(English version)

Question for written answer E-004148/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(22 October 2025)

Subject: Greek journalist denied entry into Türkiye: violation of press freedom

On 17 October 2025, the Turkish authorities banned Greek journalist Nikos Aslanidis from entering the country. Part of a delegation from the Journalists' Union of Macedonia and Thrace, Aslanidis had intended to visit Istanbul to meet the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. At the border, the journalist was informed that he was considered a *persona non-grata*, a danger to the country, without any clear justification.

Aslanidis is well known for his long professional career and his investigative work on Pontic Greeks. This demonstrates the Turkish authorities' illiberal understanding of journalism and constitutes a direct violation of journalists' right to move, investigate and impart information without restrictions.

Given that freedom of expression and press freedom are fundamental values of the European Union, and given that Türkiye is a candidate country for accession, with clear commitments in the field of fundamental rights, will the Commission say:

1. What is its view on this incident in relation to the general situation of press freedom in Türkiye?

2. Does it intend to raise this issue in its official contacts with the Turkish authorities, asking for an explanation as to why Aslanidis was denied entry?

3. What instruments and mechanisms does it intend to use to make it clear that such practices are incompatible with European values and the obligations of a candidate country?

Submitted: 22.10.2025

Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(22 December 2025)

The Commission expects Türkiye, as a candidate country and Council of Europe member, to respect media freedom and freedom of expression.

These principles must be upheld by Türkiye, which has committed to aligning with the EU *acquis*, the European standards and values. They should apply to all journalists — Turkish or foreign.

The Commission closely follows the situation of media freedom in Türkiye and provides regular assessments and recommendations in its annual reports. In its 2025 Enlargement report on Türkiye ([1]), the Commission stressed the backsliding in the area of freedom of expression, which restrained the environment for journalists and media professionals in Türkiye, particularly through arbitrary arrests, detentions, prosecutions and convictions.

It is crucial that journalists can do their job free of any threat of violence, harassment or intimidation to ensure that citizens have access to diverse and reliable information.

The Commission has underlined on numerous occasions that Türkiye should guarantee a safe, pluralistic, and independent media environment, enabling journalists to operate without fear of reprisals, censorship or undue pressure.

([1]) https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/turkiye-report-2025_en.