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**Right to education of Western Thrace Turkish Minority**

Thank you very much Mr. Moderator,

My name is Pervin Hayrullah (Chairoula). I am representing the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace, here.

I would like to draw your kind attention to the violation of education rights of Western Thrace Turkish Minority in Greece.

Mr. Moderator,

Right to education is one of the basic components of human and minority rights standards. The Turkish Minority of Western Thrace is a unique minority whose rights were guaranteed by international and bilateral treaties as well as international human and minority rights documents. (With the Greek Minority in Istanbul).

The Greek authorities, however, have almost never exercised their international responsibilities.

Section III of the Lausanne Peace Treaty states that the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace has “a right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein”. Also, the Hague Recommendations and the Ljubljana Guidelines underline the importance of the education rights of the minorities as well as other international instruments.

The practice in Greece, however, is absolutely against the international standards. The Greek authorities use 5-6 years old minority children as a tool to make psychological pressure to Turkish people in Western Thrace. That is to say, since 2006 the pre-school education has been compulsory for all children. However, in Western Thrace up to now no bilingual nursery school has been opened by the Greek authorities, nor they let the Minority open it, although in 2011 one of the Minority Foundations applied to the Ministry of Education. Without preparing the infrastructure the authorities make pressure to Turkish people to send their children to the nursery schools in which only the Greek language is spoken. On this issue the Greek authorities do not consider the Turkish Minority's will and do not fulfil their century-aged obligations.

A very recent development we learned from a Minority newspaper called Gundem releases the Greek intention towards the Turkish people in Western Thrace. Greece, in 1995 introduced 0.5 % quota for the university entrance for the Minority students of Western Thrace. However, while calculating the Turkish students' points they didn't consider the students' school grades for whom attending to Turkish Minority high schools, although they did it for the other students. This means that those students attending the Minority high schools getting lower grades to enter a good or a higher graded department.

These are just two examples of the Greek violations of education rights of the Turkish minority.



Mr. Moderator,

We will be honored if a fact finding mission of OSCE High Commission for National Minorities would visit us to see one of the most backward areas of the EU first hand.

Also, I would like to recommend Greece,

To take into consideration its international obligations and respect to the Turkish Minority's right to education,

To allow the Turkish Minority to establish its bilingual nursery schools,

To give bilingual education in public nursery schools where the Turkish students/ children attend until the bilingual minority ones are established,

To have a concrete dialogue with the Turkish Minority representatives during the legislation process.

**Thank you very much.**