

**Freedom of press and media in the world - Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world 2012 and the European Union's policy on the matter - Promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief**

Wednesday, 12 June 2013 - Strasbourg

*Debate*

Pino Arlacchi (S&D ). - Mr President, I believe that any discussion at EU level on the freedom of the press and media in the world can only be credible if media freedom is safeguarded and respected within the Union itself. We must remind ourselves that, in recent years, some European media have come under scrutiny for unethical and illegal behaviour. For this reason, the Commission should closely monitor the independence of the press within the Member States, while applying a global strategy of transparency and accountability.

Freedom of expression is the cornerstone of democracy. For this reason, the press must operate independently and free of political and financial pressure. Too often in Europe we see media empires, controlled or owned by politicians or industrial groups, carrying out misinformation campaigns, with disastrous results for democracy and freedom.

At international level, I agree on the need to adopt a press and media strategy within EU foreign policy, involving in this effort multilateral bodies such as the Council of Europe, the OECD and the United Nations.

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