

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000326/25
to the Commission
Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová (Renew)
(24 January 2025)**

Subject: Fact-checkers and very large online platform (VLOP) commitments

The EU launched its Code of Practice on Disinformation in 2018 and updated it in 2022. To date, more than 40 digital platforms, non-profit organisations, fact-checkers and research institutes have signed up to it. This voluntary document also includes several commitments from signatories to strengthen collaboration with fact-checkers.

What changes does the Commission plan to make to this document if the major digital platforms and search engines, such as Google and Meta, stop cooperating with fact-checkers and cease to honour their commitments in the area of controlling the spread of misinformation on the Internet?

Submitted: 24.1.2025

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

The Code of Practice on Disinformation ⁽¹⁾ is a unique framework agreed upon by online platforms, search engines, the advertising industry, fact-checkers, researchers and civil society organisations.

Following the signatories' willingness to have the Code officially integrated into the framework of the Digital Services Act (DSA) ⁽²⁾, the European Board for Digital Services and the Commission assessed the Code on 13 February 2025, concluding that it meets the conditions for codes of conduct under Article 45 of the DSA.

In their opinions, the Commission and the Board recognise that, taken together, the Code's robust commitments and detailed measures constitute a strong set of mitigation measures and would serve as a relevant benchmark for determining compliance with the DSA for those providers of very large online platforms (VLOPs) and search engines (VLOSEs) that adhere to and comply with its commitments.

The Commission, in its opinion, also stresses that the Code is most effective when fully implemented. Although VLOPs and VLOSEs remain committed to the vast majority of the Code, the Commission is concerned that some of them withdrew from its fact-checking chapter.

Independent, impartial fact-checking can significantly contribute to identifying and addressing risks linked with the dissemination of disinformation, and the risk of negative effects on civic discourse and electoral integrity, while respecting freedom of expression.

The Commission will assess the commitment levels and implementation by VLOPs and VLOSEs signatories on a case-by-case basis, and, if necessary, will hold regulatory dialogues and decide about appropriate follow-up actions.

⁽¹⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/code-practice-disinformation> future

⁽²⁾ 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), OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1-102.