



Assemblée générale

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Conseil des droits de l'homme

Trente-deuxième 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 1^{er} juillet 2016, 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 à Genève

La Mission permanente de la Grèce auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève et des autres organisations internationales ayant leur siège 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 du Gouvernement grec en réponse à l'exposé écrit soumis par la « Fédération des Turcs de Thrace occidentale en Europe », organisation non gouvernementale dotée du statut consultatif spécial (A/HRC/32/NGO/74), à la trentième-deuxième session du Conseil des droits de l'homme au titre du point 3 de l'ordre du jour (voir annexe).

La Mission permanente de la Grèce prie le Haut-Commissariat de bien vouloir faire distribuer le texte de la présente note verbale et de son annexe* comme document de la trente-deuxième session du Conseil des droits de l'homme au titre du point 3 de l'ordre du jour.

* L'annexe est distribuée telle qu'elle a été reçue, dans la langue originale seulement.

GE.16-12666 (F) 020816 160816



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Merci de recycler



**Annexe à la note verbale datée du 1^{er} juillet 2016,
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 à Genève**

[Anglais seulement]

**Submission by the Permanent Mission of Greece, on the Muslim
Minority in Thrace and Freedom of Association, HRC 32, 1 July 2016**

Greece attaches great importance to implementing coherent, comprehensive, and effective policies that guarantee, inter alia, equality before the law, respect for human rights /religious freedoms and equality of opportunities for all. The same principles and goals apply with reference to the protection of and full respect for the rights of Greek citizens members of the Muslim minority in Thrace. With regard to question of "ethnic self-identification" of the minority, we recall our standing position on the free individual self-identification. Moreover, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne established the status of the Muslim minority in Thrace/ Greece identifying it on the basis of the only common denominator i.e the Muslim faith of the three -otherwise distinct- groups (Greek citizens of Turkish, Pomak and Roma origin) that comprise it. Each of these groups has its own language and cultural traditions/heritage.

With regard to the link between self-identification and the freedom of assembly and association, we would like to underline that over 50 associations which are active among minority members, have been legally registered by the relevant Courts since 2008. The Greek Justice fully complies with the acquis of the European Convention on Human Rights and other international instruments, under the rule of law.

With regard to the references of the shutdown of two "minority associations' annexes" in Komotini, we stress that there were not "annexes", but informal kindergartens, which were operating illegally, housing activities for children of preschool age, with the cover of the activities of that specific minority association and under its auspices. The operation of those kindergartens, which had not applied for a legal permission from the competent authorities, on the one hand goes against the principle of legality. On the other hand, it has put at risk the physical integrity of the children, since there were no guarantees for the rules of establishment, operation and implementation of all appropriate security measures. Although the objective of the Court's decision has been the implementation of the Law and the provision of the appropriate operation measures, the NGO so-called "Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe" attempts to present this issue as a violation of minority rights, thus distorting the true facts.

We would also like to highlight that according to the journalist Mr. Dede, correspondent of the minority newspaper "Trakyanin Sesi", those annexes "were justifiably shut down since there was no official permission".