

# Press release – MEPs condemn Turkey’s activities in Varosha, Cyprus, and call for sanctions



In a resolution adopted by 631 votes in favour, 3 against and 59 abstentions, MEPs condemn Turkey’s illegal activities in the Varosha suburb of the city of Famagusta and warn that its partial “opening” weakens prospects of a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem, exacerbating divisions and entrenching the permanent partition of the island.

MEPs call on Turkey to transfer Varosha to its lawful inhabitants under the temporary administration of the UN (in accordance with [UN Security Council Resolution 550 \(1984\)](#)) and to refrain from any actions that alter the demographic balance on the island through a policy of illegal settlement.

## **Tough sanctions against Turkey**

A sustainable solution to reunify the island of Cyprus and its people can only be found through dialogue, diplomacy, and negotiations, MEPs stress. They call on the European Council to maintain its unified position on Turkey’s illegal actions and impose tough sanctions in response.

MEPS regret that the Turkish authorities have endorsed the two-state solution for Cyprus and reiterate their support for a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement on the basis of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with a single international legal status. They also call on the EU to play a more active role in bringing the negotiations under UN auspices to a successful conclusion.

## **Tense EU-Turkey relations**

As Turkey distances itself more and more from European values and standards,

EU-Turkey relations are at a historic low, warns Parliament. Its illegal and unilateral military actions in the Eastern Mediterranean infringe on the sovereignty of EU member states Greece and Cyprus. MEPs also point out Turkey's direct support of Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as well as its actions in Libya and Syria.

## **Background**

The Turkish army fenced off Varosha immediately after the invasion of Cyprus in 1974. The Greek Cypriots who fled from Varosha were not allowed to return and with public entry prohibited, Varosha has effectively become a ghost town.