

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001305/26
to the Commission
Nikola Minchev (Renew)
(29 March 2026)**

Subject: Unlawful police detentions and implications for the rule of law in Bulgaria

On 25 February 2026, the Sofia District Court ruled that the 24-hour police detention of Varna's Mayor, Blagomir Kotsev, was unlawful, finding that the measure lacked sufficient factual and legal justification. According to interior ministry data, over the past four years, nearly 640 24-hour police detentions have been declared unlawful by courts for similar reasons.

The country chapter on Bulgaria of the Commission's 2025 Rule of Law Report refers to issues concerning detention conditions and the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights but does not assess whether repeated judicial findings of unlawful police detentions may indicate broader structural deficiencies in safeguards against arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

In light of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the standards stemming from Articles 5 and 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights:

1. Does the Commission consider that repeated judicial findings of unlawful short-term police detentions may point to systemic shortcomings affecting the rule of law in Bulgaria?
2. Does the Commission intend, in its next Rule of Law Report, to assess whether the use of short-term police detention and pre-trial measures raises structural concerns regarding proportionality, the presumption of innocence and effective judicial oversight?
3. Should such patterns persist, what measures does the Commission envisage to ensure that safeguards against arbitrary deprivation of liberty are effectively implemented?

Submitted: 29.3.2026

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(19 May 2026)**

The Commission does not comment on individual cases. The competence to investigate and prosecute suspected corruption cases lies with national authorities.

The Commission will continue monitoring relevant developments relating to the rule of law in all Member States, including in Bulgaria, in the context of the annual Rule of Law Report process. The 2026 edition of the Rule of Law Report is expected to be published in July 2026.
