

**Question for written answer E-003296/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Dominique Martin (ENF)

Subject: Germany and the UK do not directly subsidise the press, but France gives private titles up to EUR 2 billion per year

French businessman Bernard Arnault – the 4th richest person in the world, with an estimated fortune of EUR 60 billion¹– will apparently receive EUR 12 million in direct subsidies from the French Government in his role as owner of the newspapers *Le Parisien – Aujourd'hui en France* and *Les Échos*². According to the French Court of Auditors, direct and indirect subsidies to the press amount to EUR 1.8 billion³. Of those subsidies, 90% are given to the written press, despite its diminishing readership and the explosion of the digital press: in 2016, online readers already constituted 70% of the total readership of the national daily press. The majority of big names in the French press have transferred their content to their online platforms. If there is to be fair competition among the 35 000 journalists employed across the sector, employment practices must also be fair.

Has the Commission's Directorate-General for Competition investigated the legality of the subsidies the French Government gives to established companies and their neutrality with regard to rival French and foreign news sites, such as *Mediapart*, which only have an online presence?

What steps have been taken to prevent the websites of traditional newspapers receiving state aid intended for the written press?

¹ <https://www.latribune.fr/economie/international/classement-forbes-le-bond-de-bernard-arnault-la-degringolade-de-trump-770858.html>

² <http://www.rallumerlesetoiles.com/2018/02/les-milliardaires-de-la-presse-gaves-d-aides-publiques-et-privees.html>

³ <https://www.latribune.fr/technos-medias/aides-a-la-presse-la-cour-des-comptes-incite-l-etat-a-soutenir-le-numerique-767489.html>