

**Question for written answer E-012348/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Sentences imposed on journalists in Egypt

On 29 August 2015 three al-Jazeera network journalists were sentenced to three years imprisonment in Egypt. Peter Greste (Australian), Mohamed Fahmy (Canadian) and Baher Mohamed (Egyptian) were found guilty of spreading false news. They were originally arrested in 2013 while reporting on the riots that followed the ousting of then President Morsi.

At first instance, they had been sentenced to prison terms of 7 and 10 years on charges that their reporting had supported the Muslim Brotherhood. Their convictions were quashed in January 2015 and they were released in February pending a re-trial. In the period before the re-trial Peter Greste was evicted from Egypt and thus sentenced in absentia. The other two journalists were arrested after the trial.

The EU Treaty makes it clear that human rights and democracy are the guiding principles for all EU actions. Indeed, the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) upgraded human rights as an objective of the CFSP and EU development cooperation.

Given that Egypt participates in the European Neighbourhood Policy which sets out specific rules regarding the rule of law, will the Commission say what action it will take to obtain the immediate invalidation of this penalty and the release of the two journalists in detention in Egypt?