Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 12917
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Violation of religious freedom in the northern part of Cyprus

Written declaration No. 517

This written declaration commits only those who have signed it

In the Cypriot territories occupied by the Turkish military since 1974 there have been ongoing violations of religious freedom, which is guaranteed by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It has become extremely difficult for the Orthodox and Maronite Christians on the Karpass peninsula to practice their faith. In particular, Bishop Christoforos has been included on a stop-list whereby he is prohibited from entering the occupied territories within his diocese. Other priests were prevented from celebrating Easter.

We condemn the policy of the Turkish government involving the transfer of Turkish nationals into the illegally controlled territories, which is de facto tantamount to a policy of ethnic cleansing against the Christians, running counter to the will of the Turkish-Cypriots themselves who are in favour of peaceful coexistence. We draw attention to the deterioration of the Christian historical heritage, subjected to ongoing acts of vandalism and wilful damage.

We urge the Turkish government, which has been showing commendable attitudes in other areas, to comply with the binding criteria established by the Council of Europe with respect to religious freedom.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed [1]:

FARINA Renato, Italy, EPP/CD
AGRAMUNT Pedro, Spain, EPP/CD
BUGNANO Patrizia, Italy, ALDE
ČIGĀNE Lolita, Latvia, EPP/CD
CORSINI Paolo, Italy, SOC
FARINA Gianni, Italy, SOC
GHILETCHI Valeriu, Republic of Moldova, EPP/CD
KALMÁR Ferenc, Hungary, EPP/CD
KYRIAKIDES Stella, Cyprus, EPP/CD
KYRIAKIDOU Athina, Cyprus, SOC
LĪBIŅA-EGNERE Inese, Latvia, EPP/CD
LOUKAIDES George, Cyprus, UEL
MALGIERI Gennaro, Italy, EPP/CD
MAYER Edgar, Austria, EPP/CD
NEUGEBAUER Fritz, Austria, EPP/CD
O'REILLY Joseph, Ireland, EPP/CD
OTTAVIANI Nadia, San Marino, EPP/CD
PHELAN John Paul, Ireland, EPP/CD
QUINTANILLA Carmen, Spain, EPP/CD
SANTINI Giacomo, Italy, EPP/CD
SCHNEIDER-SCHNEITER Elisabeth, Switzerland, EPP/CD
SCHWALLER Urs, Switzerland, EPP/CD
SORAVILLA Roberto, Spain, EPP/CD
VEJKEY Imre, Hungary, EPP/CD
VOLONTÈ Luca, Italy, EPP/CD
WACH Piotr, Poland, EPP/CD

Total = 26

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1. EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
   SOC: Socialist Group
   ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
   EDG: European Democrat Group
   UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
   NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group