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The present state of Armenian cultural treasures in Turkey

Motion for a recommendation

tabled by Mr Raffi HOVANNISIAN and other members of the Assembly

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

The Armenian genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire resulted not only in the death and total dispossession of more than 2 million people, but also in the decimation of the Armenian patrimony, its way of life, and its fundamental contributions to western culture and world civilisation.

Since 1915, thousands of historic Armenian churches, monasteries and other religious, spiritual and secular treasures belonging to European cultural heritage have been either completely destroyed or damaged to the extent of becoming immediately subject to the threat of disappearance.

Despite being a party to the European Cultural Convention and the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, Turkey fails to fulfil the obligations and commitments it has assumed within the framework of these conventions, in particular respect of the preservation of Armenian cultural monuments which constitute an integral part of the common European cultural heritage.

The Assembly therefore recommends the Committee of Ministers:

- i. to call on the Government of Turkey, as a member state of the Council of Europe and a party to the aforementioned conventions, to respect and realise fully the international obligations which it has undertaken and in particular those provisions which relate to the protection of cultural heritage;
- ii. to urge the Government of Turkey accordingly to conduct in good faith a comprehensive, integrated inventory of the Armenian cultural heritage located under its jurisdiction, and based thereon to develop a strategy for priority restoration of all ancient and mediaeval Armenian capital cities, churches, fortresses, cemeteries and other treasures; and
- iii. together with the Secretariat, to take appropriate measures immediately towards the organisation of a Council of Europe expert mission to Turkey with the purpose of assessing the current state of the Armenian cultural heritage there, and to develop a long-term programme for the preservation of our common European heritage. In the designation and implementation of the programme, the Council's rich experience in this domain, which includes its reconstruction, restoration and rehabilitation projects in South-Eastern Europe, should be taken into account.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

HOVANNISIAN Raffi, Armenia
AGRAMUNT Pedro, Spain, EPP/CD
BANIAS Ioannis, Greece
BARTOŠ Walter, Czech Republic
BEMELMANS-VIDEC Marie-Louise, Netherlands, EPP/CD
BERÉNYI József, Slovak Republic
BRASSEUR Anne, Luxembourg
CHERNYSHENKO Igor, Russian Federation
DUESUND Åse Gunhild Woie, Norway
DURRIEU Josette, France, SOC
EÖRSI Mátyás, Hungary, ALDE
FREIRE ANTUNES José, Portugal
FRUNDA György, Romania, EPP/CD
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
HOOPER Gloria, United Kingdom
HÖRSTER Joachim, Germany, EPP/CD
HURSKAINEN Sinikka, Finland, SOC
JURGENS Erik, Netherlands
KEAVENEY Cecilia, Ireland, ALDE
LAUKKANEN Markku, Finland, ALDE
LEUTHEUSSER-SCHNARRENBURGER Sabine, Germany, ALDE
LEYDEN Terry, Ireland, ALDE
MELO Maria Manuela, de, Portugal, SOC
MORSELLI Stefano, Italy
MUTTONEN Christine, Austria
NACHBAR Philippe, France, EPP/CD
PAPADOPOULOS Antigoni, Cyprus

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group