

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002016/26
to the Commission
Virginie Joron (PFE)
(13 May 2026)**

Subject: The Commission and its secret group to censor the Internet (Digital Services Act)

A report by the US Congress ⁽¹⁾ published on 3 February 2026 states that the Commission put pressure on platforms to conform and censor more content during more than 90 meetings between 2022 and 2024 organised under the Code of Practice on Disinformation.

Unit CNECT.I.4, Media Convergence and Social Media ⁽²⁾, ran the Crisis Response Subgroup in cooperation with unregistered organisation VOST, sometimes with Commissioner Thierry Breton in attendance ⁽³⁾ or in an Italian wine bar ⁽⁴⁾.

Strangely, Brussels once again called on platforms to limit COVID-19 disinformation narratives at the end of 2022. On 7 December that year, the Commission formally ordered the (permanent?) removal of a documentary on COVID-19 called Died Suddenly ⁽⁵⁾.

On 24 January 2024, three weeks before its president launched her re-election campaign, the Commission asked platforms to send a report on narratives observed on the ground ⁽⁶⁾.

1. Why did foreign or unregistered entities ⁽⁷⁾ and trainees take part in secret discussions to which no MEPs were invited?
2. Why has the Commission not published an official decision on the Died Suddenly documentary to provide the grounds for its permanent censorship?
3. Are such agreements among competitors in line with the competition rules in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ⁽⁸⁾?

Submitted: 13.5.2026

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

The Commission disputes the false allegations contained in the report published on 3 February 2026 by the Committee on the Judiciary of the US House of Representatives.

The Code of Conduct on Disinformation ⁽¹⁾ is a voluntary tool set up by its signatories. The meetings organised by the Code's permanent Taskforce are meetings of the signatories. All relevant information concerning the Code, as well as a list of its signatories, is available in the Transparency Centre ⁽²⁾.

The Digital Services Act (DSA ⁽³⁾) does not define what constitutes illegal content; this is the exclusive reserve of national or EU legislation.

The Commission does not have the power to order platforms to remove specific content. Decisions concerning the retention or removal of content are made by the providers themselves, in accordance with their own terms and conditions of use, including for the video content to which you refer.

However, the DSA requires online platform services to provide a clear and specific explanation of the reasons for restricting or removing content and to offer effective remedies to users.

If a user believes they have been wronged, the DSA thus allows them to easily access redress mechanisms that are unparalleled in the world.

¹ Annex V, Part 1 of the report: <https://tinyurl.com/47fdem4w>; <https://tinyurl.com/y292798h>. The Commission asked for contributions for a joint document proposing anticipatory measures, coordinated removal, demonetisation of certain content and promotion of 'authoritative sources'. The AFP reports that it has received EUR 5 million per year from the Commission: <https://tinyurl.com/3u3u5b49>.

² And not 'media pluralism'.

³ On 23 October 2021.

⁴ In December 2022.

⁵ The documentary can no longer be accessed anywhere but at <https://rumble.com/embed/ucfsd.v66v72j/>.

⁶ Ursula von der Leyen announced her candidacy on 19 February 2024.

⁷ VOST Europe, Science Feedback, Pagella Politica, Crisp Thinking, etc. could not be found on the register.

⁸ Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that the following are prohibited: (...) all concerted practices which may distort competition, and in particular those which (...) limit or control production, markets (...).

⁽¹⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/code-conduct-disinformation>

⁽²⁾ <https://disinfocode.eu/>.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 on a Single Market For Digital Services, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj/eng>

Specific provision is made for codes of conduct such as the Code on Disinformation as voluntary initiatives in Article 45 of the DSA. The Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA) are compatible with EU competition rules, which continue to apply in full ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽⁴⁾ Digital Markets Act (DMA)
https://digital-markets-act.ec.europa.eu/about-dma_en.