

**Question for written answer E-000772/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Erdoğan clamping down on press freedom

Journalists in Turkey now find themselves working under appalling conditions. Those criticising the government are treated with suspicion and may face charges of 'insulting the State'. As they seek to fulfil their duties in line with the fundamental principles of journalism, they find themselves engaged in a battle for survival against totalitarian forces attempting to muzzle them.

Very recently, Turkish journalist Sedef Kabaş was arrested for quoting a proverb that was interpreted as offensive to the President during a televised exchange.

A degree of stability is necessary if the independence of journalists is to be effectively guaranteed. In view of the high risks involved and the interests at stake, journalists cannot reasonably be expected to combat censorship alone.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say how it can be regarded as admissible in 2022 for a country seeking accession, to take offence at proverbs quoted by journalists and throw them into jail in order to muzzle them?
2. Does it plan to address the problem of press censorship and find ways of protecting journalists from reprisals by the Erdoğan government, which is seeking membership of the EU while flouting its basic principles?