**Question for oral answer O-000044/2025**
**to the Commission**
Rule 142
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Subject: European Democracy Shield – very large online platform algorithms, foreign interference and the spread of disinformation

Recent elections in EU Member States have highlighted the systemic risk to civic discourse and electoral processes caused by recommendation systems on very large online platforms (VLOPs). These systems favour divisive content as a means to drive engagement, thereby amplifying disinformation and propaganda campaigns run by foreign and domestic authoritarian actors.

The online information ecosystem is biased against fact-based or constructive content, while rewarding polarising, violent or misleading material. Media adhering to journalistic standards cannot compete with those spreading propaganda who are exploiting outrage to drive engagement. Malicious actors can further manipulate algorithms by deploying bot networks, as demonstrated in the Romanian elections. The 2025 Czech elections faced a flood of pro-Russian disinformation online as well.

Beyond this manipulation, studies show that the algorithm on the X platform suppresses content from some political parties while boosting others. Certain accounts, including Elon Musk's own, are reportedly amplified. Such practices undermine users' freedom to choose their content and reveal that timelines often reflect algorithmic decisions by platform owners rather than users' preferences.

These developments raise serious concerns with regard to Article 34 of the Digital Services Act (DSA), which requires VLOPs to mitigate systemic risks to civic discourse, electoral processes, freedom of expression and media freedom.

We urge the Commission to investigate and clarify whether these practices amount to breaches of the DSA.

1. When will the Commission use the available tools to investigate and, where necessary, re-establish a level playing field for information on VLOPs?

2. When will the Commission assess and, if appropriate, take measures under Article 35 DSA to stop harmful engagement-based recommendation systems?

3. How will the Commission ensure that platform algorithms comply with users' rights and their obligations under Article 34 DSA ahead of the upcoming European elections?

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