



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Escalation of hate crimes against members of the Bulgarian community in the Republic of North Macedonia and the continuous impunity of their perpetrators - Request by the Bulgarian Delegation

Delegations will find attached a note from the Bulgarian Delegation on the escalation of hate crimes against members of the Bulgarian community in the Republic of North Macedonia and the continuous impunity of their perpetrators. The topic will be included as an “Any other business” item on the agenda for the **Foreign Affairs Council** on 23 January 2023.

Escalation of hate crimes against members of the Bulgarian community in the Republic of North Macedonia and the continuous impunity of their perpetrators

AOB item requested by Bulgaria for the FAC (23 January 2023)

The Minister of Foreign affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria intends to draw the attention of his colleagues from the Member States to the seriously deteriorating situation for the security of the Bulgarian community in North Macedonia and the latest hate crime with grave health consequences against a citizen of North Macedonia self-identifying himself as a Bulgarian.

This serious and urgent topic should also be viewed in the context of the Negotiation framework for the Republic of North Macedonia, adopted by the Member States in July 2022, which stipulates that North Macedonia has to prepare and present to the Council for approval an Action plan, to be monitored during the accession process, dedicated to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities or communities, including, inter alia, in the field of non-discrimination, fight against hate speech, education, as well as setting up effective measures, reporting mechanisms and identifying respective responsible institutions.

Unfortunately, the recent developments in North Macedonia indicate that the candidate-country is moving away from, rather than towards, ensuring the necessary protection for minorities and communities, that the problem is now deeply systemic and needs to be addressed on in a sustainable manner, through working legal mechanisms and concrete actions of competent authorities.