

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3608/03

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to the Commission

Subject: Violation of the rights of the Çam minority

In June 1944 44,000 Albanians of Muslim origin were forcibly driven out of Çameria after being accused of collaborating with the Nazi occupying forces. This was the final stage in a process of genocide against these people, whose movable and immovable property was also confiscated (land, houses, livestock and household equipment).

The Çam population belonging to the Orthodox faith who remained in Çameria do not enjoy the rights recognised by the European Union, in particular the rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities and the right to learn Albanian in Albanian schools, which are banned by the Greek government. Only if these two minorities are granted political and legal equality in Greece and Albania can relations of sincere and stable friendship be established between the different peoples and countries.

Can the Commission say:

- what steps it will take to ensure that the Albanian population of Muslim origin forcibly removed from Çameria may return to their land of origin and be entitled to reacquire their property and be compensated for damage to their assets;
- what steps it will take to ensure that the Albanian population belonging to the Orthodox faith remaining in Çameria are allowed to use the Albanian language in official transactions and to enjoy full civil rights in Greece, in the same way as the Greek minority in Albania?