Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 14388
23 August 2017

Expropriations of Christian churches, monasteries and cemeteries in the province of Mardin, Turkey

Written question No. 724 to the Committee of Ministers
by Mr Pieter OMTZIGT, Netherlands, Group of the European People's Party

In the process of an administrative reorganisation in the province of Mardin, Turkey seized more than a hundred properties of the Syriac-Orthodox church and community, including churches, monasteries and cemeteries. Some of these properties belonged to the community for more than a thousand years. Places like the Mor Yahkup Monastery (still in use today) in Dibek (Badibe) and the cemetery (also still used for burials) are now state property.

For a period of time a number of properties were even brought under the control of the Diyanet, the Turkish State directorate of religious affairs, whose legal duty it is to execute the works concerning the beliefs, worship and ethics of Islam.

More than a hundred years after the genocide of 1915, the community keeps losing property to the Turkish State.

Mr Omtzigt,

To ask the Committee of Ministers,

Will the Committee of Ministers formally ask for an explanation from the Turkish government on this expropriation?

Is the Committee of Ministers aware of any expropriations of properties of other religious communities in Turkey?

Does the Committee of Ministers agree that ownership of these Christian properties should be handed back to the community?