



[FRA – Directorate, A-1040 Wien, Schwarzenbergplatz 11]

Vienna, 19 April 2011
FRA -2011-5774

Mr Jerzy Buzek
President
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60
1047 - Brussels
BELGIUM

Dear President,

Thank you very much for your letter of 4 April 2011 forwarding to me a request by Mr. Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar, Chair of the Parliament's Committee on Civil liberties, Justice and Home Affairs for an annually updated study on media pluralism in the EU Member States.

The Fundamental Rights Agency agrees that protecting the freedom of expression and media pluralism is vital. In this regard, it is indeed of great importance to verify how media pluralism is respected, protected and fulfilled across the European Union. We have in particular taken note of a project initiated in 2007 by the Task Force for the Co-ordination of Media Affairs of the European Commission.

The work of the Commission was based on a three-step approach to advance the debate on media pluralism across the European Union. The first step, completed in 2007, consisted in the publication of a Commission Staff Working Paper on Media Pluralism in the 27 Member States. The second step, completed in 2009, consisted of an independent study on media pluralism, which led to the development of a Media Pluralism Monitoring tool (MPM) that could be applied across the Member States to assess risks for media pluralism.

The third step would have consisted of implementing the MPM across the 27 Member States, which would itself have been the basis for a Commission Communication on the matter. We have learned from the Commission that it is however very unlikely that this third step will be implemented. The estimated cost of at least €2 million associated with implementing the MPM across the Member States is one of the reasons for this. The principal reason, however, relates to the fact that the regulation of media pluralism is an area that has not been conferred upon the Union in the Treaties and therefore competence in this matter remains with the Member States.

European Union Agency for
Fundamental Rights

Agence des droits fondamentaux
de l'Union Européenne

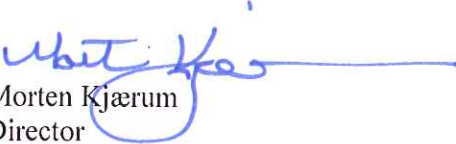
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Despite the appreciation of the high importance of the topic, the Fundamental Rights Agency is exclusively mandated to operate in areas of EU competence and as a result is not in a position to develop work that falls outside its terms of reference. In addition, the human and financial resources at the Agency's disposal for the implementation of the Annual Work Programme would not permit us to meet the LIBE Committee's request in a timely manner.

Yours sincerely,


Morten Kjærum
Director

FRA
Directorate