



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Digital Single Market
E-Commerce and Platforms

Brussels
CNECT.F.2/IRL

Nina Katzemich
On behalf of ALTER-EU
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Subject: Ares(2020)7159017 – Privileged and unbalanced access by Big Tech lobby

Dear Madam Katzemich,

Many thanks for your letter dated 27 November 2020 to Vice-President Margrethe Vestager who asked me to reply on her behalf.

Like you, we are concerned by the increasingly sophisticated and aggressive tactics used by interests from the whole spectrum, including what you refer to as “Big Tech” in seeking to take undue influence over the public policy process. We therefore support your call for greater and meaningful transparency in all actors who seek to take influence.

Concerning your observations on Google’s lobbying tactics, Commissioner Breton has made it personally clear to Mr Sundar Pichai that he expects him to raise any issues in a direct, transparent and open manner rather than rely on other channels acting as proxies for Google’s interest. Mr Pichai made a personal commitment to Commissioner Breton in this regard, and we expect him to live up to his promise.

Concerning the roundtable with industry stakeholders, we have done every effort to reach out to the full digital ecosystem. We have had similar roundtables with many other stakeholder groups in the context of necessary actions to give a reply to the Covid-19 crisis. As regards in particular the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act, we have also had a roundtable exclusively with civil society representatives recently.

Your suggestions on greater transparency for think tanks seem interesting to me. Vice President Věra Jourová’s services, in charge of transparency, can follow up on the concrete suggestion you make.

We wish to thank you and your organisation for your commitment to bring more transparency to the European policy debate, as we firmly believe that this is a precondition for trust in the institutions and in the European construction as a whole.

Yours faithfully,

(e-signed)

Prabhat AGARWAL
Head of Unit