

Minister
of Canadian Heritage



Ministre
du Patrimoine canadien

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0M5

June 28, 2023

Mr. Kevin Lowe
Chair, Board of Directors
Ms. Christina de Castell
Chief Librarian and Chief Executive Officer
Vancouver Public Library
350 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6B 6B1

Dear Mr. Lowe and Ms. de Castell:

I am writing in response to your correspondence regarding the impact of discrimination and hatred online. I appreciate your taking the time to write on this matter. Please excuse the delay in my reply.

The Government of Canada recognizes that online platforms are increasingly central to participation in public life and have an enormous impact on Canadians' everyday lives. While these platforms allow us to stay in touch with loved ones, to learn and to debate, they can also be used to discriminate, harm and silence. Content that incites violence and hate speech on the Internet is a widespread issue that cannot be tolerated.

As stipulated in my mandate letter, the Government is committed to putting in place a more transparent and equitable regulatory framework for online safety in Canada. We believe that online services must do their part to fight harmful content online and promote a safer and more inclusive online environment.

To this effect, the Government convened an expert advisory group, comprised of 12 experts from diverse backgrounds and experiences, which met over the course of the spring. They discussed wide-ranging issues, which included legislative and regulatory obligations, the role of law enforcement, freedom of expression and disinformation. The work of the expert advisory group concluded on June 10, 2022 and summaries of their discussions have been posted [online](#).

.../2

Canada 

Moreover, between June 15 and 19, 2022, the Citizen's Assembly on Democratic Expression, comprised of participants from across Canada with a variety of diverse and representative backgrounds, met to discuss the issue of a new legislative and regulatory framework to address harmful content online. The Assembly reviewed the work of the expert panel and considered the measures the Government should take to strengthen online safety, reduce disinformation and safeguard user rights. The Assembly will issue a public report later this year.

I have also conducted in-person and virtual roundtables across Canada on online safety over the summer and fall of 2022, to listen to and understand the perspectives of those who would be most impacted by the legislation.

Rest assured that I am continuing the work on developing the legislation to protect Canadians and hold online platforms accountable.

Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, fluid strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.