

**Doc. 10724**  
13 October 2005

**The plight of the Turkish Muslim Minority in Western Thrace, Greece**

Motion for a resolution  
presented by Mr Mercan and others

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

1. The Parliamentary Assembly notes that rights and freedoms of the Turkish Muslim Minority in Western Thrace of Greece are safeguarded in particular in the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923, as well as in other relevant bilateral and international covenants.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly acknowledges that there has been some amelioration of the plight of Minority in recent years thanks to the improvement of relations between Turkey and Greece.
3. It, however, expresses its concern that the Minority continues to face serious problems.
4. Standards of the Turkish Muslim Minority schools have deteriorated over the years due to excessive interference by the Greek authorities.
5. The Presidential decree promulgated on 24 December 1990, which abrogated the Law no 2345 dated 1995, has removed the Turkish Muslim Minority's right to elect its religious leaders (Muftis), which dates back to Athens Agreement of 1913. Instead, it delegated this prerogative to the Greek State. This arbitrary decision has prevented the Muftis from fulfilling their duty to supervise the properties of foundations.
6. The principle of self-governance of the Minority's foundations has been disregarded since 1967. In breach of the Athens Agreement and the Lausanne Treaty, the elected members of the executive boards of foundations were dismissed and have been replaced by appointed employees. This practice has led to the mismanagement of these foundations. Moreover, their properties were unlawfully expropriated. The remaining foundations have also been subjected to excessive taxes.
7. The Parliamentary Assembly notes with concern that the ethnic identity of the Minority is denied since the 1970s. This policy criminalizes the usage of words such as "Turk" and "Turkish". This has in turn led to the banning of the Minority's NGOs on the grounds that their titles bear the word "Turkish".
8. So far, no concrete action has been taken with a view to restoring citizenship of around 60,000 members of the minority, who have been stripped of their citizenship due to the implementation of the repealed article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Law no 3370/1955.
9. The Parliamentary Assembly requests Greece to fully abide by the European norms and practices in terms of minority protection, as well as freedom of expression and religion.

10. The Parliamentary Assembly urges Greece to settle the Turkish Muslim Minority's above-mentioned problems in compliance with the Lausanne Peace Treaty, the European Convention on Human Rights and standards of the Council of Europe.

*Signed (see overleaf)*

*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

MERCAN, Murat, Turkey, EPP/CD  
AÇIKGÖZ, Ruhi, Turkey, EDG  
BRADFORD, Paul, Ireland, EPP/CD  
Ç AVUSOGLU, Mevlüt, Turkey, EDG  
Ç ERÇİ, Mehmet, Turkey, EPP/CD  
EINARSSON, Mats, Sweden, UEL  
GROSS, Andreas, Switzerland, SOC  
GÜLÇİÇEK, Ali Rıza, Turkey, SOC  
HÖGMARK, Anders G., Sweden, EPP/CD  
LINDBLAD, Göran, Sweden, EPP/CD  
Ö ZAL, İbrahim, Turkey, EPP/CD  
SEVERINSEN, Hanne, Denmark, ALDE  
SMIRNOVA, Svetlana, Russia, EDG

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SOC: Socialist Group  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EDG: European Democratic Group  
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left  
NR: not registered in a group