

AUTODOC further tightens controls of its own advertising activities in wake of New York Times reporting

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The management of the Berlin company AUTODOC is deeply concerned about the accusations raised last week in the media. These alleged a connection between the company and right-wing extremist groups controlled by Russia. The company regrets the false impression made and is taking appropriate measures as a result.

AUTODOC expressly distances itself from far-right ideology and any attempt to externally influence or impede democratic processes. AUTODOC is committed to democratic principles, human rights, equality and respect towards all people. AUTODOC employees speak over 30 different languages and come from all over the world; the majority have an immigrant background.

The company has grown rapidly in recent years and is now active in 26 European countries from its headquarters in Germany. As is common practice in e-commerce, AUTODOC places advertisements on a great number of third-party websites (in the form of web banners, links, competitions, etc.). AUTODOC currently has around 26,000 such advertising activities per month throughout Europe. The advertiser does not usually actively and deliberately choose which websites advertising will be placed on – the process is automated. AUTODOC also works with a great number of external providers, whose goal is to reach as many potential customers as possible with the advertisements placed.

AUTODOC had already been made aware in 2017 that outside of Germany, and so in another language, some banner advertisements had appeared on websites with extreme right content. The management immediately ended all advertising on these websites. As a result, AUTODOC also established additional controls, quality standards, and clear internal rules to prevent such cases in the future.

Establishment of new quality standards – cooperation with media agency

In connection with the recent reporting by the New York Times, a few other cases of this kind became known and were also stopped immediately. However, based on the comprehensive and extensive review measures carried out, AUTODOC realized that, due to the high volume of advertising activity, the current control mechanisms do not provide absolutely certainty that such cases will not be repeated or that such advertising is not still currently running.

AUTODOC therefore decided that in addition to the control mechanisms that have been implemented so far, a renowned external media agency would be brought in to provide comprehensive and wide-ranging auditing and consultation in order to implement the new quality standards as quickly as possible.

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About AUTODOC

AUTODOC is Europe's leading online retailer for car parts. As a high-growth company in this branch, with revenue growth of 63% in the 2018 financial year to approximately 415 million euros (from 254 million euros in 2017), AUTODOC aims to further develop its position. Thanks to its successful expansion, AUTODOC now operates in 25 other European countries along with Germany. AUTODOC shows its customer focus through social media activities, technical support in the languages of the countries it operates in, and a demand-based range with nearly 2.5 million products from 545 manufacturers for 128 car brands. From brake systems to chassis parts, shock absorbers and springs, exhaust systems, interior elements, steering systems and clutches, to air-conditioning and heating systems, repair kits and engine oil, the online retailer offers a wide range of products. In June 2018 the company celebrated its 10th anniversary. AUTODOC GmbH is headquartered in the Berlin district of Lichtenberg and is completely owner-operated. Since May 2019 it also has a city-centre location in Kurfürstendamm in addition to its headquarters.