

NEELIE KROES

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ares, 1203453
Brussels, 12 OCT. 2012

Dear Prime Minister,

I would like to thank you for the constructive meeting we had last month in your office. I appreciate the time you dedicated to it.

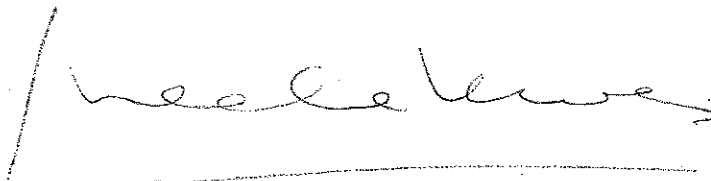
I would like to reiterate my very strong concerns regarding the state of media freedom and independence in your country. I appreciate the fact that you spontaneously admitted that the situation of media ownership transparency is not satisfactory in Bulgaria and that you agreed with me on the need for urgent action. I am eager to know which remedies you and your government intend to put in place.

During my short stay in Sofia, I also had a most interesting meeting with representatives of the media who drew my attention to what they see as major issues in the Bulgarian media, notably an excessive concentration as regards press ownership and distribution and lack of transparency. Some of the participants also expressed strong doubts as to the fairness in the distribution of advertising and promotion campaigns funded by public sources, notably originating from EU funds. If true, such practices put at risk the financial viability and the independence of the media and risk violating the principles of good governance. As you know, I am particularly attached to the need for transparency and fair competition in all sectors, but most especially when fundamental values such as freedom of the media are at stake. This is why I would urge you to take all appropriate measures to ensure that Bulgarian citizens benefit from the diverse and pluralistic media environment they deserve.

Full transparency of ownership structure is, in my view, an indispensable prerequisite to build confidence towards the media and is a key element to ensure media independence. I am a firm defender of media freedom and media pluralism, and we must strive to reach the highest possible standards across all EU Member States.

I am very keen to hear what measures your government intends to take to remedy these challenges. You can of course count on my strong support and the full cooperation of my services should you wish to avail of it.

Best regards,



Mr. Boyko Borisov
Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria
Sofia, Bulgaria