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Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
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The report by the International Press Institute (IPI) on Bulgaria is part of the Media Freedom Rapid Response¹, which tracks, monitors and responds to violations of press and media freedom in Member States and Candidate Countries.

The IPI report is, therefore, part of an independent project, the opinions expressed in the report are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Commission, nor does the Commission take part in the preparation of any concrete deliverables of the project. The IPI report continues the ‘Media Capture’ series that so far has also covered Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Czechia. To the best of the Commission’s knowledge, the selection of media experts for this series of reports seeks to ensure a comprehensive assessment of complex developments, with a particular emphasis on legal and academic expertise.

The Commission is itself monitoring closely the state of media pluralism and freedom in all Member States, including Bulgaria, in the context of its annual Rule of Law Report, which includes information about the legislative frameworks and related measures to guarantee media freedom and pluralism and protection of journalists in the Member States².

Regarding Bulgaria, the 2022 Rule of Law Report noted a lack of a clear regulatory framework to ensure transparency in the allocation of state advertising, and the need to strengthen the independence of public service media. The report also highlighted that the professional environment of journalists has slightly improved since the last year, nevertheless issues, such as access to public information, working conditions and strategic lawsuits, remain³.

¹ <https://www.mfr.eu/>

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2022-rule-law-report-communication-and-country-chapters_en#:~:text=The%202022%20Rule%20of%20Law,situation%20in%20each%20Member%20State

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/10_1_193975_coun_chap_bulgaria_en.pdf