

**Question for written answer E-000164/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Louis Aliot (ENF)**

Subject: Sexual assaults in Cologne - media censorship

The tragic events that took place in Cologne on the night of 31 December 2015, during which more than 500 women were assaulted, have sparked a heated debate in Germany and Europe. In the wake of these attacks, the policy of welcoming refugees is being called into question, given that the attackers have mostly been identified as asylum seekers. However, the initial report by local police, the day after the events, stated that there had been no major incidents that night. It was only at the end of the fourth day, seeing the number of complaints build up, that the first articles were published in the German and international press. While some media channels have apologised for this 'negligence', the media silence that surrounded such a tragedy for several days remains incomprehensible.

Will the European Union, which established the right to information and freedom of the press as fundamental values, conduct an investigation to shed light on the causes of this silence and prevent this from happening again in the future?