

**Question for written answer E-008000/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Slavi Binev (EFD)

Subject: Absence of democratic free elections in Bulgaria

The recent elections in Bulgaria were exceptionally corrupt, biased and manipulated. The root of the problem is the complete absence of a level playing field for the political parties, inter alia in the media, in the Central Electoral Commission and in relation to financing. Most media outlets and opinion poll agencies are in the service of a few large parties, which invested huge sums of money in them. International election observers reported that votes had been bought and ballot papers had been falsified; on the eve of the poll, 350 000 ballot papers were discovered that had been intended to distort the result. According to the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria party, abuses were particularly flagrant in constituencies in Turkey where the electorate was marched out to support the ethnic Movement for Rights and Freedoms party (DPS). Only 50% of those entitled to vote did so, and a quarter of those voters (among them, members of large civic associations) are unrepresented in the new parliament. Fraudulent elections produce a fraudulent parliament and a fraudulent government, and the end result is hunger, poverty and desperation. The recommendations of the Venice Commission have not been followed.

In the light of all this, the European Parliament ought to extend support to those political parties that suffered as a result of the electoral fraud; otherwise the foundations of democracy in Bulgaria will be undermined. The Bulgarian people are currently out on the street again calling for a new electoral code and a new government.

1. Is the Commission aware of these problems in Bulgaria – a Member State of the EU – which are eroding the basic principles of democracy?
2. How does the Commission intend to react?