

**Question for written answer E-006976/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Jozo Radoš (ALDE)

Subject: Discrimination against Serbia's Croatian minority

Respect for minority rights is one of the fundamental values of the European Union. The rights of the Croatian national minority are regulated by a 2005 agreement with Serbia and Montenegro. I shall set out only the most serious examples of the violation of this agreement:

1. Failure to adopt rules on the representation of Croats in local, regional and national representative bodies;
2. Encouraging the division of the Croatian minority into Bunjevci and Šokci, and favouring those Bunjevci who do not declare themselves to be Croats;
3. Failure to comply with provisions on the names of settlements in the Croatian language;
4. Absence of Croatian-language textbooks in schools for the Croatian national minority;
5. Delayed opening of departments for the Croatian language at the University of Novi Sad and in the Teacher Training Faculty in Subotica.

As a consequence of Serbia's policy, the number of Croats in Serbia has been falling constantly since 1971, when there more than 120 000, as compared with 2011, when there were some 47 000. This fall is partly attributable to the exodus of some 30 000 Croats during the war as a result of various types of pressure. Serbia has so far failed to resolve the issue of the status of displaced persons. The situation is also being aggravated by the provocative actions of the Serbian President, Tomislav Nikolić, who gave a gift of textbooks printed in the Cyrillic alphabet – which he had paid to be printed – to the Bunjevci community.

Given that negotiations on Serbia's accession to the EU have been opened:

How will the Commission ensure, during EU negotiations with Serbia, that the rights of the Croatian minority in Serbia are respected?