

Question for written answer E-001163/2025

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 144

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Subject: Arrest of the Mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu

On 19 March 2025, the Turkish authorities arrested the Mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu, along with around 100 other people, including journalists and business executives. The accusations against him include leadership of a criminal organisation, bribery, manipulating public tenders and aiding a terrorist organisation. The day before his arrest, his degree was annulled in a politically motivated decision, effectively barring him from running in the Turkish presidential elections.

His arrest and this decision come at a time when the Mayor of Istanbul is considered to be one of President Erdoğan's main political rivals and was a favourite in the primary elections of the Republican People's Party for the upcoming presidential elections. These developments have raised serious concerns about the transparency of the judicial process, respect for democratic procedures, the situation of the rule of law and freedom of the press in Türkiye.

In view of the above, and given the fact that Türkiye holds EU candidate country status, can the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy say:

1. Is the arrest of the Mayor of Istanbul compatible with Türkiye's status as a candidate country and how does she intend to react?
2. What additional measures does the EU intend to take to ensure that Türkiye respects democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights?
3. In light of the latest developments, does the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative consider Türkiye to be a reliable partner for the EU?

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