

**Question for written answer E-002057/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 144

Christine Anderson (ESN), Petr Bystron (ESN)

Subject: ‘REspect!’ – first censorship agency in Germany under the Digital Services Act

On 1 October 2024, the German Federal Network Agency (Bundesnetzagentur) approved the first trusted flagger within the meaning of the Digital Services Act. The ‘REspect!’ hotline of the Baden-Württemberg Youth Foundation received this approval¹. One of the prerequisites for trusted flaggers required by the Federal Network Agency is that online platforms be independent². However, the organisation REspect! receives funding from Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and the federal programme ‘Demokratie leben!’ (Living Democracy!) and would probably not be viable without these grants.

Appointment and monitoring are carried out by the Federal Network Agency, which operates under the authority and directives of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs. The Federal Minister and the Head of the Federal Network Agency are members of the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen party.

1. What are the legal requirements under the DSA to ensure the independence of a trusted flagger from the state, in particular with regard to freedom of expression and the rule of law?
2. How is it ensured that the approval of trusted flaggers is not subject to party-political preferences of a national ministry?
3. What is the Commission’s assessment of the reliance of trusted flaggers on public funding, and should such independence also be required by law?

Supporters³

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¹

https://www.bundesnetzagentur.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2024/20240927_DSC_TrustedFlagger.html

² <https://www.dsc.bund.de/DSC/DE/4TrustedF/start.html>

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