

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

**Green Party Member of the European Parliament
for the South East of England**

Commissioner Olli Rehn
Commissioner for Enlargement
European Commission
Rue de la Loi, 200
Bruxelles 1049

9th June 2005

Dear Commissioner,

Re: Turkish conscientious objector

I am writing to bring to your attention the case of Mr. Mehmet Tarhan, a gay man and conscientious objector, who has been detained since 8 April in the military prison of Sivas, Turkey.

Mehmet Tarhan declared his conscientious objection on 27 October 2001 and has continued anti-war activities in public ever since, without going into hiding. Therefore, he is charged with "Insubordination in front of the unit". According to Article 88 Turkish Military Penal Code (TACK), he is facing a penalty between 3 months and 5 years imprisonment.

In prison, he has received death threats, severe abuse and blackmail attempts by other prisoners, often encouraged by prison guards. Prison authorities did not respond to Mehmet Tarhan's complaints: only when his lawyer Suna Coskun demanded an examination did they even record allegations of abuse. Due to this repeated and grave mistreatment, Mehmet Tarhan now suffers from several health problems.

The arrest of Mehmet Tarhan, his abuse in the military prison and the charges against him are violations of his human rights to conscientious objection, freedom of movement and freedom from cruel and inhuman treatment, as guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Today, on the day his trial is being held, I would like to remind you that adhering to international human rights instruments remains a condition of Turkey's accession to the EU, and that the case of Mehmet Tarhan demonstrates that Turkey is yet to reach an acceptable level of compliance with international standards.

I trust you will raise this case with the relevant Turkish authorities and seek their guarantee that, in future, all conscientious objectors will be afforded their human rights as guaranteed in international law.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Caroline Lucas
Green Party MEP for South East England

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP