

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0111/08
by Renate Sommer (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Circular from the Turkish Justice Ministry on high security prisons

On 1 January 2006, the Turkish Justice Ministry issued a circular (Order of the Directorate-General for Prisons No 45.1) concerning Law No 5275 of 13 December 2004 of the Turkish Penal Code, in order to remedy shortcomings in high security (F-type) prisons. The order includes measures relating to social activities for prisoners: they should be allowed a maximum of 10 hours' contact a week with no more than 10 fellow prisoners. The 13 existing high security prisons are regularly inspected by prison monitoring committees along with representatives of UN bodies and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

Despite this, Turkish lawyers' associations and non-governmental organisations claim that the above Justice Ministry order has not yet been implemented in the majority of F-type prisons. Prisoners are still housed in isolated conditions on a long-term basis with a maximum of three other prisoners. According to Amnesty International, prisoners have also reported continuing abuse, including torture and rape, harsh disciplinary measures and complete or small-group isolation. The F-type prison No 1 in Izmir was specifically identified in this regard.

Is the Commission following these developments and what measures does it consider necessary to ensure respect for human rights in Turkish prisons?

Does the isolation of prisoners in F-type high security prisons in Turkey constitute, in principle, a violation of the Community legislation in force?