

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1807/01
by Christos Zacharakis (PPE-DE)
to the Council

Subject: Turkey's destruction of Assyrian and Syrian cultural heritage and ban on entering Assyrian and Syrian villages

Under legislation proposed by the Turkish Interior Ministry, Turkey intends to prohibit Europeans of Assyrian and Syrian origin from visiting their places of origin and their families in southern Turkey, in defiance of fundamental human rights. At the same time, Turkey continues systematically to destroy the Assyrian and Syrian cultural heritage by wrecking monasteries and churches and converting them into mosques and stables.

This is yet another example of Turkey's flouting of its international commitments, following similar measures against the Kurds, the Greek Cypriots and others, a stance which has provoked international reaction, from the Swedish Parliament among others. Will the Council therefore say:

1. what measures it will take to safeguard the inalienable right of European Assyrians and Syrians to visit their place of birth and their families, and
2. what, in its view, the implications of this further violation of human rights by Turkey are in relation to that country's progress towards membership of the European Union?