

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1325/01
by Arie Oostlander (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: 15-month prison sentence handed down to Mr Sotiris Bletsas for distributing information material financed by the Commission

In a resolution of 3 February 2001 the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL) in Dublin condemned the sentencing of Mr Sotiris Bletsas, a Greek national, by a court in Athens to 15 months' imprisonment. Mr Sotiris Bletsas was convicted of disseminating 'false information' about a European minority language in Greece. However, this allegedly false information consisted of a reference to the existence of the Vlach language in information material produced by the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages concerning minority languages in Europe. This material is financed by the Commission. Moreover, the existence of Vlach is recognised in the Commission's Euromosaic report.

Is the Commission aware of the conviction of Mr Sotiris Bletsas?

If so, does the Athens court's decision violate the fundamental right to freedom of expression?

Is the Commission considering taking steps against Greece, a Member State?