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Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission

Federica Mogherini
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-
President of the European Commission

Günther H. Oettinger
Commissioner for Digital Economy & Society

Neven Mimica
Commissioner for International Cooperation & Development

Johannes Hahn
Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations

Brussels, 16 December 2016

Dear President,

Dear High Representative,

Dear Commissioners,

I write to you concerning recent problems in the management of the Euronews channel, which receives an estimated €25 million per year from the EU, its primary source of funding.

In February 2015 Egyptian billionaire Naguib Sawiris bought a majority stake of 53% of Euronews, after a visit from Vladimir Putin to his country. The Ukrainian service of Euronews was bought in March 2015 by Ukrainian oligarch Dmytro Firtash, which led the government in Kyiv to ban the channel for suspected bias. There have also been recent reports about the intention of NBC News, an American broadcaster, to buy a large minority share in Euronews. Commissioner Oettinger has reportedly met with Deborah Turness, President of NBC News.



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According to media reports, journalists from Euronews passed a no-confidence vote in the broadcasters' management, sustaining this position on the alleged involvement of members of the management in corruption cases. Furthermore, following pressure from management, journalists in Euronews are allegedly not allowed to criticise Turkey. There has also been a diminishing interest by management to keep a multilingual service, as befits an European independent channel, replacing it by a primarily English service.

When asked by journalists, Commission Chief Spokesperson Margaritis Schinas stated that Euronews is a private company. President Juncker has, however, called for "everything to be done [...] to guarantee the editorial independence and quality of programmes on all the channel's services."¹

I agree that it is essential to maintain the independence and proper funding of Euronews, a quintessential and multilingual European news channel, crucial for the global promotion of rigorous and unbiased information with a European focus, and with important implications for our foreign policy, especially towards our neighbourhood.

In an era of "post-truth" politics and reporting, it is of paramount importance that the EU strives to support strong standards of media reporting, and keep journalists in a media such as Euronews free from pressure

I urge you to use your position to voice the concerns of journalists and workers of Euronews and press for a new management to be appointed, one which ensures adequate levels of integrity and independence.

I urge you, as well, to immediately order an investigation into the possible base of rumours of corruption affecting the image and performance of Euronews.

Ana Gomes MEP

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/10061/2015/EN/10061-2015-2120-EN-F1-1.PDF>