

**Question for written answer E-004403/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)

Subject: Removal of a Bulgarian monument in the Republic of North Macedonia

Yet another outrage has been committed against a Bulgarian memorial in the Republic of North Macedonia. A memorial plaque to the military leader Velko Skochivirski and his men, who fell fighting the Turkish army, used to stand in the courtyard of St. Archangel Mikhail church in the village of Klepach, in the borough of Prilep in North Macedonia. While Zoran Zaev speaks duplicitously of what are cosmetic changes to textbooks, on the ground monuments clearly showing that fallen leaders were Bulgarians who fought for the freedom of Bulgarians in Macedonia are being removed.

This crime against the memorial to Velko Skochivirski and all his men demonstrates just one thing – that the Republic of North Macedonia is continuing to pursue totalitarian ideology-coated anti-Bulgarian policies inherited from Yugoslav times. The erasure of history and expunging of Bulgarians were intrinsic to the Communist regime in Yugoslavia – and condemned long ago as being a criminal offence.

I am writing this because we are living in 2021, not 1946. We do not impugn identities other than our own, and ask the Republic of North Macedonia not to impugn the identity of Bulgarians living there now or the identity of those hundreds of thousands who died for the freedom and prosperity of Macedonia.

Can the Commission state, in relation to this act of vandalism:

1. What its stance is on the destruction, erasure and replacement of historic monuments?
2. What it will do to put an end to anti-Bulgarian acts, which are becoming increasingly frequent?