

**Question for oral answer O-0103/2010  
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

**Subject:** Growing threats to freedom of information and media freedom in EU Member States and action planned by the Commission

After the Czech Republic and Italy, Hungary, Estonia and Romania are also discussing severe restrictions on freedom of information and of the media, aimed at granting governments powers to determine content, censor criticism and increase governmental control over the media. In Hungary a draft government law provides for the setting up of a government-backed 'media council' to control the public media, whose leader is to be appointed by the prime minister. In Estonia the parliament is discussing a proposal for a new law forcing journalists to reveal their sources and imposing fines on newspapers on the grounds of the suspected intention to publish 'potentially harmful information'. In Romania the Supreme Defence Council has forwarded to the parliament for legislative action the new national defence strategy, which points at 'the phenomenon of ordered media campaigns aiming at denigrated State institutions by spreading false information on their activities'. Concerns have also been raised regarding the review of legislation on public broadcasting. Hungarian, Estonian and Romanian journalists and publishers, supported by their counterparts in other European countries, have criticised such moves as blows to media freedom in their respective countries, which dangerously turn back the clock.

Does the Commission think that such draft laws are compatible with European standards on freedom of information and of the media, as guaranteed by Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 10 of the ECHR with the related jurisprudence, and Article 6 TEU?

Does the Commission agree that media freedom is a fundamental element of democracy that the EU and its institutions must protect, including, if necessary, by activating Article 7 TEU?

What action will the Commission take to ensure proper and full enforcement of all relevant legislation in the areas of the internal market, audiovisual policy, competition, telecommunications, State subsidies, public service obligation and fundamental rights?

When will the communication on media pluralism indicators (announced for 2010) be issued and what will the next steps be? In particular, will it propose a revision of the TV without Frontiers Directive to include freedom of the media and media pluralism?

Tabled: 5.7.2010

Forwarded: 7.7.2010

Deadline for reply: 14.7.2010