

EN
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Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.3.2021)

The State Media Treaty has been assessed by the Commission following its notification under the procedure established by Directive (EU) 2015/1535¹, according to which the Commission and Member States may react if the notified measure may create obstacles to the internal market of goods and information society services. The Commission's assessment in this context does not take into account the concept of journalistic quality.

In relation to the broadcast concerned, the Commission notes that broadcasters bear editorial responsibility for the news content they transmit and are required under Union legislation to provide a right of reply or equivalent remedies.

More generally, the Commission considers that public debate should be underpinned by accurate and factual information. Through the Action Plan against Disinformation, the Commission promotes actions to counter disinformation². Notably, to contribute to the fight against online disinformation, it has facilitated networking between independent European organisations of fact-checkers through the Horizon 2020 project SOMA³. The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)⁴, established in June 2020, goes further and supports the creation and the work of an independent multidisciplinary community composed of fact-checkers, academic researchers and other relevant stakeholders capable of detecting, analysing and exposing disinformation campaigns. The Action Plan notes the importance of fact-checkers in challenging disinformation and underlines that their activities need to be carried out in full independence. Therefore, the Commission support to the fact-checking community does not influence what fact-checkers decide to review. Any action against disinformation must also uphold fundamental rights, including the freedom of expression.

¹ Directive (EU) 2015/1535 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 September 2015 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical regulations and of rules on Information Society services.

² JOIN (2018) 36 final

³ <https://www.disinfobservatory.org/>

⁴ <https://edmo.eu/>