

**Question for written answer E-009986/2015/rev.1
to the Council**
Rule 130
Matteo Salvini (ENF)

Subject: Violation of press freedom in Turkey and its status as a candidate country

According to journalistic sources, the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has openly called for his country's justice system to impose a heavy sentence on Can Dündar, the editor of a news website. Mr Dündar's crime, in the eyes of the government, was to publish video footage allegedly showing illegal weapons hidden inside Turkish trucks bound for Syria. If genuine, the clip proves that a number of Turkish public security officers are complicit in arms trafficking, which is hugely embarrassing for the government.

Given that Turkey is currently recognised as a candidate country for accession to the European Union, and considering that independence of the judiciary with respect to the executive power, freedom of expression and freedom of information are among the fundamental principles of democracy, and are recognised and protected in various forms by the individual Member States and by the EU, can the Council say whether it will discuss if, and to what extent, events of this kind will influence its position regarding the possible accession of Turkey to the European Union?

Will it also consider the possibility of encouraging a serious debate within the Council on current EU policies regarding the granting of aid to Turkey in the form of pre-accession support?