

**Pergunta com pedido de resposta oral O-000051/2020
à Comissão**

Artigo 136.º do Regimento

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Assunto: Imminent threat to rule of law and democracy in Bulgaria

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Bulgaria joined EU in 2007 with a special monitoring mechanism in the field of judiciary, fight against corruption and organized crime - Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). More than 10 years after the launching of this mechanism in October 2019 the Commission concluded that there is enough progress in Bulgaria in order to abolish the monitoring. After this conclusion of the Commission, the situation in Bulgaria continued to deteriorate reaching in July 2020 very worrying levels in which most democratic mechanisms in the country seem blocked. This is shown also by the fact that according to the Transparency International 2019 CPI Bulgaria is ranked at the very bottom among the EU MS. On media freedom the situation is even more dramatic: Bulgaria is once again ranked in the very bottom - 111th place according to the media freedom index of Reporters without Borders. The situation with the independence and accountability of the judiciary also reached critical levels. The radical polarization in the work of the newly elected Prosecutor General conduct has led to attacks against the principles of private property and the free market, and culminated in a showy raid to the building of the President of the Republic, performing searches in the offices of the administration and arrests of officials - an unprecedented and unacceptable act in a state governed by the rule of law.

The state of the rule of law in Bulgaria imposes an emergency and the situation requires concrete actions in the interest of the Bulgarian citizens.

1. How does the Commission assess the current situation in Bulgaria on media freedom, anticorruption reforms and independence of the judiciary?
2. What kind of instruments could be triggered at EU level in order to prevent further deterioration of the rule of law in Bulgaria?
3. What concrete steps has the Commission undertaken in regards to Bulgaria and what kind of recommendations could be effective for remedy the situation?

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Prazo: 15/11/2020