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Media freedom and implementation of Council of Europe recommendations in Albania

Written question No. 809 to the Committee of Ministers
by Ms Albana VOKSHI, Albania, Group of the European People's Party

Political pressure on the media, media ownership concentration, media closures, intimidation of journalists, and continued criminalisation of defamation all mark a media freedom backsliding in Albania.

The recommendations made as part of the processes supported by the Council of Europe, including the joint European Union and Council of Europe programme entitled “Promoting Freedom of Expression in Albania through Open Dialogue” have not been implemented. Experts called for decriminalising defamation and strengthening guarantees for media pluralism, the safety of journalists, media ownership transparency, and the independence of the regulatory authority and the public broadcasting service.

However, the newly adopted Criminal Code retains defamation as a criminal offence, maintaining legal uncertainty and the risk of intimidation. At least 77 journalists are currently facing criminal proceedings initiated by political actors, which have a chilling effect on investigative journalism.

These developments raise serious concerns about Albania's compliance with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the standards of the Council of Europe.

Ms Vokshi

To ask the Committee of Ministers:

How does the Committee of Ministers assess Albania's compliance with Council of Europe standards on freedom of expression and media pluralism, in particular in light of the continued criminalisation of defamation and the lack of implementation of relevant recommendations?