

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002839/25
to the Commission
Giorgos Georgiou (The Left)
(11 July 2025)**

Subject: Sener Levent, who was awarded the European Citizen's Prize in 2018, once again faces Turkish persecution

Sener Levent, who was awarded the European Citizen's Prize in 2018, is once again being persecuted by Türkiye. To be specific, the Turkish Cypriot journalist and publisher of the 'Avrupa' newspaper is at risk of being extradited to Türkiye by the pseudo-state and subsequently imprisoned in connection with an article and a cartoon that were considered to be 'publicly insulting the nation, the State, the National Assembly, the government, the judiciary, the army and the security forces of Türkiye'. This development is another arbitrary and illegal extension of Türkiye's growing interference and pressure in relation to the internal issues of the Turkish Cypriot community.

In view of the long-standing attempts by the Turkish State to silence and intimidate Sener Levent and other journalists, activists and politicians, as well as the right of all citizens to freedom of opinion and expression, what immediate measures does the Commission intend to take to protect Sener Levent, a European citizen who has been awarded the European Citizen's Prize?

Submitted: 11.7.2025

**Priority question for written answer P-002844/25
to the Commission
Costas Mavrides (S&D)
(11 July 2025)**

Subject: Persecution and imprisonment of Şener Levent by Türkiye

Journalist and editor Şener Levent, a Cypriot citizen and recipient of the European Citizen's Prize (2018) who lives in the occupied part of the Republic of Cyprus, received a 'court notice' to surrender for imprisonment in Türkiye. The Turkish court sentenced him in absentia to two and a half years in prison due to his articles' criticism of the Erdoğan regime. The sentence has become final due to procedural limitations on appeal.

The charges — including public insult to Turkish institutions — reflect a clear attempt to silence any criticism of Ankara. The use of so-called 'judicial assistance' between Türkiye and its subordinate regime in the occupied part of EU territory, constitutes an alarming influx of political persecution into the EU.

1. What immediate steps will the Commission take, both to prevent the enforcement of a politically-motivated foreign prison sentence against a European citizen within EU territory, and to safeguard his fundamental rights, including freedom of expression?
2. Given Türkiye's continuous disregard for human rights and EU principles, both domestically and through its proxy regime in the occupied area of Cyprus, does the Commission intend to take immediate and effective measures, including imposing sanctions, to prevent further abuse?

Submitted: 11.7.2025

**Joint answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(19 August 2025)**

The EU views with concern attempts to undermine freedom of expression and media pluralism in the Turkish Cypriot community, including the current case referred to in the questions of the Honourable Members.

Türkiye, as an EU candidate country and long-standing member of the Council of Europe, is expected to adhere to its respective commitments⁽¹⁾. The targeting of media and journalists runs counter to these commitments. In its 2024 report on Türkiye⁽²⁾, the Commission reiterated its recommendation that criminal proceedings against journalists be concluded in line with the standards established by the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights.

The EU has consistently underlined that Türkiye urgently needs to reverse the negative trend of recent years and make tangible progress in upholding fundamental rights. The EU will continue to raise these concerns with its Turkish counterparts at all levels.

⁽¹⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5638-2025-INIT/en/pdf>.

⁽²⁾ https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/8010c4db-6ef8-4c85-aa06-814408921c89_en?filename=T%C3%BCrkiye%20Report%202024.pdf.

In addition, the Commission is working through the EU Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, to strengthen media freedom and the broader respect for fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, in accordance with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. For example, the EU is providing funding to the ‘Human Rights Platform’ ⁽³⁾, a coalition of seven Turkish Cypriot civil society organisations that monitor the human rights situation in the Turkish Cypriot community, including freedom of expression. The platform reports on violations, conducts advocacy and strategic litigation, and provides legal aid.

⁽³⁾ <https://insanhaklariplatformu.eu/?lang=en>.