



**Rodos,İstanköy ve Onikiada Türkleri Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği/ Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association**

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OSCE

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

11-22 September 2017

Warsaw National Stadium, Warsaw

**WORKING SESSION 7: Tolerance and non-discrimination I**

Name of the Organization: Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association

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**Turks in Rhodes and Kos asks for non-discrimination from Greece**

Dear Moderator,  
Distinguished representatives,  
And esteemed NGO Delegates,

More than 6.000 Turks people live in the Dodecanese islands, mainly in Rhodes and Kos in the Aegean Sea. Greece does not recognize any minority rights of the Turkish minority in Rhodes and Kos on the ground that the islands were under the rule of Italy at the time the Lausanne Peace Treaty was signed, which determined the status and the rights of the Turkish Muslim minority in Western Thrace in 1923. Greece does not recognize the ethnic identity of the Turkish population in the islands and name them as "Greek Muslims".

According to the findings of the Committee of Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Council of Europe<sup>1</sup> and the NGO Human Rights Without Borders International<sup>2</sup>, the problems of the Turks living in the Dodecanese are citizenship, learning of Turkish, religion and worship, hatred and pressure, the protection of the cultural heritage of the Ottoman Turks and the pious foundations(waqfs) problem. There is no improvement in the solution of the problems mentioned above.

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<sup>1</sup> at <http://www.rodosistankoyturkleri.org.tr/andreas-gross-raporlari/>

<http://www.assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2012/eres1867.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Fautre, Willy, 2017. Greece: Ethnic Turks In Rhodes And Kos. Copyright Federal Union of European Nationalities and Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association. All Rights Reserved. Brussels, December 2017

The Turks living in the islands face the assimilation threat in terms of ethnic and cultural identity. Since the Greek authorities identify the Turks in Rhodes and Kos as “Muslim” population, there is a risk that the Turkish population in the islands may disappear in near future, if the assimilation policy by the relevant authorities does not end.

The Turks in Rhodes and Kos demand from Greek authorities to:

- accept the Turkish identity of the Muslim population in Rhodes and Kos and abolish any laws which prevent any minority organization which aims to preserve its cultural identity and traditions.
- provide Turkish children with the right of learning Turkish language in primary school level at least on the basis of bilingual education

recognize the right to religious education for the Turks in Rhodes and Kos.

- pay attention to preservation, maintenance and restoration of the cultural assets from Ottoman Turks in Rhodes, Kos and Dodecanese islands,
- protect cultural monuments and historical artifacts inherited from the Ottoman Empire, and do renovation and maintenance works.
- enable members of the boards of the foundations (Waqfs) in Rhodes and Kos to be elected by the Turks in Rhodes and Kos freely.
- return the estates nationalized by the Greek government and use them in accordance with its original construction, e.g. convert the Suleymaniye Madrasah to an institution providing education in Turkish language on the basis of bilingual education.
- prevent vandalism against the Turkish-Muslim graves and the gravestones of the Murat Reis Complex
- end hatred and pressure against members of the Turkish population in the islands.
- reinstate the citizenship rights of the Turks born in Rhodes and Kos whom were deprived of their Greek citizenship.
- remove any statement which include hostility against the Turks in the Greek textbooks in schools.

As a member of the European Union, Greece must fulfill its responsibilities in the field of human rights in full compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights and other human rights documents.