

**Question for written answer E-004471/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)**

**Subject:** Attack on reporters investigating the issue of the Bulgarian memorial plaque removed from the village of Klepach, North Macedonia

A few days ago, I notified the Commission of the case of the memorial plaque to Velko Skochivirski, a leader in the Bulgarian resistance against the Ottoman Turks, in the village of Klepach in North Macedonia. That memorial plaque has been replaced by a new one which has nothing in common with the original plaque laid by Skochivirski's contemporaries. The names have been changed to comply with the new language rules in North Macedonia, which were originally introduced during the Yugoslav occupation.

When reporters from the TV station BTB went to investigate this issue, they were attacked. Stones were thrown at them. Falsifying history is dangerous; changing the identity of people who are already dead is disgraceful; but attacking reporters who are simply doing their job is disgusting. This has been happening in a country that is aspiring to join the EU. Moreover, it has been happening in a country which is now claiming that the only obstacle in its way is Bulgaria's refusal to set a date for negotiations. This has been happening in a country with a consistent and well-documented national policy of repression against Bulgarians.

1. Does the Commission consider it normal for reporters to be physically attacked?
2. Is there, anywhere in the EU, a country that permits such violence?
3. When will the Commission address the issue of the anti-Bulgarian attacks in North Macedonia?