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**Interference with freedom of expression in Turkey**

Written question No 478 to the Committee of Ministers  
presented by Mr Salles

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Despite the progress made in terms of legislation and the entry into force of the new Criminal Code, freedom of expression and opinion continues to be obstructed in Turkey. This is incompatible with the commitments given by Turkey when it became a member of the Council of Europe and constitutes a grave violation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is also incompatible with its status as a candidate for membership of the European Union.

There are currently a number of cases which give us cause for deep concern:

- legal proceedings have been brought against the writer Orhan Pamuk under Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code on the ground that he "publicly insulted Turkish identity". The charges were brought after an interview he gave to the Swiss press in which he said that 30 000 Kurds and 1 million Armenians had been killed in Turkey. Despite the Turkish authorities' repeated assurances to the European institutions and in particular to the Council of Europe, anyone who openly asserts that there actually was an Armenian genocide is, in practice, liable to prosecution;
- the publisher Ragip Zarakolu has likewise been charged under Article 159/1 of the Criminal Code with "insulting the memory of Atatürk" by publishing books about the Armenian genocide. Ragip Zarakolu is well-known in Turkey for defending human and minority rights and has been taken to court several times as a result of his activities in these spheres.

Each of these cases has been strongly condemned by representatives of the European institutions; for example, in a statement dated 26 September 2005, Mr Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, spoke of "the shameful prosecution of one of the most renowned Turkish writers, Orhan Pamuk" .

On the basis of these facts and considerations,

Mr Salles,

To ask the Committee of Ministers what steps it intends taking to ensure that Turkey fully respects the right to freedom of expression and opinion in Turkey.

*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:  
SALLES, Rudy, France, ALDE

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<sup>1</sup> *SOC: Socialist Group*  
*EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party*

*ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe*

*EDG: European Democratic Group*

*UEL: Group of the Unified European Left*

*NR: not registered in a group*