



MALTA COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY

# Annual Activity Report 2025

## Pursuant to Art. 55 of the Digital Services Act

MCA/IMD/26-5984

8<sup>th</sup> July 2026

 (+356) 2133 6840    [info@mca.org.mt](mailto:info@mca.org.mt)    [www.mca.org.mt](http://www.mca.org.mt)

 Valletta Waterfront, Pinto Wharf, Floriana FRN1913, Malta

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background.....	1
DSC Designation and Empowerment.....	1
Capacity Building .....	2
Identification of Providers of Intermediary Services Established in Malta .....	2
Complaints (Article 53 DSA).....	2
Out-of-court dispute settlement bodies (Article 21 DSA) .....	3
Trusted Flaggers (Article 22 DSA).....	3
Vetted Researchers (Article 40 DSA).....	4
The European Board for Digital Services .....	4
National Outreach and Awareness.....	5

## Background

Pursuant to Article 55 of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 on a Single Market for Digital Services (“Digital Services Act” or the “DSA”), the Malta Communications Authority (“MCA”), in its capacity as Malta’s designated Digital Services Coordinator (“DSC”), is required to prepare an annual report detailing its supervisory and enforcement activities.

The DSA establishes a harmonised framework across the European Union (“EU”) for regulating online intermediaries and platforms. Its main objective is to ensure a safe and predictable digital environment by setting out clear responsibilities for digital services that connect consumers with goods, services, or content. The DSA introduces due diligence obligations proportionate to the scale and impact of the service, ranging from transparency measures for intermediary services to enhanced obligations for very large online platforms and search engines.

By strengthening oversight, accountability, and user protection, the DSA aims to safeguard fundamental rights online and uphold the integrity of the internal market. It also enhances cooperation between national authorities, coordinated through the European Board for Digital Services (“EBDS”), to address cross-border challenges effectively. This comprehensive framework is designed to foster trust in the digital economy and protect users in the EU from illegal content, products, and services.

## DSC Designation and Empowerment

On 12 March 2024, the Digital Services (Designation and Enforcement) Order, 2024, (as per Legal Notice 66 of 2024 of the Laws of Malta) established the national enforcement framework of the DSA and formally designated the MCA as Malta’s DSC. As the DSC, the MCA ensures compliance by intermediary service providers established in, or legally represented in, Malta, acts as the national point of contact, and represents Malta on the EBDS.<sup>1</sup>

While the DSA permits EU Member States to appoint multiple competent authorities, Malta has not designated additional bodies. Instead, the MCA maintains various memoranda of understanding with selected public bodies in Malta to allow for a coordinated regulatory framework, namely:

1. The Commissioner for Children, to address matters under Article 28 of the DSA concerning the rights and protection of minors.
2. The Information and Data Protection Commissioner, for issues under Article 26 of the DSA on advertising and Article 28 of the DSA on minors’ data protection.
3. The Director General (Consumer Affairs) within the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority, regarding Section 4 of the DSA specifically Articles 30 to 32 on online platforms facilitating consumer distance contracts.
4. The Malta Police Force, for general cooperation particularly Article 18 of the DSA relating to notifications of suspected criminal offences.

---

<sup>1</sup> The consolidated version of the order can be found under Subsidiary Legislation 418.05 of the Laws of Malta.

## Capacity Building

As the DSC of a small Member State, the MCA operates within a defined resource framework. In 2025, the MCA continued to prioritise measures to optimise the deployment of its resources while ensuring the effective discharge of its responsibilities under the DSA.

A key focus was the continued strengthening of its internal capability, particularly in relation to the legal interpretation of the DSA and its application. Developing this capability remains essential to addressing the scope, complexity and evolving nature of the regulatory framework.

In parallel, the MCA advanced the development of internal policies and procedures to underpin its supervisory and enforcement functions.

The MCA also maintained active engagement with other DSCs across the EU, facilitating the exchange of insights and supervisory approaches. This cooperation reinforces the coherent implementation of the DSA and ensures alignment with emerging practices at European level.

## Identification of Providers of Intermediary Services Established in Malta

The MCA undertakes targeted outreach initiatives to identify and engage service providers established in Malta that may fall within the scope of the DSA. Providers subject to the DSA are required to notify the MCA accordingly. These efforts support the MCA in maintaining an up-to-date list of providers of intermediary services established in, or legally represented in, Malta for supervisory and compliance purposes, based on the information received and notifications submitted.

In 2025, the MCA received one notification concerning the designation of a legal representative in accordance with Article 13 of the DSA.

### Breakdown of notified Intermediary Services established or legally represented in Malta by Size and Type (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025)

	Small / Micro	Medium	Large
<b>Mere conduit / caching</b>	1	1	5
<b>Hosting</b>	-	2	1
<b>Online platform</b>	23	2	0

## Complaints (Article 53 DSA)

Article 53 of the DSA entitles recipients of intermediary services, or organisations acting on their behalf, to lodge a complaint with the DSC of the Member State in which they are located, alleging infringements of the DSA by a service provider. Complaints concerning providers established in other Member States are transmitted to the respective DSC for handling.

In 2025, the MCA received thirteen (13) complaints under Article 53 of the DSA. Of these, nine (9) were transmitted to the competent DSCs in other Member States while four (4) were found

inadmissible. Throughout the year, the MCA also responded to related user enquiries and provided assistance through its dedicated online interface.

### Total number of transmitted complaints by specific receiving DSC

DSC in other Member State	Complaints Transmitted
Coimisiún na Meán – Ireland	7
Autoriteit Consument & Markt (ACM) – Netherlands*	2

\* Fully designated and empowered in February 2025

### Out-of-court dispute settlement bodies (Article 21 DSA)

The DSA provides users with an additional channel to resolve disputes with online platforms over content moderation decisions, through certified out-of-court dispute settlement bodies. Platforms are required to inform users of this option and to cooperate with certified bodies. DSCs are responsible for certifying such bodies in their Member State, subject to the requirements set out in Article 21, which cover independence, relevant expertise in handling disputes involving specific types of illegal content, and the ability to operate in at least one (1) official EU language.

As at end 2025, ADROIT remained the only certified out-of-court dispute settlement body established in Malta.

### Trusted Flaggers (Article 22 DSA)

The DSA empowers DSCs to designate entities established in their Member State as trusted flaggers. These need to demonstrate that they are independent of online platforms and possess specialised expertise in detecting illegal content due to their expected accuracy. Article 22 of the DSA sets out criteria covering independence, proficiency in identifying specific illegal content types, and diligence in reporting. It also stipulates that notices submitted by awarded trusted flaggers must be treated with priority by online platforms.

During 2025, in accordance with Article 22(8) of the DSA, the Commission, in consultation with the Board, commenced work on guidelines to assist online platform providers and DSCs in applying these criteria. These are expected to be finalised during 2026.

On 25th February 2025, through Decision Notice No. MCA/D/25/5553, the MCA awarded the Trusted Flagger status to the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (“FSWS”). FSWS operates Malta’s Safer Internet Centre and hotline through its ‘BeSmartOnline!’ initiative. Following an assessment conducted in accordance with Article 22 of the DSA, the MCA decided that FSWS met all the requirements stipulated therein, for the notification of online content involving violent and sexual exploitation of minors.

## Vetted Researchers (Article 40 DSA)

Very large online platforms and search engines are required to give access to non-public data, to independent academics or research organizations that have been formally approved by a DSC as a “vetted researcher”. As stipulated under Article 40 of the DSA, vetted researchers are those that meet strict eligibility criteria, including proven expertise, institutional independence, and robust safeguards for data security and confidentiality. This access is granted solely for the purpose of conducting research that contributes to identifying, understanding, or mitigating systemic risks in the EU. Vetted researchers may use the data only for the approved research objectives and in the public interest.

In 2025, the Commission adopted a delegated act outlining rules granting access to data for qualified researchers under the DSA. This complements Article 40 of the DSA as the aforesaid delegated act explains how data access should work in practice.

During 2025, no applications for vetted researcher status were submitted to the MCA. However, the MCA has published on its website information on how to apply for the status of vetted researcher and a contact point for related enquiries<sup>2</sup>.

## The European Board for Digital Services

The European Board for Digital Services (“EBDS”) is an independent advisory body comprising national Digital Services Coordinators and chaired by the European Commission. Established under Article 61 of the DSA, the Board has been operational since 17 February 2024. Its primary role is to promote the consistent and effective implementation of the DSA across the EU by providing guidance on legal interpretation, coordinating analytical work, and supporting the supervision of very large online platforms.

During 2025, the MCA maintained active engagement with the EBDS. The MCA participated in all eight (8) Board working groups<sup>3</sup>, contributing Malta’s perspective and technical expertise across a range of subject areas. This involvement included collaboration with other national authorities on specific issues such as elections, child protection, criminal enforcement, product safety, and consumer rights. To enhance its contribution, the MCA also invited relevant national stakeholders to participate alongside its representatives in working group meetings, particularly when highly specialised topics were under discussion. This approach strengthened coordination efforts and broadened national participation on certain matters. In addition, the MCA participated in discussions on the interaction between the DSA and other EU legislative frameworks.

---

<sup>2</sup> See *Become a ‘Vetted Researcher’ under Article 40(8) of the DSA* - <https://www.mca.org.mt/initiatives/dsa>

<sup>3</sup> The Board delegates much of its work to eight working groups, focusing on specific themes, including content moderation, data access, protection of minors, IT systems, consumer protection, legal frameworks, and the integrity of the online space.

## National Outreach and Awareness

Throughout 2025, the MCA continued its efforts to raise awareness and promote a clear understanding of the DSA and its implications for Malta. This included maintaining an open dialogue with various stakeholders, responding to queries and addressing requests for clarification on the framework, with particular emphasis on how its tools can support users, businesses, and national authorities.

The MCA also kept the dedicated DSA section of its website updated with informative content to educate users, businesses, and other stakeholders on the framework and the rights and obligations it establishes. This was complemented by media engagement aimed at the wider public, and by participation in events, conferences, and talks on the DSA throughout the year reaching specialist audiences.

The MCA further engaged with other national authorities to explain the DSA and the tools it offers, in particular the mechanisms provided under Article 9 (orders to act against illegal content), Article 10 (orders to provide information), Article 16 (notice and action procedures), Article 21 (out-of-court dispute settlement), and Article 22 (trusted flaggers).

In 2025, the MCA convened four (4) Digital Services Forum sessions to encourage dialogue and collaboration among participating institutions on key issues shaping the digital environment:

- **4th Digital Services Forum, 16 January 2025**  
**The DSA: Managing Risk, Crisis, and Freedom in the Digital World**  
This session focused on how very large online platforms (VLOPs) apply the DSA, with particular attention to social media platforms.
- **5th Digital Services Forum, 25 February 2025**  
**Safeguarding Minors in the Digital World**  
This session addressed age verification and the balance between safeguarding minors and protecting their privacy.
- **6th Digital Services Forum, 18 September 2025**  
**The DSA and Electoral Preparedness**  
This session examined electoral preparedness within the context of the DSA.
- **7th Digital Services Forum, 20 October 2025**  
**Guidelines on the Protection of Minors under the DSA: Stakeholder Discussion**  
This session focused on the protection of minors guidelines and their role in fostering a safer digital environment for children and adolescents.

