

**Question for written answer E-011225/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)

Subject: Pupils of the English School, Nicosia

The English School is a private secondary school in Nicosia. It was founded under British rule. With the independence of Cyprus in 1960, control over the school was transferred by law to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus.

Since its establishment, the school has served all of the inhabitants of Cyprus, except for the period between 1974 and 2003, during which the Turkish Cypriot pupils left as a result of the military partitioning of the island by Turkey. Turkish Cypriot pupils returned to the school in 2003, following the partial lifting of restrictions on freedom of movement.

Whilst the relevant law on the functioning of the school requires that all pupils be able to exercise their religious obligations freely, an issue has arisen. For example, although the school celebrates the name day of the Archbishop of Cyprus as a holiday (as it does Christmas, etc.), the festival of Ramadan is not formally celebrated. On those days, Turkish Cypriot pupils have the option not to go to school if they wish, although the school operates normally for the other pupils.

Will the Commission state the extent to which it has competence to intervene with the Government so that the constitutionally-protected and inalienable right of the pupils to equal treatment can be safeguarded, and if it does have this competence, how it intends to act?