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**Request to include freedom of the Media  
on the agenda of the XLV COSAC in Budapest on 29-31 May 2011**

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Dear Mr. Hörcsik

We would like to propose to you as the President of COSAC that the question of freedom of the media be placed on the agenda of the XLV COSAC in Budapest on 29-31 May 2011.

We believe that we as parliamentarians have a special obligation to guarantee that freedom of expression and the media is respected in our societies.

Hungary has recently come in for widespread criticism over the media law that came into effect on 1 January 2011, just as your country assumed the presidency of the European Union.

According to information in the European press the new media law provides a new regulatory body with the right to impose huge fines for material that is considered offensive. This body also has the right to inspect documents and force journalists to reveal sources on issues related to national security.

We are concerned that this new law may be "incompatible" with EU rules on press freedom. Similar concerns for freedom of the media have been echoed by the European Parliament and the European Commission.

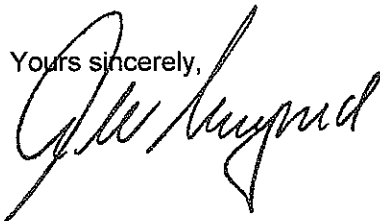
Freedom of expression is part of the common heritage of all European legal systems and protected by the European Convention of Human Rights (art. 10) and the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights that was made legally binding with the Lisbon Treaty which all EU Member States have signed up to.

As it is laid down in article 11 of the European Union's Charter of fundamental rights:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected".

The Hungarian law comes at a time where freedom of press is under pressure in many parts of the world. This should not spread to Europe. Let us therefore organise a debate on this highly important principle at the COSAC in Budapest in May.

We would be happy to introduce the issue at the COSAC chairpersons' meeting in Budapest on 11 February under the agenda point preparing the agenda for the XLV COSAC meeting in May.

Yours sincerely,  


Anne-Marie Meldgaard  
Chairman of the European Affairs Committee



Eva Kjer Hansen  
Vice-Chairman of the European Affairs Committee