

**Question for written answer E-001049/2012  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Slavi Binev (NI)**

Subject: Corruption surrounding concessions in Bulgaria

The Commission has still not given details of whether it has conducted a verification, as outlined in its answer to my question (22.7.2011- E-007272/2011), on the devastating consequences of a future gold mining operation in Krumovgrad, Bulgaria. The concession granted to the company Balkan Mineral and Mining is in stark non-compliance with the law. I concur with the letter from the citizens' movement against the concession, and would like to re-emphasise some of the shocking omissions in the issuing of the mining permit, which raise serious concerns of corruption. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) decision was made by a team that in no way had the necessary qualifications and experience to conduct such an assessment. In the whole team, there was not one narrow specialist in any of the areas under investigation.

According to prominent experts from Bulgaria and the USA, such EIAs would not be approved under any circumstances in the USA, Canada, or any other EU Member State. Such government decisions cast doubt on the whole policy being pursued by the authorities. In view of the fact, also, that this concession is not an isolated case of the law being infringed through such decisions by Bulgaria's Council of Ministers, I believe that the Commission needs to conduct a thorough investigation. I appeal to you to demand full documentation from the Bulgarian government and to assess the situation objectively. Its decision was clearly corrupted by shadowy motives.

It is a matter of saving unique flora and fauna, centuries-old tourist landmarks, and the lives and health of tens of thousands of people in two countries – Bulgaria and Greece.

My questions are:

1. What has the Commission done so far on this issue?
2. What are the next steps the Commission will take on this matter?