

**Question for written answer E-005965/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE), Josep-Maria Terricabras (Verts/ALE) and Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)

Subject: Violation of the privacy of users' communications

Following instructions from the Spanish Government, Telefonica and Vodafone have been blocking communications addressed to the Catalanian pro-referendum website¹. This blocking started on 16 September and has been increasing. By doing so, the Spanish Government is violating the privacy of users' communications and directly attacking the two main pillars of the legal framework of data protection in the EU².

These two pillars are the ePrivacy Directive³ and the General Data Protection Regulation⁴. Both ensure that personal data can only be gathered under strict conditions and for legitimate purposes.

Common EU rules have been established to ensure that personal data enjoy a high standard of protection everywhere in the EU. The right of privacy has therefore not been respected by the Spanish Government.

What action will the Commission take to ensure that the Spanish Government respects users' rights to privacy?

Given the recent events in Catalonia⁵, does the Commission consider that the Spanish state is acting arbitrarily?

Will the Commission take steps to prevent breaches of fundamental rights in Spain?

¹ <http://www.ref1oct.eu>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/online-privacy>

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2002L0058:20091219:EN:HTML>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/reform/index_en.htm

⁵ Confiscation of posters, the prohibition of political events, Spanish police raids on several Catalan newspapers, the threat by a Spanish prosecutor to close the websites of both the Association of Municipalities for Independence (AMI) and the Catalan Association of Municipalities (ACM), to mention just a few