

**Question for written answer E-002249/2016/rev.1
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Persecution of academics in Turkey

The Turkish Ministry of Justice has opened an investigation into 395 teachers facing terrorist-related charges after signing a petition calling for peace with the Kurdish community in Turkey and coexistence with other ethnic communities.¹

The Public Prosecutor's Office initiated proceedings in this connection in response to instructions from the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, that incriminating evidence be gathered to indicate that the signatories of the petition were aiding and abetting terrorist organisations or spreading propaganda on behalf of terrorists fomenting insurrection in various parts of southeast Turkey.

On 7 March the Head of Unit in the Directorate-General for Criminal Affairs at the Ministry of Justice, ordered an investigation by the Istanbul Prosecutor's Office, naming 1100 academics and researchers who signed the petition in favour of peace in Turkey and indicating that they should all face charges of criminal complicity.

In view of this:

1. What action will the Commission take to end these attempts to muzzle freedom of expression in a country that is seeking EU membership and should accordingly comply with its fundamental principles and values?
2. How has the question been broached the course of the top-level discussions with Turkey and what has been the response of the Turkish Government?

¹ <http://bianet.org/english/human-rights/170978-academics-we-will-not-be-a-party-to-this-crime>