



## NEW LAW AFFECTS TURKISH RADIO



### Turkish Broadcasting is prohibited in Greece

New licence law that was published in the official gazette brings serious limitations to radio stations broadcasting in Turkish. New law that was approved by Greek President Karolos Papoulias was published in the official gazette on 5th July affects local and Turkish radio stations.

### New law brings conditions such as:

Radio station must provide collateral of 60-100 thousand Euro, which is very difficult condition to be satisfied by the low budget minority radio stations in Western Thrace, Radio station must broadcast for 24 hours and employ 6 full time person-

nel, The most interesting component of the law is that Greek is the first and the dominant language. Accordingly, except music programmes, speaking language will be Greek.

International institutions such as International Press Institute (IPI) and South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO) sent a protest letter to Greek President Karolas Papoulias and Parliamentary Spokesman Anna Benaki-Psaroudathe. In the letter, it was underlined that new law meant prohibitions for minority radio stations and requested the officials to take the necessary steps to prevent the law come into force.

Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) censured Greek government and

expressed that right of the minorities to broadcast in their mother languages should be respected.

### Western Thrace Turkish Minority Members will be seriously affected by the impacts of the new law

Statement of Minority Deputy İlhan Ahmet caused grief among minority members. İlhan Ahmet stated that the law prepared by his Party should not cause concerns while some offers would be discussed at the Parliament and the condition of employing 6 full time personnel would be converted to part-time personnel. However, Ahmet did not touch upon the most critical condition of dominant broadcast language and he only stated that Turkish would not be prohibited.

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Halit Habipoğlu, chairman of ABTTF, stated that the new law paved the way to ban Turkish broadcasting on the back of accepting Greek as the dominant language.

Habipoğlu, chairman of Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe said that the new law was very dangerous and aimed to destroy the basic right of broadcasting in mother language and right to information.



Habipoğlu underlined that the new law should be abolished promptly, expressing ABTTF intention to initiate protest actions throughout Europe.

Meanwhile, Greek Government has not made any official statement yet. Radio employees are waiting in a highly concerned mood due to the new law. Greek Government is expected to make official statement in the coming weeks.

## STOHOS TARGETS ILHAN AHMET

### Greek press targets Turkish parliamentary İlhan Ahmet

Extreme rightist newspaper Stohos published in Greece has impeded Minority parliamentary İlhan Ahmet by targeting. The annoyance emerging from İlhan Ahmet's works related with the

has been understood once more that it had not been received to defend the rights of Turkish Minority of Western Thrace favorably in Greek press. It has been implied in Stohos' command that works of İlhan Ahmet got over endurance limit of Greek society. Stohos asserted a claim such as İlhan Ahmet

implied that these comments are the proof of prejudice of Greek press about Turkish Minority of Western Thrace. Habipoğlu reproached Stohos and he said "Greek press, still today carries on its prejudiced attitude against Minority politicians like in the past. They try to increase tension in order to suppress our Minority which continue its contest to have the rights in democratic ways. So, they attempt to arouse major society by making incorrect news and thundering. These kind of simple games are bygone now, they should know that they can never suppress our Minority in this way".

by increasing tension such as Stohos does". Habipoğlu stated that İlhan Ahmet has done important works since he had been elected and said "our parliamentary concurs to improve dialog between major society and our Minority by some important works such as his motions in the parliament, obtaining Turkish books for education of Turkish Minority children, making attempts by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs resulting in drawing the attention to Western Thrace region. Our other Minority politicians should also search for ways of dialog and they do this. But it is seen that improving dialog between major society and our Minority troubles some groups" and he finished his release.



Turkish parliamentary Ahmet

Minority has been implied by a threatening attitude in the comment published on the front page of the current number of Stohos newspaper. It has been stated in the comment that parliamenter İlhan Ahmet had been following Dr. Sadık Ahmet's way with a strong belief and it has been commanded his end could be such as Dr. Sadık Ahmet's. It

made Turkey's propaganda and rubbished İlhan Ahmet.

### Minority politicians should not be afraid of threats

Halit Habipoğlu, the President of Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF) has made a press release after attack on İlhan Ahmet in Greek press and he

Habipoğlu sent a message to Minority politicians and said "all of our politicians struggle for the rights of our Minority should not be afraid of such kind of threats. They should continue their struggle in democratic ways. Our politicians who represent our society in our rightful action should continue to utter the problems of Turkish Minority of Western Thrace decisively even in the parliament or out of the parliament. Problems of our Minority can only be solved in this way. Otherwise no one can reach a solution

Stohos newspaper is known with its propinquity to Greek Intelligence Service and Greek General Staff. It is estimated that the newspaper made this comment because of an event related with Turkish Youth Union of Komotini organized by Ahmet and İlhan Ahmet's opposition to government's policies which cause poverty of Turkish tobacco producers in Western Thrace.

# FEDERATION IN PACE MEETINGS

## ABTTF attended the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (PACE) meetings

Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF) attended the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (PACE) meetings which are organized in Strasbourg, France between 26-29 June. ABTTF has been represented by Mustafa Geveli, Director of Greek Studies and Economic Affairs of ABTTF in PACE meetings. ABTTF has made some intensive lobby activities for adoption of the motion in the first Assembly meeting which has been organized after Spring Session in which a motion related with 19. Article had been presented. ABTTF thanked to parliamenters who have signed the motion and made one-to-one interviews with lots of parliamenters.

## Motion of 19. Article has been adopted

Meetings made for adoption of the motion have been effective and it has been understood by adoption of the motion. Lots of parliamenters have declared positive opinions about support of the motion after meetings. In the last day of the meetings, Latvian parliamenter Boriss Cilevics who gave the motion has declared that the motion related with 19. Article had been adopted by PACE. After this development, Portuguese parliamenter Joao Mota Amaral has declared that the motion had been in a very good way and it had been taken in to bureaucratic



*Boriss Cilevics*



*Mustafa Geveli, Alp Ay*

transaction. Boriss Cilevics who gave the motion has said that they had succeeded to make the motion adopt with lobby activities after a difficult process and he said that this motion would be transacted by other motion given related with Macedonian Minority. Process has continued by selection of a rapporteur for the motion. It has been also

stated in the motion that the rapporteur who would be selected for the motion should be versatile and experienced about minority issues. The rapporteur will investigate violated rights of Turkish Minority of Western Thrace and will prepare a report to PACE.

Halit Habipoğlu, the President of ABTTF has talked after this

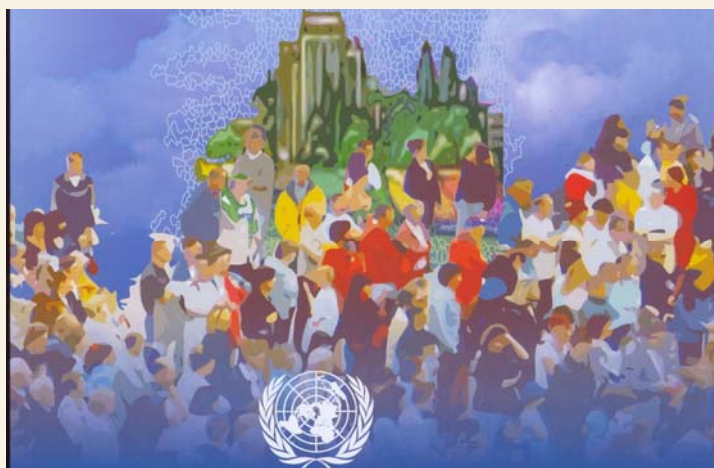
development and he said “adoption of the motion in PACE is a very important and a satisfactory development. At first, a Turkish parliamenter gave a motion about the problems of our Minority and now other European parliamenters have become aware of our problems. This motion opens the way to make political impression on Greece. We should realize the value of this motion. Now, we should work with rapporteur and we should make all problems of Turkish Minority of Western Thrace written in the report”. Boriss Cilevics who gave the motion and who is positive about problems of Turkish Minority of Western Thrace has been selected as the rapporteur of the motion and Catherine Maffucci-Hugel has been appointed to the secretariat of the rapporteur.

## „MINORITY“ WORD IS BEING PROHIBITED

**Minority Associations with 'minority' word are being prohibited in Western Thrace**

In Western Greece, as the prohibitions to establish foundations continue, new prohibitions come to scene. Recently, Iskece (Ξάνθη) Administrative Court did not permit the establishment of "Minority Civil Society Solidarity Association" as the name carries 'minority'.

The application of "Minority Civil Society Solidarity Association" which was established by the Turkish Minority in Iskeçe (Xanthi) was rejected by the Administrative Court by the decision numbered 293/2007 on the legal ground that it is not clear whether the 'minority' word in the name of the association defines religious minority or ethnic Turkish minority and thus that ambiguity constitutes risk for the public order.



Furthermore, in the statement, it was underlined that the state had the right to protect its own security and thus the foundations that constitute risk for the security of the nation can be prohibited in that sense. The Court also stated that the minority group in Western Thrace was defined 'Muslim Minority' both in Turkey and Greece under the framework of Lausanne Treaty. However, the fact that Western Thrace Minority was clearly defined

as 'minority' in the Lausanne Treaty and has the right to establish foundations under 'minority' definitions was absolutely ignored.

As might be recalled, Greek authorities prohibited the establishment of Meric Minority Youth Association on the back of same reasoning, yet permitting the establishment of Iskece (Ξάνθη) Pomak Culture Association. That harmed the credibility of the authorities

seriously. Iskece (Ξάνθη) Administrative Court made a conflicting action by permitting the Pomak Culture Association.

That last event which is the most recent example of the anti-democratic implementations was seriously criticized. Halit Habipoğlu, chairman of Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe, made a press release. Habipoğlu stated that Greece fell short of democracy day by day, prohibiting Associations with Turkish word in it and now minority names are also banned. Habipoğlu underlined that those implementations were completely against democracy and freedom of association. Habipoğlu said that that unfair decision of the Court should be brought up to European agenda. He also added that every legal way should be abused to establish the association in Greece.

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL MEETING

**ABTTF participated the first ECOSOC Human Rights Council Meeting.**

Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF) participated the first ECOSOC Human Rights Council Meeting in July 2007 after its ECOSOC membership.

United Nations (UN) ECOSOC Human Rights Meetings were held in Geneva between 11-18 June. ABTTF Representatives participated the first two days meetings and took important steps to enhance cooperation activities with other ECOSOC member NGOs. Re-

ports prepared by UN reporters about human rights violations in the Human Rights Council Executive Committee member countries were presented. Barış Hasan, ABTTF Director of Research, together with the UN Permanent Representatives of countries participated Executive Committee Meeting.

ABTTF Representatives contacted NGO and government representatives to introduce the unfair situations due to the 19th Article. ABTTF Re-



presentatives encountered requests from representatives of European Union Member Countries to organize more international activities to tell the unfair situation due to 19th Article to the world public. Halit Habipoğlu, chairman of ABTTF, made a press release after the meetings and

stated that Council Meetings were a great experience for them.

Following the meetings, representatives of ECOSOC member NGOs expressed their will to make cooperations to solve the problems stemming from 19th Article. Halit Habipoğlu stated that international interest during the meetings was satisfactory. Meanwhile, Habipoğlu also added that cooperation with other member NGOs would be enhanced and unfair implementations due to 19th Article would be told to the international public under UN roof

# ATTACK ON TURKISH JOURNALIST



*Cengiz Ömer and his Mother*

A Greek policeman has attacked on Cengiz Ömer, chief editor and holder of Millet newspaper, in front of his home in Çanakkale. The event happened on 10 June in the evening. Cengiz Ömer has stopped for a while with his car to leave his mother who is a cardiac patient and then a policeman behind Cengiz Ömer who claimed that his way had been closed got off his car and attacked on Cengiz Ömer. Policeman has attacked on Cengiz Ömer at first then on his mother who is a cardiac patient and his father physically by thundering “Turks out, we don’t want Turks in Greece, go to Turkey”. Cengiz Ömer has been hurt and his mother hospitalized after the attack.

After this event Cengiz Ömer made a complaint to the legal authorities. Cengiz Ömer indicated that this was not a disjunctive event and he said “this is very similar attack to the one which was made on Abdullah Colak, ex-president of Commission of Exhortation and Guidance, I have doubts that this is a coincidence”. He said that some courageous news and comments about the rights of Turkish Minority of Western Thrace have been published on his newspaper in recent times and so, he and his newspaper had been thundered and targeted by Greek press. And he claimed that this attack made on him and his parents is thought provoking in

field of tactic and timing.

Halit Habipoglu, the President of Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF) made a press release after appearance of this worrying event and he conveyed his afflictions to Cengiz Ömer. Habipoglu said that public officials and especially policemen in Western Thrace carried on their fanatic nationalist behaviours on Western Thracian Turks. Habipoglu said “this attack displays attitudes of policemen against Turks. Public officials in Western Thrace show their hates against Turks when they find an opportunity”. Habipoglu implied that majority society should endeavour to live

together with minority society in unison and he said “but a Turkish journalist who defend the rights of Turkish Minority of Western Thrace is under attack. All of us should respect to different identities to discourage these events. We should not let extreme nationalist fanatics remain in the society. The biggest responsibility about this issue belongs to Greek society and state officials. If the state engaged members of our Minority as policemen or public officials, we could not face with these kind of worrying events. This event showed that it is time to engage members of our Minority as public officials” and he finished his release.

## FUEN VISITED ABTTF IN WITTEN

Hans Heinrich Hansen, chairman of FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities) and Jan Diedrichsten, FUEN Brussel Representative visited ABTTF on 1 August. FUEN Delegation conversed with ABTTF employees and got informed about ABTTF Works.



*Jan Diedrichsten, Halit Habipoğlu, Hans Heinrich Hansen*

Mr. Hansen expressed their appreciation for works of ABTTF and stated that ideas of member associations were very valuable for FUEN. In that framework, Hansen underlined that they appreciated ABTTF efforts to make the world public aware of Western Thrace Turkish Minority members' problems.

After exchanging ideas at ABTTF center, Halit Habipoğlu hosted FUEN Delegation at dinner. Habipoğlu underlined that ABTTF international works accelerated after being member of FUEN, which is a

very important improvement to mention. The main issue of the dinner agenda was the future possible cooperations of ABTTF and FUEN.

FUEN Delegation stated their will to share the international experience and success of ABTTF and upon that request, Habipoğlu said that ABTTF

was also willing to make cooperation with FUEN. "FUEN; being the leader and ABTTF can unite their experiences and make cooperations. We are glad to share experience with ABTTF and we find this move very positive. We are ready to work with FUEN in the future. I hope we will find the opportunity to be partners

with FUEN under the framework new projects" said Habipoğlu.

Habipoğlu stated that FUEN visit was very useful for future prospects. ABTTF will participate FUEN Congress of Minority Education that will be held between 31 August-2 September in Flensburg, Germany.

## VISITING ASSISTANT GOVERNOR



*Sibel Mustafaoğlu, Halit Habipoglu*

Halit Habipoglu, chairman of ABTTF visited Sibel Mustafaoğlu, assistant governor of Gumulcine (Komotini), on 19<sup>th</sup> July. Halit Habipoğlu congratulated Mustafaoğlu on her new post and expressed his best wishes.

Habipoglu stated that being a local governor in Western Thrace was a challenging task and in that sense non-governmental organizations should support local governors as much as they could. Meanwhile, Habipoğlu implied their

belief in which Mustafaoğlu would succeed in her new post.

"Sibel Mustafaoğlu is a very good and important example for Western Thrace Turkish minority, being an evidence of

minority women' success and representing minority women very well. I congratulate her once more on her new post as a minority woman" said Habipoğlu.

Mustafaoğlu stated that she recognized her responsibilities, adding that she would do her best for the social improvement of Western Thrace Turkish Minority women.

Meanwhile, Mustafaoğlu expressed her appreciation for the international efforts of ABTTF, underlining the importance of the Federation for the minority and stating their support to ABTTF for representing Western Thrace Turkish Minority on international platforms.

## METE EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION

Halit Habipoğlu, chairman of Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe, and Sebahattin Mümin Vice Chairman of the Federation, Ahmet Mete, new Mufti of Iskece (Manthi) on 13<sup>th</sup> July. Ahmet Mete accepted ABTTF Delegation at his chair.

ABTTF Executive Committee congratulated Mete on his new post and wished him success on the behalf of Western Thrace Turkish Minority members in Europe.

Mr. Mete was informed on the works of ABTTF. ABTTF's membership to international organizations, its successes on international platforms like United Nations, European Parliament, FUEN and efforts to convey the problems of Western Thrace Minority members to the attention of international public were expressed during the visit. Halit Habipoğlu also gave information on

the Newsletters published in 4 languages and ABTTF's web page and underlined that by means of Newsletter and web page, problems of Western Thrace Turkish Minority were put on the international community agenda.

Meanwhile Habipoğlu congratulated Mete also on his efforts to institutionalize Mufti chair. Mete thanked ABTTF Executive Committee for their visit and their long lasting efforts to present the situation



*Ahmet Mete, Halit Habipoğlu*

of Western Thrace Turkish Minority to the attention of international community. Mete stated that ABTTF's visit honoured him. Mete gave information about the restructuring works of Mufti chair and expressed his will to visit Manthi migrants living in Europe, waiting for invitation from ABTTF.

Halit Habipoğlu, chairman of Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe and Mete exchanged ideas for future cooperation during the visit. Meanwhile, Habipoğlu stated that Mete was likely to fill ex-Mufti Aga's place on the back of his hard working and determination and expressed his best wishes to Mete.

## MEETING WITH DIMITRIOS KOTSAKIS

**Meeting with Dimitrios Kotsakis, Mayor of Gümülcine (Komotini)**

ABTTF Delegation visited Dimitrios, Mayor of Gümülcine (Komotini) and Ali Ali, Deputy Mayor responsible for minority villages.

Halit Habipoğlu, chairman of ABTTF, visited Municipality of Gümülcine for the first time after the new governance came into office. Habipoğlu met Ali Ali, Deputy Mayor responsible for minority villages and gave information on ABTTF, as well as other Western Thrace associations in Europe.

Following the meeting with Ali Ali, Habipoğlu met Kotsakis and congratulated him for his new post on the behalf of ABTTF and Western Thrace Turkish

minority members in Europe.

Habipoğlu stated that ABTTF represented Western Thrace Turkish minority members of 25 thousand in all Europe, being a member of UN ECOSOC and FUEN, having a press unit that issues Newsletters and other researches in 4 languages, putting the problems of Western Thrace Turkish minority members on the international community agenda and trying to find ways to establish dialogue with the Greek government.

Habipoğlu expressed their pleasure to Kotsakis as himself and Municipality of Gümülcine's interested for the problems of minorities, yet not getting the same attention from Greek government. Habipoğlu requested Kotsakis to give effort



*Ali Ali, Dimitrios Kotsakis, Halit Habipoğlu*

and convince Greek government to establish dialogue with the minorities, underlining the fact that such an effort would be beneficial for both sides.

Kotsakis revealed that Municipality of Gümülcine saw minority and majority as members of a family, implementing a policy under that framework. Kotsakis stated that New Democracy governance valued minority and tried to eliminate the impacts

of previous pressures on the minority members under the guidance of democracy and equality.

Upon the support request of Habipoğlu for the summer camp project for Western Thrace minority children living in Germany, Kotsakis stated that Municipality of Gümülcine would do their best to support the project and ABTTF in all means, with pleasure.



# MINORITY SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS A THREAT

Western Thrace problem was discussed in a TV programm 'Our Voice' on TRT-INT on 7 June. Halit Habipoğlu, chairman of Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe, and Erol Kaşifoğlu, chairman of Western Thrace Turks Solidarity Association, participated the programm and discussed the problems of Western Thrace Turks.

## Political pressure is necessary for the 19th Article victims

Problems regarding 19th Article unfair implementations were mainly discussed during the programm. Halit Habipoğlu stated that political pressure was necessary to reimburse citizenship rights to the 19th Article victims, expressing the endless efforts of ABTTF to solve those problems.

Habipoğlu said that for the first time a Turkish Deputy from Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) submitted a motion to the



Foreign Minister of PACE, putting the issue on the agenda. Meanwhile, Boriss Cilevics, Latvian Parliamentarian, prepared a new motion and got signatures of 20 Parliamentarians. The issue will be put on the agenda this year by Cilevics. Habipoğlu stated that ABTTF membership to FUEN was

realized as of last month and added that lobbying activities would continue. Habipoğlu said that Greece should give up seeing minorities as a threat which irritated minorities seriously. 'Our people are from majority and minority. These people are Turkish, Macedonian, Ulah, Albanian, having Muslim, Orthodox,

Katholic and Jewish beliefs. All of them work for the development of our country. In that sense, our country should give up seeing the minorities as a threat' said Habipoğlu. At the end of the programm, it was expressed that ABTTF was always ready to help the 19th Article victims and gave the contact numbers of ABTTF.

## ABTTF NEWSLETTERS

News Bulletins published in Turkish, German, English and Greek by Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF) will start its 3. incoming year.

ABTTF News Bulletins in which there are current events in Western Thrace, minority policy of Greece, international activities of ABTTF related with problems of Western Thrace Turks, information about Western Thrace Turkish associations in Europe are followed up by Western Thrace Turks at first and large parts of society interestingly.

*In addition and for abonman  
you can contact with us and get information  
at the web site [www.abtff.org](http://www.abtff.org)  
or telephone number 0049 230 291 32 91*

### ABTTF Newsletter

Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe  
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