



Doc. 11820

29 January 2009

Preserve the Monastery of Mor Gabriel in Turkey

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Omtzigt and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

As stated in the Preamble of the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage “*the deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world*”.

Also taking into account the 1985 Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, it is of outmost importance that the Monastery of Mor Gabriel in Turkey - the oldest continuously inhabited Christian monastery in the world – is preserved from destruction or any kind of deterioration.

This Monastery – which dates from 397 A.D. - represents a great value for the cultural heritage of Turkey and of the world. This Monastery may be the oldest Christian monastery in Europe and is of great value to its congregation.

Now, however, the future of this Monastery is threatened by a series of lawsuits asking *inter alia* that the monastery’s land be expropriated and divided up among the surrounding villages.

The Assembly calls on the Turkish authorities not to take away ownership of grounds with wrong pretexts and with potential irreparable consequences for this world’s cultural heritage and on one of the foremost places of religious worship in Turkey. The Assembly sees this as a test for the exercise of freedom of religion in Turkey and decides to follow this issue carefully.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed ¹:

OMTZIGT Pieter, Netherlands, EPP/CD
BEMELMANS-VIDEC Marie-Louise, Netherlands, EPP/CD
CHERNYSHENKO Igor, Russian Federation, EDG
CILEVIČS Boriss, Latvia, SOC
FARINA Renato, Italy, EPP/CD
GARDETTO Jean-Charles, Monaco, EPP/CD
GLESENER Marcel, Luxembourg, EPP/CD
HAIBACH Holger, Germany, EPP/CD
HUNAULT Michel, France, EDG
JONKER Corien W.A., Netherlands, EPP/CD
LINDBLAD Göran, Sweden, EPP/CD
LOTMAN Aleksei, Estonia, UEL
MARCENARO Pietro, Italy, SOC
MARTY Dick, Switzerland, ALDE
PERNASKA Lajla, Albania, EPP/CD
de POURBAIX-LUNDIN Marietta, Sweden, EPP/CD
POURGOURIDES Christos, Cyprus, EPP/CD
ROCHEBLOINE François, France, EPP/CD
VIS Rudi, United Kingdom, SOC
VITALI Luigi, Italy, EPP/CD
VOLONTE' Luca, Italy, EPP/CD
De VRIES Klaas, Netherlands, SOC
WEEKERS Frans, Netherlands, ALDE
WODARG Wolfgang, Germany, SOC

¹ EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
EDG: European Democratic Group
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group