

**Question for written answer E-012402/2011
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Adrian Severin (NI)

Subject: European Council's decision not to grant EU candidate country status to Serbia

On 9 December 2011, Mr Bozidar Djelic, Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for EU accession, resigned, following the failure of the European Council to grant the Republic of Serbia the status of EU candidate country for EU.

The resignation of a minister holding such an important and sensitive portfolio constitutes in itself a political crisis. This resignation, and the political crisis it represents, is a consequence of the refusal by the European Council of 8-9 December 2011 to give Serbia the status of a candidate for EU accession. This decision was taken notwithstanding the indisputable progress made by Serbia with regard to internal reforms, cooperation with the ICTY and the start in good faith of the dialogue with Pristina. This progress was made in spite of the opposition of Serbian nationalist-populists and was recognised as such by the EU.

The postponement of the decision, contrary to the EU's own assessment, has therefore caused a political crisis in Belgrade, which is likely to confirm the Serbian Eurosceptics' thesis that the pro-European policy of the current Serbian Government and President Tadic has failed.

With a view to next year's elections in Serbia, such a development poses the risk of a rise to power of nationalist-populist or, at least, Eurosceptic forces.

Against this background, what measures do you intend to take in order to:

1. avoid the rise of national-populist and Eurosceptic forces in Serbia?
2. explain to all EU Member States the grave consequences stemming from the postponement of granting EU candidate country status to Serbia?
3. ensure that the unfortunate decision of the European Council will not encourage Pristina to adopt a rigid position in its dialogue with Belgrade?
4. avoid the transformation, by some Member States, of EU enlargement policy into a means of pressure aimed at obtaining geo-political concessions from a candidate state (in this case, Serbia)?
5. ensure that, at the March 2012 European Council meeting, Serbia is given EU candidate country status in full compliance with the progress it has already achieved?