

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3394/07  
by Feleknas Uca (GUE/NGL)  
to the Commission

Subject: Dismissal of Kurdish mayor for providing multilingual services

The Turkish State Council, at the request of the Turkish Ministry of the Interior, voted in favour of the dissolution of the Sur Municipal Council in Diyarbakir and the dismissal of its mayor Abdullah Demirbas due to the decision that the municipality had taken to provide its citizens with municipal services in Turkish, Kurdish, English and Syriac.

A 2006 survey on the linguistic differences of the municipality found out that the proportion of its citizens speaking Turkish was 24%, Kurdish 72%, Syriac and Armenian 3%, Arabic 1%.

The attempts by the Ministry of the Interior to halt this initiative in Diyarbakir explicitly state that Turkish continues to be the only official language of the municipality and go clearly against freedom of expression and deny the cultural and linguistic rights of the Kurdish people.

Besides, respect for minorities and freedom of expression are among the fundamental requirements for membership of the European Union, and Turkey agreed to negotiate for membership on this basis.

What is the Commission's opinion on this?

What kind of actions does the Commission plan to undertake with regard to the Turkish authorities on this issue?