Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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12 October 2016

State of media freedom in Hungary

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Attila MESTERHÁZY and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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The Parliamentary Assembly and the Venice Commission had examined certain issues related to the functioning of democracy in Hungary with special regard to the Hungarian media law some years ago. However, the Hungarian Government has continued its policy that goes counter to democratic values – such as freedom of the press -, whereby worsening the state of free speech, pluralism of media and the freedom of Hungarian media.

The erosion of media freedom and pluralism has continued by the transformation of the public broadcasting media into a propaganda tool, by the acquisition of a national commercial television channel by a government commissioner of the Orbán government, and most recently by the complete closing of Hungary's biggest print opposition newspaper from one day to the next – without any prior notice – following its stories about the luxurious lifestyle of the head of the Prime Minister's cabinet office and about the governor of the National Bank.

The owner of *Népszabadság* suspended both the print and the online edition of the newspaper. Its reasoning is that the paper was operating at a considerable loss and struggled with dropping circulation in the last 10 years. But civil right groups said the newspaper had been shut down because it had published stories critical of the Orbán government.

This raises serious concerns regarding the functioning of the formerly pluralistic Hungarian media and gives the impression that the government endeavours to silence all those who dare to criticise its members and actions. Therefore the Parliamentary Assembly is compelled to revisit the functioning of media freedom in Hungary as one of the most important pillars of democracy.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

MESTERHÁZY Attila, Hungary, SOC
BARNETT Doris, Germany, SOC
BONET Sílvia Eloïsa, Andorra, SOC
CHRISTOFFERSEN Lise, Norway, SOC
CILEVIČS Boriss, Latvia, SOC
CORLĂŢEAN Titus, Romania, SOC
FINCKH-KRÄMER Ute, Germany, SOC
GUNNARSSON Jonas, Sweden, SOC
GUTIÉRREZ Antonio, Spain, SOC
GUZENINA Maria, Finland, SOC
HUOVINEN Susanna, Finland, SOC
JANSSON Eva-Lena, Sweden, SOC
JENSEN Mogens, Denmark, SOC
L OVOCHKINA Yuliya, Ukraine, SOC
MAELEN Dirk, Van der, Belgium, SOC
MAURY PASQUIER Liliane, Switzerland, SOC
OHLSSON Carina, Sweden, SOC
RODRÍGUEZ RAMOS Soraya, Spain, SOC
SCHENNACH Stefan, Austria, SOC
SCHWABE Frank, Germany, SOC
TORNARE Manuel, Switzerland, SOC
WURM Gisela, Austria, SOC

1. SOC: Socialist Group