

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3251/09

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to the Commission

Subject:           Infringement of freedom of political expression in Italy

On 15 April 2009, the office of the head of the Rai supervisory committee approved rules on making airtime available for the forthcoming European elections. Under these rules, which were adopted via an extraordinary procedure that showed little respect for pluralism, some important political parties are not allowed on political television programmes during the period prior to the publication of the lists of candidates. Recently formed political groups are subjected to very restrictive requirements under Article 3(2) of these rules, such that groups like 'Sinistra e libertà', which has 12 MEPs in Parliament at present, are not eligible for party election broadcasts.

Furthermore, this comes at a time when coverage of Parliament's activities by Italian television is virtually nil.

Does the Commission consider that the aforesaid rules comply with the letter and the spirit of EU law, which upholds the right to be informed and media pluralism?

Does the Commission not think that the right to vote can only be exercised as an informed right (also through impartial and balanced reporting by the mass media)?