Question for written answer E-005247/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Smart IT systems and data security

In June 2016 the Commission launched a public consultation on the safety of apps downloaded for use on smartphones or tablets. This is an important initiative, especially given the increasing popularity of apps that allow people to monitor their vital signs.

Apps downloaded to mobile devices are nevertheless just one example of the smart computer programs that are being developed at a breathtaking pace. These programs will very soon be in use across the board and are already being interconnected to form systems – in houses, flats, hotels and workplaces. The purpose of such systems – equipped with a range of sensors, cameras, recording devices and scanners – will be to make people's lives more comfortable (by personalising the ways in which the systems react to the preferences of individual users, e.g. temperature, humidity, light intensity), and safer (thanks to sensors that monitor vital signs and which are able to inform the relevant services if a risk is detected).

That is fantastic. It is not, however, difficult to imagine that the information processed by smart systems – most of them connected to the internet – will be enormously valuable to companies which may potentially be interested in using that information without the user's knowledge or agreement. That is why it is important to draw up appropriate regulatory frameworks for the producers of solutions of this kind, in order to provide a high level of protection for EU citizens' privacy and security.

In the light of the foregoing, is the Commission intending to take appropriate action in this area?