

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001497/26
to the Commission
Dan-Ștefan Motreanu (PPE)
(13 April 2026)**

Subject: ‘Dark patterns’ in online services

A complaint has recently been lodged under the Digital Services Act alleging that YouTube, as a very large online platform, imposes a profiling-based recommendation system on users by default and does not provide a sufficiently accessible alternative that avoids personalisation based on user data. According to the complainants, certain interface design practices may make it difficult for users to find or use non-personalised recommendation options, raising concerns about the potential use of deceptive or manipulative design techniques.

These allegations also highlight broader concerns regarding ‘dark patterns’ in online services, which may influence users’ behaviour or limit their ability to exercise meaningful choice when interacting with digital platforms.

Can the Commission indicate how it will tackle potential breaches of the Digital Services Act linked to recommendation systems and interface design, and ensure that platforms effectively provide accessible alternatives to profiling-based recommendations?

Submitted: 13.4.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(1 July 2026)**

The Digital Services Act ⁽¹⁾ (DSA) requires providers of very large online platforms and of very large online search engines to provide at least one non-profiling-based option for each of their recommender systems. It shall be easily accessible, directly where information is recommended. The DSA also requires interface design that does not manipulate users.

The Commission continuously monitors compliance with these obligations, including for YouTube and makes use of its investigative powers to address suspected non-compliance. Currently, the providers of Temu ⁽²⁾ and Shein ⁽³⁾ are being investigated for suspected non-compliance with their recommender systems obligations.

The provider of AliExpress, after a similar investigation, has implemented commitments addressing the Commission’s concerns. It now offers directly accessible controls ⁽⁴⁾ that allow users to disable personalised recommendations for each major recommender system.

The provider of TikTok, after an in-depth investigation, has been preliminarily found in breach of the DSA for the addictive design of its interface ⁽⁵⁾. If the preliminary findings are confirmed, TikTok’s provider will be compelled to change its interface design, including by disabling addictive features.

Giving users more control over their online environment is at the core of the DSA and diligently enforced by the Commission.

Regarding broader concerns about dark patterns online, EU consumer law ⁽⁶⁾ applies to traders whose practices materially impact consumers’ transactional decision-making. The upcoming Digital Fairness Act ⁽⁷⁾ could specify rules on dark patterns under EU consumer law. Deceptive design to collect personal data is also prohibited by the General Data Protection Regulation ⁽⁸⁾.

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

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_5622.

⁽³⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-launches-investigation-shein-under-digital-services-act>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.aliexpress.com/p/transparencycenter/index.html>.

⁽⁵⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_312.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2005/29/oj/eng>.

⁽⁷⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14622-Digital-Fairness-Act_en.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02016R0679-20160504>.