

**Question for written answer E-002806/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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**Subject:** Dispute with US companies operating in the EU over data protection rules

On 15 May 2021, WhatsApp, one of the world's most popular messaging services, implemented new data protection rules. Experts have been fiercely critical of the new rules, warning that more data may now be exchanged with the group's parent company, Facebook.

For example, the Hamburg state data protection officer<sup>1</sup> has issued an order prohibiting Facebook from using WhatsApp's data for its own purposes. Caspar is pushing for a decision at European level. Outside the EU, certain types of WhatsApp user data have been transferred to Facebook since 2016.

In May 2018<sup>2</sup>, the European Parliament held a public hearing of Facebook's CEO to address the widespread criticism of Facebook's data collection practices and their negative impact on EU citizens.

1. What view does the Commission take of WhatsApp's new data protection rules in the light of the EU General Data Protection Regulation, and what impact does the Commission expect the rules to have on the citizens of the EU Member States?
2. What practical conclusions has the Commission drawn and what specific action has it taken since the hearing with the CEO of the US concern Facebook?
3. Has the Commission considered, or will it consider, supporting alternatives in this sector, to ward off dependence on US monopolies, and could EU-developed software have been an alternative?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://datenschutz-hamburg.de/pressemitteilungen/2021/04/2021-04-13-facebook>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/zuckerberg-vor-eu-ausschuss-101.html>