

**Question for written answer E-001037/2021  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Tom Vandendriessche (ID)**

**Subject:** Censorship and free market restrictions including shadow banning and concealment or suppression of organic search results on internet

Despite previous fines running to billions, Google is continuing to use its internet search dominance to exclude its rivals, which clearly constitutes abuse of a monopoly position.

At the same time, Commission investigations into the advertising market are failing to encompass the non-profit free market for ideas on internet. By smothering organic search results, Google is effectively distorting any democratic debate.

The same problem is arising with Twitter. Notwithstanding its denials, there is scientific evidence indicating shadow banning of certain users and content<sup>1</sup>.

Facebook, for its part, makes no bones about blocking pages and individual users, while also engaging in shadow banning. In other words, it is guilty of censorship.

While the Digital Markets Act is not scheduled for adoption before 2022, the EU Commissioner for competition is nevertheless already in a position to uphold the free market and freedom of expression on internet.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission agree that it is necessary to widen the scope of the Google investigation to assess the implications for not-for-profit platform users, such as NGOs, political parties and associations?
2. Does it agree that other major dominant players, such as Facebook and Twitter, should also be investigated in this connection?
3. Should it emerge that they have indeed been manipulating the market, will it take the necessary countermeasures, such as imposing fines, introducing additional checks and, if necessary, ending the monopoly positions enjoyed by them?

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://arxiv.org/abs/2012.05101> — Erwan Le Merrer, Benoit Morgan, Gilles Trédan 'Setting the Record Straighter on Shadow Banning'.