

**Question for written answer E-009756/2014  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Ernest Maragall (Verts/ALE) and Ska Keller (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Urban development in Istanbul

The destruction of scarce urban green space in Istanbul has sparked a new wave of protests in the past weeks.

Following plans to build a mosque next to a protected ('first-degree') green space at Validebağ Grove in Istanbul's Üsküdar district, a haven of around 7 000 trees and several historic buildings, environmental activists have been holding sit-in demonstrations at the construction site, which is near the entrance of the protected green space. Local activists have collected over 80 000 signatures against plans by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to remove the protected status of the grove to allow for the construction of a leisure complex.

Last week, a project to proceed with the redevelopment of Istanbul's Gezi Park was included in the Municipality's strategic agenda for 2015–2016.

1. Is the Commission aware of these developments?
2. The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality has made a bid to be named European Green Capital in 2017. The title recognises cities that are leading the way with environmentally friendly urban living and that listen to their citizens. Is the voice of the citizens of Istanbul sufficiently respected?
3. Does the Commission think that recently adopted laws allowing for investments in forests and nature areas are in line with the acquis?