

FORM FOR TABLING A QUESTION FOR
ORAL ANSWER WITH DEBATE (Rule 128)

Select only one addressee:

COUNCIL

COMMISSION

VICE-PRESIDENT / HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

AUTHOR(S): Javier Nart and Petras Austrevicius (on behalf of the ALDE Group)

SUBJECT: (please specify) Media freedom in Georgia, following the Supreme Court's decision about the ownership of public TV station Rustavi2

TEXT:

Despite the efforts of the EU Delegation in Tblisi to monitor the Rustavi 2 court case, on 2 March , one day after the visa free travel was granted to Georgia, the Supreme Court of Georgia decided to attribute the ownership of the Rustavi2 TV station to a proxy of the current Government.

Rustavi2 is Georgia's most popular independent television broadcaster and the only large media with a pro-western editorial line. This decision undermines the space for media freedom and free public opinion in the country, as it limits access of the democratic opposition's voices to Georgian broadcast media.

In view of the worrying situation, the Rustavi2 team is offering collectively to buy the station.

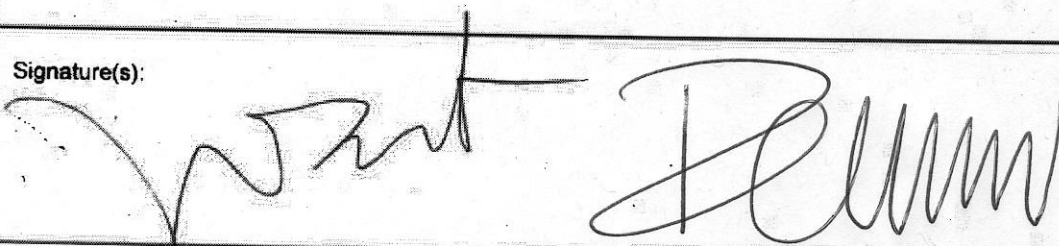
In June 2014, the EU and Georgia signed an Association Agreement, which entered into force on 1 July 2016, under which the parties committed to respect fundamental freedoms, human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance, bases on common values.

Will the HRVP Mogherini urge the Georgian government to ensure and protect a free, open and pluralistic media environment in the country and to remain committed to the European values, which lie at the heart of the political association and economic integration as envisaged in the Association Agreement?

What further steps will the EU take in order to preserve the rule of law and media freedom in the country?

Will the EU's readiness for close cooperation with the new Georgian government, as stated in the last December 2016 3rd Association Council meeting, result affected?

Signature(s):



Date: 07/03/2017