

EN

E-001398/2024

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.11.2024)

The Commission has raised concerns in its annual reports on Türkiye¹ over the conditions in prisons and specifically on reports of torture, ill-treatment, discrimination, arbitrary restrictions on the rights of detainees, denial of access to medical care, mistreatment, solitary confinement and interruption of family ties. The Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye monitors the prison administration and observation boards, but its work has remained ineffective. Due to Türkiye's backsliding in key reform areas, and in line with the relevant Council conclusions, the accession negotiations have effectively come to a standstill in June 2018².

Under the Thematic Programme for Human Rights and Democracy 2021-2023, EUR 9.3 million was dedicated to improving human rights situation in Türkiye. In 2023, four new projects for an overall amount of EUR 5.2 million were launched to contribute to combating impunity, human rights protection in the penitentiary system, and access to justice. Since 2021, Civil Society Facility and the European Endowment for Democracy provide financial support to human rights defenders. In 2023, the Commission adopted an action focusing on rights and conditions of women in prisons, with a budget of EUR 4 million.

The EU Delegations to the Council of Europe, to the United Nations and to the Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe have expressed on multiple occasions the EU's concerns over the human rights and fundamental freedoms situation in Türkiye.

At the same time, the European Council has reiterated the EU's strategic interest in a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Türkiye. Dialogue on the rule of law and fundamental rights will remain an integral part of this relationship.

¹ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/turkiye-report-2024_en, p. 30; https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/turkiye-report-2023_en, p. 31.

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/35863/st10555-en18.pdf>