

BRITISH POLICY

The policy of Britain has for many years been biased towards the aggressor but the performance of the British Labour government in recent years has been unacceptable and has frustrated Greek Cypriots in the UK and elsewhere in the world. The correspondence below with one of our members Helen Georgiou confirms this unsatisfactory state of affairs.



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Cyprus settlement & Greece Team
Europe Directorate
Room WH1.240

Dear Mr Norsworthy

Thank you for your recent letter to the Foreign Secretary about the plight of the Kurdish community in Turkey and the Cyprus problem. I work for the section responsible for relations with Turkey and Cyprus in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and have been asked to reply on his behalf.

I sympathise with your concerns about the Kurds and Cyprus but I am afraid we do not share your gloomy views of Turkish intentions towards Cyprus. Turkey has made clear its support for the reunification of the island, most notably in its support for the Annan Plan. More recently, the Foreign Secretary urged all parties, when visiting the region in January, to take the steps needed towards a resumption of settlement negotiations. In this context, we welcome the recent joint announcement in Paris of UN Secretary-General Annan and President Papadopolous of an agreement between the two communities to begin bi-communal technical discussions. We were also encouraged by Turkey's public welcome for these talks.

The opening of accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October followed the December 2004 European Council decision that Turkey had sufficiently fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria. These include the need for candidates to demonstrate stability of institutions that guarantee human rights. This positive decision was prompted by Turkey's impressive track record of EU harmonisation reforms.

The UK Government believes the reform process has seen the democratic rights of the Kurds in Turkey extended significantly. Legal restrictions on allowing private education in Kurdish

were lifted in 2003, and names can now be registered in Kurdish. Broadcasting in non-Turkish languages, including Kurdish, started on National TV and Radio in June 2004. On March 23 2006, two local TV stations and one local radio station began limited broadcasting in Kurdish after receiving approval from the central regulating body. Kurdish music cassettes, CDs, and newspapers are now freely available, and Kurdish plays and concerts take place. The Mayor of Diyarbakir, a prominent Kurdish local politician, has said that the majority of Kurds now see a fully democratic Turkey within the European Union as offering the best prospect of guaranteeing their democratic rights.

The UK Government condemns the recent violence in Southeast Turkey and the subsequent terrorist attacks in Istanbul. We continue to support the Turkish government in its determination to guarantee the rights of all Turkish citizens, and welcomed Prime Minister Erdogan's statement on his visit to Diyarbakir in August that "the political, economic and cultural problems of the region must be addressed under the umbrella of increasing democratisation". Following the recent violence, PM Erdogan, as well as condemning the violence, repeated that the "we will not back down from justice and democracy but we will build more roads, more hospitals, more schools and more workplaces".

Turkey's human rights record will be subject to intense scrutiny during accession negotiations, and advancement in the negotiations will be measured against Turkey's progress in a number of areas including human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. I believe that Turkey's EU candidacy has been, and with the opening of accession negotiations will continue to be, an effective catalyst for improvement in Turkey's human rights situation. We continue to discuss with the Turkish Government the situation of the Kurds in Turkey, and officials at our Embassy in Ankara often visit the Southeast and meet with prominent Kurds.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]
Sean Norsworthy

REPLY FROM HELEN

Dear Mr Norsworthy,

Thank you for your letter of 25 April 2006. I always tried to be positive about developments in Cyprus but with all due respect your statement that "you do not share my gloomy views of Turkish intentions towards Cyprus" leaves me baffled, not to say frustrated. As a Briton of Greek Cypriot origin I find it very difficult to identify a single issue on which Turkey has made progress on the Cyprus issue. Perhaps you would be kind enough to identify any for me.

Has Turkey:

a) Fulfilled its EU obligations towards the Republic of Cyprus? Is Turkish airspace and are ports opened to the Republic of Cyprus? Recognised the Republic of Cyprus as an equal member of the European Union?

b) Made any progress towards the termination of the violation of Human Rights against all Cypriots?

c) Are refugees like me able to return home?

d) Is the exploitation of illegal construction on Greek Cypriot land in the occupied area halted or controlled?

I would be grateful for your answers, however I do not hold much hope because I have never received a letter from the Foreign Office that does not glorify Turkey and its miniscule efforts, and not ignoring



Ayios Amvrosios and the surrounding, stunning valleys and hills are now a massive building site. British Estate agents like Henry Charles are exploiting our properties without our permission. Shame on them and to the British government for allowing them to carry on this illegal expropriation of our homes and lands and to profit at our expense. Our properties are not for sale and we will pursue the trespassers for as long as it takes until justice is restored.

the continued occupation of Cyprus, the persecution of the Kurds, the disappearance of Turkish journalists, the public beatings of woman demonstrators in Turkey and the list goes on...

As regards to your claims of Turkish progress on the Kurdish issue, perhaps you would care to answer

whether Turkey would adopt the Annan plan for the settlement of the Kurdish issue.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Georgiou
Ayios Amvrosios

If you feel the same as Helen, please write to the Foreign Office and/or your M.P. to express your own feelings.

"We will never give up our struggle for justice"