

**Question for written answer E-000364/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Increasing inequality in the world

According to a World Bank study entitled 'Digital Dividends Overview', digital technology is developing at breakneck speed. However, economic growth, new jobs and the development of new services are lagging far behind.

The study points out that 60% of the global population today does not have access to the internet, while 20% of the global population is illiterate and therefore unable to benefit from the opportunities offered by new technologies. Around six billion people worldwide still do not have access to fast internet, and despite the widespread availability of mobile telephones, two billion people do not own one. Furthermore, half a billion people live outside of areas with a mobile signal. The study also states that the disappearance of traditional jobs, the weakening of the middle class and the increasing industrial concentration of the digital era are creating a risk that the internet will become a means for controlling information rather than distributing it. The consequence of all this is increasing inequality in the world, as the internet has not been able to guarantee the social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups (women, the poor, the sick and persons with disabilities).

In light of the foregoing:

1. What is the Commission's opinion on the danger of the internet increasing inequality?
2. What will the Commission do to ensure that the EU's internet usage policy helps to combat inequality?