Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Turkish Muslim Minority in Western Thrace, Greece

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Talip KÜÇÜKCAN and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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The Turkish Muslim Minority in Greece cannot fully enjoy its fundamental human rights also emanating from bilateral and international agreements including the European Convention on Human Rights.

Despite the very timid promises of engagement by the SYRIZA-led government, the ethnic identity of the Minority is not recognised by Greece since the 1970s. In this period, several European Court of Human Rights judgements against Greece have not been implemented.

The right to education is also hindered by Greek authorities. Bilingual kindergartens are not allowed, and the demand for new minority secondary-high-schools is not met. The Minority's right to elect its religious leaders was abrogated in 1990. A new legislation in 2013 allows for a commission composed of assigned officials, including Orthodox employees, to assign Imams/Instructors for Islamic education at schools.

The principle of self-governance of the Minority's foundations has not been applied since 1967, when the elected boards were dismissed and replaced by the appointed employees. As of that year, the minority does not have a say on the management of the boards, which led to the expropriation of their properties, with high taxes applied on its foundations.

Despite repeated calls on Greece also by international human bodies such as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, no action has been taken to restore the citizenship of the members of that minority, numbering around 60.000, who were stripped of their Greek citizenship by the Greek Citizenship Code's repealed Article 19, which had been applied to non-Helens only.

In view of the above, the Parliamentary Assembly should examine the problems of the Turkish Muslim Minority in Western Thrace in order to ensure the application of the European Convention on Human Rights in co-operation with Greek authorities and the representatives of the Minority.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC: European Conservatives Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group