



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Digital Single Market
E-Commerce and Platforms

Brussels
CNECT.F.2/BK

Dear Petitioner,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 October 2020 and for sending the Commission a considerable number of petitions from citizens concerning certain large online platforms. Vice-President Vestager asked me to reply on her behalf.

The Commission considers ensuring freedom of expression online and fairness of the digital markets very important. To this end, the Commission has been conducting several competition law cases against companies like Google, often resulting in large fines, and it has also proposed legislation to address certain problems.

On 15 December 2020, the Commission adopted two landmark legislative proposals¹, the Digital Services Act² and the Digital Markets Act³, which would directly address the concerns you raise in your petition. These ambitious proposals are the result of long preparations, including widespread public consultations⁴. The Commission has taken into account the concerns and suggestions of all stakeholders, including citizens' submissions such as yours.

One of the main objectives of the Digital Services Act is to protect users and guarantee their fundamental rights, in particular their freedom of expression. For example, content moderation would need to be transparent and objective, and platforms would need to state the reasons for any content removal, which users would be able to challenge through various dispute resolution mechanisms. If your content is not in breach of the law or the service's terms and conditions, it should not be removed or suppressed.

The Digital Markets Act targets the problems caused by the behaviour of so-called 'gatekeeper' platforms, and aims to ensure fair and contestable markets. Certain online platforms obtain such an entrenched and strong position that they have systemic impacts on digital markets. With a combination of obligations and prohibitions, the proposal would ensure that these platforms behave in a fair way online.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-services-act-package>

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/digital-services-act-ensuring-safe-and-accountable-online-environment_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/digital-markets-act-ensuring-fair-and-open-digital-markets_en

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/summary-report-open-public-consultation-digital-services-act-package>

The Commission invites you to look at these proposals and share your views. Your opinion will inform the discussions during the upcoming negotiations with the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council.

Yours faithfully,

Electronically signed
Prabhat AGARWAL
Head of Unit