

**Priority question for written answer P-002596/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D)

Subject: European Union Prize for Literature: unjustified discrimination against authors

The European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL) award, which is financed by the Commission's Creative Europe programme, aims to promote cross-border mobility for those working in the cultural sector, encourage the transnational circulation of artistic output and foster intercultural dialogue. Regretfully, the Maltese Book Prize winner Aleks Farrugia was disqualified from the EUPL shortlist because of the publishing house he had used for his book.

1. Can the Commission clarify if authors are nominated and judged based on their work, creativity and diversity in fiction, or based on the ownership of the publishing house they have used?
2. Can it confirm if the official award nomination rules state that authors will be disqualified if they belong to a political party or are published by a publishing house owned by a political party and, if so, why is this rule not transparent on the EUPL website, and where can it be found?
3. How does the Commission justify imposing such restrictive conditions on authors given that the main objective of the award and a key EU value of the Creative Europe Programme is to promote European literature? Does it consider this to be a restriction on the freedom of expression and freedom of writers to choose what to say, how to say it and where to say it?