

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002080/24
to the Commission
Costas Mavrides (S&D)
(15 October 2024)**

Subject: Usurpation or unlawful involvement of EU citizens with properties in the occupied territory of the Republic of Cyprus

EU citizens are among those facing criminal charges of usurpation or unlawful business involvement with properties in the occupied territory of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), mainly for acting as intermediaries for construction companies operating in the occupied territory, promoting or selling luxury accommodation built on illegally seized property owned by Greek Cypriots. So far, citizens of Germany, Italy, Hungary, Czechia and Portugal have been arrested and/or charged in the RoC for illegal involvement and activities.

Such incidents represent a clear violation of rulings by the Court of Justice of the EU and of the rule of law. They deserve special attention as EU citizens are at the centre of the violations.

Moreover, these violations are part of the blatant, cynical policy of the occupying Turkish regime to gain legitimacy by establishing economic ties with the EU via lucrative though illegal property and development deals, using EU citizens as buyers, promoters or middlemen.

1. Is the Commission aware that EU citizens are involved in such illegal property dealings in the occupied territory of Cyprus?
2. What measures does it intend to take aimed at preventing similar cases in the future, safeguarding the rule of law in the EU and protecting EU citizens' rights?

Submitted: 15.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(19 December 2024)**

The Commission is aware of cases of legal actions taken against EU citizens involved in property transactions and property development in the areas not under the effective control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 389/2006 (the Aid Regulation) ⁽¹⁾ provides that the Commission shall ensure that, in the implementation of actions financed under the regulation, the rights of natural or legal persons, including the rights to possessions and property, are respected.

To this end, the Commission systematically consults the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus and avoids infringing property rights in actions financed under the Aid Regulation.

Outside the scope of the Aid Regulation, the Commission has no competence to ensure that property transactions in the non-government controlled areas respect the rights of the owners concerned, due to the suspension of the *acquis* in those areas pursuant to Protocol 10 of the 2003 Act of Accession ⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006R0389>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A12003T%2FPRO%2F10>