

**Question for written answer E-005177/2020
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Eva Kaili (S&D)

Subject: Smartphone apps using microphones and cameras for targeted advertisements

It is becoming more and more evident that several apps seem to be using the microphones and cameras installed on our smartphones, while not using the app, in order to target us with personalised advertisements. Voice assistants such as Alexa and Siri are always ready to talk to us, which must mean that our devices are always ready to listen. Other reports have indicated how hundreds of apps use 'ultrasonic tones' to track where we physically are. These apps need access to our microphones in order to detect 'beacon' noises emitted in shops and by advertisements.

The best solution would be to turn off the 'always on' microphone feature on our handsets, but turning off microphone access will affect and disable main features.

Given that this issue is of great importance for many consumers in the EU:

1. Will the Commission consider making it mandatory for companies to provide consumers with more options on their handset settings, such as 'use the microphone or camera only while using the app'?
2. Will it consider making it mandatory for companies owning these applications to make it easy for consumers to remove the default option of receiving targeted advertisements, by removing constant pop-up notifications on cookies?