

EU 'seriously concerned' about Mor Gabriel Monastery

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The European Union has stated that it is "seriously concerned" about a court decision on the Mor Gabriel Monastery in Mardin.

The spokesman for Stefan Füle, the commissioner responsible for the Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy said the commission was concerned both about the verdict and about the fact that the litigation against the monastery had been started by state authorities.

Speaking to Today's Zaman, spokesperson Peter Stano said the commission was deeply concerned regarding the decision made by the Civil General Assembly of the Court of Cassation against the monastery. "The commission is also concerned that the litigation on such issues is instigated by judicial actions launched by state institutions," noted Stano.

Bearing in mind that Turkey is a candidate country negotiating its accession to the EU, Stano said it had to guarantee respect for the fundamental rights of all citizens. He also announced that the commission would follow cases closely regarding the property rights of the Aramaen (Syriac) community and in particular of the monastery.

Last week the Supreme Court of Appeals threw out a petition by the Mor Gabriel Monastery to re-examine a decision handed down by its 20th Chamber, which ruled that the monastery is occupying state land even though it has been paying taxes on that land for decades. The local court has also twice ruled in favor of the monastery.

Source: Today's Zaman

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