

**Question for written answer E-008336/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Escalating campaign to muzzle the opposition press in Turkey

Apart from its historical importance, 'Cumhuriyet' is Turkey's oldest secular newspaper. In fact it is considered an institution of the Republic of Turkey.

On 31 October 2016 Istanbul Public Prosecutor issued 16 arrest warrants for 'Cumhuriyet' staff, on charges of supporting the attempted coup of 15 July. 11 of them were arrested, including the director of the newspaper, the chairman of its board of governors, as well as a cartoonist and a columnist. It should be borne in mind that before the latest arrests and immediately after 15 July 99 journalists and intellectuals had been arrested without any charges being brought. If one adds the media workers who have been arrested, that brings the total number to 130. In addition, the Turkish government has shut down media organs by government decree and hundreds more workers have lost their jobs.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

- When will it provide a tough response to the escalating campaign by the **Erdoğan** government to muzzle the opposition press?
- Does it consider that the mass persecution of journalists is based on political rather than legal criteria, bearing in mind that journalists were persecuted even before the coup of 15 July?