

**Question for oral answer O-000076/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the PPE Group

Subject: New Bulgarian government - serious threat for EU internal affairs and security

As a matter of priority, the new Bulgarian Parliament has adopted a law aimed at amending the structure and functioning of the entire national security sector. The changes to the State Agency for National Security (SANS) Act aim at conferring police and investigative functions on SANS, which runs counter to the current profile of the agency, which is an independent counter-intelligence body, as recommended by the Commission in its Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) reports. Furthermore, the General Directorate Combating Organized Crime (GDCOC), which is currently part of the Ministry of Interior, will be closed and its current functions will be transferred to SANS together with substantial investigating powers. The balance between the institutions that are expected to guarantee the security of Bulgarian and all EU citizens has been upset, thus threatening the democratic order. We find this law a dangerous precedent for the security system of the European Union, especially as it has not been put to any public consultations or garnered societal support.

These changes could lead to an increase in crime levels, including transnational organised crime, and could cause European partner organisations and institutions to lose their trust in Bulgarian decision-makers and society.

A day after the amendments entered into force, a very controversial person was appointed SANS director without any public debate and who was forced to leave after strong social unrest.

- Is the Commission aware of this fundamental change in the security system of an EU Member State? Does the Commission agree that such legislative changes that have not been put to a debate put democracy in danger?
- Was the Commission notified by the Bulgarian Parliament about the reasons for such a reform effort and its exact purpose? If not, does the Commission consider them to be in line with the purposes of the CVM?
- In the Commission's view, is it justified to merge a counter intelligence service with a political body? If yes, why?
- The SANS with its new functions will not be held accountable for its work and it will not be subject to weekly parliamentary control by the Bulgarian Parliament. Does the Commission consider that, as a result of these developments, democratic principles are being violated?
- Does the Commission find the above acts of the Bulgarian legislator a due reason to issue an extraordinary report within the framework of the CVM to assess the situation in Bulgaria in terms of national and EU security? If not, why not?

Tabled: 24.6.2013

Forwarded: 26.6.2013

Deadline for reply: 3.7.2013