



General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 October 2015

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Thirtieth session

Agenda item 3

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Note verbale dated 2 October 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honour to provide herewith the comments of the Government of Greece in relation to the written statement submitted by the “Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe”, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status (A/HRC/30/NGO/95), submitted to the Human Rights Council at its thirtieth session under agenda item 3 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Greece kindly requests the Office of the High Commissioner to circulate the present note verbale and the text attached thereto* as a document of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 3.

* Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission only.



Annex

[English only]

Muslims on Rhodes/Kos

Greek citizens of Muslim faith residing on Rhodes and Kos enjoy the same rights and have the same obligations as all Greek citizens. No Treaty or other international instrument designates them as minority. Nevertheless, their religious and cultural rights are fully respected. Greece regrets the fact that unsubstantiated allegations with regard to their rights and status are promoted within international organisations, such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Human Rights Council.

The Greek State reinstates Greek citizenship to those people who were deprived of it in the past, according to the, currently revoked, Art. 19 of the Citizenship Code. The interested persons may apply to the competent Greek authorities and applications are examined individually based upon the relevant provisions of the Citizenship Code.

With regard to the teaching of Turkish, it is to be noted that despite the fact that there were lessons provided by the Association "Brotherhood" on Kos, they have been suspended, due to low attendance. At the moment, Turkish language, among others, is provided by a learning institution for foreign languages in Kos, and here again only 10 students are following the lessons.

On Rhodes, there are 6 mosques, including Ibrahim Pasa Mosque, which fully covers the religious needs of the limited muslim population on the island. Similarly, there are 2 mosques operating on Kos (Gasi Hasan and Defterdar) for the religious needs of the muslim population of the island. On both islands, Muslim citizens enjoy full support of their rights and have their own associations, cemeteries and libraries.

Historical monuments belong to the State, as a general rule all around the world, given that they constitute part of its national cultural heritage, and, in some cases, part of the world cultural heritage. Despite the current dire financial situation, the Greek State has spent more than 26 million euros, within the last few years, for the restoration of Ottoman or other muslim monuments, thus stressing the importance given to cultural heritage monuments in Greece.

The information provided about the muslim foundations is entirely preposterous: there was neither such a regulation-called "Katalipsis", nor the rest of the facts stated in the FUE document are accurate. As far as the registration of real estate property to the Cadastre Office is concerned, there is no different practice or legislation than the one in force for all Greek citizens, regardless of ethnicity, religion or other discrimination.

Who pays for the minority schools?

According to data provided by the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace, during the financial year 2013, EUR 18,571,629.53 was spent for the operation of Minority schools in Thrace. EUR 17,963,686 was allocated for teacher salaries and EUR 607,943.53 was paid by the State for operational expenditures of schools. Payment of such considerable amounts of money, particularly in this economic juncture, requires reforms for more rational and effective utilization of this significant investment for the benefit of students attending Minority schools.

Salaries of teachers in the sector of the Greek-language program (both, in elementary and in the two minority secondary schools) have always been charged to the national budget and not to the Muslim communities.

Statistical data for minority schools

The tables below give an overview of the Minority education during school years 2013-14 and 2014-15:

A. Number of Schools by Level of Education

Region	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools- High Schools		Medresses	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Xanthi	52	49	1	1	1	1
Rodopi	92	83	1	1	1	1
Evros	15	14	0	0	0	0
Total	159	146	2	2	2	2

B. Number of students

B1. School Year 2013-2014

Region	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools- High Schools		Medresses	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Rodopi	1.397	1.305	328	366	157	127
Xanthi	1.345	1.315	225	309	23	16
Evros	211	207	-	-	-	-
Total	2.953	2.827	553	675	180	143
		5.780		1.228		323

B2. School Year 2014-2015

Region	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools- High Schools		Medresses	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Rodopi	1.358	1.248	360	417	158	117
Xanthi	1.353	1.279	248	324	20	23
Evros	210	205	-	-	-	-
Total	2.921	2.732	608	741	178	140
		5.653		1349		318

C. Number of teachers in minority primary schools

	Elementary school teachers		Elementary school substitute teachers		Graduates of the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki		Graduates of the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki (substitutes)		English teachers		P.E. Teachers	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Rodopi:	160	162	7	10	137	140	25	29	14	9	12	6
Xanthi	136	147	4	5	111	110	31	28	15	16	14	14
Evros	28	20	1	9	26	24	5	4	1	-	3	2
Total	324	329	13	24	274	274	61	61	30	25	29	22

D. Number of teachers in minority schools of secondary education

	<i>Number of Teachers</i>			
	Greek-Language Program		Minority Program	
	2013	2014	2013	2014
Medresses	26	23	9	9
Minority Middle Schools- Minority High Schools	29	36	35	37

Establishing and operating minority middle schools and high schools is not part of the obligations established by the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

Law 4310/2014 was the result of a lengthy consultation with members and representatives of the minority as well as the majority. The Association of Graduates of the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki for the regional units of Rodopi and Evros states in their letter (ref.num. 14/18-02-2015) addressed to the Minister of Education: ".We are puzzled indeed and the whole of the Minority is puzzled about the purpose and the content of this document (i.e. the document of the Association of Graduates of the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki for the regional unit of Xanthi denouncing Law 4310/2014), since as we have officially set out to you in a previous document, the changes that have occurred in the minority education have the universal acceptance of the Minority. The provisions of the amendment have been our long-standing demands and we therefore thank the Greek State for responding for the first time in a serious manner and with an honest intention to provide equal rights and equality before the law by intergrading teachers-members of the minority in the system of Education Management. It is worth asking who are those who speak on behalf of the Minority and why, opening discussions which damage the interests of the minority education presenting themselves as arbiters of issues and situations that have resolved continuing institutional problems of education".

By law 4301/2014 the Supervisory Board for Medresses in Thrace is established. Three Muftis of Thrace (one of whom shall be appointed as President) and three Muslim Theologians will participate in this institution which shall set out all issues regarding the religious education of the Muslim minority. Law 4310/2014 has established for the first time two posts of Educational Counselors for the minority program in which solely members of the minority shall be appointed. Thus, an institution aiming to support scientifically and pedagogically the minority program of minority schools is established, in line with the public education.