

**Question for written answer E-001548/2022
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)

Subject: Hate speech by North Macedonia state officials

On 16 April 2022, a cultural centre for Bulgarians in the Republic of North Macedonia was opened. This triggered a wave of incompetent, inappropriate and distinctly anti-Bulgarian statements by the Prime Minister and the President of North Macedonia, as well as by MPs and prominent public figures.

All of their statements give the impression that the name of the Bulgarian cultural centre, 'Ivan Mihailov', is 'Nazi' or 'fascist'. That is categorically untrue. Ivan Mihailov emigrated to and lived until the end of his life in Rome, where he continued to work on the 'Macedonian issue'. In fact, more than once he proposed the idea of Macedonia being a 'Switzerland in the Balkans'. In his texts and his work, he proved his respect for all nationalities but also defended the struggle for freedom of Bulgarians from Macedonia.

The rewriting of history, and the condemnation of people and automatic labelling of them as 'Nazis' and 'fascists', is absolutely unacceptable. This is hate speech that must stop. Ivan Mihailov is a Bulgarian who led the largest revolutionary organisation at the start of the last century. This is the same organisation that Gotse Delchev was in, and North Macedonian historiography considers him to be a 'Macedonian'.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission intend to look into the issue of hate speech and the falsification of Bulgarian history?
2. Does the Commission consider the statements by the state officials to be in line with the Copenhagen criteria, especially with regard to human rights?