

**Question for written answer E-000961/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: What is the Commission doing to guarantee press freedom in the EU?

The attacks on independent media over the past week must have set some kind of record in the EU in how to undermine press freedom as quickly as possible. This is completely unacceptable.

Poland introduced a 'media tax' whereby media companies will have to pay between 2 and 15 % of their advertising revenues. The justification given for the media tax is to raise more money for healthcare and to limit Google's and Amazon's revenues in the country. In reality, the media tax is directed against the country's independent media. Last week, 43 Polish media companies sent an open letter to the Prime Minister of Poland describing the law as pure extortion that will result in cuts and in the closure of independent media companies.

Today, Hungary's last independent radio channel — Klubrádió — lost its broadcasting licence. Last week, 80 Members of the European Parliament signed a letter to the European Commission urging it to take action against the restriction of press freedom in Hungary and Poland. In response, the Fidesz delegation sent a letter to the EPP in which they rejected the media reporting on Klubrádió as 'fake news' and a mere misunderstanding.

It is a fundamental problem that the European Commission is not able to take commensurate action as regards the repeated attacks on the rule of law. It is unacceptable that press freedom in the EU is beginning to crumble before our very eyes. The potentially fatal inaction of the European Commission must end.

What does the European Commission intend to do to guarantee press freedom in all Member States, including in Hungary and Poland?