Question for written answer E-005145/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew), Atidzhe Alieva-Veli (Renew), Iskra Mihaylova (Renew)

Subject: Worrying actions by the Bulgarian police

On election day in Bulgaria, a bus was stopped by the police for document checks after entering Bulgaria via a Turkish-Bulgarian border crossing. Passengers were held for an indefinite time, with little explanation. The majority were Bulgarian citizens residing in Turkey, who chose to exercise their civil right to vote in Bulgaria. The bus and its passengers were only released after people indicated that they would block the road in protest.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) Act stipulates that the activities of the ministry should aim at protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens, counteracting crime, protecting national security, preserving public order, ensuring fire safety and protecting the population. Among the main activities of the MoI are operational-search activities, carried out on specifically enumerated legal grounds, and security activities, guided by instructions from the Minister of Interior.

1. Does the Commission consider actions by the police aimed at restricting the freedoms of EU citizens – performed without substantiated cause, under instruction from administrative bodies but without prosecutorial or judicial review – in line with the EU legal order and rule of law?

2. Will it include such actions, which instill fear of participating in the electoral process, in its next rule of law report?