

**Question for written answer P-009555/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE)

Subject: Violations of the rights of German communities in the redefinition of the boundaries of the city of Opole (Poland)

A Polish Council of Ministers decree issued on 19 July 2016 on defining the borders of a number of towns and municipalities in Poland redefined the borders of the city of Opole, thereby changing the national proportions in areas inhabited by members of the German minority – the gminas Dąbrowa, Dobrzeń Wielki, Komprachcice and Prószków are all inhabited by people belonging to the area's German minority. Joining the towns in these areas with the city of Opole means that communities of Polish citizens of German nationality are split across the new administrative boundaries, making it difficult to claim certain legal rights, for example the right to bilingual place names and the use of German as an auxiliary language. What is more, the local authorities did not take account of the results of public consultations carried out in the municipalities that have been partially absorbed into the city of Opole, and in which more than 90% of the votes were against the proposed border change.

Does the Commission have legal means of investigating the boundary changes in the city of Opole and the possible violations of the rules protecting the rights of national minorities, enshrined, for example, in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union? Does the EU have instruments designed to protect the rights of national minorities?