

**Question for written answer E-001451/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE)

Subject: Persecution of the LGBTI community in Tunisia

Question No E-009718-15 enquired about homosexuality being a criminal offence in Tunisia as laid down in Article 230 of its penal code. Months later, rather than seeing progress on this issue, the LGBTI community is instead suffering harassment through arbitrary detentions, rape and torture in prisons, assaults, smear campaigns in the media, etc.

Six students were arrested in December 2015 in the city of Kairouan and subsequently sentenced to three years imprisonment for having engaged in 'homosexual practices'. The main LGBTI association, Shams, which was legalised last year, has been provisionally suspended by the justice system.

Activists also report that anal examinations, considered by the UN to be a form of torture, are being carried out in order to prove detainees' sexual orientation.

Respect for fundamental rights is one of the basic principles of EU-Tunisia relations. These incidents are, furthermore, in breach of Tunisia's 2014 Constitution.

1. Is the Commission planning to make representations to the Tunisian authorities about the events described here?
2. What approach is it taking to the question of human rights in negotiations on the future free trade agreement with Tunisia?
3. What specific actions will the Commission take in order that the association Shams can operate freely?