

**Question for written answer E-004668/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Defending Christians in Cyprus and protecting the Greek Cypriot population

The Turkish occupying regime has rejected requests from two Cypriot clerics, Bishop Porphyrios of Neapolis and Fr. Diomodis Konstantinou, both of the Cypriot Orthodox Church, to celebrate mass in the occupied territories. Porphyrios was scheduled to celebrate Sunday mass in the church of Saint Euphemianos in the village of Lysi, while the priest was expected by faithful at the church of Saint Charalambos in Neo Choriò Kythreas.

This latest prohibition comes shortly after the Bishop of the Karpass peninsula, Christoforos, was added to a list of people who are definitively banned from entering the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Since the beginning of the Turkish occupation in 1974, there has been an attempt to remove every trace of Christian and Greek presence: hundreds of Christian places of worship and archaeological monuments have been ransacked, deconsecrated and vandalised.

Considering:

- that every day, a large number of Turkish Cypriots — regarded by the government of the Republic of Cyprus as citizens in every respect — cross the seven check-points to reach the free territories of Cyprus for work, to make use of the free medical care or to obtain identity and travel documents from the Republic of Cyprus, in order to be able to travel abroad;
- the recent resolutions of the European Parliament in defence of Christians;
- that on 1 July, the Republic of Cyprus will begin its six-month Presidency of the Council of the EU;
- that only Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, whose declaration of independence has been declared 'legally invalid' by Resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984) of the Security Council of the United Nations;

Can the Commission say what actions it proposes to take to defend the Christians of Cyprus and to protect the Greek Cypriot population?