

**Question for written answer E-003466/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Alex Agius Saliba (S&D)**

**Subject:** Deteriorating freedom of the press in Slovenia

A recent report warns that the Slovenian Government has a growing problem with media freedom. Over the last 14 months, independent journalism has come under sustained pressure, and press freedom has deteriorated ever since Janez Janša returned to power. More broadly, leading government officials are stoking the toxicity of public debate via official government channels by insulting and denigrating journalists, including women journalists, who have been targeted with misogynistic and sexist insults.

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights has also warned that steps taken by the Slovenian Government risk undermining the ability of independent voices to speak freely and that hostile public discourse, smear campaigns and intimidation against civil society activists and those who express critical opinions harm free expression and can have a damaging effect on media freedom.

As of 1 July 2021, Slovenia took over the EU's rotating presidency. The presidency plays a crucial role in preparing the EU agenda and determining the topics and major issues that the Council will address.

1. Is the Commission going to condemn these attacks on journalists and civil society in Slovenia, and how will it preserve the integrity of the Council's presidency under the Slovenian Government?
2. What steps will the Commission take to address these problems and ensure that freedom of expression and media freedom is restored in Slovenia?