

EN  
E-003122/2018  
Answer given by Mr Hahn  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(14.9.2018)

As the Honourable Member noted, the Commission has repeatedly, most recently in its 2018 Annual Report on Turkey<sup>1</sup>, referred to the situation of the Theological School of Halki and the need to implement the Venice Commission recommendation regarding the use of the ecumenical title of the Orthodox Patriarch, among other issues affecting the non-Muslim communities in Turkey.

The Commission will continue to express these concerns in its dialogue with Turkey and will continue to closely monitor developments.

The Commission also expressed growing concerns about the serious backsliding in the areas of rule of law and fundamental rights in the past years in Turkey. It has repeatedly stressed that Turkey, as a candidate country, is expected to apply democratic standards and practices, and needs to guarantee human rights in line with the European Convention on Human Rights.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-turkey-report.pdf>