

**Question for written answer P-012393/2015  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Louis Aliot (ENF)**

Subject: Regional daily press monopoly in France

The French newspaper group *La Dépêche du Midi*, owned by the leader of one of the parties in the French government coalition, recently bought up the *Les Journaux du Midi* group. *La Dépêche du Midi* now has an information monopoly in the regional daily press in several of France's departments.

The merger is cause for serious concern: provision of daily news and information is now concentrated in the hands of just one — publicly subsidised — group covering the 13 departments of the new administrative entity formed by the amalgamation of the Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon regions.

The group's monopoly over local daily news in rural areas raises issues linked to the pluralism of media content and the potential for abuse of power in a sensitive sector. France's national competition regulator has acknowledged both that *La Dépêche du Midi* has a monopoly and the negative commercial side effects of this concentration of media ownership; it has said nothing about the ramifications for democracy, however.

The fact that the Commission has often reacted with concern to similar scenarios in the candidate countries of the former Eastern bloc makes addressing this new state of affairs in France all the more important.

What is the Commission's stance and does it intend to act?