

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000566/26
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(10 February 2026)**

Subject: Manipulative digital practices and effective online consumer protection

In Sicily, Codacons (Italian consumer protection body) has launched the ‘Sentinelle Digitali’ (‘Digital Watchdogs’) initiative, an information and training programme aimed at teaching the public how to recognise and prevent online scams, phishing, identity theft and privacy violations, focusing in particular on the most vulnerable groups ⁽¹⁾.

Even though the EU has a framework for consumer protection and digital services, design and personalisation practices that influence individuals’ choices (dark patterns, subscription traps, complex opt-out procedures and misleading messages) are still very common.

In the light of the forthcoming Digital Fairness Act, expected in 2026, I would ask the Commission the following questions:

1. What is its assessment of the effectiveness of the enforcement measures, and what coordinated actions will it strengthen (including cross-border measures and sweeps) to ensure swift remedies and dissuasive sanctions?
2. What operational guidelines will it put in place to reduce fragmentation and insufficient application with regard to the Digital Services Act and consumer law?
3. Does it plan to support literacy and prevention programmes aimed at vulnerable groups, promoting local initiatives such as ‘Sentinelle Digitali’?

Submitted: 10.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(27 May 2026)**

The Digital Fairness Act (DFA) that the Commission plans to propose in the fourth quarter 2026 will update EU consumer protection rules. It will seek to tackle specific identified consumer protection gaps, with a particular focus on the protection of minors.

More concrete EU consumer rules will facilitate enforcement against unfair practices. In parallel, the Commission plans to revise the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation ⁽¹⁾ and assess the need to centralise enforcement in specific cases directly at EU level.

The Digital Services Act (DSA) ⁽²⁾ provides a robust framework applicable to intermediary services, addressing the dissemination of illegal content online, including scams and fraud.

Ensuring consistency of the potential DFA measures with other EU rules, such as the DSA, is an important part of the ongoing impact assessment analysis for the DFA. The Commission has already issued a report on the interplay of the DSA with existing EU law. ⁽³⁾

Moreover, the Commission plans to adopt in 2026 an action plan against digital fraud. It will focus on prevention measures, disruption of fraudulent activities and cooperation with Member States and stakeholders to support and protect victims. ⁽⁴⁾

¹ <https://www.canalesicilia.it/prevenzione-dei-rischi-web-al-via-linziativa-sentinelle-digitali/>.

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/2394/oj>.

⁽²⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj>.

⁽³⁾ Report from the Commission on the application of Article 33 of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 and the interaction of that regulation with other legal acts, COM(2025) 708 final, 17.11.2025, and the Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report, SWD(2025) 368 final, 17.11.2025, available at: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/report-application-article-33-regulation-eu-20222065-dsa-and-interaction-regulation-other-legal>.

⁽⁴⁾ Call for evidence available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/16313-Fighting-online-fraud-action-plan_en.

A provisional political agreement was reached in November 2025⁽⁵⁾ to revise the Payment Services Directive⁽⁶⁾ and to establish a Payment Services Regulation, introducing stronger safeguards against online fraud with measures to strengthen awareness and prevention of payment fraud, targeting vulnerable groups such as younger and older persons and individuals with low digital skill.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/11/27/payment-services-council-and-parliament-agree-to-step-up-the-fight-against-fraud-and-increase-transparency/>.

⁽⁶⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2015/2366/oj>.