

**Question for written answer P-012663/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE)

Subject: Investigation into possible corruption in Bulgaria

It is a well known fact from the biannual progress reports under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism that there are serious problems of corruption in Bulgaria. For this reason we have been keeping a close eye on events in Bulgaria that might involve corruption.

The television programme *Otkrito*, shown on Bulgarian National TV (BTN) on 11 and 24 September 2013, drew conclusions regarding the ongoing court case no. 14/2011 between a group of real estate investors and the Bulgarian First International Bank in the Targovishte District Court. The conclusions drawn could influence the outcome of the case and I therefore have deep concerns that the group of investors in question will not get a fair trial.

The bank accused, First International Bank, may have exerted undue pressure on the courts and judges by virtue of its position in the local community and may even have corrupted judges.

From the TV programme it seems to me that a verdict has already been passed by the TV station, which might be under strong pressure from the bank to present the case in a certain light. I strongly urge the Commission to keep a close eye on the court case and to take appropriate action if it transpires that corruption has indeed taken place.

I would like to know if the Commission has been made aware of any corruption or if any undue pressure has been put on the court regarding this case and, if so, what does the Commission intend to do about it?