

**Priority question for written answer
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Sophia in 't Veld (Renew)

Subject: Commission launched micro-targeting campaign on X about controversial chat control proposal

On 11 May 2022, the Commission published its proposal for a Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse.¹ It is meeting with considerable scepticism and controversy. Privacy regulators, national governments and parliaments, and the Council legal service have strongly criticised the proposal.

Although the legislative process on this file is ongoing, DG HOME launched a paid advertising campaign on X (formerly Twitter) in at least seven Member States²³, using emotional techniques showing unsettling images, suggesting that the critics of this proposal are not supporting child protection. Microtargeting⁴ was used to avoid certain audiences, while the X algorithm was used to automatically further refine targeting.⁵⁶ The campaign on X started on 15 September, and ended some 10 days later.⁷

- 1 Can the Commission clarify the aim of a public campaign promoting a very sensitive legislative proposal while the legislative process in Parliament and Council is ongoing?
- 2 Does the Commission consider that the micro targeting advertising campaign on X is in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and Digital Services Act, including Article 26(3), and can the Commission explain the choice for each specific positive and negative target?
- 3 Why did the Commission decide to end the X-campaign already 10 days after its launch?

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A209%3AFIN>

² Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Slovenia, Portugal and the Czech Republic.

³ <https://www.volkskrant.nl/columns-opinie/opinie-europese-commissie-misleidt-burgers-met-desinformatiecampagne-en-illegale-advertenties-b86cae2c/>

⁴ <https://ton.twitter.com/ads-repository/ads-repository/1709243560636166341.csv>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/KuypersMarieke/status/1705173643322417536>

⁶ <https://business.twitter.com/en/help/ads-policies/ads-content-policies/political-content.html>;
<https://business.twitter.com/en/help/ads-policies/campaign-considerations/targeting-of-sensitive-categories.html>

⁷ <https://dannymekic.com/202310/undermining-democracy-the-european-commissions-controversial-push-for-digital-surveillance>