

**Priority question for written answer P-002827/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Christine Anderson (ID)

Subject: Fake news and disinformation concerning coronavirus figures and failure of the Action Plan against Disinformation

There was recently a major fake-news scandal in Germany¹ in which a large and hitherto well-regarded news magazine deliberately printed inaccurate, inflated figures concerning the coronavirus situation in order to have a particular effect on the population.

For example, in March the magazine predicted that there would be 50 000 new infections a day in May and an incidence of 1 200, which is wrong by a factor of about 10.

The grotesquely-exaggerated predictions are claimed to have 'contributed to preventing scenarios they had hypothesised'. In its defence, the magazine stated that this was 'not a deficiency; on the contrary, it was a great asset'.

The EU has had an 'Action Plan against Disinformation' since 2018, which was developed to combat disinformation.

1. Does the Commission consider this kind of conduct on the part of the magazine, whereby disinformation is deliberately disseminated in order to achieve a 'positive' impact, to be expedient?
2. In the Commission's view, does this kind of conduct conflict with the 'Action Plan against Disinformation'?
3. What action is the Commission taking to combat fake news and disinformation in the press, and how could it happen that the Action Plan has clearly had no impact?

¹ <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/horror-zahlen-spiegel-rechtfertigt-panik-prognosen-bei-corona-76364632.bild.html#fromWall>