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Measures to restrain the violence against the members of the Bulgarian ethnic community in the Republic of North Macedonia

Written question No. 806 to the Committee of Ministers
by Ms Denitsa SACHEVA, Bulgaria, Group of the European People's Party

Many reports of hate speech and incidents of hostility targeting persons belonging to the Bulgarian ethnic minority in the Republic of North Macedonia have been received by the Parliamentary Assembly, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the Commissioner for Human Rights.

Combating hate speech and hate crime is a core obligation of Council of Europe member States and requires the authorities to adopt comprehensive measures, including awareness-raising, training of law enforcement and judicial authorities, as well the systematic collection of disaggregated data.

Unfortunately, we are not witnessing to date any measures taken by the authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia to restrain violence against the members of the Bulgarian ethnic community.

The Assembly report on the Post-monitoring dialogue with North Macedonia (Doc. 16317, January 2026, paragraph 96) mentions, with regard to the situation of ethnic Bulgarians, that “according to the 2023 ECRI report, they are sometimes victims of hate speech, labelled as "fascists" and physically attacked. The ECRI report refers to an arson attack against the Bulgarian Cultural Centre in Bitola on 4 June 2024 and an attack against the Secretary of the Bulgarian Cultural Club in Ohrid on 19 January 2023”.

On 2 November 2022, the parliament amended the Law on Foundations and Associations in order to overturn the legal registration of ethnic Bulgarians' organisations, which raised several legal issues, including that of retroactive application of the new provisions.

Ms Sacheva

To ask the Committee of Ministers:

Is the Committee of Ministers ready to urge the authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia to adopt comprehensive measures to restrain the violence against the members of the Bulgarian ethnic community and to actively combat hate speech and hate crimes against Bulgarians?

What steps will the Committee of Ministers take in this respect?