

**Question for written answer E-002401/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Media pluralism in Italy – the case of Roberto Saviano and RAI

On Wednesday 26 July, RAI, the Italian public broadcaster, which is 99 % owned by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, announced the cancellation of the programme *Insider II*, hosted by anti-mafia writer Roberto Saviano. Saviano, who has been living under police protection for 17 years, is currently on trial and, according to some observers, organisations and newspapers, is a victim of a SLAPP¹. The programme was set to deal with anti-mafia activity and persecuted reporters.

RAI justified its decision by citing the incompatibility of Saviano's language with the company's code of ethics, evidence of which is lacking. Moreover, the decision arguably betrays a lack of impartiality and a failure to pursue the aim of guaranteeing information pluralism, which should be a public service media outlet's mission. In light of this, the 2023 Rule of Law Report², which refers to RAI's 'risks of political influence and financial dependence on the Government', and the fact that Saviano is on trial for defamation against Matteo Salvini and Giorgia Meloni, this editorial choice seems to have been driven by political motives on the Italian Government's part.

1. Is the Commission aware of this case?
2. Having regard to the proposed European Media Freedom Act³, does RAI's decision breach the requirement for information pluralism?
3. What measures can the Commission undertake to address this violation?

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¹ Strategic lawsuit against public participation.

² Commission staff working document of 5 July 2023 entitled '2023 Rule of Law Report – Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Italy' (SWD(2023)0812), accompanying the Commission communication of the same date entitled '2023 Rule of Law Report' (COM(2023)0800).

³ Commission proposal of 16 September 2022 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market (European Media Freedom Act) and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (COM(2022)0457).