

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3258/09
by Giulietto Chiesa (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Freedom of information in Italy

Three recent shameful incidents have drawn attention to a continuing anomaly in Italy, whereby the Prime Minister in one way or another controls the main national private and public television networks, with the obvious threats this situation entails for freedom of expression and information, a state of affairs already highlighted by Council of Europe resolution 1387 (2004) and European Parliament resolution P5_TA(2004) 0373¹.

- Disciplinary action was taken against Milena Gabanelli's investigative journalism programme 'Report' by the RAI Ethics Committee after it conducted an investigation into the government's 'social card' policy;
- Another RAI investigative journalism programme, 'Annozero', directed by Michele Santoro, has been ordered by RAI executives to put out a 'corrective follow-up', after it investigated the shortcomings of the emergency services during the Abruzzi earthquake, while Vauro Senesi has been suspended over a cartoon deemed to be 'lacking in respect for the dead and not in keeping with the obligations of public service broadcasting';
- According to reports in the Italian press, on 17 April 2009, during a meeting at his Rome residence, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi decided on the new RAI staff plan, putting journalists and officials loyal to him in charge of television news programmes and networks, matters which under the rules should be determined by RAI's board of directors.

Does the Commission not think that Italy is clearly breaching Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?

Does it not think it should apply Article 7 of the Treaties?

¹ OJ C 104E, 30.4.2004, p. 1026