

**Question for written answer E-000396/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Financial access for pro-Russian actors and disinformation websites: exploring inconsistencies and EU policy

A recent analysis¹ uncovered significant discrepancies among EU banks in their approach to providing financial services to operators of disinformation and pro-Russian websites. While some banks, such as Česká spořitelna, actively refuse to open accounts due to concerns about reputational damage and potential support for harmful narratives, others such as Raiffeisenbank readily open accounts. This inconsistency raises critical questions about the potential role of financial institutions in influencing information.

This issue exists within the broader context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, where financial sanctions aim to limit Russia's financial resources and impede its war effort. Reports suggest that some banks continue to operate in Russia despite the conflict, potentially undermining the collective stance of the EU. Notably, the ethical implications of financing weapons production further complicate the landscape, with banks generally refusing such involvement despite the current security concerns.

1. Given the documented inconsistencies in approach, what assessment does the Commission have of the current landscape regarding access to financial services for operators of disinformation and pro-Russian websites across the EU?
2. Does the Commission consider that EU banks have a responsibility to align their practices with the broader objectives of combating disinformation and upholding EU values, even in the absence of specific legal mandates?

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¹ <https://denikn.cz/1331634/aeronet-jako-vazeny-klient-pristup-bank-k-financovani-lzi-se-lisi-dezinformatori-si-oblibili-dve/?ref=list>.