

**Question for written answer E-006243/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Nikos Androulakis (S&D)

Subject: Revocation of permission by the Turkish Government concerning the historic Monastery of the Virgin Mary 'Soumela' [Moni Panagias Soumela]

The historic Monastery of the Virgin Mary 'Soumela' was reopened in June 2010, after 88 years. The Turkish government granted the Ecumenical Patriarchate permission to conduct a patriarchal Mass for the celebration of the Dormition of the Mother of God on 15 August. This permission to open the Monastery once a year was indefinite and subject to no temporal restrictions. Recently however, the Turkish authorities revoked their permission, without even explaining whether the revocation would apply only for this year.

In view of the above, could the Commission please state:

1. Is restriction of people's freedom of religious expression compatible with applicant country status?
2. What action does the Commission intend to take to effectively communicate the importance of protecting religious freedom to the Turkish authorities?