(English version)

Question for written answer E-004101/25
to the Commission
Raquel García Hermida-Van Der Walle (Renew)
(17 October 2025)

Subject: Threat to independent journalism in Serbia

According to recent reports, press freedom in Serbia is increasingly under severe pressure. While most media outlets are following President Aleksandar Vučić's direction, United Media remains independent and critical with its TV channel N1. However, this independence now seems to be in jeopardy: Stan Miller, CEO of the Dutch United Group conglomerate, spoke with state-owned Telekom Srbija and promised to dismiss the CEO of United Media Aleksandra Subotić. ([1]) The situation raises questions about the protection of media freedom in Serbia and the role of the EU institutions in this regard.

1. Does the Commission agree that these recent developments put independent media and journalists in Serbia under increasing political pressure, and how does it assess the current state of media freedom in the country?

2. Does the Commission agree that safeguarding independent journalism is a key element of Serbia's EU accession process and, if so, what action is it taking in this regard in the ongoing accession negotiations?

Submitted: 17.10.2025

Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(9 January 2026)

Media freedom is one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and a fundamental right in the EU, and therefore a crucial element and prerequisite of Serbia's EU accession process.

As a candidate country, Serbia is expected to create an enabling environment for media freedom that safeguards independent journalism and ensure that freedom of expression can be exercised without hindrance.

Moreover, Serbia is expected to align its legislation with the EU *acquis*, including the European Media Freedom Act ([1]), which provides unprecedented safeguards for media and journalists against political interference, ensuring editorial independence which is a key requirement under the regulation.

In both the 2025 Rule of Law report ([2]) and in the 2025 Enlargement Package ([3]) the Commission has outlined its concerns about the worsening situation facing journalists, media professionals and outlets in Serbia and the chilling effect the recurrent statements by high-level officials are having on freedom of expression and the work of journalists.

The Commission has been consistent in calling for the attacks on journalists in the context of the protests to stop, including reported cases of police involvement and verbal attacks from high-level officials. The Commission will continue to monitor these issues in the context of the EU accession process and the annual Rule of Law report.

Through the Instrument for pre-accession assistance, the Commission has provided more than EUR 9 million to support independent and professional media outlets as well as media associations supporting the rights and safety of journalists and an enabling environment in Serbia.

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1 https://www.occrp.org/en/scoop/telecom-chief-and-united-group-ceo-in-talks-to-weaken-serbias-last-independent-broadcaster.

([1]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R1083.

([2]) SWD(2025) 931 final, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025SC0931.

([3]) SWD(2025) 755 final, https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6e68ce26-b95b-48e1-921a-c60c12da8f00_en?filename=serbia-report-2025.pdf.