



Avrupa Batı Trakya Türk Federasyonu Föderation der West-Thrakien Türken in Europa Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe Ευρωπαϊκή Ομοσπονδία Τούρκων Δυτικής Θράκης Fédération des Turcs de Thrace Occidentale en Europe

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
Member of the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP) of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
Member of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)

Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF) International Work/Activities January-December 2024

Summary Activity Report

Written contribution to the 2024 Rule of Law Report of the European Commission, 15.01.2024

ABTTF sent its written contribution to the 2024 Rule of Law Report of the European Commission. ABTTF, which participated in the online targeted stakeholder consultation initiated by the European Commission and open to non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders in EU Member States for the report expressed the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace in order to contribute to the country report on Greece to be prepared by the Commission.



In its written contribution, ABTTF underlined that Greece denies the ethnic Turkish identity of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, indicating that Greece has not executed three separate judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) related to the Bekir-Ousta and Others Group of Cases since 2008, and this, despite the decisions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and all its warnings, and that it violates the freedom of association of the Turkish community.

“Facts about Our Country” programme series, 12th programme, 01.02.2024 / Online



The twelfth part of the online programme series of ABTTF titled “Facts about Our Country” was broadcast on 1 February 2024. Former United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Dr. Fernand de Varennes, who had visited Western Thrace in 2019, was the guest of the programme. In the programme moderated by ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı, Varennes answered the questions with respect to the definition of “national minority” within the scope of international human rights

law, the general situation of minority rights in Europe, the general situation in Greece regarding the protection of national minorities, and the issues of the Western Thrace Turkish community in Western Thrace in Greece. Varennes indicated that the issue of the definition of “national minority” is a little bit

complicated, and noted that ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities are referenced in the UN, and that the concept of “national minority” is used especially in Europe. Noting that ethnic identity is related to culture, Varennes underscored that the Turkish minority in Greece can be defined as an ethnic, linguistic, and even religious minority.

Participation in the 87th session of UN CEDAW, 05-06.02.2024 / Geneva, Switzerland

ABTTF, which is in a special consultative status with the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council, representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace attended the 87th session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 5-6 February 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı attended the session where Greece’s consideration was examined on 6 February to the sessions which lasted for 3 weeks.



ABTTF attended the public non-governmental organisations (NGO) information meeting organised by CEDAW, a group of 23 independent experts, on Monday, 5 February before the session regarding Greece. In its speech at the meeting regarding the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports submitted by Greece to CEDAW, ABTTF explained the religious autonomy of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, freedom of association and the Turkish women’s access to justice.

Parallel report to the report of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 15.02.2024



ABTTF prepared a parallel report in response to the issues regarding the Turkish community in Western Thrace within the “2022 Report on Incidents Against Places of Religious Importance in Greece” published by the Greek Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports on 28 December 2023 and forwarded it to the competent authorities of our country.

In its parallel report, ABTTF detailed the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace, which has religious autonomy in accordance with bilateral and international treaties, on religious issues and expressed their opinions and demands. Moreover, ABTTF accounted for the situation of the mosques and places of worship in Western Thrace, as well as the religious issues of the Turkish community in Rhodes and Kos, and noted the issues faced in terms of protection of historical, architectural and cultural monuments inherited from the Ottoman period in the country, and the attacks on sacred places.

Fact-finding mission to Western Thrace, 04.03.2024 / Komotini & Xanthi, Greece

ABTTF organised a fact-finding mission to the Western Thrace region of Greece with a delegation of academics and experts from Europe on 4 March 2024.

International Relations Director Melek Kırmacı, representing ABTTF, Head of the Cluster “Danish-German Minorities Issues” of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) and Associate Professor of the University of Southern Denmark Dr. Martin Klatt and Petranka Nedelcheva and Magdalena Marinova from the National Museum of History of Bulgaria (HYSTORYSMUS) participated in the fact-finding mission. Within the framework of the programme organised and prepared by ABTTF, the delegation met with Elected Mufti of Komotini and Chairman of the Western Thrace Turkish Minority Advisory Board (BTTADK) Ibrahim Şerif and visited Friendship Equality Peace (FEP) Party, Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA), Culture and Education Foundation of Western Thrace Minority (PEKEM), Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union (BTTÖB), Komotini Turkish Youth Union (GTGB), Elected Mufti of Xanthi Mustafa Trampa and Xanthi Turkish Union (ITB) as well as the Gündem and Millet newspapers.



Preliminary meeting of the EU project titled “B-SHAPES”, 05.03.2024 / Komotini, Greece



The preliminary meeting of the European Union (EU) project titled “B-SHAPES - Borders Shaping Perceptions of European Societies”, in which the Turkish community in Western Thrace is also included, was held on 5 March 2024 in Komotini, with the initiative of ABTTF.

At the acquaintance and preliminary meeting held in English with the focus group established within the scope of the project and consisting of members of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, the themes of perceptions about being a minority in the border region and understanding the issues of

the Turkish community in Western Thrace were discussed. At the meeting, the leader of the project, Head of the Cluster “Danish-German Minorities Issues” of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) and Associate Professor of the University of Southern Denmark Dr. Martin Klatt realised a presentation with respect to the project to be implemented in the Hungary-Slovakia, Austria-Italy, Germany-Denmark, Czechia-Poland and Greece-Bulgaria border regions and further touched upon the the contribution of the Turkish community in Western Thrace to the project. Petranka Nedelcheva and Magdalena Marinova from the National Museum of History of Bulgaria (HYSTORYSMUS), one of the partners of the project, also attended the meeting.

Meeting with Chairperson of the German National Delegation to PACE Frank Schwabe, 04.04.2024 / Recklinghausen, Germany

President of ABTTF Halit Habip Oğlu met with Frank Schwabe, Chairperson of the German National Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), who is also a Member of the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag), on 4 April 2024. The meeting took place at Schwabe’s constituency office in Recklinghausen, Germany.

Habip Oğlu, who conveyed the current issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, especially those related to freedom of association, indicated that Greece denies the existence of the Turkish community in the country, and that Greece is persistently not executing the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (EctHR) with respect to the Xanthi Turkish Union, Cultural Association of Turkish Women of the Prefecture of Rodopi and the Evros Prefecture Minority Youth Association for the past 16 years, despite all the warnings of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.



Participation to the 6th annual meeting of FUEN's Education Working Group, 09-10.04.2024 / Helsinki, Finland



ABTTTF attended the 6th Annual Meeting of the Education Working Group of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), of which it is a full member which was held in Helsinki, the capital of Finland, on 9-10 April 2024. Deniz Servantie from ABTTTF Brussels Office attended the meeting titled "Primary school - primary level in minority education" hosted by the Swedish minority in Finland. At the meeting, ABTTTF conveyed the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace in the field of education and the work carried out by international organisations regarding

these issues to the representatives of other minorities in Europe who are members of FUEN.

Working visit to Strasbourg, 15-17.04.2024 / Strasbourg, France

ABTTTF paid a working visit to Strasbourg on 15-17 April 2024, in parallel with the Spring Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The ABTTTF delegation, consisting of ABTTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu and ABTTTF International Relations Director Melek Kırmacı, conveyed the current issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, especially those related to the freedom of association, in their meetings with PACE members and the Council of Europe bodies. During his three-day working visit, ABTTTF President Habip Oğlu met with the new Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Michael O'Flaherty, who took office on April 1, in his office.

Within the framework of their contacts in Strasbourg, the ABTTTF delegation met with Chairperson of the National Delegation of Norway to PACE and European People's Party (EPP) Vice-Chairperson Ingjerd Schie Schou, Chairperson of the National Delegation of Türkiye to PACE Yıldırım Tuğrul



Türkeş, PACE Turkish Delegation Members Abdurrahman Babacan, Mehmet Akalın, Mustafa Canbey, Sena Nur Çelik Kanat, Yunus Emre and Zeynep Yıldız and with officials from the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). During the meeting with the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR, the ABTTF delegation stressed that Greece has not executed the ECtHR judgments with respect to the Xanthi Turkish Union, Cultural Association of Turkish Women of the Prefecture of Rodopi and Evros Prefecture Minority Youth Association in the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases for the past 16 years, noting that this constitutes a clear violation of the principle of the rule of law, and reminded that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe will re-examine this group of cases at its next meeting to be held on 11-13 June 2024.

Participation in the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, 22-23.04.2024 / Vienna, Austria

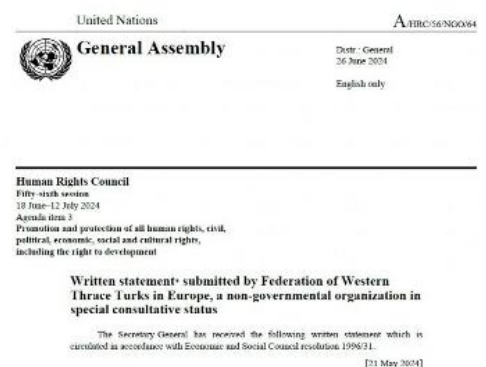


ABTTF and the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA), representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace, attended the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) held in Vienna, the capital of Austria, on 22-23 April 2024. K. Engin Soyyılmaz from ABTTF and WTMUGA Member Kerem Abdurahimoğlu represented the Turkish community in Western Thrace at the first Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of the year titled “The Role of Civil Society in the Promotion and Protection of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law”.

Organised by the Malta OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the importance of civil society in documenting violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, especially in times of conflict and humanitarian crises, and the significant threats faced by human rights defenders in the OSCE region and how these challenges confront them were discussed during the meetings. Furthermore, the impact that such challenges have on their safety and ability to conduct their work effectively was addressed.

Two written statements to the to the 56th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, 29.05.2024

ABTTF submitted two written statements to the 56th Session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council held in Geneva, Switzerland between 18 June-12 July 2024, entitled “Violation of Freedom of Association within the Framework of Restrictions on Democracy and the Rule of Law in Greece” and “Systematic Discrimination against the Turkish Community in Western Thrace and Discrediting and Targeting Human Rights Defenders of the Turkish Community”. Regarding the issue of the rule of law and freedom of association, ABTTF indicated that the Turkish community in Western Thrace, whose status was determined by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, has been struggling with systematic discrimination for many years and that in recent years, the rule of law in our country Greece has been undermined and pressure and difficulties against human rights defenders and national minorities have increased.



Stating that freedom of association and the execution of ECtHR judgments is one of the most important indicators of democracy and the rule of law, ABTTF explained that Greece has persistently failed to execute the three judgments with respect to the associations of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, known as Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases, for the past 16 years. ABTTF called on Greece to fully respect the freedom of association of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and to immediately execute the aforementioned ECtHR judgments concerning the three Turkish associations.

Parallel report to the U.S. 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Greece, 07.06.2024



ABTTF prepared a parallel report on the 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Greece published by the Department of State of the United States of America (USA) on 22 April 2024 and submitted it to the competent authorities of the U.S.

In its parallel report, ABTTF criticised the fact that the issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace were given even less space in the U.S. report compared to last year and explained in detail the current issues of the Turkish community which were missing and not included in the report.

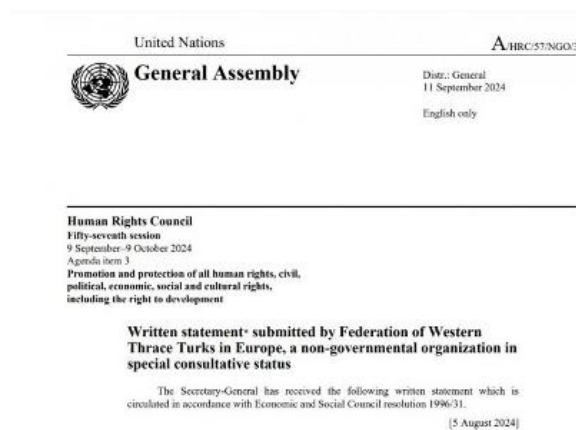
Working meeting to Strasbourg, 25-26.06.2024 / Strasbourg, France

During the working visit where ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu was accompanied by ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kırmacı, Habip Oğlu expressed the current issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace during his meetings with the PACE members. Within the framework of his contacts in Strasbourg, Habip Oğlu focused on meetings with the representatives of our motherland Republic of Türkiye in PACE and informed the Turkish DelPACE Turkish Delegation about the important developments in Western Thrace. In this context, Habip Oğlu held meetings at different times with Chairperson of the PACE Turkish Delegation and AK Party MP Yıldırım Tuğrul Türkeş, and AK Party MPs Mustafa Canbey and Meryem Göka; CHP MPs Namık Tan, Yunus Emre, Gökçe Gökçen and Aysu Bankoğlu; MHP MPs Konur Alp Koçak and Pelin Yılık and İYİ Party MP Mehmet Akalın.



During the meetings, Habip Oğlu shared the latest developments on the Bekir-Ousta group of cases regarding the violation of the freedom of association of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, which has been pending for 16 years to be executed, he further revealed the decision of the Committee of Ministers on 11-13 June and indicated that Greece is following a strategy to prolong the process by not executing the ECtHR judgments. Habip Oğlu underscored that the closure of the Western Thrace Fenerbahçe Culture and Sports Association by the court is another violation of the freedom of association and added that similar violations will continue to occur unless the judgments with respect to the Bekir-Ousta group of cases are executed.

Two written statements to the 57th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, 05.08.2024



ABTTF submitted two written statements titled “Demand for Dissolution of the Friendship, Equality and Peace (FEP) Party in Greece and Right to Vote and Stand for Election of the Turkish Community in Thrace” and “Targeting of Political Representatives of the Turkish Community in Western Thrace” to the 57th Session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council held in Geneva, Switzerland between 9 September-11 October 2024.

Stating that the ethnic Turkish identity of the Turkish community in Western Thrace in Greece, which was recognised as a “minority” under the

1923 Treaty of Lausanne and granted autonomy in the fields of education and religion, is denied and rejected, ABTTF noted that as a reflection of the official state policy, MPs and members of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, all of whom are Greek citizens, are subjected to serious hate speech in the mainstream Greek media. ABTTF further indicated that unfounded and defamatory news were published about the rights defenders of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and that Turkish MPs were scapegoated just because they participated in the activities of Turkish organisations in Western Thrace or because of their work in Parliament to protect the rights of the Turkish community. In a written statement with respect to the demand for the dissolution of the FEP Party, ABTTF brought to the agenda the demands for the dissolution of the Friendship Equality Peace (FEP) Party, the political party of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, after the aforementioned party became the first party in the European Parliament (EP) elections held on 9 June 2024 by receiving the highest number of votes in the prefectures of Rodopi and Xanthi, as in 2014 and 2019. ABTTF stated that following the party’s large vote rate and success in the elections, political speeches and media reports were made claiming that the party was supported by Türkiye and that it posed a supposed danger to Greece’s national security and territorial integrity, and that this situation turned into a smear campaign for the dissolution of the party.

Parallel report to the U.S. 2023 International Religious Freedom Report on Greece, 16.08.2024

ABTTF prepared a parallel report in response to the 2023 International Religious Freedom Report on Greece published by the Department of State of the United States of America (USA) on 26 June 2024 and submitted it to the competent authorities of the U.S. In its parallel report, ABTTF expressed in detail the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace, which has been granted religious autonomy in accordance with international treaties, in the religious field and the current developments regarding freedom of religion.



ABTTF noted that the state does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Greek Orthodox Church, which is the dominant religion in the country, or the Jewish Community of Greece, which is one of the known religions, but that the religious freedom and autonomy of the Muslim Turkish community in Western Thrace is violated by law and governmental practices, despite having been granted religious autonomy in accordance with the international treaties. Indicating that the government has been appointing muftis or mufti regents in Western Thrace since 1991, contrary to the religious autonomy of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, and that the government does not recognize the muftis

elected by the Turkish community, ABTTF explained that the elected muftis are subjected to judicial prosecution and received prison sentences for illegally using religious symbols.

Participation to the 68th FUEN Congress, 19-22.09.2024 / Husum, Germany



ABTTF, representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace, attended the 68th annual congress of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) held in Husum/Hüsem, Germany on 19-22 September 2024. ABTTF President and Working Group on Turkic Minorities/Communities (TAG) at FUEN Spokesperson Halit Habip Oğlu, ABTTF Vice-President and FUEN Vice-President Nabi Ibrahimcik and ABTTF Head Office Manager K. Engin Soyyılmaz attended the Congress which was hosted by the North Frisian minority in Germany and celebrated the 75th anniversary of FUEN. Rhodes, Kos and Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association (ROISDER)

President Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kaymakçı and Board Member Raşit Tavşancı also attended the Congress.

In the panel sessions of the Congress attended by 180 people from 30 European countries, the situation of the North Frisian minority was discussed with cultural performances, the future of minority rights in the European Union (EU) and FUEN's vision for 2099 in this framework were discussed with the participation of MEPs, national politicians and experts. At the traditional "Minority Market" organised within the framework of the Congress, the culture and problems of Western Thrace Turks and Rhodes, Kos and Dodecanese Turks were presented. On Saturday, 21 September, the draft resolution submitted jointly by ABTTF, Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA) and Friendship Equality Peace (FEP) Party as the Western Thrace Turkish delegation to the FUEN Assembly of Delegates was unanimously adopted.

Working visit to Strasbourg, 03-04.10.2024 / Strasbourg, France

ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu paid a working visit to Strasbourg on 3-4 October 2024 in parallel with the Autumn Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). During the working visit, during which ABTTF President was accompanied by ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kırmacı, Habip Oğlu expressed the current issues during his meetings with PACE members and Council of Europe bodies.

Within the framework of his contacts in Strasbourg, Habip Oğlu expressed that Greece persistently does not execute the ECtHR judgments on the Bekir-Ousta group of cases, which have been pending for 16 years regarding the violation of the freedom of association of the Turkish community in Western Thrace. Habip Oğlu noted that Greece is following a strategy to prolong the process in this group of cases, which the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe continues to examine and brought the demands to the agenda before the examination of the Committee of Ministers in December.



Participation to an event on teaching regional and minority languages in pre-scholar age, 03.10.2024 / Brussels, Belgium



ABTTF participated in an event organised by the Brussels Representation of the Autonomous Region of South Tyrol in cooperation with the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) on 3 October 2024 in Brussels. Deniz Servantie from ABTTF Brussels Office attended the event entitled “Regional and Minority Languages Teaching in Pre-Scholar Age”.

In the two thematic panel sessions of the event moderated by FUEN Policy Advisor Johan Häggman, stakeholders from various parts of Europe discussed, among others, the impact of artificial intelligence in teaching, the resources and

structures needed in the education system to preserve regional or minority languages, and future projects and recommendations.

During the panel session on language acquisition of children from different cultural backgrounds, ABTTF made a presentation on access to quality pre-school education for children belonging to the Turkish community in Western Thrace living in Greece. In its presentation, ABTTF drew attention to the fact that the autonomous status of the schools belonging to the Turkish community in Western Thrace has been significantly weakened by various legal regulations and ministerial decisions and noted that Turkish schools have been turned into schools managed under the supervision and control of the state.

Participation in the OSCE Human Dimension Conference, 07-08.10.2024 / Warsaw, Poland

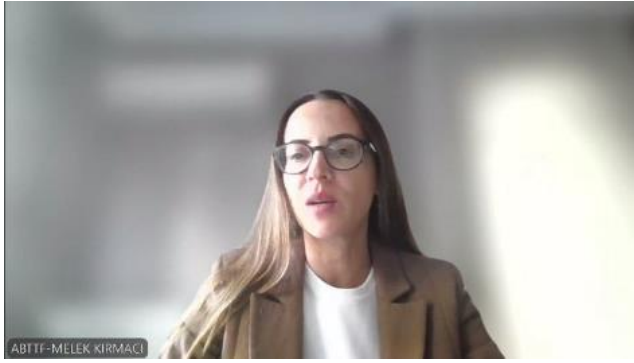
ABTTF and the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA), representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace, participated in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Human Dimension Conference organised by the 2024 OSCE Chairpersonship of Malta and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Warsaw, the capital of Poland on 30 September-11 October 2024. The Turkish community in Western Thrace was represented by K. Engin Soyyılmaz from ABTTF and Dr. Pervin Hayrullah and Kerem Abdurahimoğlu from WTMUGA at the ten-day conference organised by the OSCE Chairpersonship of Malta with the support of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the OSCE region and the impact of current events and trends on the security of the region.



Intervening at the session on fundamental freedoms on 7 October of the conference attended by OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions, international organisations and civil society representatives, ABTTF indicated that Greece has not executed the three judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) with respect to the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases concerning the Turkish associations for more than 16 years and underscored that this situation is not only a violation of the freedom of association of the Turkish community in Western Thrace but also a clear attack on its rights and freedoms. ABTTF also stated that after its success in the European

Parliament (EP) elections on 9 June 2024, the Friendship, Equality and Peace (FEP) Party was stigmatised in politics and the media and that applications were made to the Council of State and the Court of Cassation for the dissolution of the party, claiming that it posed an alleged threat to the national security and territorial integrity of Greece.

Participation in the consideration of Greece of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 22.10.2024 / Online



ABTTF, which has a special consultative status at the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council, participated in the consideration of Greece at the 142nd Session of the Human Rights Committee, which examines the compliance of countries party to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

During the session held in Geneva on 14 October-8 November 2024, ABTTF participated online in the consideration of Greece on 21-22 October 2024. ABTTF sent a detailed report to the Human Rights Committee within the scope of the contribution process of NGOs for the consideration of Greece to be held at this session and conveyed the minority issues of our community to the Committee with a detailed report within the framework of Article 27 of the Covenant, including the ethnic Turkish identity of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, education, freedom of association, freedom of religion, political representation and hate speech against the Turkish community in Western Thrace. ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kırmacı, who participated in this meeting online, raised the issue of the violation of freedom of association and non-execution of ECtHR judgments.

Participation in FUEN TAG 10th Annual Meeting, 30.10-02.11.2024 / Ankara, Türkiye

ABTTF, Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA) and Friendship, Equality and Peace (FEP) Party representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace attended the 10th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Turkic Minorities/Communities (TAG) of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) held in Ankara, the capital of motherland Türkiye on 30 October-1 November 2024. ABTTF President and FUEN TAG Spokesperson Halit Habip Oğlu, ABTTF Vice-President and FUEN Vice-President Nabi Ibrahimcik, ABTTF Vice-President Sebahattin Mümin and ABTTF Head Office Manager K. Engin Soyyılmaz attended the meeting as FUEN TAG Secretariat officer.



The FUEN TAG delegation first visited on 31 October the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) and was received by YTB Vice-President Abdulhadi Turus. Later, the FUEN TAG delegation visited the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSOY) and was hosted by TÜRKSOY Secretary-General Sultan Raev and Deputy Secretary-General Sayit Yusuf. The FUEN TAG delegation visited Yunus Emre Institute (YEE) and was received by YEE Vice-President Assoc.

Prof. Dr. Cahid Şenel and Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) and was hosted by TIKA President Serkan Kayalar.

At the FUEN TAG round table which was held on 1 November, representatives of Western Thrace Turks, Rhodes and Kosovo Turks, Meskhetian Turks, Crimean Tatars, Kosovo Turks, Ukrainian Gagauzians, North Macedonian Turks, Moldovan Gagauzians and Bulgarian Turks presented the important developments in the Turkic minorities and communities they belong to, their current problems and the activities of the organisations they represent. The meeting, where the activities of FUEN TAG for 2025 were discussed, ended with the determination of a common roadmap for 2025 with the contributions of the participating organisations.

Following the meeting, FUEN TAG delegation was received by the Vice-President of the Republic of Türkiye Cevdet Yılmaz at the Presidential Complex. FUEN TAG Spokesperson Habip Oğlu explained that they held their tenth annual meeting in Ankara after their first annual meeting in 2014 and briefed about FUEN and TAG and their activities. During the meeting, the members of the delegation had the opportunity to convey the activities of the organisations they represent.

Participation to the FUEN Conference on the Women of Minorities Project, 30.10-01.11.2024 / Athens, Greece



ABTTF participated in a Conference on Minority Women organised by the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) in Athens on 30 October-1 November 2024. ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kırmacı attended the conference titled “Approaches to Addressing Intersectional and Multiple Forms of Inequality” hosted by FUEN member Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (Ec.Fe.Con) as a speaker. In the panel on the role of the state and institutions, Kırmacı, Ec.Fe.Con. President Nikolaos Uzunoglu and Ec.Fe.Con. representatives Georgia Amilia Voulgari and İlay Örs discussed the role of the state in minority policy towards the Turkish community in Western Thrace in Greece and the Greek Orthodox community in Türkiye.

Participation to the 17th Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues, 28-29.11.2024 / Geneva, Switzerland

ABTTF participated in the 17th Session of the United Nations (UN) Forum on Minority Issues on 28-29 November 2024. ABTTF and Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA) represented the Turkish community in Western Thrace at the forum themed “Minority representation and self-representation in public spaces and discourses” organised in Geneva, Switzerland.



ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kırmacı and WTMUGA member Kerem Abdurahimoğlu, who participated in the forum within the framework of the sessions where the representation of minorities in public spaces, education, media including social media, arts and culture were discussed, conveyed the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace in the field of education.

Intervening at the session on the representation of minorities in education on the first day of the Forum, ABTTF noted that Greece is one of the countries with the worst record on the rights of national minorities in Europe and that it has not ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and has not signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Reminding that within the framework of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the Turkish community in Western Thrace was granted the right to establish and manage its own schools, but that this autonomy recognised in education has been dismantled as a result of government interventions, ABTTF stated and expressed the issues at different levels of education.

In their speeches, the representatives of the Turkish community in Western Thrace demanded the return of the autonomous structure of the Turkish community in Western Thrace in education and asked that the demands of the Turkish community be considered urgently in solving the issues in education.

Working visit to Brussels, 10.12.2024 / Brussels, Belgium



ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu paid a working visit to Brussels, the capital of the European Union (EU) on Tuesday, 10 December 2024. Within the scope of the working visit, Habip Oğlu, accompanied by Deniz Servantie from ABTTF Brussels Office, held meetings with various Members of the European Parliament (MEP). In this regard, he met with member of the Hungarian minority in Romania and President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) Loránt Vincze (EPP, Romania), Rasmus Andresen from the Danish minority in Germany (Greens/EFA, Germany) and İlhan Kyuchyuk from the Turkish community in Bulgaria (Renew Europe, Bulgaria) as well as European Language Equality Network (ELEN) Secretary General Davyth Hicks.

During the meetings with the MEPs dealing with minority rights and issues under the EP, the basic and current issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and the latest developments in Greece and Western Thrace were conveyed. During the meetings with the MEPs, views were also exchanged on the re-establishment of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages in the new legislative term of the EP and future cooperation issues.

During the meeting with ELEN Secretary-General Davyth Hicks, Habip Oğlu stated that the applications of the Turkish community in Western Thrace for the opening of bilingual Turkish and Greek minority kindergartens in the region have been ignored and left unanswered by the Greek authorities for years and that the children belonging to the Turkish community in Western Thrace are deprived of their right to learn their mother tongue Turkish.