



## Turkey warns that Bulgarian compensation claims might be harmful

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Turkey's foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu told reporters at a press conference with Brazilian counterpart Celso Amorim, who is visiting Ankara, that Bulgaria's resettlement compensation claims could harm bilateral ties, the [worldbulletin.net](http://worldbulletin.net) reported on January 5 2010.

This follows reports that Bulgaria could seek up to 14 billion euro in compensation for the relocation of refugees in the Thrace region following the Second Balkan War in 1913.

Although no official appeal from Sofia has yet been made, it is thought that Bulgaria could use the issue as a bargaining tool in the run-up to Turkey's European Union accession bid.

Veselin Ninov, from the Bulgarian government's press office, told EUobserver on January 4 that the claim is currently being worked on by Bulgarian and Turkish officials.

In the aftermath of hostilities in 1913, the Ottoman Empire expelled hundreds of thousands of ethnic Bulgarians from lands on the western side of the Bosphorus. As the Ottoman Empire disintegrated and became the Republic of Turkey in 1923, it recognised the rights of those displaced in a 1925 treaty, but the agreement was never implemented, hence the Bulgarian claims that compensation is due to be paid.

Ninov himself has confirmed the compensation claims, only citing a different sum:

"This is a matter of official government policy. There is a contract between the two parties, dated 1925. This is an official contract, so, according to the contracting parties, the Turkish government has to repay the equivalent of eight billion euro to the Bulgarian refugees."

But the Turkish foreign minister warned that such claims of resettlement compensation could only harm friendly ties between Bulgaria and Turkey.

"There have been no official attempts on such a topic. It is in both countries' interests that relations between Turkey and Bulgaria, which constitute a very good model, remain as they are," the Anadolu news agency quoted Davutoglu as saying on January 5.