



2019/2176(INI)

29.10.2020

OPINION

of the Committee on Petitions

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the Turkey – Annual progress report 2019 and 2020
(2019/2176(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Emmanouil Fragkos

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Petitions calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the Committee on Petitions conducted a fact-finding visit to Famagusta, Cyprus, on 7-8 May 2018, in the context of petition 733/2004 submitted by Loizos Afxentiou, on behalf of the Famagusta Refugee Movement; whereas the purpose of the mission was to reassess and update the information at its disposal on the situation in Famagusta and, in particular, Varosha (the section of the city sealed off by the Turkish army), following on from Petition 733/2004, 10 years after the Committee's previous fact-finding visit, which took place on 25-28 November 2007;
- B. whereas, in its report of 21 November 2018 following the fact-finding visit, the Committee on Petitions established that the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants is a matter of enforcement of the existing UN Security Council resolutions, the supranational organisation par excellence that can exert real pressure on Turkey;
- C. whereas the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants under UN administration, as a matter of urgency and without waiting for an agreement on a comprehensive settlement, was envisaged by the 1979 High-Level Agreement, UN Security Council Resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992), and numerous European Parliament resolutions, the most recent being that of 13 March 2019 on the 2018 Commission report on Turkey¹;
- D. whereas on 9 October 2019, the UN Security Council, in its Press Statement (SC/13980) following the briefing of Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco on the situation in Cyprus, also recalled the importance of the status of Varosha:
- ‘The members of the Security Council recalled the importance of the status of Varosha as set out in previous United Nations Security Council resolutions, including resolution 550 (1984) and resolution 789 (1992), and reiterated that no actions should be carried out in relation to Varosha that are not in accordance with those resolutions.
- The members of the Security Council stressed the importance of implementing its resolutions’;
- E. whereas, in his report of 7 January 2020 on the UN operation in Cyprus (S/2020/23), the UN Secretary-General stated: ‘During the reporting period, Varosha gained increased attention as a result of public statements made by the Turkish Cypriot side and high-level visits organised to the closed-off area by authorities in the north. The presence and movements of UNFICYP in Varosha continued to be restricted by the Turkish forces. UNFICYP continued to use all available technology, including satellite imagery, to enhance monitoring and reporting in this sensitive area. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha’; whereas the reporting period lasted from 20 June to 18 December 2019;
- F. whereas in its Resolution 2506 (2020) of 30 January 2020, which, among other

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0200.

things, extends the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, the UN Security Council ‘calls on the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkish forces to restore in Strovolia the military status quo which existed there prior to 30 June 2000, recalls the status of Varosha as set out in relevant resolutions, and reaffirms that UNFICYP’s freedom of movement should be respected’;

- G. whereas the Turkish Government continued to act in total disregard of the aforementioned calls from the international community, including the UN Security Council, when a conference was held on 15 February 2020 in the occupied territories on creating the legal basis for ‘turning Varosha into a large Turkish city in the eastern Mediterranean’, in the presence of the Vice-President of Turkey together with members of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership and clearly stating Turkey’s intention to open Varosha under the ‘administration’ of the illegal secessionist entity in the occupied part of Cyprus;
- H. whereas the European Council confirmed in its conclusions of 12 December 2019 that the Turkey-Libya Memorandum of Understanding on the delimitation of maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean Sea violates the sovereign rights of third countries, does not comply with the Law of the Sea and cannot have legal consequences for third countries;
- I. whereas the European Council has confirmed the European Union’s position on Turkey’s illegal drilling activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus;
- J. whereas Turkey must avoid threats and actions that harm good neighbourly relations and must respect the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the EU Member States over their territorial waters and airspace, as well as all their sovereign rights, including, in particular, the right to undertake exploration for and to exploit, preserve and manage natural resources in accordance with EU and international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- K. whereas the need for a solution to the status of Varosha is both urgent and critical; whereas the report of the Committee on Petitions of 17 July 2008, following the first fact-finding visit, had already warned of the danger that time was running out;
- L. whereas the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants would constitute a formidable confidence-building measure and could become the catalyst for a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and in line both with the values and principles on which the EU is founded and the acquis, by creating conditions of cooperation, mutual respect and trust between the two communities in Cyprus;
- M. whereas the Committee on Petitions has received several petitions regarding Turkey, some of which are critical towards the 2016 EU-Turkey statement on addressing the migration crisis and express concern about respect for human rights and international law, particularly with regard to the Kurdish people and the incursions into Syrian territory;
- 1. Condemns the unilateral opening of Varosha on 8 October 2020 by the puppet administration in the occupied areas, with the outspoken support of President Erdogan, and welcomes, in this context, the UN Security Council statement of 9 October 2020

reaffirming the status of Varosha as set out in UN Security Council Resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992);

2. Calls on the Commission, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council and all EU Member States to table a new resolution in the UN Security Council calling for political and economic sanctions against Turkey for its acts of aggression in the eastern Mediterranean and for its non-compliance with Resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992) of the UN Security Council;
3. Calls for the resumption of the UN-led negotiations between the parties; reiterates its support for a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement on the basis of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with a single international legal personality, single sovereignty and single citizenship and with political equality between the two communities, as defined by the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, in accordance with international law and the EU acquis, and on the basis of respect for the principles on which the Union is founded; calls on Turkey to withdraw its troops from Cyprus, to transfer the sealed-off area of Famagusta to the UN in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 550, and to refrain from any actions altering the demographic balance on the island through a policy of illegal settlements; stresses the need for the EU acquis to be implemented across the entire island;
4. Calls on the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council and all Member States to suspend accession negotiations with Turkey and all financial agreements between the EU and Turkey, in particular by freezing pre-accession assistance to Turkey, until the EU is convinced that Turkey is fulfilling its contractual obligations to properly manage the funds and is fully complying with EU and international law;
5. Calls on the EU Delegation in Turkey to closely monitor the use of EU funds disbursed as a result of the EU-Turkey statement; stresses that neither EU funds nor any facilities funded by the EU may be used to forcibly return refugees to Syria; reiterates that any returns to Syria must be voluntary, safe and dignified, and carried out under the control of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees;
6. Is deeply concerned about the lack of respect for freedom of religion and discrimination against religious minorities, including Christians and Alevis; calls on the Turkish authorities to carry out effective reforms in the area of freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
7. Strongly condemns any actions to promote the extremist view that the physiognomy of the Hagia Sophia historical-religious monument should be transformed into a mosque.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	29.10.2020
Result of final vote	+ : 30 - : 0 0 : 5
Members present for the final vote	Alex Agius Saliba, Andris Ameriks, Marc Angel, Andrus Ansip, Margrete Auken, Jordan Bardella, Alexander Bernhuber, Markus Buchheit, Ryszard Czarnecki, Eleonora Evi, Agnès Evren, Gheorghe Falcă, Emmanouil Fragkos, Mario Furore, Gianna Gancia, Ibán García Del Blanco, Alexis Georgoulis, Peter Jahr, Radan Kanev, Stelios Kypouropoulos, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Dolors Montserrat, Ulrike Müller, Sira Rego, Frédérique Ries, Monica Semedo, Massimiliano Smeriglio, Yana Toom, Loránt Vincze, Thomas Waitz, Stefania Zambelli, Kosma Złotowski, Tatjana Ždanoka
Substitutes present for the final vote	Ádám Kósa, Demetris Papadakis

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

30	+
EPP	Alexander Bernhuber, Agnès Evren, Gheorghe Falcă, Peter Jahr, Radan Kanev, Stelios Kypouropoulos, Ádám Kósa, Dolors Montserrat, Loránt Vincze
S&D	Alex Agius Saliba, Andris Ameriks, Marc Angel, Ibán García Del Blanco, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Demetris Papadakis, Massimiliano Smeriglio
Renew	Andrus Ansip, Ulrike Müller, Frédérique Ries, Monica Semedo, Yana Toom
ID	Jordan Bardella, Markus Buchheit, Gianna Gancia, Stefania Zambelli
ECR	Emmanouil Fragkos
EUL/NGL	Alexis Georgoulis, Sira Rego
NI	Eleonora Evi, Mario Furore

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5	0
Greens/EFA	Margrete Auken, Thomas Waitz, Tatjana Ždanoka
ECR	Ryszard Czarnecki, Kosma Złotowski

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention