



PROBLEMS OF THE MINORITY EDUCATION IN GREECE

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Introduction

There are more than 200 minority schools in Western Thrace, whose foundation and activities were guaranteed by the 40th and 41st articles of the Lausanne Agreement. The education in these schools is mostly bilingual: both in Turkish and Greek. Following the Lausanne Agreement, administration of these educational institutions, which had been found accordingly to the former millet administration system of the Ottoman Empire, were aligned to the minorities and hence constituted the impulsive force of the minorities awakening process.¹

The education issue, which didn't become subject to serious complaints until the end of 1950s, became a victim of the Cyprus conflict, just like other problematic areas. Not only the new course books, being imported from Turkey are blocked despite all the agreements and protocols, but also the Turkish teaching hours were trimmed and minority's control over these schools were tried to be eliminated with the assistance of new laws, which are in fact against the 37th, 40th and 41st articles of Lausanne Agreement. Despite positive developments in the last years, the schooling of the minority in Western Thrace faces serious challenges. In this study, the actual situation of the minority education will be evaluated and both problems that are being and was experienced will be put forward.

¹ Expressions, which are used in the introduction and will be in the rest of this study, with the meanings of „ethical/national awakening“, „nation“, „ethnicity“, do not carry any irredentist meanings at all. Throughout in the history of the Western Thrace minority, irredentist options have never come to question. Religion, which served as a binder to maintain the unity of the minority since the beginning of the minority life in 1920s, has been replaced by the ethnic consciousness following a hard process of transition. This transition, which took place at the end of 1970s, was lead to a compromise between the religious and nationalist understanding, as the mystical leaders have played the leading role in the defence of ethnic based challenge for justice. Today, religion and nationality is inseparably glued to form the identity of an average member of the Western Thrace minority.

1. Minority Education

1.1. Primary Schools

In 223 primary schools of the minority of Western Thrace, a total of 6694 pupils attend classes. According to the information provided by the Greece Ministry of Education, as of school year 1997-98, 175 of these schools continue their activities with 2 teachers, which is the minimum number of teachers that should be present in a minority school. ²

1.2. Secondary Education

Unlike the vast number of minority primary schools, there are only two minority high schools that offer education in higher levels of secondary education. One of these schools, which have the same status as the other schools of minority, is located in Gümülcine (Celal Bayar High School³, foundation:1952) whereas the other one is located in İskeçe (Muzaffer Salihoğlu High School, foundation: 1965). Averagely, in each of these institutions' secondary school sections 300 and in high school sections 110 students are registered. ⁴ Of the 6 year education, 3 are of secondary and 3 are of high school level. Another danger for these schools, whose attractiveness was taken away through legal changes that we will go through in the following sections, is the educational institutions that Greece founded in the mountainous district located northly of the region. It is reported that, in these five

² Tsitsekilis; Mavrommatis, **Turkish...**, s. 15. Karş. Halil, İlnur, "Batı Trakya Türk Okullarında 1923'ten Günümüze Eğitim ve Öğretim", **IV. Uluslararası Batı Trakya Türkleri Kurultayı: 16-18 Haziran 2000-Londra**, Prepared by Avrupa Batı Trakya Türk Federasyonu, ?, Bursa, 2000, p. 94-102.

³ In 1952, the school, which was opened by the President of Turkey, Celal Bayar, is named after him. Following the military coup in 1960, the government has applied to Greek authorities that the name of the school is changed. The respond to this demand was positive and the school was renamed as "Minority School". On the other hand, the school is still referred with its former name by the minority and they desire that the school is one more time renamed and this time back to its former one. I'm quoting what, the president of the Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union, Sadik Salih told me as I met him during my visit to the region in 2005: "... Although it was renamed in 1960s, this school is called "Celal Bayar High School" not only by the Turks but also by the Greeks. I can still recall the bronze letters with which the name of the school was written on the wall: there stood the name Celal Bayar High School, both in Turkish and Greek. It was a marvelous thing. On the one side of the Celal Bayar High School stood a flagpole with a Turkish flag and on the other side one with a Greek, there was friendship. These were the good days and we are seeking them at the moment. We have no bad intentions, we only want to bring up our kids good educated."

Interview with Sadik Salih, Gümülcine, 24.05.2005.

⁴ Tsitsekilis; Mavrommatis, **Turkish...**, p. 19.

schools, four of which are in İskeçe and the other in Gümülcine, all lessons with the exception of religion classes are being held in Greek language.⁵

1.3. Madrasahs

The first madrasah was founded in 1949 in Gümülcine and the second one in Şahin, a town connected to İskeçe. The primary aim was to educate the clergy. However, following the World War 2 and the civil war, Greece has used graduates of these institutions in order to meet the lack of teachers and thus these institutions became schools that train teachers at the same time.⁶

The duration of education, which was 3 years by the time these institutions are found, has been increased to 5 years in 1957. After long years without a status, with the law, which is ehhe in 1988, these institutions were given the status of elementary schools and the duration of education was increased to 6 years. (1998/2621 tarih/sayılı yasa) In these schools, the classes are held in 3 languages: Turkish, Arabic and Greek.

1.4. Higher Education

Aside Turkish language programmes in some Greek universities and SÖPA (Private Academy of Pedagogy Selanik), which was founded to train teachers for minority schools, there are no institutions of higher education in Greece, that's main language is Turkish.

Due to the low level of quality in minority education, which we'll go over in the following chapter, the chances that a member of the minority would have the opportunity to study in university level, is significantly low.⁷ So as to offset this difficulty, with a new law in 1995, a special quota for the minority in entering higher education institutions is introduced. In the first year of application, academic year of 1996/1997, 70 students have received the chance to study in

⁵ Halil, İlnur, "Batı Trakya Türk Okullarında...", p. 98.

⁶ Çavuşoğlu, Asım, "Medreselerin Dünyü Bugünü", **IV. Uluslararası Batı Trakya...**, p. 111, Halil, İlnur, "Batı Trakya Türk Okullarında...", p. 98.

⁷ According to Gündüz Aktan, who has been for duty in Greece, only 2 members of the minority have succeeded to graduate from a Greek university. **Hürriyet**, 01.08.1999.

a university. It's reported that in 2000, the number of minority members taking advantage of the special quota has reached 400.⁸

SÖPA, which is a higher educational institution, could have been theoretically examined in this section; however we'll examine it in the following sections, specifically under the headline of problems.

⁸ Kaşifoğlu, Erol, "Batı Trakya Eğitim gerçeği ve çözüm önerilerimiz", **IV. Uluslararası Batı Trakya...**, p. 103-105.

2. Problems of Minority Education

2.1. Naming the schools

Naming of the schools in Western Thrace had not been subject to discussion for a long time, even with orders, issued after the 1954 dated⁹ law; it was asked that the “Muslim School” signs should be replaced with “Turkish School” name plates. (Look, App. 1) The minority still keeps the photos of these schools with the “Turkish School” name plates on. (Look, app. 2) The military coup, which came to power in 1967, has started its job with the changing of the schools’ name plates.¹⁰ According to Baskın Oran, after the end of 1950s, the expression “Turk” has been started to be deleted from the schools names with the pressure from the state inspectors. The law 1190, which came into force in 1972, has officialized this practice.

Examining this situation, which is in fact more of a definition question than a content, under the title of education problems may seem rather inappropriate, however the fact that more or less all problems of the Western Thrace minority have their roots from the way the identity is defined, may attribute conceptualisms great importance and cause some definitions to lose their immunity. At this point, the penalties that the teachers got, who used the expression “Turk” to define their schools and themselves, are worth to be remembered.¹¹

⁹ It is reported that in this law which is also known as “Marshal Papagos Law” no. 3065, the minority schools were referred to as “Turkish School”, İlnur, “Batı Trakya Türk Okullarında...”, p. 95. Oran, Baskın, **Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Batı Trakya Sorunu**, Bilgi Yayınları, Ankara, 1991, p. 120.

¹⁰ According to the reportings of Ömeroğlu, the expression “Turk” was erased from the schools’ names in this period and “M/KON” has been written instead. This expression is an abbreviation which may mean minority school or Muslim school at the same time. Ömeroğlu, Aydın, **Belgeler ve olaylar ışığında, bilinmeyen yönleriyle Batı Trakya Türkleri ve Gerçek –1-**, İstanbul, 1994, p. 59. This shows that a transitional phase was planned until the expression of “Turkish School” could be completely removed with some law manipulations.

¹¹ 12 Turkish teachers were sentenced to 8 years of jail, due to the expression of “Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union”, which is used in the documents that they’ve signed. IHF, **Report to the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues: Greece**, Warsaw. 17-27 October 2000, p. 24-25. In the suitcase, that is brought to the European Court of Human Rights by Adnan Raifoğlu, Greece has accepted to pay as indemnity GRD 7 million. IHF, **Report**, 2000, p. 25. A primary school teacher called Rasim Hint (Hid), was exiled to villages on the mountains between 1996-1998 and was sentenced to a year in prison. IHF, **Parallel Report on Greece’s Compliance**, March 2000, p. 15. Moreover, because of the expression “Turkish” in its name, the name plate of the Western Thrace Teachers Union (foundation: 1936) is removed in 1983 and its ever since so. The union has been continuing its

2.2. Administration of the Schools

If we read the 40th article of Lausanne Agreement's section about the education of minorities in Greece:

"The [Greek] nationals that are members of the [Muslim minority] will have equal rights to found, administrate and audit all kinds of schools and educational institutions of any kind, provided that they meet the expenses."

That the minority has the rights to found, administrate and audit their own schools is crystal clear. Administration of the schools was executed until 1977 by the committee which is elected by the parents of the students. With the law no. 694¹², which was passed in 1977, the right to elect/assign the committee is attorned to the governor. With the 6th article of the new law, the governor is made to select the committee from a list that should consist of 3 members out of minimum 5, maximum 15 candidates. (1. Article) Provided that no such list exists, the governor assigns the three members of the committee according to his own will. (Article 4) This situation injures the autonomy of these schools; however this legislation has only meant to establish the foundation of the situation regarding the election of the committees, which were brought to a stop after the military coup in 1967. On the other hand, the main issue here is the authority of the committee rather than their election. When we consider the 5th article of this legislation which states: *"The election procedure of the school committees, as well as their tasks and the level of their authorities are determined by the ministries of Education and Religious Affairs."* along with the applications following the governmental decree no. 1109, which was issued in 1972, attorning the rights of the committee to propose the assignment of teachers to the general inspectors; we arrive at the conclusion that these committees are in fact non-functional. Here, we should recall that with the law no. 695, which was passed concurrently with the law no. 694, the graduates of the SÖPA are set to have priority if there should be an assignment of teachers to the minority schools (1977/695 m. 3/7). This has surely increased the erosion of the committees' power on the assignment of teachers, which is indeed their main province. It is reported by the minority that not a single teacher to the primary schools is assigned by the committees since 1965. On the

activities illicitly and has been executing cultural activities under the name of legally recognized organizations, names of whom do not include the expression "Turkish".

¹² For the translation of the law into Turkish refer to Mollahüseyin, Halit, "Batı Trakya Türkleri'nin Eğitim Sorunları İlgili Kanun, Andlaşma ve Protokoller", **Türk Dünyası Araştırmalar Dergisi**, year 1, issue 2, October 1979, p. 114-137.

other hand, for all the recent assignments to the secondary/high schools, graduates of Turkish universities are selected.¹³

2.3. The low quality of Education

2.3.1. Course material

The issue of course materials to be used through the education of the minority in Western Thrace, was tried to be brought to a solution with a protocol signed by both Turkey and Greece (1968) during the military coup government in Greece, where the minority rights violations have reached its peak. The problems of the students, who had been using the in 1952 printed course books, was solved by the books imported in the following year after the signing of the protocol. But as the continuity of this act was not sustained, the students had to use course books that are dramatically behind the modern knowledge. According to the reports of Helsinki Human Watch Committee on their visit to the region in 1990, the course books in Greek were brand new whereas the books in Turkish were old and used. They mostly carried dates 1970 or even before and some pages were missing.¹⁴

By the end of 20th century, thanks to the positive developments in Greek-Turkey relations, this problem is resolved, but until that time it had been creating great difficulties in minority education. The books, which are duplicated through photocopy machines, were all well worn and full of out dated expressions such as “mankind will one day travel to the moon”. Such expressions reflect how old fashioned and behind the modernity the course books were. The politics over course books that Greece tried to implement at the end of 80s is worth to recall. In this period of time, Turkish books prepared by Greek authors were tried to be used as course books however following the hard reaction of the minority, they couldn’t gain prevalence.

The books that are imported to the country in year 2000 for minority education have the same context as those who are used in Turkey, however all national symbols of Turkish Republic are

¹³ Batitrakyaaber@yahoo.com, “Eğitim yılı sorunlarla başlıyor”, 16 September, 2004.

¹⁴ Helsinki Watch, **Vernichtung der ethnischen Identität**, USA, 1990, p.41.

removed.¹⁵ This was a common reason why other books that were offered as course material by Turkey were refused. It is also reported that some math books were sent back so that it should be corrected and expressions of Turkish Lira should be replaced by Greek Drahmi.¹⁶

2.3.2. Classrooms

Another issue, detected by the Helsinki Human Rights Committee during their visit to the region is the bad conditions that the schools are in. Mentioned is not only the narrow educational space but also the unavailability of the required permissions which are necessary to renovate the demolished sections.¹⁷ The inadequacy of conditions for education continued to take part in the following international reports.¹⁸ In the last years, thanks to the contributions from the European Union, developments in this field are being observed. As of 1998, of the USD 2 million funds, which are reserved for minority schools, 450.000 are spent for renovation expenditures and 325.000 for educational material.¹⁹ What draws attention is that in the same year USD 940.000 is used to fund building of new schools. According to data of Greece, the funds that are earmarked for the renovation of minority schools total some ECU 1.7 billion, whereas a total of EDU 6.7 billion is dedicated to construction for new schools.²⁰ Appearing as a positive development, as previously discussed in the section of *secondary education*, these funds are strategically spent only for the construction of educational institutions, where all classes, with the exception of religion, are held in Greek language. Contrarily to the minority schools, which are suffering under bad conditions, these modernly equipped schools are created as attractive magnets and thus causing the minority schools to lose blood. Lately, the two minority high schools have been suffering greatly from lack of classrooms. Even with the extension building, which is constructed in 2004, the need for classrooms in Gümülcine Celal Bayar High School could not be met. Due to lack of adequate classrooms, the number of students in some classes exceeds 40. In that respect, new secondary/high schools should be opened in order to meet the educational requirements of the minority.

¹⁵ Tsitsekilis; Mavrommatis, **Turkish...**, p. 16.

¹⁶ Helsinki Watch, **Vernichtung...**, p. 41.

¹⁷ Helsinki Watch, **Vernichtung...**, p. 40-41.

¹⁸ IHF, **OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues**, Warsaw, 1997 (http://www.ihf-gr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5033, date of connection: 10.12.2004)

¹⁹ Greek Helsinki Monitor, **Minority Rights in Greece**, 1999, p. 40.

²⁰ Republik Griechenland, **Griechenland in der Welt: Eine Gesamtdarstellung der ausserpolitischen Beziehungen als Mitgliedstaat der EU**, Griechische Botschaft Presse- und Informationsbüro, Bonn, 1998, s. 79.

Table: Number of Classrooms in Minority Schools

Number of Classrooms	Number of Schools
Single Classroom	45
Two Classrooms	82
Three Classrooms	41
Four Classrooms	26
Five Classrooms	10
Six Classrooms	6
More than Six Classrooms	52
Total	262²¹

2.3.3. Lack of educational staff

One of the most serious problems of many minority schools in Western Thrace is the lack of teachers. As before mentioned, of 230 minority schools, 175 are facilitating with only two teachers. The main problem, however, is the qualities of the teachers. Three types of teachers have served in the ongoing minority education in Western Thrace:

- a. Teachers without formation: Teachers of this type have various levels of education; a wide spectrum from Primary School to high school; some had no education at all and almost all without pedagogic formation. Teachers of this group, which includes graduates of Madrasahs, are mostly assigned to this duty by the minority, mainly due to the contemporary problems and lack of teachers. Today, number of teachers of this type is quite puny.
- b. Teachers with formation: This group consists of teachers with Western Thrace roots, who have managed somehow to get the formation to teach in Turkey and then started to teach in the region of contractual basis and *teachers of quota*. According to the Culture

²¹ In some minority schools, the education does not have the means of continuity; some have to be shut down periodically. The gap between the number of active schools and the number of schools according to the number of classrooms they have, is therefore.

Agreement of 1951, this definition includes the teachers who were assigned by the Turkish government to teach in these areas where members of the minority live. Although the agreement has stated the teachers to be assigned as 35, Greek authorities authorize only 16 teachers annually, which is way too low to meet the needs of the minority.

c. Teachers who are graduates of SÖPA: The Academy of Special Pedagogic, Saloniki, which is founded in 1968 during the military coup government, was converted in 1977 by the law no. 695 and then became the main source to train teachers for minority institutions (m. 3/7). Unlike other mentioned types of teachers, these have the status of civil servants. (m. 3/9)

According to the latest available information, as of 2004-2005, of 861 teachers that are assigned to 214 minority primary schools, 417 are members of the minority and 9 are teachers of quota, assigned by the Republic of Turkey. Of the 95 teachers that teach in secondary and high schools, 55 are Christian orthodox, 31 are members of the minority and 7 are assigned by Turkey. Those who are graduates of SÖPA and teach in minority schools are said to be around 250-300. (Also counted as teachers with minority backgrounds)

What one can interpret from these numbers is that the situation is intolerable. In addition, the fact that the teachers, who are graduates of SÖPA, have become the main source to meet the deficiency in educational staff in minority schools without having the adequate qualities to perform makes the situation even more worrisome. Due to the cruciality of these organizations, we'll argue out the subject of SOPA under a separate title.

2.3.4. Reduced teaching hours in Turkish language and the issue of holidays

The teaching hours in minority schools are regulated with the law no. 3065, which is passed from the parliament in 1954. This law, which carries a reflection of the good relations between Turkey and Greece, has foreseen 8 hours of Greek during the first three years in primary school education and in the following three years a total of 12 hours of teaching in Greek, adding 2 hours of geography and 2 hours of history. However, following some changes in the regulations within the period of 20 years between 1975 and 1995, the teaching hours in Turkish have diminished by 40%, whereas the

teaching hours in Greek increased by 50%. In addition to the erosion in the education in the mother language, the rearrangement of the school holidays have wounded the minority education seriously. With the decree in 1972, it became obligatory to shut down the minority schools on the days of national holidays, and thus the annual education duration was shortened by an additional 30 days. Considering that these schools, which are mostly located in mountains where the duration of yearly education is shorter (from the beginning of November to the beginning of May), were to be shut down on religious holidays of Muslims as well, this rearrangement has had consequences, hard to carry.

2.3.5. Graduation exams in minority schools, obligatory period of education and loss of students

The graduation exams, which are executed in the minority's language until 1984, had been since they started to be done by a commission that consists of the Turkish lecturer and two other teachers not from the same school. (For high school classes 1, 2 and 3) The examination of the classes, which were held in Turkish, in the Greek language, has caused the level of success to go dramatically down. The indicated occasion's most crucial conclusion is the descending popularity of the minority schools. After the reaction of the minority, the graduation exams, executed by the commission, are today only implemented to the students of high school class 3.

The impacts of the graduation exams on secondary educational institutions had been heavier, registrations to the schools have diminished, which has caused the C. Bayar High School in Gümülcine from giving graduates between years 1985-1990. The number of students attending these schools, which were almost due to be shut down in mid 80s, has shown some significant increase in the last years. This is due to the relative improvement in the conditions of these schools and the quota reserved in Greek universities for students with minority background. As of 2005-2006 education periods, the students attending the secondary and high school sections of these two minority schools have increased to 900.

Table: Number of students attending the İskeçe and Gümülcine minority high schools (1983-2003)

School Year	Number of Students	School Year	Number of Students
1983-84	532	1993-94	367
1984-85	357	1994-95	364
1985-86	304	1995-96	417
1986-87	127	1996-97	562
1987-88	131	1997-98	646
1988-89	214	1998-99	740
1989-90	273	1999-00	812
1990-91	318	2000-01	905
1991-92	336	2001-02	909
1992-93	333	2002-03	925

Source: The statistics until 1990 Oran, Baskın, **Türk-Yunan...**, p.146. After 1990 Tsitsekilis; Mavrommatis, **Turkish...**, p.26.

Another reason what caused the educational institutions of the minority to lose blood is that the minority schools were not included into the extension of the obligatory education in Greece to 9 years. Moreover, the fact that 214 primary schools are followed by comparatively very few secondary educational institutions (2 secondary/high schools and 2 medreses), has made it for many members of the minority hard to proceed with their educations. Following the extension of the obligatory education in Greece to 9 years in 1976, the high school entrance exams were generally abolished, however with the exception of minority schools, thus entrance to these schools are made hard. Implementation of this act is however after 15 years abolished in 1992 and entrance to these schools was realized on a lottery basis. As a consequence of these two exercises, 23.5% of those who started these minority schools failed to graduate. The average failure rate in Greece is 1.2%.²²

2.4. SÖPA and Madrasahs

SÖPA is founded by the military coup government, in order to train the teachers that will be assigned to the minority schools by the state itself; according to a SÖPA graduate, in order to train

“more trustworthy” teachers.²³ This institutions main source of students is the two madrasahs which have then received the status of a high school. In these madrasahs, the education is continued in there languages: Turkish, Arabic and Greek. It’s reported that in Gümülçine Madrasah, there are 6 Turkish teachers who are graduates of educational institutions in Arabic countries and 7 Greek teachers whereas in Sahin Madrasah in İskeçe, there are 2 Turkish teachers after 7 Greek teachers.²⁴ The graduates, who fail to get sufficient Turkish education in these madrasahs that have in practice undertook the task to train teachers that will teach minority students, study in Greek for 3 years in SÖPA with full scholarship and then are assigned to minority schools. The situation naturally causes protests of the minority. On the one hand, the nomination of teachers who haven’t mastered Turkish language to the minority schools as teachers of Turkish language causes unrest, on the other hand it’s criticized that the SÖPA graduates serve the endeavors to assimilate the minority with their Greek formation. There are even rumors that these people were made to sign documents to state that they are “Helen Muslims”.²⁵

Despite of all the reactions shown by the minority, the SÖPA and the madrasahs succeed to find students. The basic reason for this is the expectance by these youngsters who live in mountainous areas where economical possibilities are narrow, that this education with scholarship will open the doors to a good career, in this institution, where an education program of 3 years is offered, 68 students and 16 instructors are registered as of 2000-2001.

The graduates of SÖPA were completely excluded from the community by the minority until 1990s, however the situation afterwards changed and they came to a composition with other institutions of the minority. SÖPA graduates had to carry heavy costs because of their actions together with organizations of the minority and demands towards a better education. For instance, 14 of those, who took part in the “Seminar of Introduction of the Turkish Culture” which was organized by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Education, were rusticated and many of them were sentenced to 2 months in jail and others banished to teach in out of the way villages.²⁶ Contrarily to those graduates

²² Tsitsekilis; Mavrommatis, **Turkish...**, p. 13-14.

²³ Hasan, Ahmet A., “SÖPA’nın Kuruluşu, Gayesi, Gelişmeler: Akademi Öğrencilerinin ve Öğretmenlerinin Azınlık Eğitimine Bakış açısı”, **IV. Uluslararası Batı Trakya...**, s. 114-116, s. 114.

²⁴ Hasan, Ahmet A., “SÖPA’nın Kuruluşu...”, s. 111.

²⁵ Akıllıoğlu, Tekin, “Batı Trakya Azınlığının Karşılaştığı Güncel Sorunlar”, **İnsan Hakları Merkezi Dergisi**, issue 3 (Ankara, December 1994), p. 32.

²⁶ Hasan, Ahmet A., “SÖPA’nın Kuruluşu...”, p. 115.

of the SÖPA, who carries serious costs of their participation to the struggle of the minority, there are many, who place themselves to the other side. For example, the usage of the course books in minority schools that are prepared in Greek are pioneered by the SÖPA graduates. This situation, naturally arised protests from the minority.²⁷ This dual situation, has initiated discussions over the future of SÖPA's future. For example, Vaaz and İrşad groups give sermon not to send the minority kids to the madrasahs, whose purposes are manipulated²⁸ so that they place themselves totally against SÖPA. On the other hand, some minority members consider that the SÖPA should be reformed and thus be converted to an institution of university level and be supported by the educators from Turkey.²⁹ What here evident is, is that, nobody is pleasant with the current situation of this institution. It is also reported that Greek government has the intention to change its politics and convert this institution to a section of university.³⁰

2.5. Demands for kindergarten

In the last years, the minority has been expressing its demand for bilingual kindergarten. The institutions to meet this need is however until now not realized. According to the data of 2000, only 300 children from minority families attend state kindergarten that offers education in Greek. Greek writers refer this situation to the agricultural and traditional social structure of the minority however the news from the villages of the region where minority lives state that there is an increasing demand for bilingual kindergartens.³¹ There are no kindergartens with Turkish educational programmes in Greece whereas with the initiatives of BTTÖB and BTAYTD, children clubs in some villages are being formed. These clubs, which are administrated by expert volunteers, have in practice the function of a kindergarten. There are totally only 9 clubs of this sort. As legal hurdles still exist for founding and facilitating these clubs, they face some pressure from the Greek authorities.

²⁷ "Batı Trakya Türk Toplumuna Danışma Kurulundan Duyuru", **İnsan Hakları Merkezi Dergisi**, issue 3 (Ankara, December 1994), p. 20

²⁸ "Eğitimimizde oyunlar oynanmaya devam ediyor", **Öğretmenin Sesi**, ***, s. 6.

²⁹ For this discussion batitrakyahaber@yahoogroups.com, "Azınlık Eğitimine Acil Çözüm", 29 July 2004.

³⁰ Tsitsekilis; Mavrommatis, **Turkish...**, p. 21. Among the minority, BTTÖB also supports this disposition. Director of the association, Sadık Salih, suggests that the teachers, who are to be trained to serve in minority schools, should be educated in Turkey or in Greece by Turkish and greek academicians within the framework of a university. Interview with Sadık Salih, Director of BTTÖB, 24.05.2005.

³¹ batitrakyahaber@yahoogroups.com, "Çift dilli anaokulu istiyoruz", 15.12.2004.

3. Conclusion

In order to understand the general point of view of Greece about the minority education, it'll be beneficiary to take a close look at the law no.694, which was accepted in 1977. As Baskin Oran also points out, this law highlights the principles of "administrative discretion" and "reciprocity".³² For the cases of foundations of new schools, it's stated "governorship makes his decision taking the number of petitions, the residence of the people in desire of school's foundation and the reciprocity principle between two countries." (M.5/1b). This brings out a very uncertain regulation. Issues such as matters pertaining to the personal who does not have the status of a civil servant, duration of education in Greek and Turkish and school programmes, responsibility of school committees and with which alphabet should the education be proceeded, etc. are left to the decisions of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Religion by the 7th clause of the law.

Another long term plan of the Greek authorities on the minority education is the reduction of the status of the Turkish language in minority education. According to the official statement of Greece, education of the minority, that has "various different origins", is held in Turkish language, only due to the fact that Turkish is the only language that is used as literary language among languages of minority.³³ Probably with this assumption, with the order of Greece, a graduate of SÖPA has prepared a Greek-Pomak dictionary and in addition to this a magazine, which has not reached much popularity is issued. These developments seem to be the initial steps of certain politics that will aim to cause disengagement in minority education.^{34 35}

Since 1965, graduates of Turkish teacher schools are not being assigned. This deepens the education problems of the minority.

³² Oran, Baskin, **Yunanistan'ın Lozan İhlalleri**, SAEMK, (<http://www.saemk.org/yazdir.asp?id=15&dba=010>, date of connection: 09.12.2004)

³³ Republik Griechenland, **Griechenland in der Welt**, p. 78

³⁴ "Investments" of Greece to set up an ethical consciousness among Pomaks, who live in the northern section of the region and identify themselves as Turks, didn't have positive outcomes until now and won't have in the future. One of the most effective educative instruments of the new era, television can be watched all over the region thanks to the developments in the satellite technology. These people, who are tried to be separated from the Turkish ethical consciousness and language with the application of "Prohibited Area", which will be studied in another report, are learning better Turkish than ever thanks to the means of mass communication.

³⁵ Today, as the associations who carry the Turkish expression in their names are accused of creating "a minority problem that does not exist", a Pomak Research Center can facilitate freely in Gümülcine.

Ministries of Education and Religion have been assigning SÖPA graduates as teachers to the primary schools. Parents of the children react to these teachers' insufficient knowledge of Turkish and incorrect usage of the verbal language, so incorrect that the students sometimes make fun of them. SÖPA stands as a marginal part in the Greek education system. Its foundation is against Lausanne Agreement and has no other identical in any other minority education systems. The minority's demand of reform in this institution has not succeeded to get a proper response.

Two minority secondary/high schools are far from meeting the needs of the minority. New high schools for the minority should be built.