

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

by Iles Braghetto and Panayiotis Demetriou

on the protection and preservation of the religious heritage in the northern part
of Cyprus

Lapse date: 3.7.2006

Written declaration on the protection and preservation of the religious heritage in the northern part of Cyprus

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 151 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, according to Article 151 of the EC Treaty, the Community aims to promote the cultural heritage of its Member States while respecting national and regional diversity,
- B. whereas since 1974 the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has been unable to exercise control over the northern part of Cyprus and to ensure respect for the provisions of Article 151,
- C. whereas more than 133 churches, chapels and monasteries that are located in the northern part of Cyprus controlled by the Turkish army since 1974 have been desecrated, 78 churches have been converted into mosques, 28 are used as military depots and hospitals and 13 are used as stockyards, and whereas their ecclesiastical items, including more than 15 000 icons, have been illegally removed and their location remains unknown,
 1. Condemns the pillage of Greek Orthodox churches and monasteries and the removal of their ecclesiastical items;
 2. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take the necessary actions to ensure respect for the Treaty and the protection and restoration of the affected churches to their original Greek Orthodox status;
 3. Calls on the Commission and the Council to examine this matter under the relevant chapters of the negotiations with Turkey;
 4. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Commission and the Council.