

**RSF urges Juncker to call for the repeal of Poland's new media law**

**As the European Commission prepares to hold a debate tomorrow on the rule of law in Poland, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has written to the commission's president, Jean-Claude Juncker, urging him to unequivocally condemn Poland's new media law and to call for its repeal.**

Dear President Juncker,

All Europe will be watching you tomorrow, when the members of the European Commission are to discuss the situation in Poland with regard to the rule of law. This discussion cannot end without a strong undertaking from you. Your credibility depends on it.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) an international organization that defends freedom of information, urges you to unequivocally condemn Poland's enactment of a new media law violating fundamental European values, and to call for its complete repeal.

This law gives the government full powers to appoint and dismiss the chief executives and supervisory boards of the public broadcast media, who until now were selected by means of a procedure overseen by the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT).

Respect for media freedom and pluralism are among the requirements for admission to the European Union, which cannot demand from membership candidates what it does not demand from its own members.

Poland's President Andrzej Duda enacted the law on 7 January, a week after the two parliamentary chambers passed it without any debate.

RSF and other NGOs filed a joint warning with the Council of Europe on 4 January about the threat that this law poses to media freedom. Posted on the Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists, this alert was sent to the Polish authorities requesting a response. There was none.

The ruling Law and Justice party (PiS) already gave evidence of its authoritarian tendencies when it passed a law in late December stripping Poland's constitutional tribunal of its independence.

In a letter to Polish foreign minister Witold Waszczykowski on 30 December, European Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "Freedom and pluralism of the media are crucial (...) in a member state respectful of the common values on which the union is founded."

RSF hopes that the action that the European Commission takes as a result of tomorrow's debate accords with this position.

We are all very conscious of the precedent of Hungary's adoption of a draconian media law in late 2010, to which the European Commission reacted by recommending amendments. Eventually adopted by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government, these recommendations were purely cosmetic and did not address the core of the problem because the ruling party, Fidesz, continues to control the composition and powers of Hungary's all-important Media Council.

RSF cautions the European Commission against any unprincipled compromise that endangers media pluralism and freedom in Poland.

RSF says no to the "Orbanization" of Polish democracy.

Sincerely,

Christophe Deloire

Reporters Without Borders secretary-general