

**Question for written answer E-001904/2023**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)**

**Subject:** Attack on the Co-President of the Bulgarian association 'Shemeto' in the town of Struga

There has been yet another brutal attack and beating of a Bulgarian in North Macedonia. The Co-President of the Bulgarian association 'Shemeto' has been assaulted in Struga. His attacker used the words 'dirty Bulgarian'. While here in Brussels people pretend not to see the violence and discrimination against Bulgarians in North Macedonia, there the hatred is peaking.

All the responses I have received from the Commission relating to hate speech, attacks and provocation just say: 'We are monitoring the situation'. Unfortunately, the Commission's progress report on North Macedonia overlooks acts of hatred such as the arson attack on the Bulgarian club in Bitola, the shooting at the club in Ohrid, the repression and false accusations against active members of Bulgarian associations.

Closing one's eyes to the violence and hatred bred by the propaganda and lies of politicians in Skopje is leading to radicalisation and attacks. It is time for the European Union to take a stance and show that until North Macedonia radically changes its policy towards Bulgarians there, and to Bulgaria, there is no place for it in the European family.

My questions to the Commission are:

- 1) Will negotiations with North Macedonia be frozen if it continues to refuse to include Bulgarians in its constitution and fails to guarantee their equality, lives and dignity?
- 2) Will financial restrictions be imposed under IPA III for the non-fulfilment of the undertakings made?

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