

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000061/25
to the Commission
Virginie Joron (PFE)
(9 January 2025)**

Subject: Did Brussels try to censor Meta?

On 7 January 2025 ⁽¹⁾, Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Meta (formerly known as Facebook), published a video and press release confirming the return of free expression to his networks. His company's fact-checking system, consisting of 40 000 moderators worldwide, will be scrapped and censorship will be reduced. The company also intends to give users back the free expression they want on political issues, particularly immigration and gender.

In his video, Zuckerberg says that governments and established media outlets have continued to call for more censorship in recent years. He calls for the US Government to support American companies against Europe, which 'has an ever increasing number of laws institutionalising censorship' ⁽²⁾. According to him, these laws prevent innovation in Europe, a criticism already made by Mario Draghi in his report on European competitiveness ⁽³⁾.

In August 2024, Zuckerberg confirmed that Meta had bowed to government pressure to censor posts about Covid-19 ⁽⁴⁾.

What has the Commission asked of Meta in terms of limiting free expression on immigration, gender and other issues?

Submitted: 9.1.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(29 April 2025)**

The Digital Services Act (DSA) ⁽¹⁾ requires providers of very large online platforms (VLOPs), including Meta as provider of Facebook and Instagram, to have mechanisms in place to mitigate the risks posed by the dissemination of illegal content, including illegal hate speech and unlawful discriminatory content.

The DSA does not impose general monitoring obligations, nor does it regulate online content. It defers to EU or national laws to define what is illegal content, based on which judicial or administrative authorities may issue orders to act against it.

The DSA sets clear rules for transparency, accountability and user protection, and respects freedom of expression. It requires hosting services to set up notice and action mechanisms for users to report illegal content, including illegal hate speech.

The DSA also requires providers of VLOPs like Meta to assess systemic risks stemming from their services and put in place effective measures to mitigate such risks related to the dissemination of illegal content, gender-based violence, fundamental rights including the right to freedom of expression and information and to non-discrimination, and civic discourse and electoral processes.

The Commission opened formal proceedings ⁽²⁾ in relation to Meta's services Facebook and Instagram to assess whether Meta may have breached the DSA.

The current proceedings focus on deceptive advertising and disinformation, the over-suppression of political content, the non-availability of an effective real-time election monitoring tool and the notice and action mechanisms.

The European Media Freedom Act ⁽³⁾ will further strengthen media pluralism and independence in the EU.

The Commission remains fully committed to upholding freedom of expression.

¹ <https://about.fb.com/news/2025/01/meta-more-speech-fewer-mistakes/>

² Ibid, 4:11.

³ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/97e481fd-2dc3-412d-be4c-f152a8232961_en

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/article/2024/aug/27/mark-zuckerberg-says-white-house-pressured-facebook-to-censor-covid-19-content>

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market for Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act) 2022 OJ L277/1.

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_2373

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act) OJ 2024 L 17.4.2024.