

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000880/26
to the Commission**

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(3 March 2026)

Subject: Protection of EU officials and civil society against risks of privacy violations and foreign sanctions in relation to the implementation of the Digital Services Act

In a report published in February 2026, the United States House Judiciary Committee has once again attacked our digital regulations, claiming that the Digital Services Act amounts to ‘foreign censorship’. The report contains thousands of email exchanges between digital platforms such as Meta and TikTok, Commission officials, and civil society organisations, such as Democracy Reporting International and Reporters Without Borders.

These documents expose the identity of EU officials and members of civil society, raising concerns about violations of personal data and privacy, including breaches of the General Data Protection Regulation, and a risk of sanctions, such as the travel bans imposed by the US State Department on former Commissioner Thierry Breton, civil society members involved in combating disinformation and online hate speech, and Member of the French Parliament Eric Bothorel.

1. What measures will the Commission take to address the violations of privacy and personal data, and what safeguards will it put in place to ensure that such breaches do not happen again?
2. How will the Commission ensure that the EU officials and citizens publicly exposed in this report are protected from potential US sanctions, and how it will guarantee the functional protection of its officials in the event of retaliatory measures?

Submitted: 3.3.2026

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(20 May 2026)

The Digital Services Act (DSA ⁽¹⁾) obliges the Commission to publish decisions with due regard to protecting confidential data of affected companies.

That is why, before publication, the Commission gives companies a chance to redact sensitive business information ⁽²⁾. This due process and regard for confidential information should be followed by all sides, including by providers of online platforms under the EU’s data protection rules.

The publication of personal data of EU staff and civil society experts is deeply concerning. Having published personal data as part of unredacted documents potentially exposes the respective companies to legal liability for personal data breaches under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ⁽³⁾. Consequently, the Commission is exploring a complaint on behalf of the affected staff members to the competent Data Protection Authority.

The Commission has a duty of care for its staff, which it takes very seriously. An expression of this duty is Article 24 of the Staff Regulations ⁽⁴⁾ according to which the Commission assists, if the relevant conditions are met, staff members who are subject to ‘threats, insulting or defamatory acts or utterances, or any attack to person’.

Affected staff members have been provided with information on how to obtain support in case of threats, insults, defamation or other attacks to their person or property. Moreover, the Commission already provides needs-based counselling and assistance to staff enforcing the DSA.

The enforcement of EU democratically adopted digital regulations is a sovereign matter. The Commission remains committed to enforcing the DSA at full speed and, in doing so, stands firmly behind its staff.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/digital-services-act.html>.

⁽²⁾ Article 80(2) and Recital 146 of the DSA.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02016R0679-20160504&qid=1532348683434>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01962R0031-20210101>.