

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002218/25
to the Commission
Christine Anderson (ESN)
(3 June 2025)**

Subject: French intelligence services allegedly call on Telegram to censor conservative voices in Romania

Pavel Durov, the founder of the Telegram messaging platform, has stated publicly that in spring 2025 Nicolas Lerner, the head of France's foreign intelligence service (DGSE), asked him to suppress conservative Romanian voices on Telegram in the run-up to the presidential elections in Romania ⁽¹⁾. Durov maintains that he rejected the request. The French authorities have firmly rejected the allegations and described them as unfounded.

1. Is the Commission aware of any attempts by the French authorities or intelligence services to influence content on platforms such as Telegram in connection with the presidential elections in Romania, and how does the Commission assess such allegations with regard to upholding fundamental rights in the EU, in particular the freedom of speech and the freedom of information?
2. What steps is the Commission taking to ensure that Member States do not exert undue influence on digital platforms, especially in the context of elections in other Member States?
3. Is the Commission planning to look into these allegations and, if necessary, take action to protect the integrity of elections and the independence of digital communication platforms in the EU?

Submitted: 3.6.2025

**Question for written answer E-002390/25
to the Commission
Petra Steger (PFE), Mary Khan (ESN)
(13 June 2025)**

Subject: Censorship attempts by France in the run-up to the Romanian presidential elections

According to Telegram founder Pawel Durow, France made deliberate attempts to silence conservative voices in Romania on his platform ahead of the second round of the Romanian presidential elections ⁽¹⁾. It is striking that, just two days before the elections, the head of the French foreign intelligence service, Nicolas Lerner — who had allegedly asked Durow to implement this censorship — travelled to Romania especially to meet the leaders of the Romanian secret service ⁽²⁾. Even more seriously, Macron's bosom buddy and Renew Group leader Valérie Hayer issued an open statement to France Info saying that every effort would be made on the ground to ensure that the next Romanian President is pro-European ⁽³⁾. These rampantly proliferating fantasies of control and censorship are nothing more than an attack on democracy. After all, any attempt to influence national elections through digital platforms such as Telegram constitutes a violation of fundamental European values. What is more, in statements made by ex-Commissioner Thierry Breton — who openly contemplated nullifying undesirable election results — the Commission has itself revealed a dangerous readiness to undermine democratic processes.

1. What information does the Commission have on the censorship allegations made by Telegram founder Pawel Durow?
2. Is the Commission planning to open an investigation to look into these serious allegations?
3. What specific measures is the Commission taking to prevent such interference by Member States in national elections?

Submitted: 13.6.2025

**Joint answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(4 August 2025)**

The organisation and conduct of elections are the competence and primary responsibility of the EU Member States' national authorities and courts, in accordance with their national rules and legislation, as well as their international commitments and EU law. The Commission does not have general competence to intervene in the organisation and conduct of national elections.

¹ <https://t.me/durov/232>

² <https://www.spiegel.de/netzwelt/web/pawel-durow-telegram-gruender-kritisiert-franzoesische-einmischung-in-rumaenien-wahl-a-1eddfa73-f872-4ece-bf7c-64459e217159>

³ <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/news/vorwurf-der-einmischung-frankreichs-geheimdienstchef-soll-rumaenien-kurz-vor-der-wahl-besucht-haben-li.2327797>

⁴ <https://www.lejdd.fr/International/presidentielle-en-roumanie-valerie-hayer-accusee-dingerence-au-profit-du-candidat-centriste-pro-ue-157948>

The Digital Services Act (DSA) ⁽¹⁾ requires providers of Very Large Online Platforms (VLOP) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSE) to assess and mitigate systemic risks linked to electoral processes and civic discourse, while protecting fundamental rights, including the freedom of expression ⁽²⁾. The Commission published guidelines in this area ⁽³⁾.

Under Article 33 of the DSA, Telegram reported fewer than 45 million users and is not designated as a VLOP ⁽⁴⁾, thus not under the Commission's direct supervision of the DSA. ⁽⁵⁾

The Commission supports EU Member States mainly through the framework of the European cooperation network on elections ⁽⁶⁾, hosting exchanges among competent authorities as well as through the application of EU law provisions relevant in national electoral contexts, i.e. the DSA, the General Data Protection Regulation ⁽⁷⁾, the Artificial Intelligence Act ⁽⁸⁾ and the regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising ⁽⁹⁾ (from October 2025).

Protecting the integrity of elections is also a priority in the implementation of the DSA. A Working Group has been set up within the European Board for Digital Services (Board) to focus on the integrity of the information space and to discuss elections and civic discourse ⁽¹⁰⁾. The Board also released a DSA Elections Toolkit for national authorities, providing tools, best practices, and lessons learned ⁽¹¹⁾.

⁽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), OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1-102: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ Articles 34 and 35 of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52024XC03014&qid=1714466886277>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://telegram.org/tos/eu-dsa>.

⁽⁵⁾ Telegram appointed its legal representative in Belgium, placing the responsibility for compliance monitoring with the Belgian Digital Services Coordinator, the Belgian Institute for Postal Services and Telecommunications.

⁽⁶⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/democracy-eu-citizenship-anti-corruption/democracy-and-electoral-rights/european-cooperation-network-elections_en.

⁽⁷⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj/eng>.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj/eng>.

⁽⁹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/900/oj/eng>.

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/working-group-4-european-board-digital-services-integrity-information-space>.

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/dsa-elections-toolkit-digital-services-coordinators>.