

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

European Council President, Charles Michel

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola

Dear Presidents,

We, the undersigned international journalists' and media freedom organisations, are deeply concerned by plans of the Slovak government to dissolve the country's public-service media, Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS), and replace it with a new, politically controlled organisation, the Slovak Television and Radio (STaR)

The proposed Act on Slovak Television and Radio will provide for direct government control over the public media, ending its independence and potentially enabling its swift conversion into an institution for state propaganda.

This act poses a grave threat to media independence and press freedom in Slovakia and is a direct challenge to the EU's resolve to protect media freedom and the integrity of European democracy. It contravenes the European Media Freedom Act and its provisions to protect the independence of public service media.

Moreover, the bill, if swiftly implemented, risks undermining the Slovak public's right to independent information ahead of the upcoming EU elections and thereby the vote's fairness.

We welcome the swift expressions of concern by Vice President of the Commission, Vera Jourova, and other political leaders about the bill and we call for these to be followed by urgent action across the European Institutions.

We urge all the institutions of the EU to take all necessary steps to defend press freedom and uphold democratic principles in Slovakia.

Signed

International Press Institute (IPI)

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

Free Press Unlimited (FPU)

OBC Transeuropa (OBCT)

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)