

**Question for written answer P-007609/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Hungarian media laws, media freedom and pluralism in the European Union

In December 2010 the Hungarian Parliament adopted controversial media laws despite an international outcry and national protests; the Commission raised limited concerns and the Hungarian Government responded by amending the law to address the points raised by the Commission. The OSCE and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights expressed serious reservations, warning that despite Hungary's amendments, the laws still violated European press freedom standards. The EP, in its resolution of 10 March 2011, expressed the need for a directive on media freedom, pluralism and independent governance. The recent News of the World scandal in the UK further underlines the need for EU legislation against media concentration. The Commission has not reacted further and seems not to be convinced that media freedom, pluralism and independence fall within its competence, focussing on a restrictive interpretation of Article 51 CFREU, whereas substantively the CFREU applies to Hungary and is violated by provisions of the Hungarian media laws, especially by the obligation of balanced coverage, the restrictions of the right to keep journalistic sources confidential and the sanctions regime. Given the above, the Commission is kindly asked:

- How has the Commission continued to closely monitor and assess the conformity of Hungary's media laws as amended with European and international legislation and standards, particularly with the CFREU?
- Has the Commission examined Hungary's compliance with Article 30 of the AVMSD, the liability arrangements laid down in Directive 2000/31/EC on electronic commerce and Hungary's transposition of EU Framework Decisions 2008/913/JHA and 2008/919/JHA, which include references to freedom of expression and circumventions of the rules on media freedom, and if not, is the Commission planning to?
- What steps has the Commission taken to act, on the basis of Article 265 TFEU, by proposing a legislative initiative pursuant to Article 225 TFEU on media freedom, pluralism and independent governance before the end of the year? Is the Commission preparing binding minimum standards for safeguarding media freedom, pluralism and independent governance in the EU?
- What is the Commission's approach regarding media freedom and pluralism in Europe? What are the conclusions of the work of the High Level Group on Media Pluralism until now? Why is the Commission not implementing or further developing the Media Pluralism Monitoring Tool (MPM)?