

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002899/26
to the Commission
Catherine Griset (Pfe), Virginie Joron (Pfe)
(14 July 2026)**

Subject: European Board for Media Services' failure to be impartial with regard to market concentration

On 3 July 2026, the European Board for Media Services failed to oppose the mega-merger of the Belgian French-speaking media groups Rossel (*Le Soir*, *SudInfo* and *L'Écho*) and IPM (*La Libre Belgique*, *L'Avenir*, *La DH* and *LN24*) ⁽¹⁾.

With regard to Article 23 of the European Media Freedom Act, it considered that the merger did not pose a real risk to the functioning of the internal market for media services, although it recognised that it would create a 'quasi-monopoly' in Belgium.

This decision comes as a surprise, given that, on 10 April 2026, the board stated its opposition, on the basis of media pluralism, to the takeover of a Hungarian tabloid by Indamedia, a media group close to former Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán ⁽²⁾. The Commission itself opened an infringement procedure against Hungary in this connection.

1. Will the Commission also oppose the quasi-monopoly being created in French-speaking Belgium?
2. If not, should it be inferred that the establishment of media monopolies is forbidden when they lean to the right (Hungary under the Orbán Government), but allowed when they lean to the left (French-speaking Belgium)?

Submitted: 14.7.2026

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

The proposed acquisition of IPM by Rossel was not notified to the Commission under the Merger Regulation ⁽¹⁾. The acquisition was notified and cleared by the Belgian Competition Authority on 3 July 2026, subject to conditions aimed at preserving the quality and diversity of the French-language daily press ⁽²⁾.

The Media Board, established under the European Media Freedom Act ⁽³⁾ (EMFA), considered that the Rossel/IPM merger had a primarily national dimension and was therefore unable to establish that all the conditions required for a valid opinion under Article 23 of the EMFA were met.

However, given the significant impact of the proposed concentration on the French-speaking Belgian media ecosystem, the Media Board calls on the national competent authorities to carefully consider any commitments offered by the parties, including their enforceability, duration, monitoring and effectiveness in preserving editorial autonomy and diversity ⁽⁴⁾. At this stage, the Commission does not intend to issue its own opinion on the merger under Article 23 of the EMFA.

¹ https://media-board.europa.eu/document/download/6eaa8524-2272-4330-888d-e008e66d673b_en?filename=Media%20Board%20statement%20on%20the%20proposed%20Rossel-IPM%20concentration.pdf.

² https://media-board.europa.eu/news-0/opinion-media-board-pursuant-article-23-1-european-media-freedom-act-emfa-2026-04-10_en.

⁽¹⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 of 20 January 2004 on the control of concentrations between undertakings (the EC Merger Regulation).

⁽²⁾ <https://www.belgiancompetition.be/en/decisions/26-cc-22-rossel-ipm>.

⁽³⁾ 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).

⁽⁴⁾ https://media-board.europa.eu/deliverables_en.