

Question for written answer E-002547/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
Jordi Cañas (Renew)

Subject: Infringement of freedom of expression by social media channel Facebook

Facebook recently closed down the account of Félix Ovejero, the author of a long list of academic works who holds a doctorate in economics from the University of Barcelona¹.

Facebook did not just block his account temporarily so it could be reviewed, as usually happens when it is suspected that publications may be in breach of European standards. Instead Facebook closed his account down and removed it without giving any explanation. This constitutes censorship and an attack on freedom of expression² by a company which exercises arbitrary control over discussion on the networks.

In addition to not being able to defend himself, Ovejero has lost all the content, documents, letters, photographs and academic publications that were stored on his account.

Furthermore, not knowing why his account was closed down feeds conjecture that this was an attack by organised political groups, as accounts are only closed permanently if thousands of complaints are received or if a supervisor at the content moderation centre decides to do so.

Therefore, and to ensure freedom of expression is duly protected:

What steps will the Commission take to investigate practices in Facebook's content moderating policy that may be unfair?

How will it ensure transparency and impartiality when accounts are closed down and that they are not closed unlawfully at the request of organised groups?

¹ <https://www.elcatalan.es/facebook-censura-el-perfil-de-felix-ovejero-y-azua-insinua-que-podria-ser-a-causa-de-una-accion-del-secesionismo>

² Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.