

**Question for written answer E-000388/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: The case of the journalist Sedef Kabas

The Turkish journalist Sedef Kabas was arrested on 22 January 2022 on charges of insulting President Tayyip Erdogan. Ms Kabas, the target of vicious accusations from government officials, was allegedly arrested after using a popular proverb live on a public TV station to describe the Turkish leader's actions. If convicted, she risks up to four years in prison.

The charge, a weapon brandished at Erdogan's detractors, comes in application of a widely contested law punishing 'slander' against the president with the arrest of political opponents. According to data from the independent Turkish website 'Expression Interrupted,' there are currently 59 journalists in jail for crimes of free expression.

These countless cases of unlawful detention and breach of press freedom are the clearest expression of the Erdogan regime's anti-democratic slide, and the fruit of the EU's failed policies in its relations with Turkey. Turkey, moreover, continues to benefit from EU funding even under the current financial framework.

Does the Commission not think it is time to put an end to the submissive approach adopted thus far by ruling out any path to accession once and for all and, most importantly, halting payment of subsidies which have yet to make the slightest difference to the deteriorating rule of law in Turkey?