

**Question for written answer E-013801/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Charles Tannock (ECR)

Subject: Citizenship application process in Bulgaria

There has been concern for some years now as to the large number of Macedonians being awarded Bulgarian citizenship. It has been brought to my attention that the naturalisation process continues and that there are increasing numbers being awarded citizenship in this way thanks to recent changes to the citizenship laws in Bulgaria.

Reports suggest that Macedonians are able to obtain Bulgarian citizenship by simply recounting the phrase, 'I have Bulgarian roots and I feel like a Bulgarian', without the need to provide any documentation or verifiable proof. The numbers of individuals gaining citizenship in this manner are estimated to range from between 60 000 and 120 000.

This process not only has potential ramifications for the political stability and reconciliation process in the Western Balkans, but also has the potential to impact all other Member States owing to the right of freedom of movement within the EU that Bulgarian citizenship affords.

What discussions have been conducted with the Bulgarian authorities on this subject?

Does the Commission know of any plans that the Bulgarian authorities have to change this policy?