

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BULLETIN 4/2006

1. THE “POLITICAL HEADLINES”

The Bulgarian Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (CPD) ruled out that a ban on veil-wearing in schools was not discrimination in case all students wore uniforms. CPD intervened after the union for Islamic culture signalled for discrimination in a Smolyan school. According to the union some schools intentionally introduced uniforms to prevent religious students from wearing veils. According to the commission the union intentionally tried to incite discrimination, for which it would be fined. Since all students in the Smolyan school wore uniforms the ban on veils could not be seen as discrimination, the CPD ruled out.

The topic is widely covered in the Bulgarian press, some of them making parallels with the situation in France in 2004.

<http://www.sofiaecho.com/search.php?submitted=1&page=1&keywords=smolyan&cat=0&pstart%5Bday%5D=1&pstart%5Bmonth%5D=6&pstart%5Byear%5D=2006&pend%5Bday%5D=28&pend%5Bmonth%5D=8&pend%5Byear%5D=2006>

Five Bulgarians opened a petition against the discrimination of the non-Roma population of Bulgaria. The authors give examples of the state providing free apartments, aid, to individuals of Roma origin and not providing such to non-Roma citizens. The petition says the electric grid company, the public transport company and the police tolerate Roma representatives by not fining them if they fail to pay for the services they have used. Over 7,000 people have signed the petition so far. The petition was raised after a media report that Bulgarians in the Plovdiv district of Stolipinovo (with predominantly Roma population) had their electricity cut because the Roma did not pay their electricity bills.

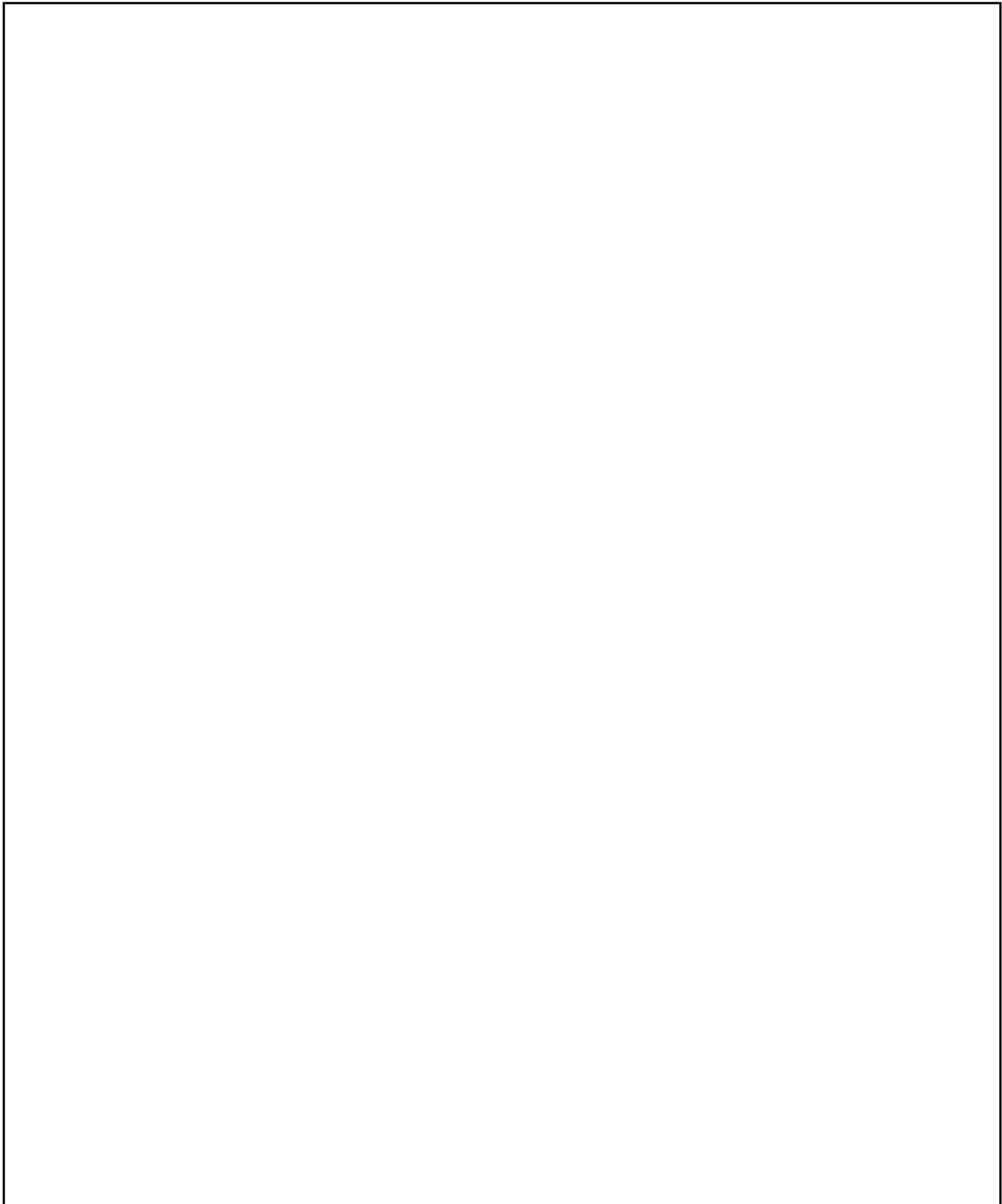
<http://www.bgpetition.com/diskriminacia/index.html>

Court Finds Bulgarian Nationalists' Leader Guilty in Instigating Discrimination

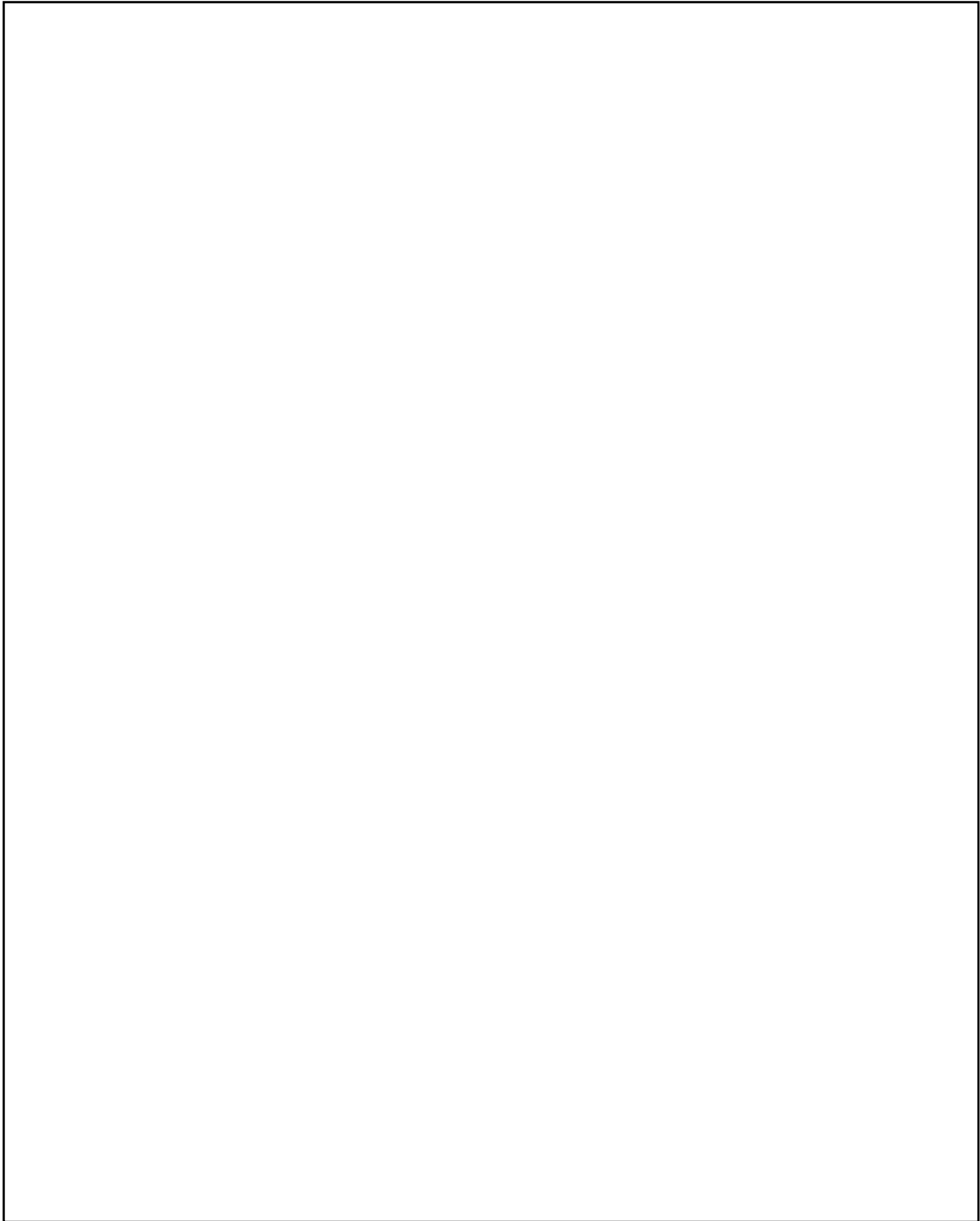
On July 21 the Sofia Regional Court found Volen Siderov guilty in instigating discrimination under the Antidiscrimination Law. The lawsuit was filed by a Bulgarian, which belongs to the Armenian ethnic minority. The court found that two of Siderov's statements are harassment and they incite discrimination. The court said Siderov should restrain from such statements but did not rule he should make a public apology.

<http://www.srs.justice.bg/119/page.html>

2. LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS



3. RESEARCH



4. NEWS AND EVENTS

On August 4, 2006, the Bulgarian Parliament unanimously voted a declaration which condemns the attempt for setting on fire the mosque in the town of Kazanlak on July 25. The parliament declared its intentions to prevent other such incidents, which to disturb the ethnic tolerance in the country.

The incident in Kazanlak follows a series of acts against the Muslim communities in different Bulgarian towns, initiated by the protest of Bulgaria's parliament-represented nationalist party Ataka against the speakers of the mosque in Sofia.

<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=plSt&lng=bg&SType=show&id=182>

http://news.ibox.bg/news/id_1556866417(in Bulgarian only)