

**Priority question for written answer P-001747/2023/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Ivan Vilibor Sinčić (NI)

Subject: Inflation correction for Bulgaria's accession to the euro area: request for confirmation that unlike Croatia, Bulgaria will be subject to hard inflation requirements

Recordings have been leaked of a meeting of the Bulgarian political party We Continue the Change in which former Prime Minister Kiril Petkov explained to his colleagues that he had talked to Ursula von der Leyen¹(45:00) and asked her whether she would back Bulgaria's accession to the euro area² if he and his party were to agree on a coalition with GERB and ensure that Mariya Gabriel became the new prime minister³. Mr Petkov then said that Ms von der Leyen had asked him if he could think of a way to bend the rules. He then suggested considering an inflation correction because of the Ukrainian war, which would enable Bulgaria to join the euro area with higher inflation than allowed.

Mr Petkov is heard mentioning the name of Commission head Ursula von der Leyen, who had (allegedly) informally promised him that the Commission would give Bulgaria concessions when it came to fulfilling the 3 % inflation criterion for joining the euro area.

- 1) Can the Commission say whether Ms von der Leyen is familiar with the leaked recordings?
- 2) Is the content of these recordings true?
- 3) Will arrangements be made to bend the rules so that Bulgaria can join the euro area?

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¹ <https://soundcloud.com/krasimir-krumov-3/prom/s-QSEnVzCeGxi>.

² https://m.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=220258.

³ https://kinsights.capital.bg/politics_and_society/2023/05/30/4489220_laundering_borissov_purging_the_secret_services/.