

**Question for written answer E-008282/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Slavi Binev (EFD)

Subject: Physical and psychological attack on journalists

I have been informed, by the leaders of the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria party, of a direct attack on media freedom in Bulgaria. As a politician who champions democratic principles and freedoms, I was shocked to learn that, on 5 July 2013, Volen Siderov and 15 other individuals from the Attack party set upon and beat up members of a crew from the SKAT television channel. This attack, on journalists from a private broadcasting company, was not only unlawful but also undemocratic and it is not the sort of behaviour one associates with the chair of a political party. Any attack on a person is a punishable offence, and Mr Siderov is exploiting his parliamentary immunity and his position in order to break the law. Instead of apologising for the attack and cooperating with the investigation into it, he is continuing to disrupt public order by organising unlawful protests outside SKAT's headquarters, literally besieging the building and impeding the work of the TV channel.

Mr Siderov's arrogant behaviour does not stop there. He walks around in Parliament armed with a gun and a truncheon and he is accompanied at all times by his bodyguards. To crown it all, he has accused peaceful protestors of being paid to take part in street demonstrations, has claimed that they have no right to protest and has threatened them with citizen's arrest.

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