

Question for written answer

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to the Commission

Rule 138

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Subject: Interference in the public service media in Italy

On 8 May 2023, Carlo Fuortes resigned as the CEO of the Italian public broadcaster Rai. In his resignation letter, he hinted at political pressure on his role, stating that this could undermine Rai's mission as a public broadcaster.

Several journalists have announced their departure in the wake of Fuortes's resignation. It is feared that such sudden changes will cause more government influence on the editorial line and programming. Public service media (PSM) providers play an essential role in delivering fact-checked information and quality programmes reflecting a plurality of opinions, and must be at the service of citizens regardless of the governing majority.

According to the Media Pluralism Monitor 2022 report on Italy (covering the year 2021)¹, 'the independence of PSM governance and public funding is still at high risk' in the country and there is 'the need for a substantial reform' of Rai. These alarming developments make it more pressing for the EU to come up with a robust legal framework to protect the media against interference.

- 1) What is the Commission's assessment of the impact that these changes in Rai's management team have had on media freedom in Italy?
- 2) How can it ensure that PSM providers are shielded from any political or economic interference and what measures does it intend to take in this regard?

Submitted: 13.6.2023

¹ Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom, <https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/74694/MPM2022-Italy-EN.pdf>.