

**Question for written answer P-001183/2019  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner (ECR)**

Subject: Facebook's dominant position and consumers' rights

Facebook dominates the European social media market. Many of the principal applications used by consumers — Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp — are controlled by this one operator. The company, which has staggered from one scandal to another, is making record profits partly because people find it very difficult to stop using these services. Facebook's position is so strong that, in practice, ceasing to use Facebook is tantamount to social death for many people.

Facebook collects an enormous amount of information on its users, which it aggregates between its different services. Users are also monitored on websites outside Facebook. Facebook even creates shadow profiles of users who have never registered as service users.

Germany's Federal Cartel Office (FCO) has stipulated that Facebook should give users the option of refusing to allow their data to be gathered and aggregated without being compelled to stop using services on account of such a refusal. If the decision becomes law and Facebook does not comply with it, it can be fined up to 10% of its annual turnover.

According to news sources, e-mails internal to Facebook which have been used as background material for a very critical study of the company published by the British Parliament show that the company knowingly and deliberately breached users' privacy and infringed competition law.

1. Does the Commission consider the current state of competition on the European social media market to be healthy, or is the leading position of Facebook becoming too dominant?
2. Does the Commission consider it desirable to convert the decision of the German Federal Cartel Office into a European standard in order to further strengthen the position of consumers?
3. What comments would the Commission like to make concerning the British Parliament's Facebook study and its possible consequences?