

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0107/06
pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure
by Karin Resetarits, on behalf of the ALDE Group
to the Council

Subject: Recognition of diplomas from northern Cyprus

Following the negative outcome of the referenda in the Republic of Cyprus on 24 April 2004, and the resulting failure to secure the accession to the European Union of a united Cyprus, the Council expressed on 26 April 2004 its strong desire to 'ensure that the people of Cyprus will soon achieve their shared destiny as citizens of a united Cyprus in the European Union' and its determination to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community.

Two years after this declaration the situation remains critical for the Turkish Cypriot community. The benefits of the so called Green Line agreement are limited, and trade and economic exchange over the line hardly exist as a trade facilitation agreement remains blocked in Council. The financial aid package, finally adopted on 27 February 2006, with a total of € 139 million for 2006, will focus on infrastructure projects.

However, the isolation and deep disappointment felt by the Turkish Cypriot community can hardly be cured by however necessary EU-sponsored infrastructure projects, but should be complemented by EU-financed efforts to increase people-to-people contacts between the two communities and concrete measures to end the isolation of the north. Such measures should especially target young people and students, who supported the political changes that have taken place in northern Cyprus, but so far have seen no external recognition of their new approach.

In this context, does the Council have any plans to take concrete measures to increase the cooperation of educational institutions in northern Cyprus in EU and Europe-wide structures, such as the Bologna process and to commence a process of recognition of diplomas from northern Cypriot universities and educational institutions?

What supplementary measures has the Council identified as a means of reaching its objective of 'putting an end to the isolation of the north and facilitating a comprehensive settlement of the division of the island'?

Tabled: 27.09.2006

Forwarded: 28.09.2006

Deadline for reply: 19.10.2006