

**Question for written answer E-003432/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Hate speech against Bulgaria

In a statement made in public in the centre of Skopje, a representative of the Youth Forces Union of the DPMNE called Bulgarians 'Tatar fascists' and insinuated that Bulgarian women were 'easy'.

Let me remind you that the DPMNE is the largest opposition party and for many years it would promote the Comintern-based idea of 'Macedonianism'. That young man's words are the fruit of the education system of North Macedonia, where Bulgarians are portrayed as 'fascist invaders', 'Tatars' and 'rapists'. All of this is very far from the historical reality. As a great VMRO leader said, 'when Bulgarian schools were opened in Macedonia in 1941, there was no resentment against them and no other schools were requested', and that is the historical truth. At the time a 'Macedonian' was synonymous with a 'Bulgarian' and that is our common history, which we must acknowledge.

The hate speech against Bulgaria in the Republic of North Macedonia is coming from the second largest party in the country, and the government is not even trying to distance itself from these kind of statements, nor to stop or sanction them.

That is why we would like to put the following questions to the Commission:

1. Will the Commission take into account the anti-Bulgarian statements and actions in the Republic of North Macedonia in its next annual progress report on that country?
2. Will this affect the EU's position on the opening of negotiations with the Republic of North Macedonia?