

**Question for written answer E-003123/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Digital media freedom

In its Rule of Law Report published on 13 July 2022¹ the Commission considers that 'conflict of interests and a highly concentrated market dominated by only a few players might also have the effect of undermining freedom of the media.' Moreover, multiple reports show that Facebook is the main source of information for a considerable number of citizens, while Google's search function makes it a critical factor for many elections. As such, these companies present a risk for democracy, stemming from their influence on market dynamics and the specific features of the digital landscape, as described by the Crémer² Report presented to the Commission in 2019.

1. Does the Commission consider the position of Alphabet's Google search engine and of Meta's Facebook as critical to our democracy, especially when examining mergers and acquisitions these companies might participate in?
2. Does the Commission plan to examine their behaviour in order to ensure that they have not breached Article 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, resulting in a risk for democracy?
3. Does the Commission believe that its self-referencing doctrine established in the Google Shopping case³ could apply to news and information if Google search results showed a political bias or unfair preference to certain ideologies or interests over others?

¹ COM(2022)0500.

² <https://ec.europa.eu/competition/publications/reports/kd0419345enn.pdf>

³ Case C-48/22 P.