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Population transfer as a human rights violation

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Aleksei LOTMAN and other members of the Assembly

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

Population transfer is a broad phenomenon including forced deportations, pushing people off land, *inter alia* by property destruction and implantation of settlers. Such policies have been declared illegal several times since the *Allied declaration on German War Crimes* in 1942. The strongest and one of the most recent condemnation is stated in the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* from 1998, which clearly defines deportation, forcible transfer of population and implantation of settlers as war crimes.

Population transfer has been practiced by major state powers, as well as by paramilitary groups, in view of strengthening the hold of territories under their respective control. Prominent examples include: policies of the Soviet Union both within its borders and in occupied territories, actions by Turkey in Kurdistan and elsewhere, policies of former Iraqi government in Kurdistan and in the south of the country, Israeli policies in the occupied territories, Chinese policies in Tibet, Eastern Turkestan and Inner Mongolia, Serbian actions during the last ethnic conflicts in the Balkans, and Russian policies in the Caucasus – both within the national territory and in occupied parts of Georgia.

Policies of population transfer, especially implantation of settlers may lead to an ethnic group becoming a minority in its historic homeland. Currently most well-known example is the fate of Tibetan people who are severely threatened by state-sponsored immigration of Han Chinese. Similar developments have resulted from the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus where 170,000 Greek Cypriots have been evicted from their homes and around 100,000 settlers from Turkey are believed to be living in violation of the Geneva Convention and various UN resolutions.

The undersigned members of the Parliamentary Assembly are deeply concerned by the past and continuing practice of such state-sponsored human rights violation conducted both by the states that European countries have intense economic and other relations with, and even more regrettably by the Council of Europe member states themselves. They deem it necessary for the Parliamentary Assembly to adopt a clear standpoint on this human rights issue condemning such practices through the adoption of a resolution.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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