

**Question for written answer E-001366/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

David Lega (PPE), **Michael Gahler** (PPE)

Subject: Media freedom legislation in Albania

The Commission's Albania 2020 report states that 'Parliament approved a set of amendments to the media law, aiming to regulate online media [...] on which, in June 2020, the Venice Commission issued an opinion. The amendments fall short of international standards and principles of media freedom and raise concerns about increased censorship and self-censorship, and about possible setbacks on freedom of expression'.

It was dismaying to see the Albanian Government adopt the amendments in 2019, despite warnings from domestic stakeholders and the international community, including the European Parliament.

We were therefore pleased to see the Council state in its conclusions of 25 March 2020 that Albania must revise the proposal prior to the first intergovernmental conference and that 'amending the media law in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission remain important priorities'.

Eight months after the Venice Commission issued its opinion on the matter, the above-mentioned legislation still has not been amended to meet the required standards. Yet Commissioner Varhelyi insists that all criteria for the first intergovernmental conference have been met.

How can the Council conclusions – as well as the Copenhagen criteria of freedom of expression – be considered fulfilled, when the Venice Commission recommendation has not yet been implemented?