



Assemblée générale

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Conseil des droits de l'homme

Vingtième session

Point 3 de l'ordre du jour

**Promotion et protection de tous les droits de l'homme,
civils, politiques, économiques, sociaux et culturels,
y compris le droit au développement**

Note verbale datée du 28 juin 2012, adressée au Haut- Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme par la Mission permanente de la Grèce auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies et des autres organisations internationales à Genève

La Mission permanente de la Grèce auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève et des autres organisations internationales en Suisse présente ses compliments au Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme et a l'honneur de lui faire tenir ci-joint les observations formulées par le Gouvernement grec concernant l'exposé écrit de la «Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe», organisation non gouvernementale dotée du statut consultatif spécial (A/HRC/20/NGO/47), en date du 11 juin 2012.

La Mission permanente de la Grèce demande au Haut-Commissariat aux droits de l'homme de bien vouloir faire distribuer le texte* ci-joint en tant que document de la vingtième session du Conseil des droits de l'homme, au titre du point 3 de l'ordre du jour.

* Le texte des observations est reproduit en annexe, tel qu'il a été reçu.

Annexe

[English only]

We regret that the NGO “Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe”, continues its orchestrated campaign to raise, on every opportunity, issues pertaining to the Muslim Minority in Thrace- Greece in a tendentious and biased manner, attempting to put forward erroneous and distorted views of the situation of the minority, totally unrelated with the facts on the ground

These tactics smack of political expediencies or other agendas and do not constitute well meaning and constructive criticism which Greece always welcomes

With regard to the written statement submitted by the above mentioned NGO in the framework of the 20th Session of the Human Rights Council under Agenda item 3 (Geneva, 18.06-06.07.2012), Greece would like to raise the following points:

With regard to the representation of Muslim women of the minority to the labor market and to the political system, there is definitely room for improvement. Existing shortcomings in this respect, can be attributed mostly to the traditions, customs and perceptions for the role of women in the particular social/religious group they belong to and less to other reasons such as the current economic crisis in Greece or the relatively lower level of participation of women in the political-economic life of the country compared to men.

However, it is encouraging that the leader of the political party “Proto Vima Gia Tin Isotita”, which claims to represent the interests of the Muslim minority, is a woman, currently a member of the Municipal Council of the city of Komotini. Muslim women are represented also in the local government (municipalities) in the towns of Myki and Arriana, while the largest and most active NGO of the minority (PEKEM) has women in key positions.

In no case there is any kind of state discrimination against Muslim women (or men) because of their sex or religion as the written statement implies.

The Greek state not only does not discriminate against Muslim women but on the contrary, has taken and continues to take affirmative action to improve their better integration into all aspects of economic, social and political life, both at regional and national level.

In that respect, special quotas for the benefit of all minority members have been introduced.¹ Muslim women, in particular, are beneficiaries of broader gender equality policies and do actively participate in relevant programmes implemented by state authorities or civil society and NGO’s.

It should be noted that Muslim women in Thrace, as everywhere in Greece, are free to dress according to their traditions and wear the headscarf. This is a possibility that is not an option even in some Muslim countries

Greece will continue to seek further ways and means to meet the needs of the members of the Muslim minority and enhance their progress, prosperity and well – being.

¹ a 0.5% quota for the admission to Universities and Higher Technical Educational Institutes/Institutions of students belonging to the Muslim minority as well as a 0,5 0/00 quota to the state exam system for civil service in favor of the members of the Muslim minority in Thrace were introduced.