WRITTEN QUESTION E-1805/09
by Marco Cappato (ALDE) and Marco Pannella (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Censorship in Turkey

Today's papers draw attention to reports about censorship affecting Turkey's respected science magazine *Bilim ve Teknik*. Unesco has made 2009 the year of famed naturalist Charles Darwin, who first expounded the theory that natural selection is the basis for millions of years of evolving life on earth. The editors of the magazine were planning to carry a cover story celebrating the bicentenary of Darwin's birth, but the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBITAK) intervened to make the editors of the magazine scrap the article about Darwin and replace it with a story about global warming. Publication of the magazine was delayed for one week as a result of the intervention. The daily newspaper *Vatan* has pointed out that Islamists were fierce adversaries of Darwin's evolution theory. *Bilim ve Teknik* editor Çiğdem Atakuman has been removed from her post after preparing a cover page about Darwin.

Given that this very serious and unfortunate incident is probably also an indirect consequence of EU hostility to Turkey's accession, although this would not be a pretext for the EU accepting TÜBITAK's decision, could the Commission raise this issue with the Turkish authorities and suggest to them that the magazine should be published as intended and that the decision to remove Ms Çiğdem Atakuman from her post should be reversed?

Could the Commission assess the implications of the violation of fundamental rights in this case - the right to freedom of expression and freedom of scientific research - for cooperation between Turkey and the EU on scientific issues?

Could the Commission provide a list of the projects which the EU is carrying out in cooperation with TÜBITAK or in which TÜBITAK is involved? Could the Commission explain how the anti-scientific attitude TÜBITAK has displayed in this case might affect cooperation between it and the EU?