Report on meeting with Microsoft (27 May 2019)

Participants: ▮▮▮
▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮*Microsoft), Tauno Tohk (CAB Ansip), Ulrik Smed (CAB King)*

- The delegation came to discuss the recent decision by Microsoft to join the Code of Practice against disinformation. The representatives provided a perspective on their experience with 'battling legislation' with the Commission in the early 2000s and see the situation with the Code of Practice as slightly similar today. From this view, the company hopes to bring a more moderate conversation to the table.
- The current situation and relations between the tech sector and the Commission was also discussed. The representatives were of the view that more trust between the parties would be useful in order to move forward on a range of issues.
- At the same time, potential regulation for the tech sector was discussed. There seems to be a growing feeling that the way forward is to cooperate in order to find a common ground rather than resisting such developments, which could harm trust and lead to a worse-off situation. With this in mind, different models should be explored to assess the right scope for e.g. data access, audits, as well as other options, while building public sector capacity to analyse and potentially regulate this space.
- Finally, the representatives mentioned the initiative NewsGuard, which Microsoft is supporting, and informed how they had recently succeeded in reaching an understanding in the UK to further integrate their tools into online experiences for citizens and users in the UK. This could potentially be explored for other Member States, too.
- CAB Ansip and King briefed on the current state of play following the European Parliament elections and invited the company representatives to support the development of the Code of Practice, in particular with a view to empowering meaningful access to data for researchers.