

Client alert

Data protection

18 July 2025

European Commission Adopts Rules on Researcher Data Access under the DSA

On 2 July 2025, the European Commission (the **Commission**) adopted a delegated act (the **Delegated Act**) outlining rules granting access to data for qualified researchers under the Digital Services Act (**DSA**). “Vetted” researchers will benefit from access to previously undisclosed or under-disclosed data, allowing research on the systemic risks and on the mitigation measures in the EU.

Article 40 of the DSA requires very large online platforms (**VLOPs**) and very large online search engines (**VLOSEs**) to provide access to the data they hold for the purposes of regulatory supervision, research and scrutiny that contributes to the detection, identification and understanding of systemic risks in the European Union (**EU**), and to the assessment of the adequacy, efficiency and impacts of risk mitigation measures that those providers have to take under the DSA. Enhanced data access should contribute to the monitoring of the online environment by the competent authorities and, therefore, to a safer online world.

The Delegated Act sets out the technical conditions under which VLOPs or VLOSEs are to share data with authorised researchers and the purposes for which the data may be used. In particular, the delegated act sets out the procedures to be followed by Digital Services Coordinators (**DCS**) for the formulation of reasoned requests for data access to VLOPs or VLOSEs. Consequently, the Delegated Act creates data access portal and a harmonised procedure with the following key elements:

- Researchers must be verified by a DCS, which shall determine the access modalities and shall take into consideration the protection of personal data and the protection of confidential information, trade secrets, and maintenance of the security of the service.
- The DSC may consider that a secure processing environment - which is a physical or virtual environment with the means to ensure compliance with Union law - is required.
- Only data that is necessary to perform research on systemic risks in the EU can be requested, such as user profile information and relationship networks, content exposure and engagement history, advertising information, pricing and product information.

The Delegated Act represents a pivotal step in harmonising and operationalising the DSA's transparency and accountability framework by ensuring a robust and effective data access portal in order to enable researchers to assess systemic risks in the EU and the effectiveness of measures to mitigate those risks.

The Delegated Regulation, which can be accessed [here](#), will enter into force 21 July 2025.

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