

**Question for written answer E-002824/2022  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)**

Subject: Continuing repression of Bulgarians by the North Macedonian authorities

The authorities in Skopje are continuing their repression against Bulgarians in Macedonia. The Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia has so far announced that two organisations are to be investigated: the 'Tsar Boris III' civil association in Ohrid and the 'Ivan Mihaylov' cultural centre in Bitola.

It is inadmissible that an EU candidate country should permit itself to take such measures to impede the right to freedom of association and intimidate certain groups of people whose only intention is to assert their human rights, their right to self-determination and to remember the past.

While the North Macedonian services are doing all they can to intimidate Bulgarians and hinder the activities of their associations, hate speech and behaviour born of an abhorrence of Bulgaria is an everyday occurrence, with no action being taken against the perpetrators.

I would once again point out that human rights are part of the Copenhagen criteria.

Can the Commission state, in connection with the aforementioned investigations launched:

1. what action it will take to protect the right of association, as laid down in the European Charter, of the Bulgarians in North Macedonia?
2. whether it does not view the action taken by the Prosecutor's Office as discriminatory against Bulgarians?