

Question for written answer E-001423/2021/rev.1
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Towards a performance audit of the Commission's Directorate-General for Competition

The Commission's first high-profile task involved implementing competition and anti-cartel rules¹. The complete domination of Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon in Europe is glaringly obvious, as the Commission itself has acknowledged².

According to Tommaso Valletti³, professor at Imperial College, the Directorate-General for Competition (DG Competition) is ineffective in the digital economy: the Commission has approved 1000 mergers in the digital economy and not turned down a single one, while Google and Facebook have been controlling 95% of their markets for the last 10 years. The directorate regularly loses lawsuits against tech giants before the Court of Justice of the EU⁴.

Has the Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS) assessed the performance of DG Competition in the digital economy?

DG Competition refuses to open investigations even when it is clear that anti-competitive agreements have been concluded (on the Parler application, for instance) or when Europe's strategic interests are at stake (Microsoft's acquisition and subsequent closure of Nokia⁵). Moreover, employment does not enter the equation in its decision-making. The Commission forced Alstom to sell its Reichshoffen plant before authorising its takeover of Bombardier. Pursuant to Article 147 and the preamble to the TFEU, the EU's main focus should be jobs for Europeans.

What action will the Commission take to ensure that Commissioner Reynders and the IAS urge DG Competition to open the investigations required and include safeguarding jobs for Europeans among its immediate objectives?

¹ Article 101 et seq. of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The third recital of the preamble is worded as follows: 'Affirming as the essential objective of their efforts the constant improvements of the living and working conditions of their peoples'.

² COM(2020)0842, p. 2; 'The enforcement experience under EU competition rules, [shows that the] gatekeeper power of these large digital platforms is often misused by means of unfair behaviour vis-à-vis economically dependent business users and customers [...]'

³ Hearing before the European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) on 19 February 2021.

⁴ curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2020-07/cp200090fr.pdf

⁵ www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-003513-ASW_FR.html