

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3254/09  
by Vittorio Agnoletto (GUE/NGL)  
to the Commission

Subject: Censure, satire and the suspension of Vauro Senesi, cartoonist on the 'Annozero' programme

Following the broadcast of the 9 April edition of the television programme 'Annozero', the cartoonist Vauro Senesi was suspended and disciplinary action was taken against him because of a cartoon that was deemed to be offensive.

This incident shows that the media in general, and, in this specific instance, the public broadcaster, RAI, to which the Italian public is required to pay a licence fee, are subject to major restrictions as regards freedom of expression, news pluralism and satire.

The European Parliament has already expressed its views on this issue in its resolution on the right to freedom of expression and of religious belief and, still more forcefully, in its resolution (P5\_TA(2004)0373<sup>1</sup> on the risks of violation, in the EU and especially in Italy, of freedom of expression and information (Article 11(2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights).

How does the Commission intend to guarantee to the European public that the media will observe the principles of freedom and pluralism, which are of crucial importance to democratic life in the Member States, as laid down in, among other things, the Treaty establishing the European Community (Articles 6, 7, 22, 49, 83 and 87) and Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ('Freedom of expression and information'), under which:

- '1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.
2. The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected'?

What stance does the Commission intend to take vis-à-vis a Member State in which those principles are ignored, in particular by a state-owned organisation?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 104 E, 30.4.2004, p. 1026.