

**Question for written answer E-004600/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Politico's revelations on Commissioner Várhelyi

According to more than a dozen officials from multiple institutions and an analysis of internal documents, Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi has overseen a push to play down concerns about the rule of law and human rights in candidate countries for EU membership<sup>1</sup>.

1. How will the Commission investigate the reports and indications by Commission staff that Commissioner Várhelyi has ignored issues related to the rule of law in neighbouring countries to the EU? How will it follow up on these revelations, which are based on multiple high-level Commission sources and internal documents? What measures will it take to restore trust and ensure the impartiality and integrity of the enlargement process?
2. Can the Commission guarantee that the progress towards accession made by Serbia in 2020 was assessed according to objective criteria? If so, how does it explain the discrepancy between the rule of law assessment in the Commission report and the assessments by credible actors<sup>23</sup>, as well as internal emails from high-ranking Commission officials claiming that Commissioner Várhelyi and his cabinet brought political influence to bear on the report?
3. What is its response to the internal documents proving that Commissioner Várhelyi's cabinet sought to remove language on LGBTIQ+ rights from Commission documents?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/oliver-varhelyi-eu-commissioner-enlargement-western-balkans-serbia-human-rights-democracy-rule-of-law/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/freedom-world/2021>

<sup>3</sup> [https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf?mkt\\_tok=NzUzLVJJUS00MzgAAAF\\_66rwMdgPAdnXSed7mqSXC5ioWThxjApAr0Bcx7ZqyDifaISMx0CI14xppVlqU3qZ0w\\_0HDFi6JtvX0qPBRarXhWE4URO5UtgN3FM3D\\_M30NIHg](https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf?mkt_tok=NzUzLVJJUS00MzgAAAF_66rwMdgPAdnXSed7mqSXC5ioWThxjApAr0Bcx7ZqyDifaISMx0CI14xppVlqU3qZ0w_0HDFi6JtvX0qPBRarXhWE4URO5UtgN3FM3D_M30NIHg)