Question for written answer E-005296/2021
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Rule 138
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Subject: Russia’s interference in the freedom of the press

On 17 November 2021, the Russian embassy in Italy sent a note against the director of the national newspaper la Repubblica, Maurizio Molinari, in response to a 14 November editorial analysing President Putin’s political strategies towards the West.

In a reply note, the spokesperson for the Russian embassy used offensive tones and strongly denigrated both the director and the editorial staff, which unequivocally interfered with the freedoms of the press and information. Once again, the Russian reaction demonstrates Russia’s intolerance of dissent and its intimidation tendencies, and it constitutes an attack on the entire Gedi publishing group.

It is no coincidence that this intimidation coincides with Lukashenko’s attempt to put pressure on the EU’s borders and his constant violation of the most elementary principles of the rule of law and liberal democracy in Belarus. The intimidation also coincides with Russia’s military build-up on the Russia-Ukraine border. Finally, we would like to recall the very serious sanctions issued by Moscow against the President of Parliament and other EU officials. All of these actions have a leitmotif, namely attacking Europe’s freedoms and democratic system.

In the light of these very serious facts, can the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy clarify what actions he intends to take to stop non-EU interference with the EU’s free press?