

**Question for written answer E-001318/2023  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)**

**Subject:** Attacks on Bulgarian clubs in the Republic of North Macedonia continue to go unpunished

In the past year, we have witnessed several attacks on Bulgarians and Bulgarian cultural institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia. A gun was fired at the Bulgarian club in Ohrid, the club's sign was broken, and the club's secretary was attacked by three assailants who beat him up, endangering his life. One of the assailants has still not been found. Last summer, a similar incident took place at the Bulgarian club in Bitola which was the target of an arson attack; the perpetrator received the most lenient punishment possible: a six-month suspended sentence. Today, this attacker has publicly declared that he is proud of what he did and feels no remorse.

In the light of the Commission's efforts to combat discrimination of all kinds, I should like to ask the following:

1. What are the Commission's views concerning the legal penalties for hate crimes in the Republic of North Macedonia?
2. How does the Commission intend to incorporate a guarantee of the rights of Bulgarians and Bulgarian cultural institutions in the negotiating framework for the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as in future progress reports on the negotiating framework?
3. In the light of the increased attacks against Bulgarians and Bulgarian cultural institutions, what is the Commission's view of the state of the rule of law in the Republic of North Macedonia?

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