On 17/02/2020 EVP Vestager met with Facebook. Other participants: Werner Stengg of Cabinet Vestager;

In his introductory remarks pointed that Facebook welcomes and supports the public authorities’ actions as concerns regulation and taxation of the digital sphere, as such issues need to be decided by legitimate democratic authorities. In the opinion of even if new regulations would hurt some of the Facebook’s business interests in the short term, it would nevertheless be beneficial in the long term. Private companies should not be the ones making certain decisions, for instance regarding trade-offs between security and free expression. As concerns illegal content pointed at the very significant resources that the company is devoting to tackling this issue. He also referred to the setting up of the Oversight Board which is to work as an appellate body for the company’s decisions regarding content moderation. Furthermore pointed at data portability as an area where regulatory intervention might be particularly suitable. Also stressed that further regulatory clarity could be beneficial in establishing what is the exact scope of a given user’s data, in particular on platforms such as Facebook where data often stems from interactions between different users.

On her part the EVP has flagged the ongoing preparatory work on the Digital Services Act (covering also ex ante regulation), as well as the forthcoming digital package due for the College adoption on 19 February.