

**Brok, Gahler: "The attempts for rehabilitation of diplomats-agents of the communist Secret services is not a good sign for Bulgaria"**

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We learned with deep regret that our former MEP colleague Kristian Vigenin - a representative of the young generation among Bulgarian politicians, with whom we have worked in the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament - has, immediately after his approval for Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, stated that one of his priorities as a minister will be the rehabilitation of the former staff and collaborators of the communist State Security Service who have occupied until recently high-rank positions in the Bulgarian diplomatic service.

We consider Mr. Vigenin's statements, saying that these people have been "repressed", "humiliated" and "represent a capacity that should not be dispersed", absolutely inappropriate. It is a fundamental European principle that one should pay tribute and respect the victims of a totalitarian regime and not to collaborators of the Secret police who have been directly or indirectly involved in repressions. This fact was recognized by the Bulgarian National Assembly when in 2000 it adopted the Law on Declaring the Criminal Nature of the Communist Regime in Bulgaria. For the last four years Bulgaria has taken a number of important steps aimed at rethinking its communist past, including by widening the access of all citizens to the archives of the repressive institutions of the communist power but also by joining the European initiative to honour 23 August as a Day of Remembrance for Victims of National Socialism, Communism and other totalitarian regimes.

We do consider that these achievements should not be questioned and undermined but preserved, promoted and deepened which would help Bulgarian society overcome the trauma of totalitarianism. We appreciate the statement of the Bulgarian President Mr. Plevneliev that, despite the intentions of the new Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, he is not going to approve any Bulgarian ambassador linked to the former communist Secret police.