I think what we delivered all together during the past two years is an extremely important step forward.

Our conviction was that in order to handle the threat, we needed to build on the support of existing fora such as the G7, of the Aqaba process, and I want to pay tribute here to Your Majesty, kingdom of Jordan. You were one of the first to combat the dissemination of terrorist content online through the Aqaba process initiative, and I want to thank you for your participation today. But we wanted also to unite the strength of states, tech companies and civil societies.

I do believe that our method was totally original, and all together, we demonstrated the fact that it was an extremely efficient approach. We also acknowledged that this fight against terrorism cannot be waged at the cost of our values : open societies, rule of law and free, open and secure internet. That is why it is up to us, democracies and defenders of fundamental freedoms, to find the right solutions.

Our call has been heard. Now, we have 55 states, the European commission, two international organisations and ten companies now support our work. This community has been reinforced by the Christchurch call advisory network, made up of 47 civil society organisations with diverse and strong expertise on these issues. I would like, tonight, to thank all the members of this community present today.

Yet, tragedy happened again. It happened in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, Nice, in France last year, but also in Vienna, in Hanau, Germany, in Glendale in the US and in a lot of other places in other different countries. For each of these, the internet was abused by terrorists as a weapon to propagate their hateful ideologies and sometimes actually inspiring further attacks. And I'm thinking obviously here in particular to the online course to violence that led to the killing of a French school teacher. His name was Samuel PATY. And this cannot and will not be forgotten.

This cannot and should not happen again. We need to refresh ambition to our collective actions within the multi-stakeholder and multi-shareholder approach which made the Christchurch call so unique, and we need to set the bar high, and it is our duty as governments to protect our citizens against these threats.

This is why I commend the recent adoption of the European regulation on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online and the European Commission's announcement on the Digital Services Act. These tools are critical. The voluntary commitments that we took together are just as important, they bring us together in a demanding multi-stakeholder dialog to find innovative mechanisms to tackle this content online while ensuring that fundamental rights are protected and they push us, governments and tech companies, to do more and better.

We are here this evening to reaffirm our willingness to continue clearly this work together. We all have responsibilities to shoulder and a role to play in continuing to implement the engagements of the Christchurch call. This is why I would like to warn the new states providing the support to the call, which reflects the international community's mobilization on this issue, and I'm very pleased to announce this evening that the United States, Tunisia, Peru, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia have now joined the Christchurch call community. And we welcome you, and I know that we will be stronger together.

Jacinda mentioned some of the few tools and new dimensions of these initiatives, and I absolutely share your words and your description, especially about algorithms. This is absolutely critical if we want to progress and be efficient. We will discuss our working plan, which contains a lot of new elements. We will follow up on this methodology and on transparency algorithms and so on. We will elaborate this new approach.

Before giving you the floor, Jacinda, I would like to also thank all the supporters of the Christchurch call for their involvement. I know that achieving this ambition and this ambitious outcome in such a short amount of time required a great deal of work in recent weeks for many of you, and especially within the Christchurch call advisory network. All of the Christchurch community is grateful and we are working to build a new way of tackling these issues and intend to make sure that your commitment has not been in vain. I want to thank you and I pass the floor to you, Jacinda. Thank you.