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EWC OPEN LETTER ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN ITALY

The Board of the European Writers' Council – the federation of national and trans-national authors' associations in 33 countries of Europe, comprising more than 60 organisations, meeting in Helsinki on 3 July 2010,

Wish to express their profound concern about the alarming situation in Italy in the sector of Media, newspapers, publishing and culture, due to a proposed law that is already under discussion in the Italian Parliament. This law would allow for severe financial and penal punishments for journalists and authors who choose freely to publish news stories in newspapers, books, TV formats or Internet Media, without submitting their copy to the proposed restrictions.

If this new law is approved, as seems to be the intention of the Government, without an appropriate and pluralistic debate on the matter, this will seriously affect Freedom of Information and Freedom of Expression in Italy.

Already the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mrs. Viviane Reding, has reminded the Italian government of "*the high symbolic value of the European Charter on Freedom of the Press*".

The European Writers' Council wishes to emphasize again the fundamental value of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press for all authors, writers, journalists, and for all the citizens of Europe.

The Board
European Writers' Council

Brussels, 9 July 2010