

**Question for written answer E-002213/2022/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Klára Dobrev (S&D), Csaba Molnár (S&D), Sándor Rónai (S&D), Attila Ara-Kovács (S&D)

Subject: Further restriction of mass media in Hungary

According to a government decree published in Hungary, a vendor of press products is not obliged to obtain a permit for use of public space if they only sell press products that contain public service announcements on the war in Ukraine. By means of this allowance, the government decree is pressuring vendors to stop distributing newspapers that do not contain public service announcements. According to the practice of the Hungarian government, a public service announcement is one-sided, often anti-Union propaganda issued by the government, which is in line with Moscow's stance as regards the war. The aim of this latest ploy of the Fidesz government is to use the pretext of the war in Ukraine to eliminate independent newspapers that do not contain government propaganda. For years, the government has only published announcements in 'friendly' newspapers.

This provision puts press products which do not publish public service announcements, i.e. are not considered 'friendly', at a serious disadvantage. With this new measure, the Fidesz government is further restricting freedom of information.

In the light of the above, we ask the Commission the following:

1. Does the Commission agree that this puts Hungarian and foreign market players whose press products do not include government-ordered public service announcements at a disadvantage?
2. What action can the Commission take to prevent such and similar political discrimination in the European Union?
3. What other measures can the Commission take in response to the given situation?