

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

by Luca Romagnoli, Carlo Fatuzzo and Marco Pannella

on equal access to public service broadcasting and on pluralism of political information in Italy

Lapse date: 12.3.2006

Written declaration on equal access to public service broadcasting and on pluralism of political information in Italy

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas for 90% of Italians political information in Italy is dominated by television and whereas it is obvious that freedom, the objectiveness of information and equal access to the media constitute principles which are vital to the acquisition of knowledge and deliberation,
- B. whereas in Italy and other EU Member States public broadcasting services receive state subsidies, as well as the proceeds of the compulsory licence fee charged to television owners,
- C. whereas, in particular, according to the data published by the Italian media supervisory authority on the amount of broadcasting time devoted to the various political actors by RAI, the sole public service broadcaster, smaller political parties are heavily discriminated against, even during election campaigns,
- D. whereas these parties (whose members and voters in fact support the company through the licence fees they pay and, indirectly, as consumers, through advertising revenue) are represented in the Italian and European Parliaments and in various local councils,
- E. whereas the presence or absence of certain parties in radio and television debates draws attention to cases of discrimination against minorities and reveals a desire to distort the debate by not allowing the democratic pluralism which the public service should be guaranteeing,
- 1. Condemns the Italian state broadcasting service's discriminatory policy towards all small parties; reiterates that this policy constitutes a violation of people's freedom and right of expression and information, pursuant to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- 2. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Commission, the Italian Government and the Italian Parliament.