

The Population Issue in North Cyprus

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According to calculations, it is estimated that one in thirty-five people on earth bore the status of migrant during the early part of 2002. Without doubt explanations about this situation should be investigated in conjunction with the more general phenomena of homelessness, poverty and statelessness. The “sacred” borders, which were established to meet the needs of capitalism at that time, are now becoming porous to meet the needs of the same system under “new” conditions in which multinational corporations have become more effective, and where the production process continues on a more multinational level. Neoliberal globalisation is not simply an economic project; it contains a political component too. The movement of people, whose lives are shaped by this generic change, has gained a momentum never seen before. Workers, who were eventually freed from being the property of their masters and subsequently sold their work “freely” on the market, now have the chance to market their labour power beyond national borders. However, with the logic of a national-state centred world, this undoubtedly requires the setting of restrictions and is subjected to certain limitations. The labour market, nevertheless, increasingly acquires different characteristics under the new global order which are affected not only by internal but also external dynamics. It is thus not just the jobless people within state borders but also those beyond the border who can be brought in as migrants and who are regularly exploited as the lowest wage earners. The latter segment of workers secure few benefits since they have no power to organise or collectively bargain effectively as well as exercise and receive the necessary solidarity to further their struggles. Moreover, their status remains continuously repressed and precarious. In sum, the reorientation of the needs of capitalism has changed both the places of production and the labour market.

Diverse practices are being developed in different countries in order to accommodate changing conditions. Significant variations can be observed even in the most advanced capitalist countries (United States of America, the European Union, and Japan) where the conditions for migrant entry to a country, or their rights within the country of destination, vary considerably. This variation can be observed in areas such as conditions of entry to a country; conditions for temporary residence; conditions for permanent residence; restrictions on family re-unification; citizens’ rights and cultural/identity rights and problems of representation.

Policies on immigration, multiculturalism, and diversity concerning immigrant people form continuously heated debates. National policies surrounding these issues are being established because human movement has gained such vital

importance for countries of destination (which are primarily 'rich' countries), that political parties now include it in their electioneering manifestos and then need to be seen to deliver. Much public debate focuses on the affects of immigration on various social processes (such as welfare, health services and jobs) and the matter is perpetually on the discussion agenda.

Global, European Union and North Cyprus: Similarities and Differences

A Post-war Periodisation

The developments regarding human movement in European Union countries and globally can be divided into four main periods:

- 1940-1950: Mass immigration of 15 million people during and after the Second World War.
- 1950-1970s: Migration to Germany, France and Britain to meet the needs of the work force in these countries. In the cases of Britain and France workers came mainly from former colonies, but in the case of Germany they mainly came from southern and south-eastern Europe.
- 1974-1980: The worker intake came to an effective standstill during this period with the exception of family re-unification. Public and political debates focused on the legal framework and family re-unification.
- 1980-2002: The local conflicts in Latin America, the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East triggered waves of politically but also economically motivated migration. Under the frame of asylum-seeking, increasing numbers of people left their homelands to find better working conditions and a better standard of living.

The latter period can be classified in terms of the notion of "illegal migration". At the beginning of the twenty-first century, problems were observed that arose from the massive differences in the standards of living created by the "new world order" among Southern and Northern countries. This spawned a wave of migration of people attempting to break free from their misfortunes. As a result of intense human trafficking, people who escaped in their endeavour to migrate to a country they believed offered better living conditions, were subjected to hiding in stuffy trucks for days, or crowding onto ships that lacked any security measures. A current estimate suggests that 450,000-500,000 illegal immigrants have succeeded in entering another country. This signifies why the topic of illegal migration prevention is most widely discussed.

The most important issue to consider at this point is that no standards exist for studies and law practices. Countries are trying to stabilise certain regulations based on various agreements – for example, on human rights and minority rights.

However, even in countries that claim to exercise “social responsibility” – even for dimensions whose competence lies with powerful transnational formations, such as the European Union – the conditions are laid down by the needs of multinational corporations and local capital. The de facto state that appears to effect two-way dynamics (protective rights and laws on one hand and absolute needs of the capital on the other) is problematic. The situation can be summarised as follows: While some nation-states maintain relatively easy access into the country and extend citizenship rights on the basis of residence, another group of nation-states make entry into the country difficult, and in the short term restrict benefits which attend citizenship rights.

In most of today's EU and European Economic Area (EEA) countries, the number and share of the foreign-born population has increased. Since the early 1990s, the biggest increases occurred in Spain. Relative to population size, increases have also been considerable in Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, and Luxembourg.

- Of the 474 million citizens and legal foreign residents of the EU/EEA and Switzerland, some 42 million were born outside of their European country of residence. In absolute terms, Germany had by far the largest foreign-born population (10.1 million), followed by France (6.4 million), the UK (5.8 million), Spain (4.8 million), Italy (2.5 million), Switzerland (1.7 million), and the Netherlands (1.6 million).
- Relative to population size, two of Europe's smallest countries – Luxembourg (37.4%) and Liechtenstein (33.9%) – had the largest percentage of immigrants, followed by Switzerland (22.9%), Latvia (19.5%),¹ Estonia (15.4%),² Austria (15.1%), Ireland (14.1%), Cyprus (13.9%), Sweden (12.4%), and Germany (12.3%).
- In the majority of Western European countries, the foreign-born population accounted for between 7% and 15% of the total population. In most of the new EU Member States in Central Europe (with the exception of the Baltic States and Slovenia) the foreign born population was still below 5% (see Box 1).

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND FOREIGN BORN POPULATIONS



Box 1: Foreign born population in Europe

(Source:<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=402>)

North Cyprus

When considering the situation in northern Cyprus, we need to bear in mind the policies that attended mass immigration from 1975 onwards. This includes the expectations of many of these immigrants (e.g. pledges regarding Greek Cypriot properties etc), the methods of settling them (collectively in certain villages), the relations between these people and the wider mission their settlement served.

This context shows the inadequacy of taking this population movement as a solely economic or demographic phenomenon. In effect, all human movement throughout the world has both economic and political dimensions in relation to non-economic forces. To identify the specificities in human movement in northern Cyprus, it is important to consider the situation globally as well as in southern Cyprus in order to appreciate the significance of **non-economic** factors in relation to the **economic** factors. How “economic forces” and “non-economic forces” are connected should be examined alongside the analysis of their formation.

When viewed from the vantage point of economic criteria, the people who are currently in northern Cyprus are there because of labour market demand – unlike the period of 1975-1976 – or they are there because their expectations have been formed through information supplied by relatives and friends who either come on a seasonal basis or decide to stay in north Cyprus. This type of migration parallels the situation globally inside the EU. Non-economic factors that accompany this process however, make northern Cyprus different from other countries. Let us look at what these elements are.

<u>Entry permit</u>	<u>Recent changes in status</u>
-Transit -----	No change
-Working-----	Permanent residency (20 Feb. 2008)
-Open workplace---	Permanent residency (20 Feb. 2008)
-Student-----	No change
-Visitor-----	for 5 years (Permanent residency 20 Feb. 2008)
-Special permit-----	No change

Box 2: New regulations aim to change status of settlers

The migration process begins spontaneously but once started it is subjected to surveillance/observation by Turkey’s power network (the term ‘network’ is preferred to ‘centre’). Settlement is actively promoted in order to encourage the number of people to be as high as possible when the flow is directed towards northern Cyprus.

Regulations regarding permanent residence in the country, together with issues of citizenship, are changing to ensure the legalised permanent settlement of people of Turkish origin arriving in north Cyprus (Box 2). However, there are some examples that do not fit either of the state organs, i.e. the Security Forces (being the authority responsible for deportations) or the police (with their unwillingness to find and initiate legal processes against people whose legal stay as determined by the Department of Labour expired).

The relationship between northern Cyprus and the Republic of Turkey is by no means an innocent one because of the latter’s expansionist effect; in fact it is crucial

in understanding the population issue. The source of this deep-rooted and inseparable relation stems from the functioning of a fundamental dynamic of development. In other words, the population “brought/forced to come” (this distinction has lost its importance) to northern Cyprus to preserve, stiffen and reproduce the de facto state, has concurrently become the most vital component of the accumulative structures of capital in the north (capital accumulation crisis, expansion of the capital, minimising of the market problem, pillage of properties, and land usage) – the front benchers of northern Cyprus’ capital are not solely a collaborator comprador class. By the same token as a class whose own development opportunities have been dispelled by asymmetrical relations with Turkey, they have been reduced to organic actors within the process. Consequently, the population transfusion to northern Cyprus, which is one of the most significant elements of Turkey’s domination, is also a capitalist necessity for both economic (cheap labour, rearrangement of the labour market, magnifying the opportunities of organisation and solidarity, cutting the airflow of demands on education/health/social policies) as well as for many non-economic procedures in this part of the island. The pillage and seizure of Greek-Cypriot properties, the land in the northern area, and the usage of Karpaz land with intentions other than for parks, are prime examples.

The Republic of Turkey oversees everything that occurs throughout this entire process and provides **ex post confirmation**. Claiming that the flow of the population to northern Cyprus is induced purely by economic reasons without considering either the structural characteristics or the operation of non-economic forces is tantamount to being content with the ear of an elephant. If interpretations on the issue are not the result of a naive failure to see the whole, then they are the product of a finicky choosy understanding that does not consider the structural context. Moreover, regardless of what happens eventually, it equates to a stand that reproduces a given.

The Class Struggles of Ideology and Hegemony

Many social factors relating to the population issue impact on the understanding and evaluation of the migration process. For a number of years the topic has been dominantly projected as taboo. Rauf Denktaş’ phrase that “a Turk goes, a Turk comes” has become emblematic of this standpoint, representing a rhetoric that sees critique as the work of national enemies. A variation of this viewpoint, which was asserted between 1975 and the beginning of the 1980s, was submitted in the famous Cuco³ report: “People who come to the North of Cyprus from Turkey are in fact Cypriots who have immigrated to Turkey before.” It was observed that this fabrication, which held no substance at all concerning its legitimacy, was circulated under a different guise. The new understanding focuses on the rights of those who

originally came to settle in north Cyprus and who have resided in that area for a specific period. Indeed, the duration of residence of people who are categorised as migrants is also considered an important criterion in regard to their rights in other regions of the world too. The emphasis on this issue has been merged with the rights of people of Turkish origin who were born in northern Cyprus after the beginning of the 1990s. At this point, it is pertinent to focus on the ideological quality of the expression, “new” rights. It is a fact that attributing any right with a self-claimed value produces results to the contrary of those targeted at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Likewise, Cuco’s findings were justified in the updated study by the rapporteur, Jaakko Laakso, in his report regarding the transfusion of people to the northern part of the island, in which he added that: “naturalisation of the settlers encourages new arrivals and stiffens secret colonisation in the North.”⁴

Any kind of right/entitlement is an acquisition based on accumulation and is gained as a result of a social struggle, embodying positions that should not be allowed to degrade. This general thesis, however, should not lead to amnesia of the historical context and attributions of each concept employed for ideological purposes. Throughout history, capitalism had the power to absorb all kinds of concepts, social movements and rights. Absorption, does not necessarily render capitalism ineffective, it can also be used to enhance capitalist aims. We are going through a period where the revolutionary anthems of Rhodesia are played at the opening ceremonies of beauty contests, posters of Che are used as the main feature of sports shoes, and Deniz Gezmiş has become the hero of a soap opera. Civil initiatives, which were not allowed the space to breathe at one time, have currently been transformed into organic institutions that pave the way for neo-liberal ideology and its market, which in turn spreads its ideology. Republics, broken away from the collapsed Soviet Union and civil society organisations in many African countries now function as social actors, paving the way for multi-national corporations, for both ideological and physical practices in this neoliberal drive. Moreover, they are financed by the same multinational corporations and by their institutions beyond nations. Countries with problematic human-rights records have normally headed towards dissolution of the nation-state perspective (again meeting the needs of capitalism within this focus and periphery) and the authoritarian / anti-democratic administrations – including military / fascist administrations and their constant violation of human rights – acting with great sanctimony to protect the benefits of multi-national corporations.

It cannot be said that capitalism’s absorption potential is based on irresistible or absolute power. The basic dynamic that energises power is the quality of practice within our daily lives and expressions as well as discourses. If we accept the expression of right as a self-proclaimed fact, it ultimately generates an effect that reproduces specific structural elements. In other words, the most important element

that feeds the power of capitalism's absorption is to refrain from questioning, and gaining depth to the meanings of concepts that the system intends to use/absorb within this framework. When evaluated within this context, the most fallacious arguments in the discussions on the current population transfusion are not only "the comers were actually the goers" or "both the comers and goers are Turks", but it is the neo-liberal expression of "rights" that also seems to voice human/immigrant problems, and prioritisation of this argument is dangerous because it has the same aims as older arguments regarding the ideologically reproduced integration of given relations. Both expressions are, however, different versions of the same understanding of hegemony (nationalistic and neo-liberal). In this case, what actually happens is that a different dominant discourse is advanced globally in place of another discourse⁵ which is facing a crisis of legitimacy.

What are the points highlighted by this new discourse against "segregating the people originating from Turkey" or "discrimination against people originating from Turkey"? Actually this is a fake sensitivity because it is the capitalist class that insults people who come to northern Cyprus, discriminating against them and exploiting them to the extreme. The famous process of "evil acts, evil actors" succeeds, and workers who are set to work under the most severe conditions, and are accommodated in places where animals do not even feel comfortable – and most are actually villagers, not workers – are later insulted: "these live like animals, smell like animals, they do not deserve more than this". These people are subsequently blamed for living under such appalling conditions. They are categorised as responsible for their unfortunate situation and their "personal characteristics" are similarly equated, resulting in overt "racism". The discrimination and racism of upper class society spreads to other sectors of the community, and it is true that from time to time the Left in northern Cyprus has often reproduced such discourses. Instead of disclosing the population policy that is being implemented and thus challenging hegemonic structures, large layers of the community focus on the people and criticise their dress code or their attitude on the beaches, leaving neo-liberal ruling structures intact. Hence, a fake sensitivity which never reviews a structural policy, or comes near to a rigorous analysis, is proclaimed from a secure (and without risk) position. No attempt is made to unionise these people; the trade unions and the Left neither raise the issue of how debased these persons are, nor is there any concern raised about their problems, at least publicly. The targets are the opposition who voice their discomfort regarding the population policies in force. Turning almost into a "thunderstruck egg", as the poet Mehmet Yaşın says, Turkish Cypriots who feel ever more breathless each day are allegedly to be saved from racism. The position is plain to see and in the fullness of time it reproduces the dominant expression, dressed up with different accessories.

The Current Situation

It is evident that a census that complements the international criteria and considers the needs of the country has not been undertaken in north Cyprus because the figures contradict one another. Over a period of years “projections” have substituted censuses, mocking both the people and the international community. Except for the unsuccessful agriculture census of 1978, no census was conducted between 1974 and 1996. For 22 years the State Planning Organisation published population figures based on projections without any “trend” (e.g. Population increase rate based on censuses). All these figures were wrong. The de facto population was estimated to be 178,023 just before the 1996 census. The census result was 201,008. The de facto population was estimated to be 115,436 the day before the 2006 census. The result was 265,100. In 2006, while the official publication of the State Planning Department showed the projection-based population as 216,000, in April of the same year the population was announced as 265,000 when the census was carried out. There was also a serious deficiency during the census in the scope of the statistics, and considerable errors were made in relation to the definitions and differences between the de jure and the de facto population which was depicted as little as 9,000. According to a study based on the revealed figures, the number of original Cypriots (ancestral home) is about 133,000 and the number of people originating from Turkey who became citizens, is 46,000. However, juxtaposed to

TABLE 1: STATISTICS OF RT (REPUBLIC OF TURKEY) AND 'TRNC' ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES TO AND FROM NORTH CYPRUS

	RT entry	RT departure		'TRNC' entry	'TRNC' departure	
1974-2001	4924228	4833111	91117	2092729	2138112	-45383
2002	316193	310514	5679	133317	134083	-766
2003	340083	321447	18636	119682	119583	99
2004	434744	402578	32166	134886	135343	-457
2005	488023	487440	583	152804	152347	457
2006	572633	570533	2100	175081	179915	-4834
2007	598529	555193	43336	184181	178906	5275
	7674433	7480816	193617	2992680	3038289	-45609

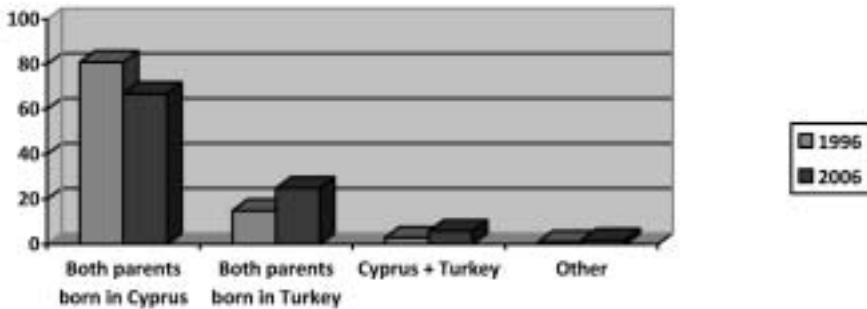
(Source: All these figures are tabulated from monthly records of Ministry of Interior)

this, there is a population of about 74,000 who also originate from Turkey. In addition, different figures appear on some alternative sources to the census; for example, the statistics of citizens of the Republic of Turkey (RT) on arrival and departure, is one alternative source (see Table 1).

Although the statistics on entry—departure contain some fluctuations in the calculations on population, it is an indispensable source which illustrates the overall picture. As observed in Table 1, after proving the entry—departure of people of Turkish origin, the number of those remaining in the northern area is 193,617. Without doubt, the children who were born in northern Cyprus should be included in this figure and the number of deceased should be excluded. Furthermore, approximately 26,000 RT-origin students and officials should also be excluded from this figure. Moreover, the population in northern Cyprus that originated from Turkey, is not 120,000 as speculated in the census in 2006, but is between 220,000 and 230,000.

When the figures are examined it is noticeable that the post-referendum period for the United Nations' Annan Plan holds a special place.

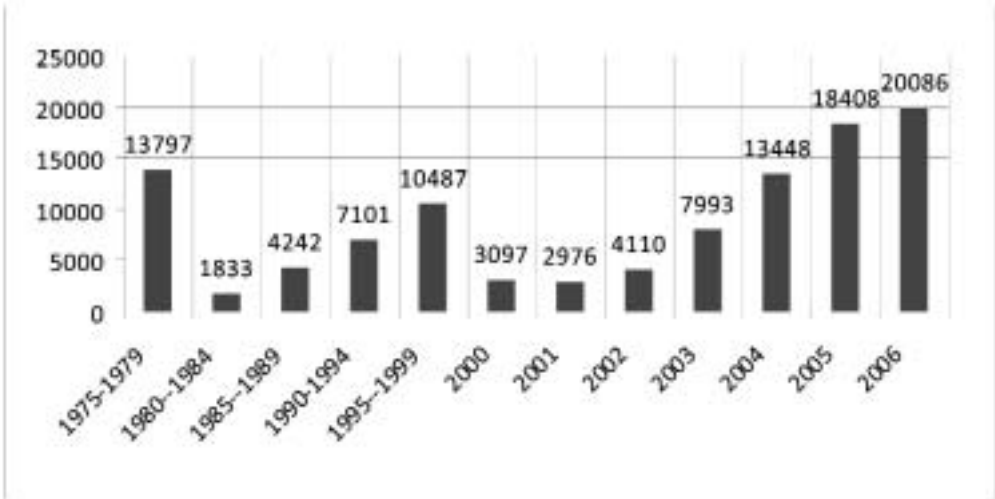
**GRAPH 1: PROPORTIONS OF DE JURE CITIZEN POPULATION
(BASED ON ANCESTRAL HOME)**



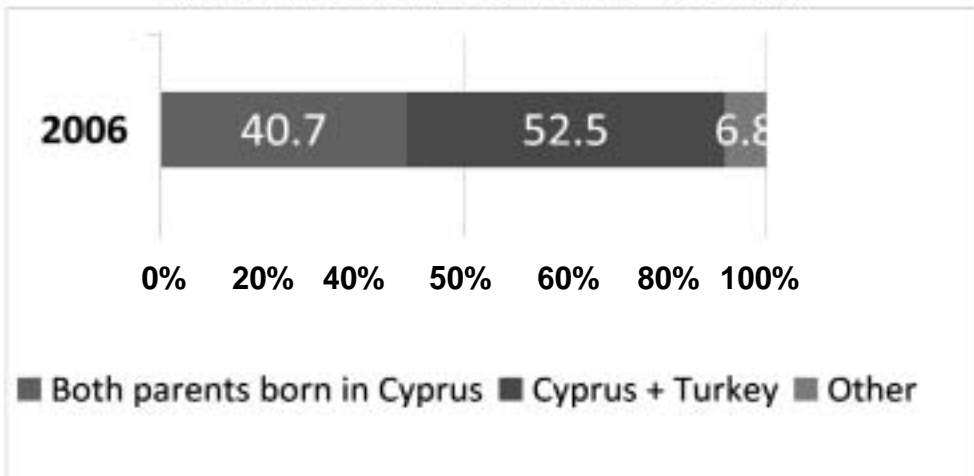
2006 citizens	178,031
1996 citizens	164,460

As can be seen from Graph 2 opposite, a total of 59,849 people have come to northern Cyprus since 2003 and have decided to reside permanently. When the figures are examined (RT-origin officials and students should be excluded) it appears that post-2003 is an era that witnessed the most intensive population transfusion after the 1975-1976 period.

GRAPH 2: NUMBER OF THOSE PERMANENTLY RESIDENT IN NORTH CYPRUS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR YEAR OF ENTRY TO THE COUNTRY

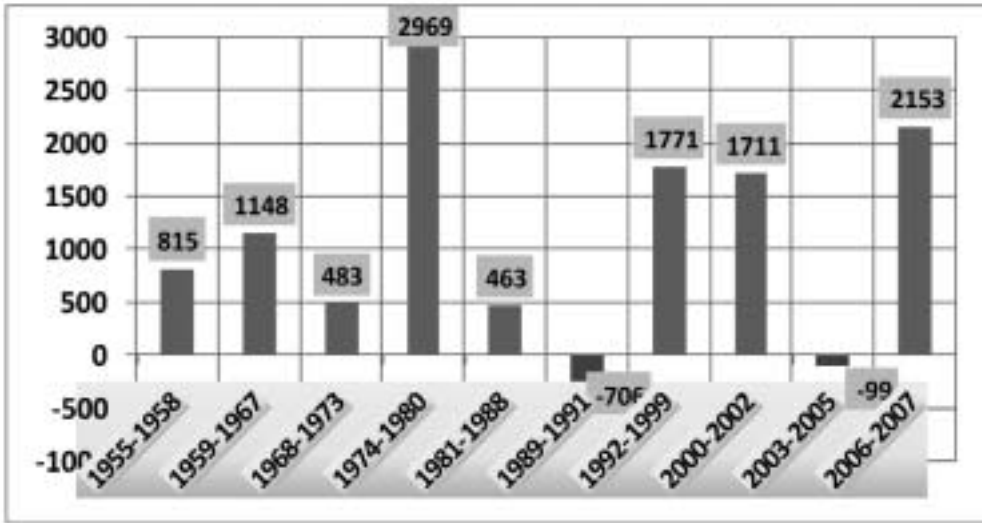


GRAPH 3: PROPORTIONS OF DE JURE POPULATION (BASED ON ANCESTRAL HOME) (ESTIMATED FIGURES BASED ON ARRIVALS – DEPARTURES)



When the entries and departures of ‘TRNC’ citizens since 1974 are studied, a tendency is observed as regards migration. When approximately 3,500-4,000 RT-origin people are excluded from the figure because they are either estimated to have gone to Britain or to other European countries to seek asylum, or are Cyprus-origin people who are temporarily abroad due to various reasons, it can be seen that approximately 35,000 Turkish Cypriots have left the country permanently.

**GRAPH 4: TURKISH CYPRIOT MIGRATION FROM CYPRUS
(MIGRATION PER YEAR FOR SELECTED PERIODS)**



When the overall picture is evaluated – without getting lost in details – the outcome detected is that there is an intensive flow of RT-origin population to northern Cyprus during the recent 30-year period, and Turkish Cypriots are also constantly migrating to other countries, intensifying in certain periods. When the figures are analysed it is evident that there is a “radical demographic change” in northern Cyprus.

Notes

1. This figure is presumably referring to the Russian speaking population rather than a general category of ‘foreign born’: a large number of these persons do not have Latvian citizenship.

2. As with Latvia, the same issue applies in Estonia, except that in Estonia the relations between the Russian-speaking minority and the Estonian ruling groups are much more tense and polarised.
3. At the end of the meetings, Alfonse Cuco – the Spanish parliamentarian, member of the Committee of Immigrants and Demography of the European Council in Cyprus in 1991 (including the authorities of the period) – put in writing that the population in north Cyprus “was being changed radically”.
4. This report was accepted at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 24 June 2003.
5. It is obvious that those who circulate this expression do not do so out of simple political choice. It is not a coincidence that those who make comments in this direction have positions as well as financial resources.