

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000083/25
to the Commission
Jorge Buxadé Villalba (PFE), Jorge Martín Frías (PFE)
(10 January 2025)**

Subject: Censorship measures on social networks in breach of to the Digital Services Regulation

Recently the CEO of Meta, Mark Zuckerberg, acknowledged the existence of censorship tools and censorious attitudes on his social networks that have ultimately affected users in the EU. ⁽¹⁾

Given that the Digital Services Regulation reiterates that the rights enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights — in particular freedom of expression — must be complied with when establishing appropriate, proportionate and effective safeguards against the frequent publication of illegal content or the sending of unfounded notifications or complaints, and that this principle been breached not only by social networks but also fact-checking companies both in the USA and in the EU:

1. Does the Commission intend to launch an investigation into the number of people affected and the prevalence of these practices, which are in breach of the Digital Services Regulation, in the EU?
2. Does it intend to take measures, as part of its scheduled activities under the aegis of the European Democracy Shield or others, to combat all forms of censorship on social networks, with a view to putting an end to censorship — which is in breach of fundamental rights — in the EU once and for all particularly on platforms and social networks from third countries?

Submitted: 10.1.2025

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

The Commission is committed to protecting freedom of expression as one of the fundamental rights both offline and online. The Digital Services Act (DSA) ⁽¹⁾ aims to ensure a safe, predictable and trusted online environment that facilitates innovation and protects the fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter, such as the freedom of expression.

It sets out rules and responsibilities for online intermediaries to tackle illegal content (as defined in national and EU law), while safeguarding freedom of expression and information. The DSA does not regulate online content, nor does it define what is illegal content.

Instead, the DSA imposes due diligence obligations on providers of hosting services, requiring them to set up notice and action mechanisms for users to report illegal content and to act once they are notified that illegal content is accessible on their services in the EU.

The DSA also mandates transparency for content moderation actions. For instance, when certain items of information are restricted on the grounds that the information provided by the recipients constitutes illegal content, the concerned user must be informed *inter alia* on the reasons, on the facts and circumstances relied on taking the decision and on the possibilities to redress such decision.

The Commission opened proceedings against several very large online platforms, including Meta's Facebook and Instagram in April ⁽²⁾ and May 2024 ⁽³⁾.

The Commission is monitoring the functioning of Meta's services to ensure compliance with the DSA and can open additional proceedings, should this be necessary.

The European Democracy Shield will protect and promote democracy in the EU, in full respect of fundamental rights such as freedom of expression.

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

⁽¹⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-services-act-package>; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R2065>

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

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_2664