

**Question for written answer E-001536/2019  
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**  
Rule 130  
**Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi (PPE)**

Subject: VP/HR - Provocative utterances by Turkish President regarding moves to undermine the cultural status of the Hagia Sophia museum

As part of his campaign in the run-up to the municipal elections in Turkey, President Erdogan has announced his intention of converting the Hagia Sophia museum into a mosque.

This is not the first time that the question has come to the fore, the Turkish President having repeatedly announced his intention of taking such a measure in the past. Hagia Sophia is currently a World Heritage Site that attracts thousands of tourists from the entire world, as well as a timeless symbol of Orthodox Christianity in Istanbul.

According to the Turkish press, a presidential decree is all that is needed to convert it into a mosque, although a century ago such a measure necessitated a cabinet decision.

Hagia Sophia, which is of historic significance, has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1934 and is currently a museum open to the public.

In view of this:

Can the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy indicate the immediate reaction of the EU to the insistence of the Turkish President on seeking to undermine the cultural status of Hagia Sophia, thereby riding roughshod over the religious sensibilities of Christians throughout the world?