



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Twenty-sixth 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 27 June 2014 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 dated 26 May 2014 submitted by the “Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe”, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status (A/HRC/26/NGO/84).

The Permanent Mission of Greece kindly requests the Office of the High Commissioner to circulate the attached text\* as a document of the twenty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 3.

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

GE.14-07157 (E)



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## Annex

*[English only]*

### **Participation of the muslim minority in Thrace in Greek public life**

The allegations expressed in the A/HRC/26/NGO/84 document, submitted to the HRC by the NGO "Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe" have little to do with the actual participation of the Muslim minority to the governance of the local, the regional and the national affairs. According to the above mentioned NGO, Greece is allegedly impeding the political representation of Greek citizens of Muslim faith residing in Thrace in the decision making process at all levels due to the 3% electoral threshold.

Facts suggest otherwise; at the most recent local and regional elections of May 25, 2014 roughly 120 Greek citizens members of the Muslim Minority were elected at the local and regional councils in Thrace; among them three mayors in the cities of Ariana, Iasmos (Rodopi constituency) and Miki (Xanthi constituency). Therefore, the participation of the Muslim Minority in the region's local administration is far from restricted but vigorous and active.

What is more, at the last European elections —held at the same day with the local and regional elections— the "Democracy and Equality Party" gained a considerable part of the ballot in the constituencies of Rodopi and Xanthi — accounting to 41,425 votes with an overall voter turnout in the region as high as 70%.

The 3% electoral threshold is applicable in a non discriminatory way in all elections that are held in Greece. It has never served as the obstacle to the political representation of Greek citizens of Muslim faith residing at the region of Thrace the "Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe" wishes to present. In fact, it is as early as 1927 that members of the Muslim Minority have been members of the Hellenic Parliament. And this is the case of almost all parliamentary elections without the exception of the most recent; as of June 17, 2012 three members of the Muslim minority in Thrace serve as MPs in the current Parliament with two different parties.

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