

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1892/08
by Manfred Weber (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Human rights situation in Turkey: protection for Mr Cengiz

Improving the human rights situation in Turkey is of crucial importance in view of the accession negotiations with Turkey and the need to meet the Copenhagen criteria. As the Commission noted in its 2007 progress report for Turkey (SEC(2007)1436), and as human rights organisations are also stressing, alarming incidents were still being reported very recently, despite the wide range of efforts being made. These incidents include politically motivated persecution, assault and murder, unfair trials, torture and ill-treatment by state bodies.

The current case of Orhan Kemal Cengiz is of particular concern. Mr Cengiz is a human rights activist and lawyer and is representing the widow of one of the people murdered in an April 2007 attack on the Christian publishing house Zirve in Malatya. Mr Cengiz has been subject to increasing intimidation and threats since the start of the proceedings against the people accused in this murder case, and allegations have been made to the public prosecutor accusing him of being involved in the murders. Mr Cengiz has asked the authorities for protection, but this has so far been refused. In view of the death threats and subsequent assassination of the human rights activist and journalist Hrant Dink in 2007, there is now great concern for Mr Cengiz's safety.

Has the Commission contacted the Turkish authorities in connection with this specific case in order to secure protection for Mr Cengiz and ensure his safety?

To what extent are the above incidents and the still precarious human rights situation in Turkey taken into account in the accession negotiations?