

**Priority question for written answer P-000878/2021/rev.1  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Assita Kanko** (ECR)

Subject: The escalation of police action and the anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric used by President Erdogan

Reports of the arrest of peaceful protestors in Turkey are causing deep concern in the academic world. For the past month, the students and professors of Boğaziçi University in Istanbul have been protesting against the appointment of a new rector, Melih Bulu, by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Academic freedom is coming under siege, with President Erdoğan tightening his grip on academia. It is very important to preserve the autonomy of universities all over the world.

The escalation of police action and the anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric used by President Erdoğan and his cabinet are dreadful. Four students have been arrested in Turkey over an artwork that reportedly depicted LGBTQIA+ rainbow symbols alongside an image of a sacred Islamic site. In a tweet, Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu called the four suspects 'LGBT deviants'. Meanwhile, Erdoğan called the students 'vandals' in a televised address, saying that 'LGBTQIA+ youth are undermining and poisoning our values and norms'.

1. Will the Commission condemn these actions and call on the Turkish President to take immediate action to review his decision to appoint the aforementioned rector, in order to ensure academic freedom and restore peace to Turkish university campuses?
2. Will the Commission address these unacceptable statements in its next discussion with the Turkish Government?