

THE TURKISH CYPRIOT HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION

Address of the Representative of the TURKISH CYPRIOT HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION
Mr. Ali Dayıoğlu
to the 2007 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the OSCE

Warsaw
Monday, 24 September

The Right to Education of the Turkish Cypriots Living in Southern Cyprus

The Turkish Cypriots living in Southern Cyprus, along with other matters, are being seriously confronted with discrimination in the field of education. While the Greek Cypriots living in the Karpas region in North Cyprus are receiving their education in their mother tongue and enjoying the right to choose their teachers and curriculum in primary and secondary schools, none of these amenities are recognised to the Turkish Cypriots living in the South even at primary school level. This is contrary to the Cyprus Constitution, Article 3 which foresees the official languages of the Republic to be Greek and Turkish and articles 20 and 87 which regulate the educational rights of the Turkish Cypriots. The said articles provide that the Turkish Cypriots will have the right to receive education in their mother tongue and administer their own schools. Despite these clear provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot Administration continuously hindered the opening of a Turkish primary school and even alleged that there was no such a demand on the part of the Turkish Cypriots. In furtherance of this allegation, the Greek Cypriot Administration, through the Ministry of Education and Culture established, in violation of the Constitution, proceeded to solve the matter by opening, in a normal Greek Cypriot school in Limassol, where there is a concentration of Turkish Cypriots, a class in which a few lessons are conducted in Turkish. Furthermore, these lessons conducted in Turkish, are being given by people without the help of a textbook and whose profession is unrelated to elementary education. Thus, the Turkish Cypriots are being made to receive education, apart from a few hours, in the Greek language which they do not understand. By this arrangement, the Greek Cypriot Administration is preventing the Turkish Cypriot pupils from receiving education on the same standards as the Greek Cypriot pupils and thus, the Turkish Cypriot pupils are being faced with a lower standard of education.

This arrangement is in fact, indicative of the Greek Cypriot Administration's denial of Turkish Cypriot status as equal co-founder of the Republic of Cyprus. The Greek Cypriot Administration does not even view the Turkish Cypriots as a minority, because according to international covenants regarding minority rights, minorities have the right to education in their mother tongues and parties to these covenants are obliged to take the necessary steps in the realisation of this right. Despite the above, the Greek Cypriot Administration denies to the

Turkish Cypriots not only the right which emanates from the Constitution, but even the international rights recognised to minorities in the world.

Today, the denial of the Turkish Cypriots' constitutional right to receive education in their mother tongue by the Republic of Cyprus which is a member of the European Union is a situation the like of which does not exist in the world. The recognition of this right by putting an end to this arrangement is not only a legal requirement, but also an obligation on the part of a member of the European Union where human rights are most highly valued.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ali DAYIOGLU

Member of the Board of Trustees of the
Turkish Cypriot Humans Rights Foundation
North Cyprus

E-mail : dayioglu@kktc.net / info@ktihv.org