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The state of the historically important cultural monuments of Azerbaijan in the territory of Armenia

Motion for recommendation
presented by Rafael Huseynov and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

Until the deportations were carried out during the 20th century, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis had been living in the territory of present day Armenia and creating a rich cultural heritage in this area. In his book, "New danger to the Russian cause in the Caucasus" published in 1911, Mr N. Shavrov, a Russian researcher who had carried out research on the process of the settling of Armenians in the South Caucasus by studying the official archive sources of the Tsarist era, indicated that in the 19th and early 20th centuries, out of 1,300,000 Armenians living in the Caucasus, 1,000.000 Armenians were not indigenous to this region and were settled in the Caucasus by the Russians.

The Russian clerk, Mr I. Shopen, who conducted the first population census in the territory of present day Armenia in 1829 – 1832, noted that the Armenian population in Irvan province numbered, 20,073 (3,498 families) and there were eight times as many Azerbaijanis in this territory. In the map of the Trans-Caucasus edited in 1931 in Moscow 78,1% of the geographical names in the territory of Armenia were Azerbaijani and just 3,45% were of Armenian origin. So in the territories where Azerbaijanis prevailed as a majority, the Azerbaijani cultural heritage was much richer and this fact was reflected in historical sources and documents. Twelve mosques, over thirty sacred places and hundreds of historically important cemeteries, described in detail by the travellers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and which were considered to be masterpieces of oriental architecture, have been raised to the ground. The Akhi Tavakkul Temple of the 11th century in the Yeghegnadzor district of Armenia, the Gipchag Temple of the early 13th century in Artic district, all towers, bridges, inns, palaces and hundreds of other monuments of Azerbaijani origin located in various parts of the territory of Armenia have been completely destroyed or claimed as Armenian.

This is probably not the most terrible aspect of the matter, as scriptures written in ancient Turkish or Arabic alphabets as well as Moslem ornaments on the monuments of Azerbaijani origin have been erased and fake additions "proving" an Armenian origin of these monuments appeared in their place. The worst thing is that the world-wide famous rare art masterpieces described as Azerbaijani monuments in the catalogues and scientific works have been totally destroyed. Two thousand year old human monuments (as has been described in many photos and chronicles during 1970 – 1980; in Boyahmadli village of the occupied Agdam region of Azerbaijan; Azikh cave, one of the earliest human settlements in Europe which is located in the occupied Fuzuli region of Azerbaijan; Nuvadi Azerbaijani inscriptions dating back to the first millennium BC in the Meghri region of present day Armenia; stone monuments and statuettes in the ancient Azerbaijani settlement Urud in the Sisian region of present day Armenia inhabited until 1988 only by Azerbaijanis all became pieces of world heritage long ago. These monuments belong to the masterpieces of human civilization and unfortunately the Armenians have not refrained from humiliating them so far.

Though the overwhelming majority of the above-mentioned historical and cultural monuments have been destroyed, some monuments are supposed to have survived to the present day. It is vital to save the remaining monuments and to restore the damaged ones. These monuments should not only be considered on a national level but also on a European and worldwide scale. Therefore an appropriate monitoring procedure should be carried out to study in depth the present state of the monuments, sacred places and masterpieces of Azerbaijani origin across the whole territory of Armenia.

Taking into account all the aforesaid, the Assembly considers it important to take the necessary measures in order to ensure:

- the discussion of this issue in the relevant committees;
- the appointment of a Rapporteur for studying the present state of historical and cultural monuments of Azerbaijani origin in the territory of Armenia,
- protection of the historical and cultural monuments within the framework of the international conventions.

*Signed*¹:

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¹ 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