

**Question for written answer E-005474/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Idoia Villanueva Ruiz (The Left), **Eugenia Rodríguez Palop** (The Left)

Subject: Use of algorithms to alter attitudes in public opinion and play down grassroots opposition

A project entitled 'VECTOR: Vectors to accessible critical raw materials in sedimentary basins' has been presented for funding under the Horizon Europe programme. VECTOR continues from where an earlier one, called 'INFACT: Innovative, Non-invasive and Fully Acceptable Exploration Technologies', left off. INFACT was coordinated by a German firm and had the mining firms Atalaya Mining (responsible for mining projects by Touro in Galicia, and Riotinto in Huelva) and Cobre Las Cruces (from Seville) as participants.

One of the project's central components is the so-called 'social licence to operate'. This refers to the use of artificial intelligence tools such as algorithms and geo-references (in the case of Galicia) to influence public opinion and frustrate the efforts of civic grassroots movements aware of the effects mining has on the environment, so as to ensure local communities will support the mining industry.

1. In the light of the above, we should like to ask the following questions:
1. Does the Commission believe that these companies ought to use public money, such as Horizon Europe funding, to alter attitudes in public opinion and play down grassroots opposition?
2. In the Commission's view, do strategies that make use of algorithms and artificial intelligence infringe citizens' fundamental rights?