

**Question for written answer E-003111/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Samira Rafaela** (Renew)

Subject: The practice of shadow-banning content on social media platforms

We have been made aware of a very worrying practice in which major social media platforms, such as Meta, X and TikTok, are secretly hiding certain posts and content that they seem to deem incompatible with their own opinions. This practice of shadow-banning has been used particularly to hide posts and content addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza<sup>1</sup>, thereby suppressing the voices of a particular community.

One of the main goals of the Digital Services Act is to create a safer digital space in which the fundamental rights of all users of digital services are protected. I would therefore like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. How will the Commission work on criteria to make a clear distinction between content moderation and visibility reduction and is it aware of this worrying shift from content moderation to visibility reduction, which poses a real threat to our freedom of speech?
2. What range of techniques can the Commission develop in the future to prevent shadow-banning and other methods aimed at reducing the visibility of certain platform users, even if they have not breached the rules of conduct?
3. Considering the fast-paced development of the conflict and its subsequent impact on the online dissemination of content, can the Commission respond to these answers in a time-appropriate manner, i.e. within five days?

Submitted: 20.10.2023

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/oct/18/instagram-palestine-posts-censorship-accusations>