

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-000667/25
to the Commission
Mélissa Camara (Verts/ALE)
(12 February 2025)**

Subject: Rule of law concerns in Slovakia

The Slovakian Government, claiming foreign interference, has recently requested information on the funding of non-governmental organisations, media and journalists operating in Slovakia. This move raises concerns about respect for the fundamental democratic principles of the European Union.

Firstly, it could undermine the freedom of association and of the press, guaranteed under Articles 11 and 12 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Similar restrictions have already been condemned by the EU Court of Justice in *Commission v Hungary* in 2020.

Secondly, while the fight against foreign interference is a legitimate objective, it cannot result in discriminatory or arbitrary measures against certain civil society actors. The transparency requirement must be applied in a balanced manner and not be instrumentalised for political purposes.

Finally, this move could undermine political pluralism and equality in the democratic debate, values which are enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

Given these risks, does the Commission intend to examine this situation and, if necessary, initiate proceedings against Slovakia to ensure that the EU's fundamental values are respected?

Submitted: 12.2.2025

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(2 April 2025)**

The Commission is monitoring the developments in Slovakia. An environment enabling political pluralism, equality in the democratic debate as well as freedom of expression and association is an essential component of democracies.

Democratic accountability and transparency are also key elements of well-functioning democracies. The proposed Directive on interest representation carried out on behalf of third countries lays down balanced and proportionate transparency requirements accompanied with strong safeguards to prevent misuse.

Such internal market standards should apply to all economic operators carrying out interest representation activities in the internal market impacting the regulatory and decision-making process in the EU, regardless of their legal form.

The Commission is preparing the European Democracy Shield, as announced in the Political Guidelines ⁽¹⁾. It will constitute a horizontal strategic framework to better protect and promote democracy, in full compliance with fundamental rights and democratic principles including freedom of expression and of association.

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en