

**Question for written answer E-001274/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Mathilde Androuët (ID)

Subject: Penalising social networks which systematically deny users freedom of expression

On 15 December 2020, the Commission published its proposals for regulations on digital services and markets, which, come 2022, should establish a new legislative framework that can be used to hold tech giants to account. With regard to content moderation, this framework will impose 'obligations of means' on social networks. The Commission is also calling for digital platforms to be transparent about the way their algorithms recommend content.

But what about the way these platforms unilaterally censor and ban accounts in the name of 'the public interest' and 'the fight against discrimination'?

In response to these arbitrary practices employed by Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple (GAFA), Judit Varga, the Hungarian Minister of Justice, has called for the European Union to address the issue of freedom of expression. She was particularly critical of 'shadowbanning', the deliberate attempt to keep the views held by a significant proportion of Europeans off social media sites, on ideological grounds.

M^s Varga spoke (18 January 2021 Reuters dispatch) about the possibility of penalising social media platforms if they are found to be engaging in 'systematic abuses' which hamper freedom of expression.

Would the Commission be in favour of this?