



# Avrupa Batı Trakya Türk Federasyonu Föderation der West-Thrakien Türken in Europa Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe Ευρωπαϊκή Ομοσπονδία Τούρκων Δυτικής Θράκης Fédération des Turcs de Thrace Occidentale en Europe

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations  
Member of the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP) of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights  
Member of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)

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## Working Session II: Tolerance and non-discrimination II

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Dear President,  
Distinguished representatives  
And esteemed NGO Delegates,

We monitor the rise of far-right extremism in Europe with great concern and the situation is all the more serious as extremist political parties have gained an increased influence in national parliaments and governments. Morten Kjaerum, the Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, said that there are indicators that the situation in the EU is not improving, on the contrary, in the last few years, there is a continued and renewed violations of fundamental rights of people living in the EU through verbal abuse, physical attacks or murders motivated by prejudice.

Nils Muiznieks, Council of Europe's Commissioner of Human Rights recently published a comment that Europe has been experiencing a worrying intensification of activities of racist extremist organizations, including political parties and added that the upsurge has even reached the point of "an early form of far right terror". The Golden Dawn in Greece won 6, 92% of the vote in the national elections of June 2012 and 18 seats in the Greek Parliament.

On May 19, 2013, Spokesman for the Golden Dawn Ilias Kasidiaris party told supporters at a rally late, "If a mosque is constructed for Islamist criminals in Greece, a front of 100,000 Greeks headed by Golden Dawn will be created".<sup>1</sup> The threat came days after the far-right party has given a one-month ultimatum for Muslims to leave Greece or they will be "slaughtered like chickens". A few days later, the Muslim Association of Greece received a letter with the emblem of the far-right party threatening that "there will be blood" if Muslims do not leave the country. The letter, written in Greek, English and Arabic, the letter used vulgar language against Muslims in Greece and it was written in English that "Until June 30 you shut your bordela in Greece you will go to hell. From July 1 onwards those who are still here will be slaughtered like chickens on the road".<sup>2</sup>

The Commissioner noted that in addition to migrants, other social groups have also been targeted by hate speech and violence including Muslim minority of Turkish origin. In the period after the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/greek-neo-nazis-threaten-to-mobilize-against-mosque.aspx?pageID=238&nid=47230>

<sup>2</sup> <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2013/05/18/greeces-muslims-cite-slaughter-threat/>

election of Golden Dawn to the Greek Parliament, the attacks were recorded against the minority by perpetrators linked to Golden Dawn members or supporters.

The Golden Dawn supporters made demonstrations in the villages where the Minority lives and chanted slogans against the Minority and Turkey. In Xanthi and Komotini, Golden Dawn supporters with Greek flags in their hands drove by the Turkish villages by motorbikes and cars. In August 2012, a group of nearly 150 members of extreme nationalist Golden Dawn (Chrysi Avgi) party marched toward Komotini Turkish Youth Union (Gümülcine Türk Gençler Birliği)(GTGB) and chanted slogans against Turkey and Turkish Minority of Western Thrace, and the group threw bottles to the garden of the association. At that day, Golden Dawn organized a demonstration in order to protest the settlement of illegal immigrant to the police schools in Komotini and Xanthi. After the demonstration, a group of demonstrators marched toward the Turkish Consulate in Komotini, but the police did refuse access of the group to the street on which the consulate is located. Subsequently, the group congregated in front of the GTGB building. The group chanted Greek national anthem and shouted slogans against Turkish Minority and Turkey, then threw bottles to the garden.<sup>3</sup>

In September 2012, Cemali Mülazım was attacked by Golden Dawn supporters in Xanthi's centre as he was hanging a placard of an event. A group of 7 to 9 persons attacked Cemali Mülazım and beaten him. On 25 June 2013, the perpetrator was sentenced to 7 months of imprisonment by Xanthi Criminal Court, but the enforcement of the verdict has been deferred for 3 years.<sup>4</sup> Another example of physical attack is that Golden Dawn supporters attacked Cüneyt Serdar, while he was passing through during a tension between an anarchist group and the Golden Dawn members on demonstration at Xanthi's centre and beaten him blatantly. Cüneyt Serdar was taken to hospital with ambulance given the serious injury he has got on his head and face that he had to have stitches.

The Golden Dawn has triggered further intolerance and leads to the trivialization of racism in society. Lastly, on 17 September 2013, a 35-year-old rapper Pavlos Fyssas, who defined himself as anti-fascist was stabbed to death by a man who is linked to Golden Dawn. He was stabbed twice in the heart and chest on Tuesday night in a brawl after soccer match shown in a cafe in Keratsini and died within minutes of being stabbed in the chest when he and a group of seven friends were set upon by around 30 black-clad supporters of Golden Dawn in the district of Keratsini<sup>5</sup>. The alleged perpetrator, a 45-year-old man who was arrested confessed to being linked to Golden Dawn. While the extremist Golden Dawn has been blamed for numerous violent attacks in the past, the overnight stabbing is the most serious violence so far directly attributed to a member.

The death of Pavlos Fyssas drew condemnation from across Greece's political spectrum and from abroad. Hannes Swoboda, president of the Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament, urged Greek authorities to examine banning the party altogether. "Golden Dawn's openly xenophobic; neo-Nazi hatred even goes as far as murdering political opponents. This is shocking and intolerable by any standards, and more so in a European Union country," he said. In 1999 Guidelines of the Venice Commission on the prohibition and dissolution of political parties, the Venice Commission stated that "prohibition or dissolution of political parties can be envisaged only if it is necessary in a democratic society and if there is concrete evidence that a party is engaged in activities threatening democracy and fundamental freedoms

We strongly believe that it is crucial that Greece should condemn firmly and unequivocally all manifestations of hate crime. Member of European Parliament Sophie in't Veld asked European Commission's view in her question for written answer on 14 August 2013 on numerous racist and xenophobic statements of Golden Dawn MPs who target not only the Jewish community, but also

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.batitrakya.org/bati-trakya/bati-trakya-haber/yunanistanda-turklere-cirkin-saldiri.html>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.gundemgazetesi.com/news/detay\\_02.php?h1\\_id=1364](http://www.gundemgazetesi.com/news/detay_02.php?h1_id=1364)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/18/greece-ban-golden-dawn-pavlos-fyssas>

other minorities such as the Turks of Western Thrace in the light of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA.<sup>6</sup>

All forms of hate crimes constitute serious human rights violations and there is a need to impose on the perpetrators of sentences that are effective, proportionate and appropriate to the offence committed. MEP Sophie in't Veld asked the Commission to ensure that Greece adopts comprehensive legislation on racism and xenophobia. We welcome the government's effort in transposing the European Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 "on combating certain and in forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law" replace Law 927/1979, although the deadline was 28 November 2010.

We invite the Government of Greece to impose effective penalties or prohibition, if necessary for the extremist activities of political organizations, including Golden Dawn political party. Such political parties where evidence demonstrates that they advocate for and are involved directly or indirectly in acts of racist violence, must be banned and excluded from all state subsidies which are usually provided to political parties.

Negative portrayals of Muslims, stereotypes and prejudices towards Muslims create a general climate of mistrust, fear and hostility towards Muslim communities in Europe. OSCE participating States should promote educational programs for combating intolerant discourse and ODIHR must provide training to law-enforcement officers in recognizing, understanding and investigating hate crimes. Hate crimes and intolerance motivated by prejudice and bias are threats to cohesion within societies and their security, as seen in Greece. Training of police work to address hate crimes is at the very heart of the security, therefore we request from the Greek Government to invite ODIHR to implement the TAHCLE programme as part of its commitment to fight hate-motivated crimes in Greece.

Reaffirming the importance to collect and maintain reliable information and statistics about hate crimes motivated by racism and related discrimination and intolerance to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE Participating States should take investigate and full prosecute any act and/or threat of violence motivated by hatred. And, ODIHR should pay more attention to hate-motivated incidents and crimes against Muslims in the OSCE area, in particular Greece and establish a more concrete cooperation mechanism with NGOs in reporting racism and racist hate crimes they face in countries which they live.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2013-009567+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en>