Resolution on mass graves of the missing persons of Ashia in Ornithi village in the occupied part of Cyprus

2015/2551(RSP) - 12/02/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 543 votes to 43, with 62 abstentions a resolution on mass graves of the missing persons of Ashia in Ornithi village in the occupied part of Cyprus.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Members recalled that 106 individuals went missing from the village of Ashia following the bombardement by Turkish air forces on 14 August 1974.

In the spring of 2009, a search was conducted in the Ornithi area, a village situated 4 km west of the village of Ashia. Four burial sites were disinterred. It was confirmed that the remains, identified by DNA testing, belong to the list of 71 civilians who went missing in Ashia on 21 August 1974.

Members stated that the European Court of Human Rights concerning the missing Greek Cypriots and their families, found a **continuing violation** of Article 2 of the Convention (right to life) in that the Turkish authorities had failed to conduct an effective investigation into the whereabouts and fate of Greek-Cypriot missing persons who disappeared in life-threatening circumstances, due to the silence of the Turkish authorities.

Members recalled that 2 001 Cypriots have remained missing for several decades now, of whom 1 508 are Greek Cypriots and 493 Turkish Cypriots.

Against this background, Members condemned the relocation that took place in Ornithi, as a great disrespect to the missing persons. They stressed the urgency of the matter as regards the families of the missing persons, 41 years after their disappearances, and called for search efforts to be intensified by the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP).

They urged Turkey and its government to immediately cease removal of the remains from the mass graves and to comply with international law in this area and to give full access to military archives and military zones for exhumation.

Members called on Turkey to:

- fully implement its obligation following the decision of the ECHR to compensate the families of the missing persons;
- allow access to zones that have been defined as military if there is information that burial sites of missing persons are located within them.

Lastly, Parliament reiterated its call on parties concerned to pass on any information they have as regards the missing persons to the CMP without further delay.