

**Question for written answer E-000103/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: New digital technologies and EU citizens' right to privacy

Our lives are becoming increasingly digitalised. It is now the case that not only telephones and televisions, but also cars, household appliances and even entire homes are fitted out with smart systems. These systems work by gathering data on users, and processing that data in order to tailor the equipment to suit users' individual preferences.

Unfortunately, however, smart appliances that are designed to make life easier for us also pose a risk to privacy in a number of different ways. Take smart, voice-controlled speakers, for example. Such speakers record all the sounds that are made within a certain space (including conversations between those using that space) and send them to the central servers at a company where a special program identifies and interprets voice requests and turns them into specific commands. Unfortunately, however, those recordings not only include commands that are given, but also everything that happens within range of the speaker. The users of the devices concerned, however, are unaware of this.

To make matters even worse, although there are specific rules concerning the management of telecommunications data, for example, there are no rules laying down the conditions under which sensitive information recorded by smart speakers may be collected, collated, stored and processed. Furthermore, it is not known what can be done to safeguard against attacks by hackers and the theft of such confidential, thoroughly private material.

Is the Commission aware of this problem, and how is the Commission intending to address it?