

**Priority question for written answer P-002420/2023/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew)

Subject: Violation of the rights and freedoms of a Serbian citizen identifying as Bulgarian in Serbia

On 9 August 2023, after waiting over five hours at the Ribartzi-Oltomantsi BCP between Serbia and Bulgaria, Aleksandar Dimitrov – a journalist and chairman of the Bosilegrad-based ‘Glas’ (‘Voice’) Association – was denied entry to Serbia because he was carrying books. Dimitrov was travelling by car with three books on the lives of Bulgarians in the western outlands written by Edvin Sugarev, the former Bulgarian Consul in Niš. The Serbian border guards refused to grant Dimitrov entry, even though he was legally entitled to bring the three books by that author into the country, and also refused to give him a document attesting to their confiscation.

No information has yet been received from Serbia as to the grounds and the reasons for forcing him to return the books to Bulgaria.

1. Is the Commission aware of this blatant violation of citizens’ rights and freedoms by an EU candidate country, and what measures might it take in this regard?
2. Is the Commission aware of the potential existence of ‘black lists’ of books in Serbia and of the fact that a Serbian citizen identifying as Bulgarian has been stopped from getting hold of literature from Bulgarian authors?

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