

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000587/26
to the Commission
Virginie Joron (PFE)
(11 February 2026)**

Subject: A billion euro for the University of Amsterdam: how much do the Commission's watchdogs for the Digital Services Act cost?

On 3 February 2026, the Judiciary Committee of the US House of Representatives published a report detailing the Commission's interference and manoeuvring in elections in Europe. In over 90 meetings organised under the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation, the Commission put pressure on platforms to change their global content moderation rules and further censor certain conservative content, such as content on migration and the COVID-19 pandemic and content criticising the sexualisation of minors ⁽¹⁾.

In response to the report, Euronews published an article fully supporting the Commission, relying on the testimony of two 'experts' working in the Netherlands ⁽²⁾, who at no point mention the funding ⁽³⁾ received from the Commission. Mr de Vreese and Ms Helberger reportedly received EUR 2 million ⁽⁴⁾ and EUR 1.5 million ⁽⁵⁾ respectively from the European Research Council. They purportedly also participated in other projects, as well as in the DSA Observatory funded by the Open Society Foundations. Over a ten-year period, the University of Amsterdam allegedly received or managed EUR 1.5 billion in funding from the Commission, while Euronews reportedly received EUR 238 million ⁽⁶⁾.

1. Why does the Commission not make visible the names of the 'experts' who receive funding, along with the amounts that they receive?
2. How much have these two experts and the organisations associated with them received?
3. Why are four Commission officials participating in a conference on the Digital Services Act organised by the University of Amsterdam's Institute for Information Law and by the DSA Observatory ⁽⁷⁾, even though those organisations are not listed in the Transparency Register ⁽⁸⁾?

Submitted: 11.2.2026

**Answer given by Ms Zaharieva on behalf of the European Commission
(16 July 2026)**

The Commission rejects the unfounded allegations made by the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in its report of 3 February 2026.

1. Under Article 38 of the Financial Regulation ⁽⁹⁾ the Commission makes available on a centralised website ('Financial Transparency System' ⁽¹⁰⁾) information on recipients of funds from the budget, including on remunerated experts contracted by the Commission for above EUR 15 000.

Pursuant to Article 49 (3) of the Horizon Europe Regulation ⁽¹¹⁾ '*the names of independent external experts evaluating grant applications*' are published on the Funding and Tenders Portal ⁽¹²⁾, under section 'Guidance & Documents', subsection 'Reference documents', 'Experts' lists.

⁽¹⁾<https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/2026-02/THE-FOREIGN-CENSORSHIP-THREAT-PART-II-2-3-26.pdf>.

⁽²⁾<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2026/02/09/is-the-eu-really-censoring-americans-interfering-in-elections-and-targeting-conservative-c>.

⁽³⁾<https://www.uva.nl/en/profile/v/r/c.h.devreese/c.h.devreese.html?cb#Profile>; https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/erc_2014_cog_results_sh.pdf; <https://www.aimedemocracy.nl/about-us/>.

⁽⁴⁾https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/erc_2014_cog_results_sh.pdf; <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/647316>.

⁽⁵⁾<https://www.ivir.nl/erc-grant-for-prof-dr-natali-helberger/>.

⁽⁶⁾According to the EU's Financial Transparency System.

⁽⁷⁾https://dsa-observatory.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/2026-Programme-The-DSA-and-Platform-Regulation-Conference_06.02.2026.pdf.

⁽⁸⁾https://transparency-register.europa.eu/faqs-and-contact_en.

⁽⁹⁾<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj/eng>.

⁽¹⁰⁾<https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/index.html>.

⁽¹¹⁾Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe — the framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013.

⁽¹²⁾<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/reference-documents?programmePeriod=2021-2027&frameworkProgramme=43108390>.

2. The European Research Council has funded a Starting Grant of EUR 1 479 515 to Dr Helberger for the project ‘Personews’ ⁽¹³⁾, and a Consolidator Grant of EUR 2 million to Dr de Vreese for the project ‘EUROPINIONS’ ⁽¹⁴⁾. The organisation University of Amsterdam has received in total for H2020 and Horizon Europe (data until mid-May 2026) EUR 387 532 951.

3. The attendance of Commission officials at events related to the Digital Service Act is part of the Commission’s actions to foster capacity building and knowledge development for its enforcement. Public conferences are not meetings with interest representatives which require the registration of the interest representatives concerned in the Transparency Register under Commission Decision (EU) 2024/3082 ⁽¹⁵⁾. For the conference organised by the Digital Service Act Observatory on 16-17 February 2026, conference video recordings are publicly available on the organiser’s webpage, including the intervention made by the only participating Commission official holding a management position.

⁽¹³⁾<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/638514>.

⁽¹⁴⁾<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/647316>.

⁽¹⁵⁾https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202403082.