



# Avrupa Batı Trakya Türk Federasyonu Föderation der West-Thrakien Türken in Europa Federation of Western Thracian Turks in Europe Ευρωπαϊκή Ομοσπονδία Τούρκων Δυτικής Θράκης

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

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European Commission  
President José Manuel Barroso  
1049 Brussels  
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10.01.2007

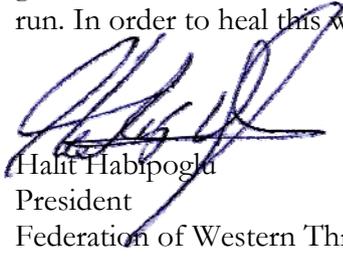
Dear Mr. José Manuel Barroso,

I am writing you this letter in order to attract your attention to the developments in Greece. The Turkish minority living in Western Thrace, the north-southern part of Greece, was exposed to compulsory migration and assimilation policies of Greece. The Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code, which was one of the most important means of this policy, led to denaturalization of the members of the minority to which I also belong on the ground that they were of another ethnic origin. This racist and discriminative statute was abolished in 1998 after a 43 year enforcement process. Nevertheless, the outcomes of this enforcement are quite severe: According to the official announcements of Greece, 44.638 and according to the numbers delivered by ECRI, 60.000 West Thracian Turks had been unjustly denaturalized during this period. When the „indirect victims“, who were born after 1998, are added to these numbers comprising the direct victims, we reach a total victim number of 80.000. Enclosed, I am sending a report published by our organization about the content and enforcement of the code. In this report, you may find in details the enforcement of the code and victim numbers.

As the statute was abolished in 1998, it was not executed retroactively despite the appeal of the Turkish minority in this regard. However, the implications of the unjust caused by this racist statute should have been fully removed. In this respect, our organization has been struggling for 9 years in order that the implications of the statute are removed also retrospectively. A recent incident has caused, in addition to the previous ones, hesitation that the implementation of the statute is still continuing. Ms. Besime Nurseoglu, a West Thracian Turk and “Greek citizen”, who lives in Izmit in Turkey, was denaturalized as she went to Greece to renew her identity card and passport. After she had been given her new identity card, she was taken into custody and then deported on the ground that she was not a Greek citizen. As you may see in the report enclosed, there are such other incidents happened before. This situation, which we perceived before as an outcome of uncoordinated and inefficient state administration, cannot be evaluated with good will any longer after 9 years since the abolition of the statute. In this respect, we are calling the European Commission to follow the developments in the region of Western Thrace more closely and to be more sensitive to the removal of the negative implications of the Article 19 of.

The Article 19 of the the Greek Citizenship Code led to denaturalization of 80.000 West Thracian Turks between the years of 1981 and 1998 by Greece, a European Union member country. This situation makes the issue more than an interior matter of Greece, and brings up the the responsibility of the European Union. As we all believe, the ideal of a united Europe can only be realized through the common spirit of a half million of European citizens who do not see any lingual, religious, ethnic or other differences among themselves. The situation that 80.000 European Union citizens have lost their citizenships on the

ground of ethnic discrimination is a great wounding the European ideal is not able to tolerate in the long run. In order to heal this wounding at once, we all together shall not wait any longer to act.



Halit Habipoglu  
President  
Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe