

**Question for written answer E-002856/2012/rev.1
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Slavi Binev (NI)

Subject: Dangerous situation in Bulgaria

The complete control of the media in Bulgaria and their inability to exercise freedom of speech conveniently shields those governing the country. Criticisms of the government from all sides are regularly filtered and go unpublished. To give one recent illustration of this: after I had called, from the floor of this House, for the arrest of the Prime Minister of Bulgaria and his accomplices, an appearance I had been due to make on national television was cancelled at the last minute. Public attention is being shifted in a very calculated manner towards other, relatively trivial issues such as the problems of bees, or herring roe, for example. In this way, Bulgarians, including the people who elected me, are being denied the opportunity of knowing about what I do. The absence of information about the EU institutions and the frenetic displacement of serious issues by 'softer' subjects have made Bulgarians sceptical about their relationship with the European institutions. The people are being deluded and kept in the dark about what is happening around them.

The points I am making are underscored by the fact that the Bulgarian Parliament's Media Committee has failed, in over a year, to make any response whatever to my request for a statement on the subject of freedom of speech (lodged on 28 January 2011, reference number KK/ 140-01-1).

A scenario similar to those in Hungary, Greece and the Arab countries is a more than likely prospect, with the difference that, in the case of Bulgaria, the things we have witnessed in all those countries may be combined.

- Will the Commission undertake to investigate the violation of the Bulgarian people's freedom of speech and their right to information – a freedom and a right protected under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?