

**Question for written answer P-007514/2011
to the Commission
Rule 117
Kristian Vigenin (S&D)**

Subject: Bulgarian Interior Ministry's EUR 3.3 million revenue from donations in the first quarter of 2011

The Bulgarian Interior Ministry's statement of revenue for the three months to 31 March 2011, published on its website, shows that revenue from donations amounted to approximately EUR 3.3 million (BGN 6 512 714) – almost 22% of the ministry's total extra-budgetary revenue for the period in question.

Under the Interior Ministry's statute, its directorates-general and regional directorates are legal entities, and donations are recognised as a form of revenue to the ministerial budget. There is no provision in the statute in relation to the source of donations or to the effect that they should be compulsory.

Nonetheless, there have been reports in the Bulgarian media that the donors include individuals who are under investigation or against whom criminal proceedings are being taken, as well as companies whose interests depend in one way or another on government decisions.

In this regard, the Interior Ministry has approved new internal rules concerning agreements with donors, barring people with criminal convictions and people or firms who are the subject of criminal proceedings from making donations to it, and including various other provisions 'to introduce transparent procedures for the acceptance and administration of donations, as well as accounting procedures for their management and for the strict observance of the donors' wishes'.

Despite these belatedly taken measures, we believe that the practice of making donations to the Interior Ministry is problematic, inasmuch as it opens the door to ministry officials' blackmailing or pressurising individuals or bodies into donating and, at the same time, calls into question the objectivity of the administrative authorities when action has to be taken against donors.

Can the Commission therefore indicate:

1. whether it is aware of the existence of similar practices in other Member States?
2. whether it intends to take any specific steps, e.g. to propose the abolition of provisions allowing individuals or legal entities to make donations to bodies responsible for upholding or administering the law, notably the Interior Ministry?