

**Priority question for written answer P-005732/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Brando Benifei (S&D)

Subject: Violations of the fundamental freedoms of students at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul

Over the past year or so, peaceful protests have taken place at Boğaziçi University against Turkish President Erdogan's attempts to undermine the independence of the academic system. The activists' freedom of expression and human rights are violated on a daily basis and a number of students have been in prison for months without a fair trial.

On 4 October 2021, a few protestors sought to approach the rector Naci İnci to speak with him, but security forces responded with undue violence and were particularly rough in their ill-treatment of Ersin Berke Gök. On 6 October 2021, Gök and fellow student Caner Perit Özen were arrested and spent 51 days in solitary cells before being transferred to another unit where they remain behind bars. Accepted by Istanbul's Criminal Court of First Instance, the indictment seeks jail terms for 14 students (including Gök and Özen), who will appear before court on 7 January 2022.

1. Is the Commission aware of these latest developments, which point to the country's ever-worsening democratic decline?
2. What diplomatic steps will it take to secure the release of those who have been unjustly imprisoned, including Gök and Özen?