



**THE  
CONSTANTINOPOLITAN  
SOCIETY**

GREEKS EXPATRIATED FROM ISTANBUL  
BY TURKISH COERCION

**2015 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING**

Warsaw, 21 September - 2 October 2015

Wednesday, 30 September 2015

Working session 14: Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including:  
Combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, also  
focusing on intolerance and discrimination against Christians  
and members of other religions

## **The Greek Minority in Turkey**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO OSCE / ODIHR**

Due to significant restrictions and serious limitations on human rights which are threatening the sustainable vitality, survival and vibrant future of the Greek Minority in Turkey, OSCE / ODIHR are called upon to urge Turkey -as OSCE participating State- to:

#### **Property rights**

- Return properties of minority foundations registered in the 1936 Declarations without precondition and bureaucratic obstacles to their rightful owners. If there is any kind of dispute as for the ownership of a particular property, the burden of proof should lay on the state and not on the foundations.
- Amend the Law on non-Muslim Welfare Foundations in such a way that would allow for, *inter alia*,:

- Solving the question of property that was seized and sold to third parties.
- Issuing new regulations for the arbitrarily suspended elections within the minority foundations and immediately permit conduct of elections in all foundations.
- Returning the three churches of Panayia Kafatiani, Aya Yani and Aya Nikola in the district of Karakoy - Galata in Istanbul, as well as their immovable properties, which are illegally and forcibly occupied by the self-declared and nonexistent "Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate (TOP)", to their legal owners. Turkish authorities should grant them full legal entity status so as to be able to elect their governing bodies and freely administer and manage their own foundations.
- Returning the archives and the library of 50.000 valuable volumes of the Hellenic Literary Society of Constantinople (Ellinikos Filologikos Syllogos Konstantinoupoleos) - which has been illegally confiscated in 1925- to a Greek Minority Foundation in Istanbul. This library represents the intellectual heritage of the Hellenism of Constantinople.
- Ensuring that Greek citizens are able to fully enjoy their rights over inherited patrimonial property, by implementing as of March 2010 recommendations of the Council of Europe Venice Commission on the protection of property rights. Turkey should conform to the relevant rulings of the European Court for Human Rights.

#### **Educational rights**

- Amend the Law on Private Schools Education, so as the diplomas of students of European and other nationalities are officially recognized and validated for their admittance in Turkish Universities etc.
- Facilitate the approval of textbooks used by Greek minority schools through a simple and speedy process.
- Support financially minority schools, as it is foreseen by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty.
- Delete all anti-minority references from schoolbooks used for teaching in Turkey, as it forges historic realities, fosters discriminatory behavior against members of the minority and incites hate actions.

#### **Human rights, non-discrimination issues**

- Restitute Turkish Republic citizenship to Greek minority members living abroad and issue permanent residence and work permit to those who are willing to live in Turkey.
- Ensure that Greek citizens are able to fully enjoy their rights over inherited patrimonial property.

- Comply with decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights by removing the space listing religious affiliation on official identification cards.
- Fully implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and interpret the 1923 Lausanne Treaty so as to provide equal rights to the Greek Minority in Turkey.
- Sign and ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) of the Council of Europe.
- Revise the law on the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in order to make it an independent body which is adequately accountable to the public and which includes the participation of non-Muslim minorities' members.
- Turkey is urged to make sustained efforts to prevent and punish hate speech or crimes targeting persons belonging to minorities.

Overall, Turkey is called upon to take seriously into consideration the recommendations by EU and international organizations pertaining to human rights and act upon them and make more strenuous efforts to prevent discrimination, intolerance and religiously motivated acts of violence.\_