

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001073/25
to the Commission
Tineke Strik (Verts/ALE)
(12 March 2025)**

Subject: Start of trials in relation to Tunisian conspiracy case

On 4 March 2025, the trial in relation to case 36/6835 started in Tunisia. This case concerns the prosecution of 40 individuals, including political opponents, lawyers, journalists and human rights defenders, who stand accused of several serious charges, including ‘conspiracy against the internal and external security of the State’. Some of these individuals have been in pre-trial detention since 10 February 2023. Experts refer to the case as ‘the conspiracy case’ and have expressed concerns about the instrumentalisation of judicial institutions for political purposes by the Tunisian authorities and the lack of independence of the Tunisian courts. Human Rights Watch expressed concerns ⁽¹⁾ about the lack of evidence and several major legal flaws.

1. What is the Commission’s view on case 36/6835, and does it have sufficient trust in the independence of the Tunisian judiciary to guarantee the right to fair trial for the individuals charged, and on what basis?
2. Has the Commission engaged in dialogue with the Tunisian authorities about this specific case and will the Delegation of the EU to Tunisia monitor the trial?
3. Can the Commission provide an overview of the specific funding, including under the EU-Tunisia memorandum of understanding, directly or indirectly benefiting the Tunisian Ministries of Justice and the Interior?

Submitted: 12.3.2025

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(23 May 2025)**

As Tunisia is a close neighbour and important partner for the EU, the EU follows the situation in the country closely. This also includes the first two hearings in the ‘conspiracy against state security case’, held on 4 March 2025 ⁽¹⁾ and 11 April 2025 by the criminal chamber of the first instance court in Tunis.

The EU Delegation in Tunis was present on both occasions to observe the trial, alongside representatives of the diplomatic missions of several Member States and like-minded partners. The court did not allow diplomatic observation of the final hearing held on 18 April 2025.

While respecting the independence of the Tunisian judicial system, the EU noted with concern the heavy verdicts pronounced by the Tunisian court on 19 April 2025, which also involved EU citizens; and the reported controversies around the judicial process.

The EU regularly recalls the importance of freedom of expression, respect of the right to a fair trial and due process requirements in its exchanges with the Tunisian authorities.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms constitutes a key element of EU-Tunisia relations, as enshrined in the Association Agreement ⁽²⁾ and it is raised as part of the regular dialogues with the Tunisian authorities.

The EU used to support Tunisia’s reform of the justice sector via its Programme to Support Justice Reform (PARJ), which had a budget of EUR 60 million and ended in 2023.

As for support to the Ministry of Interior, the EU-funded Programme to Support Security Sector Reform and Modernisation in the Republic of Tunisia (PARMSS) is still ongoing and amounts to EUR 23 million.

The EU is also assisting the Ministry of Interior via the migration-related programmes related to Pillar 5 — Migration and Mobility — of the memorandum of understanding on a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership ⁽³⁾.

¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/05/abusive-conspiracy-trial-opens-tunis>.

⁽¹⁾ Case nr 53856/5.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A21998A0330%2801%29>.

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/attachment/875834/Memorandum_d'entente.pdf.