

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000560/26
to the Commission
Catherine Griset (PfE), André Rougé (PfE), Laurent Castillo (PfE), Julie Rechagneux (PfE)
(10 February 2026)**

Subject: Financing of leftist media and audiovisual empires by public banks

Matthieu Pigasse, president of the Combat press group and major shareholder in Mediawan, a large audiovisual production studio in Europe (producing TV series, films, documentaries, debate programmes and thematic TV channels), has stated that he wants to 'exert as much influence as possible on the 2027 presidential election' in order to defeat the National Rally ⁽¹⁾.

Mr Pigasse and his French associates, Pierre-Antoine Capton and Xavier Niel, hold 50.01% of Mediawan's voting rights through their holding company TopCo Breteuil. However, Bpifrance, the French public investment bank, is part-financing the group's acquisitions. Mediawan has also just acquired the US film and TV studio North Road ⁽²⁾.

1. Does this financing, granted by a public bank to an unambiguously leftist media group for the acquisition of new audiovisual media, comply with competition law?
2. Is this in compliance with the European Media Freedom Act ⁽³⁾, which was drawn up to promote media pluralism and combat excessive concentration?
3. Will the Commission protect the integrity of the French presidential election from interference by leftist media and audiovisual empires, partly financed by public bodies controlled by the French Government?

Supporter ⁽⁴⁾

Submitted: 10.2.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(13 April 2026)**

In accordance with EU law, a measure constitutes state aid if, cumulatively, (i) it is imputable to the State and financed through State resources, (ii) it confers a selective advantage to an undertaking, (iii) it is liable to affect trade between Member States and (iv) it distorts or threatens to distort competition.

Financing granted by a State-owned investment bank, therefore, may not automatically constitute state aid. If a Member State intends to grant state aid, it is under an obligation to notify the measure to the Commission and obtain the Commission's approval before the measure is implemented, unless the measure is covered by block exemptions.

The European Media Freedom Act ⁽¹⁾ does not prohibit investments or acquisitions in the media sector as such. It provides a framework for assessing media market concentrations that may affect media pluralism and editorial independence.

National regulatory authorities and, where relevant, competition authorities remain responsible for the assessment of such transactions, in accordance with EU and national law.

The European Media Board or the Commission may issue an opinion where the concentration is likely to affect the functioning of the internal market for media services.

The conduct and the organisation of free and fair elections are the competence and responsibility of the Member States, in accordance with their national constitutional and legislative rules, while respecting their international obligations and EU law.

¹ <https://www.france24.com/fr/info-en-continuu/20260114-le-patron-de-presse-matthieu-pigasse-veut-peser-sur-la-pr%C3%A9sidentielle-2027>

² https://www.liberation.fr/culture/cinema/en-rachetant-le-studio-audiovisuel-north-road-le-poids-lourd-francais-mediawan-etend-encore-son-empire-20260130_6EXLALCC4BFWRKA3QWJ2E57LLY/

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024R1083>

⁴ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Jean-Paul Garraud (PfE).

⁽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>.

National competent authorities and courts have the primary responsibility of ensuring compliance with these rules, including several EU rules applicable in electoral contexts such as the political advertising Regulation ⁽²⁾ or the General Data Protection Regulation ⁽³⁾

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/900 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2024 on the transparency and targeting of political advertising, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/900/oj/eng>.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj/eng>.