

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002212/25
to the Commission
Dolors Montserrat (PPE)
(3 June 2025)**

Subject: The Spanish Government's spreading of false rumours about state security forces

On 31 May 2025, Spain's Deputy Prime Minister and two government ministers circulated a claim that a former Guardia Civil officer had threatened to plant a car bomb in the Prime Minister's vehicle. Checks by journalists, however, revealed the claim to be false. It was nevertheless used as a political weapon, with statements explicitly identifying an agent of the Central Operative Unit (UCO), a specialist anti-crime team that is investigating scandals involving the government.

This is an example of institutional disinformation and an attack on the reputation and credibility of a state security force. It is undermining public trust in the police and democratic scrutiny.

In the light of Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065, which obliges public authorities to act diligently so as not to encourage the spread of disinformation, and in line with the European democracy action plan:

1. Does the Commission take the view that such dissemination of false rumours breaches the principle of diligence that the regulation requires public authorities to uphold?
2. Is the Commission intending to include specific recommendations on institutional disinformation in its rule-of-law report?

Submitted: 3.6.2025

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

The Digital Services Act (DSA) ⁽¹⁾ requires providers of designated very large online platforms (VLOPs) and very large online search engines (VLOSEs) to assess and mitigate systemic risks linked to civic discourse, while protecting fundamental rights, including the freedom of expression and information.

Under Article 17 of the DSA, providers of hosting services are required to provide a clear and specific statement of reasons for any restrictions of the visibility of specific items of information provided by the recipient of the service. These provisions apply to the providers of such hosting services. They do not impose obligations on public authorities.

The Commission's Rule of Law report ⁽²⁾ contains a dedicated chapter on media freedom and media pluralism. Where appropriate, the report includes specific recommendations addressed to the relevant Member States.

The Commission will continue monitoring relevant developments in the Member States and remains committed to strengthening the Rule of Law in the EU.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2025-rule-law-report-communication-and-country-chapters_en.