Question for oral answer O-000003/2026
to the Commission
Rule 142
Fabrice Leggeri (PfE), Mathilde Androuët (PfE), Christophe Bay (PfE), Marie-Luce Brasier-Clain (PfE), Marie Dauchy (PfE), Valérie Deloge (PfE), Mélanie Disdier (PfE), Anne-Sophie Frigout (PfE), Angéline Furet (PfE), Jean-Paul Garraud (PfE), Catherine Griset (PfE), France Jamet (PfE), Virginie Joron (PfE), Julien Leonardelli (PfE), Thierry Mariani (PfE), Aleksandar Nikolic (PfE), Philippe Olivier (PfE), Gilles Pennelle (PfE), Pierre Pimpie (PfE), Julie Rechagneux (PfE), André Rougé (PfE), Pierre-Romain Thionnet (PfE), Rody Tolassy (PfE), Matthieu Valet (PfE), Alexandre Varaut (PfE), Séverine Werbrouck (PfE), Petra Steger (PfE), António Tânger Corrêa (PfE), Ondřej Knotek (PfE), Gerald Hauser (PfE), Sebastian Kruis (PfE), Vilis Krištopans (PfE), Marion Maréchal (ECR), Ivaylo Valchev (ECR), Laurence Trochu (ECR), Ewa Zajączkowska-Hernik (ESN), Christine Anderson (ESN), Milan Uhrík (ESN), Sarah Knafo (ESN), Céline Imart (PPE), Christophe Gomart (PPE), Laurent Castillo (PfE)

Subject: Reporters Without Borders, a biased NGO heavily subsidised by Brussels

The European Union is currently discussing strengthening its Democracy Shield, a central aim of which is to guarantee media independence, trust in institutions and transparency in public processes. Interest in these principles is on the rise in a number of Member States. In France, recent exchanges between the Regulatory Authority for Audiovisual and Digital Communication and the public broadcaster following an episode of *Complément d'enquête*, an investigative current affairs programme, have sparked a national debate on editorial protection, respect for pluralism and the balance between public governance and editorial freedom.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF), an NGO that the French presidency has held up as an example in the area of media certification, can be controversial. Indeed, in its contribution to the 2024 annual report on the rule of law, RSF included an assessment describing the editor-in-chief of a newspaper as 'far-right'[1]. The use of such wording, irrespective of any value judgement, calls into question an organisation's ability to contribute in a strictly neutral manner to an exercise presented as being methodologically objective – all the more so given that the report concerned helped establish an EU assessment of the situation with regard to fundamental freedoms in the Member States.

1. Furthermore, data from the Commission's Financial Transparency System show that RSF apparently received EUR 72.48 million between 2014 and 2023. In the current debate on media independence and transparency in the funding of organisations that have an influence on public policymaking, this combination of circumstances raises a legitimate question of objectivity, in a cross-party spirit: how can we ensure that those involved in assessing Member States are not financially dependent to the extent that the impartiality expected of them could be compromised?

2. For the sake of transparency, therefore, could the Commission confirm the amount of funding involved, give its assessment of how neutral the contributions to the Rule of Law Report are, and state what steps it intends to take to ensure that organisations it funds are able to take part in its work without compromising the requirement to be impartial?

[1] 2024 Rule of Law Report – Targeted stakeholder consultation, Reporters Without Borders, page 16.

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