

**Question for written answer E-002259/2017  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Franz Obermayr (ENF)**

Subject: Freedom of expression on social networks

According to a recent article by Junge Freiheit<sup>1</sup>, Germany's Network Enforcement Act (Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz, NetzDG), intended to combat hate speech and fake news on social networks, has already led to illegal content being deleted. There are supposedly no more checks to establish whether or not the activities are punishable. Any private network operators that fail to delete the relevant content face fines of up to EUR 5 million for private persons and up to EUR 50 million for companies. Content must be deleted if it is deemed to disrupt public peace, disparage the German President or religious faiths, incite hatred or generally have a bearing on the protection of honour, e.g. slander and defamation. Content written in languages other than German are not covered by the Act.

1. How does the Commission regard the fact that private companies have to make executive enforcements and legal assessments against private individuals on social networks?
2. Does the Commission not believe that German citizens are being discriminated against given that the law applies only to German-language posts?
3. To what extent does the Commission protect freedom of expression on social networks?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://jungefreiheit.de/debatte/kommentar/2017/die-zensur-ist-wieder-da>