Parliamentary Assembly's Culture Committee Criticises Media Situation in Italy

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At its meeting in Paris on 13 March 2002, the Committee on Culture, Science and Education of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe expressed a critical opinion on the media situation in Italy.

The Committee stressed its concern at the fact that the Italian Government is, directly or indirectly, in control of all national television channels. It found that the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, is still the owner of three national private television channels and of an important publishing group, and has not yet isolated himself from running his media interests. The Committee noted, on this point, that a law was recently passed by the Italian Parliament to legitimise ownership by a government minister of important media outlets. In reality, the Bill in question, Disegno di legge N. 1206, Norme in materia di risoluzione dei conflitti di interessi (Draft Law No. 1206 on norms in the matter of the resolution of conflicts of interests), has so far only been approved by one of the two Chambers of the Italian Parliament, so it is not yet definitively binding.

In addition, the Prime Minister is head of the coalition government that appoints the Presidents of both Chambers, who are in charge of nominating the governing board which administers three State-owned national television channels (RAI). On the other hand, the Committee noted that the new five-member governing board of RAI is led by a former President of the Constitutional Court and includes two representatives from the opposition parties.

Finally, the Committee supported the plea made by Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi for plurality and independence of the media as a vital element of democracy.

Statement by the Parliamentary Assembly's Culture Committee on the media situation in Italy, Press Release of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, 13 March 2002, Doc. 139a(2002)

Legislatura 14° - Disegno di legge N. 1206, presentato dal Presidente del Consiglio dei ministry (BERLUSCONI) e dal Ministro per la funzione pubblica (FRATTINI) di concerto col Ministro per gli affari regionali (LA

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LOGGIA) (V. Stampato Camera n. 1707) approvato dalla Camera dei deputati il 28 febbraio 2002 Trasmesso dal Presidente della Camera dei deputati alla Presidenza il 1º marzo 2002, Norme in materia di risoluzione dei conflitti di interessi

http://www.senato.it/bgt/ShowDoc.asp?leg=14&id=00015453&tipodoc=Ddlpres&modo=PRODUZIONE

Draft Law No. 1206 on norms in the matter of the resolution of conflicts of interests, approved by the Chamber of Deputies on 28 February and transmitted by the President of the Chamber of Deputies to the President [of the Republic] on 1 March

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