

**Question for written answer E-003774/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Total ban on the use of languages other than the official language of Bulgaria during election campaigns

According to Article 351.2 of the Bulgarian Electoral Code, 'the right to be elected Member of the European Parliament for Bulgaria shall furthermore be vested in any citizen of a Member State of the European Union'. According to Article 181.2 of the same code, 'the election campaign shall be conducted in the Bulgarian language'. In this text, the legislator says that the election campaign in Bulgaria must be conducted only in the country's official language, which is Bulgarian. This legal contradiction makes it impossible to uphold Article 351.2 of the Electoral Code. Many Bulgarian politicians have been penalised for speaking a few sentences in a language other than the official language during election campaigns.

1. Does the Commission agree that this rule constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and association, and non-discrimination, as laid down in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Articles 11 and 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Articles 2, 3 and 9 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 2.1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?
2. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that languages other than Bulgarian may be used during election campaigns in Bulgaria?
3. Are EU political leaders also at risk of being fined during election campaigns in Bulgaria if they use languages other than the official election language?