

**Question for written answer E-004316/2019
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Giuliano Pisapia (S&D)

Subject: Rule of law and press intimidation in Malta

Recent developments in the investigations into the murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia have confirmed the concerns expressed by Parliament in its resolution of 28 March 2019 on the rule of law in Malta.

The resolution drew attention in particular to threats to press freedom, blurring of the separation of powers, a judiciary that is not sufficiently independent, widespread corruption and the failure by the government to comply with EU and international laws on recycling.

Members taking part in Parliament's delegation to Malta on 3 December 2019 have attested to the fact that these failings still exist.

In fact, a further attempt at intimidating the press occurred on 6 December 2019. Sandro Ruotolo of Fanpage has reported how journalists attending the press conference called by the Prime Minister Mr Muscat were prevented from leaving the government offices by individuals who were not members of the police force.

In light of the above:

1. Would the Commission agree that the whole situation constitutes a breach of the rule of law by Malta?
2. What steps will the Commission take to ensure the breaches in the rule of law cited above do not continue?