

**Question for written answer E-005016/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)**

**Subject:** Hate speech against Bulgaria and the Bulgarian community during local election campaigning in the Republic of North Macedonia

Hate speech against Bulgaria was used during the election campaign in the Republic of North Macedonia as a key means of whipping up the electorate. Local government issues were not addressed, as should be the case in local elections, but Bulgaria – and specifically the nationality of Daniela Arsovska, who was standing for mayor of Skopje – were.

The hypocrisy of the Social Democratic Union for Macedonia (SDSM) leadership, which launched attacks on Arsovska, has been exposed for all to see. Zoran Zaev's party has sworn they are in no way discriminatory and that a compromise can be found with Bulgaria, when in reality their actions show there to be no compromise and that no compromise will ever be found. We will not allow a country in which people are attacked for being Bulgarian – be this on account of their documentation or their conscience – to join the EU.

One must of course stress that Arsovska's own party – the Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (DPMNE) – also takes a basically anti-Bulgarian line. The party itself uses hate speech, although she has proved her Bulgarian origins with a view to obtaining Bulgarian citizenship.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. When will the issue of hate speech against Bulgaria be raised within the framework of the high-level meetings on the Western Balkans?
2. What steps will the Commission take to encourage the Republic of North Macedonia to take action against hate speech?
3. Does the Commission think that penalties in respect of pre-accession funding could be imposed on North Macedonia owing to the continuing discrimination against the Bulgarian community?