

**Question for written answer E-004400/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Tom Vandendriessche (ID)

Subject: Reform of decree regarding the VRT public broadcasting governing body in Flanders

The VRT (Flemish radio and television broadcasting body) has a market share of over 40% of the television broadcasting sector, rising to 55% for radio. Under Article 8 of the Cultural Pact, however, all ideological currents of opinion must be proportionally represented in the management of cultural institutions (Article 8). This principle is also enshrined in the Belgian Constitution (Articles 11 and 131). Furthermore, protection against state interference in public broadcasting is stipulated by the EU Treaties.

The government has recently tabled an amendment to the relevant decree, seeking to replace four democratically selected representatives by four of its own expert appointees. This amounts to a loss of seats for the democratic opposition and the de facto replacement of critics by unelected establishment figures.

1. Are such reforms not incompatible with the democratic rule of law?
2. Is state interference subject to certain limits (given the level of market concentration and the number of dismissed opposition members), beyond which the Commission will take action to safeguard European values?
3. Will the Commission take action in this case?