Question for written answer E-000491/2020
to the Commission
Rule 138
Stelios Kouloglou (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Clearview AI, privacy and data protection breaches

According to recent revelations 1, Clearview AI, a start-up company based in the US, has developed a facial recognition app that allows clients such as US law enforcement authorities to match photos of unknown people to images of them found online. Reportedly, the company has illegally collected more than three billion images of individuals from sources like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Given that Clearview AI’s ability to protect data is questionable and has not been tested by an independent party, and taking into consideration the fact that millions of EU citizens share personal photos on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is the Commission and the European Data Protection Supervisor aware of Clearview AI’s activities, and is its software used by any companies or national authorities in the EU?
2. Is the company in possession of the data of EU citizens, and if so, how has the Commission ensured that it has been lawfully obtained and processed?
3. Are the company’s activities consistent with EU rules on privacy, data protection and data processing, and EU-US bilateral agreements on privacy?

---