Question for written answer E-001018/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: New York Times revelations on detention conditions in Bulgaria

On 10 February 2026, the New York Times published an article[1] documenting the worrying conditions in Busmantsi detention centre in Sofia, Bulgaria. The publication describes several problematic conditions, including poor hygiene, overcrowding and a lack of medical care. Moreover, people are allegedly occasionally forced to sign 'voluntary return' papers by the Bulgarian police and Frontex, to countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The article claims that they face consequences if they refuse to sign.

1. Does the Commission consider the conditions in Busmantsi detention centre to be in line with Directive 2013/33/EU laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection[2]?

2. Has the Commission received any reports of misconduct or inadequate standards at the Busmantsi detention centre?

3. Will the Commission launch an investigation into the allegations made in the New York Times article, and is it prepared to share the outcome with Parliament?

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[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/10/magazine/immigration-detention-europe-busmantsi-bulgaria.html?unlocked_article_code=1.LVA.OP_M.YTDPE6D15zjU&smid=nytcore-ios-share.
[2] OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, pp. 96, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2013/33/oj.