



## Recommendation 1608 (2003)<sup>1</sup>

# Colonisation by Turkish settlers of the occupied part of Cyprus

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly expresses its deep disappointment at the failure of the negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations aimed at achieving a functional and viable solution to the Cyprus problem. It hopes, nevertheless, that the efforts will be resumed and continued until a sustainable settlement is found.
2. It is a well-established fact that the demographic structure of the island has been continuously modified since its de facto partition in 1974, as a result of the deliberate policies of the Turkish Cypriot administration and Turkey. Despite the lack of consensus on the exact figures, all parties concerned admit that Turkish nationals have since been systematically arriving in the northern part of the island. According to reliable estimates, their number currently totals 115 000.
3. The settlers come mainly from the region of Anatolia, one of the least developed regions of Turkey. Their customs and traditions differ significantly from those present in Cyprus. These differences are the main cause of the tensions and dissatisfaction of the indigenous Turkish Cypriot population, who tend to view the settlers as a foreign element.
4. In particular, the Assembly expresses its concern at the continuous outflow of the indigenous Turkish Cypriot population from the northern part of the island. Their number decreased from 118 000 in 1974 to an estimated 87 600 in 2001. In consequence, the settlers outnumber the indigenous Turkish Cypriot population in the northern part.
5. In the light of the information available, the Assembly cannot accept the claims that the majority of arriving Turkish nationals are seasonal workers or former inhabitants who had left the island before 1974. Therefore it condemns the policy of "naturalisation" designed to encourage new arrivals which was introduced by the Turkish Cypriot administration with the full support of the Government of Turkey.
6. The Assembly is convinced that the presence of the settlers constitutes a process of hidden colonisation and an additional and important obstacle to a peaceful negotiated solution of the Cyprus problem.
7. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 7.1. instruct the European Population Committee (CAHP) to conduct a population census of the whole island, in co-operation with the authorities concerned, in order to replace estimates with reliable data;
  - 7.2. promote the idea of the creation, with a contribution from the international community, of a fund which would ensure the financing of any voluntary returns of the Turkish settlers to Turkey;
  - 7.3. encourage the involvement of the Council of Europe Development Bank and call on the governments of Turkey and Cyprus to present concrete return projects for financing;

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1. Assembly debate on 24 June 2003 (19th Sitting) (see [Doc. 9799](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mr Laakso). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 June 2003 (19th Sitting). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 June 2003 (19th Sitting).



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- 7.4. call on Turkey, as well as its Turkish Cypriot subordinate local administration in northern Cyprus, to stop the process of colonisation by Turkish settlers and, in particular, call on the Turkish Cypriot administration to review their migration legislation and policies, and especially the law on naturalisation, with a view to revising them and, in consequence, bringing them into line with international standards;
- 7.5. call on Turkey to comply with the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights concerning refugees' right to property in the occupied part of Cyprus;
- 7.6. promote contacts and dialogue between the civil societies of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.