

**Question for written answer E-000782/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Google AdSense: freedom of expression on the internet and competition law

In January 2017, Google AdSense announced that it had banned 340 websites from using Google ads. One of the justifications provided was the suspicion that some of those websites were misrepresenting content to users, including by impersonating news organisations, and could be circulating fake news stories. The decision made by Google is unchallengeable, as the company has a de facto monopoly on online advertising.

Advertising is one of the very few ways in which websites, particularly small-scale blogs, can generate income, and the move is therefore likely to force some of the sites to close down.

Google is not, however, a public authority, nor is it an impartial judge, as it clearly has commercial interests to protect. What is more, it is difficult to distinguish between false and unsubstantiated information.

1. Is the Commission aware of this decision, which could constitute a breach of the right to freedom of expression guaranteed under Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the constitutional traditions common to the Member States?
2. Would it agree that Google's market position could be at odds with the competition rules laid down in Articles 101 and 102 of the TFEU?
3. What measures will it take to ensure compliance with the Treaties?