



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)
Member of the European Language Equality Network (ELEN)

Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF)

International Work/Activities

January-December 2025

Summary Activity Report

Working visit to Strasbourg, 28-29.01.2025 / Strasbourg, France

ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu paid a working visit to Strasbourg on 28-29 January 2025 in parallel with the Winter Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). During his working visit, Habip Oğlu, accompanied by ABTTF Head Office Manager K. Engin Soyyilmaz, conveyed the current issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and the rights violations it is subjected to during his meetings with Chairperson of the national delegation of San Marino at PACE Gerardo Giovagnoli and Chairperson of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Group at PACE Iulian Bulai.



Habip Oğlu pointed out that Greece has persistently failed to execute the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) concerning the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases, which includes the Western Thrace Turkish associations, for the past 17 years and indicated that despite all the warnings and decisions from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Greece pursues a strategy to prolong the execution process of the aforementioned judgments. Moreover, Habip Oğlu conveyed details pertaining to the building issue of the Xanthi Turkish Minority Secondary and High School, which has been going on for years, and informed about the developments related to the confusion of competencies caused by the Greek authorities passing the responsibility to each other, and further drew attention to the issues faced by the children belonging to the Turkish community in Western Thrace in accessing quality education.

Written contribution to the 2025 Rule of Law Report of the European Commission, 06.02.2025



ABTTF submitted its written contribution to the European Commission's 2025 Rule of Law Report. ABTTF, which participated in the online consultation process open to civil society organisations and other stakeholders in EU Member States initiated by the European Commission for the 2025 Rule of Law Report, conveyed the issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and the rights violations it is subjected to in order to contribute to the chapter on Greece

in the report to be prepared.

In its written contribution, ABTTF underlined that Greece denies the existence of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and its Turkish ethnic identity and has persistently failed to execute the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases for the past 17 years and violated the freedom of association of the Turkish community.

Working visit to Brussels, 18.02.2025 / Brussels, Belgium

ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu paid a working visit to Brussels, the capital of the European Union (EU) on 18 February 2025. Habip Oğlu, accompanied by Deniz Servantie from ABTTF Brussels Office, met with MEPs from the European Parliament (EP) Iuliu Winkler (EPP, Romania) from the Hungarian minority in Romania and İlhan Kyuchyuk (Renew Europe, Bulgaria) from the Bulgarian Turks.

Habip Oğlu conveyed the current issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and the recent important events in Western Thrace and Greece during his meetings with the MEPs dealing with minority and human rights issues. Habip Oğlu indicated that the European Commission, EP and leading international non-governmental organisations drew attention to the systematic violation of the rule of law in Greece and noted that Greece has persistently failed to execute the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) concerning the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases involving Western Thrace Turkish associations for 17 years despite all the warnings and calls of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.



Written contribution to the thematic report to be prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, 05.03.2025



ABTTF submitted its written contribution to the office of the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Prof. Nicolas Levrat for the thematic report to be submitted to the 61st Session of the UN Human Rights Council in March 2026. In its written contribution, ABTTF conveyed the attitude towards minorities in Greece and the problems and rights violations faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace.

ABTTF noted that the non-recognition and assimilation of national minorities in Greece is an official state policy and demanded Greece to restore the educational and religious autonomy of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and to establish a consultation mechanism with the broad participation of the representatives of the Turkish community to solve the existing problems.

Written statement to the 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, 13.03.2025

ABTTF submitted a written statement titled "Obstacles to Access to Quality Education for Children Belonging to the Turkish Community in Thrace in Greece" to the 58th session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council held in Geneva, Switzerland on 24 February-4 April 2025.

In its written statement, ABTTF pointed out that according to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the Turkish community in Western



Thrace in Greece has the right to establish, manage and control all kinds of charitable, religious and social institutions and all kinds of schools and other institutions for education and training purposes at its own expense and noted that this autonomous structure in education has been taken under the control of the state through fait accompli legal practices without consulting the Turkish community.

Question for written answer to the European Commission on the stigmatisation of civil society organisations in Greece, 15.03.2025



Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Bulgaria, Renew Europe) submitted a question for written answer to the European Commission on 15 March 2025 with the title “Stigmatisation of civil society groups in Greece”. In the question for written answer submitted by MEP Kyuchyuk with the initiative of the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF), it is noted that in the chapter on Greece of the 2024 Rule of Law Report published by the European Commission, a number of issues regarding the state of the rule of law in the country and the independence of the judiciary were raised.

The question for written answer further noted that the report published by the European Commission indicated that the registration of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Greece remains an issue and that a study by the Expert Council on NGO Law of the Council of Europe drew attention to the stigmatisation and criminalisation of certain activities of NGOs in the country.

Presentation on the issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace at the ALDE Group meeting in Strasbourg, 09.04.2025 / Strasbourg, France

ABTTF delivered a presentation on the Turkish community in Western Thrace at the meeting of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Group on 9 April 2025 in parallel with the Spring Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). During the working visit to Strasbourg within the framework of the presentation at the ALDE group meeting, the latest current developments in the region were also conveyed during the meetings with politicians and bureaucrats.

During the group meeting hosted by ALDE Group President Iulian Bulai (Romania), ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı conveyed the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace in the field of ethnic recognition and freedom of association and the problems experienced in education at all levels within the framework of the dismantlement of the autonomous structure in education.



Fact-finding mission to Western Thrace with the participation of the European Language Equality Network, 01-04.05.2025 / Western Thrace, Greece



ABTTF organised a fact-finding mission to Western Thrace this year with the participation of the European Language Equality Network (ELEN), of which it is a member. The delegation, which included ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu and ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı, was also joined by ELEN President Elin Jones and ELEN Secretary General Davyth Hicks.

Within the framework of the programme organised and prepared by ABTTF, the ELEN delegation first visited President of the Western Thrace Turkish Minority Advisory Board (BTTADK) and Elected Mufti of Xanthi Mustafa Trampa, at his office on 2 May 2025 and was briefed on the violations of the religious autonomy guaranteed to the Turkish community of Western Thrace under international agreements and the issues they face in the field of religion.

Special meeting with ELEN on educational issues facing the Turkish community in Western Thrace, 15-03.05.2025 / Western Thrace, Greece

Within the scope of the fact-finding mission organised by ABTTF with the participation of the European Language Equality Network (ELEN) on 1-4 May 2025, a special meeting was held on 3 May 2025 to discuss the problems of the Turkish community in Western Thrace in the field of education. The meeting, organised by ABTTF and hosted by the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA), was attended by the Western Thrace Turkish Teachers' Union (BTTÖB), the Culture and Education Foundation of Western Thrace Minority (PEKEM), the Union of Western Thrace Turkish Minority School Board Members, the Xanthi Turkish Minority Middle and High School Board, the Xanthi Turkish Minority Primary School Board and the Friendship, Equality, and Peace (FEP) Party.



At the special education meeting held with ELEN, which aims to ensure multilingualism within the framework of linguistic equality and human rights for communities in Europe that speak regional, minority or endangered languages, and which raises the issues of these communities at local, regional, national, European and international levels, the presidents and administrators of institutions and organisations representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace in the field of education discussed the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace at the primary school, primary, and secondary school levels.



Participation in the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, 05-06.05.2025 / Vienna, Austria

ABTTF participated in the meeting titled "Protecting civic space- the role of human rights defenders and freedom of peaceful assembly: Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting II".

The meeting, which brought together representatives of OSCE countries, international organisations, civil society and human rights

defenders and was attended by approximately 300 people, was attended by ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı, representing the Turkish community of Western Thrace. The meeting discussed good practices in the protection of human rights defenders and the challenges faced by civil society organisations and human rights defenders. It was noted that the civil space is increasingly under threat through defamation, criminalisation and direct attacks against human rights defenders.

Working visit to Brussels, 21.05.2025 / Brussels, Belgium

ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu paid a working visit to Brussels, the capital of the European Union (EU), on 21 May 2025. During his working visit, accompanied by ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı and Deniz Servantie from ABTTF Brussels Office, Habip Oğlu met with Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Herbert Dorfmann (EPP, Italy), representing the German minority in Italy.

Congratulating Dorfmann on his re-election in the EP elections held in June 2024, Habip Oğlu conveyed to him the current issues and human rights violations faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace. Habip Oğlu indicated that Greece has persistently failed to execute the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgments regarding the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases for the past 17 years, and noted that the Western Thrace Fenerbahçe Culture and Sports Association, established in 2022 and officially registered, was dissolved on 28 May 2024 on grounds that the phrase “Western Thrace” in its name was contrary to public order.



During the meeting, which also addressed the economic development of Western Thrace, ideas were exchanged regarding potential joint initiatives that could be undertaken at the European Parliament.

Presentation about the issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace at the European Parliament, 21.05.2025 / Brussels, Belgium



ABTTF delivered a presentation at the event titled “Name, Identity and Memory: 40 Years Since the Final Stage of the Change of Muslim-Turkish Names in Bulgaria” hosted by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from the Turkish minority in Bulgaria Ilhan Kyuchuk (Renew Europe, Bulgaria) in Brussels on 21 May 2025. ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu, ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı and Deniz Servantie from ABTTF Brussels Office participated in the event held at the EP.

The event was also attended by Member of the European Parliament and President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) Loránt Vincze (EPP, Romania) and European Commission Coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred Marion Lalisse. In his opening remarks, Kyuchuk noted that the Turks of Bulgaria were subjected to assimilation by the communist regime in the 1970s and 1980s and that their names were forcibly changed.

Habip Oğlu noted that Greece, one of the oldest members of the EU, denies the ethnic Turkish identity and existence of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and aims to eliminate its educational and religious autonomy through various laws and practices.

Participation in FUEN TAG 11th Annual Meeting, 29.05-01.06.2025 / Varna, Bulgaria

ABTTF participated in the 11th Annual Meeting of the Working Group of Turkic Minorities/Communities (TAG) of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), of which it is a member, held on 29 May-1 June 2025. Representing the Bulgaria Turks, the meeting was organised by the Youth and Innovative Development Association and held in Varna. ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu attended as FUEN TAG Spokesperson, ABTTF Vice President Nabi İbrahimcik as FUEN Vice President, and ABTTF Vice President Sebahattin Mümin also participated on behalf of ABTTF.



The meeting was attended by representatives of Western Thrace Turks, the Turks of Rhodes and Kos, the Meskhetian Turks, the Crimean Tatars, the Turks of Kosovo, the Gagauz Turks of Ukraine, the Turks of North Macedonia, the Gagauz Turks of Moldova, the Bulgarian Turks, and the Turks of Romania. Representatives of seventeen Turkic organisations from ten different European countries attended the meeting, where FUEN TAG members had the opportunity to get to know the Bulgarian Turks and their current problems closely.

The FUEN TAG roundtable meeting held on 31 May began with opening and welcoming speeches by FUEN TAG Spokesperson Halit Habip Oğlu and FUEN Vice President Nabi İbrahimcik. Habip Oğlu provided information about TAG's recent activities, while İbrahimcik briefed the participants on FUEN's recent actions. Following this, the participants shared important developments in their regions over the past year, their current issues, and the activities of the organisations they represent. The meeting concluded with the adoption of the 2025-2026 activity programme of FUEN TAG and a joint roadmap with the contributions of the participating organisations.

Parallel report to the U.S. State Department's 2024 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Greece, 18.09.2025



ABTTF submitted its parallel report on the 2024 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Greece 2024 published by the Department of State of the United States (U.S.) to the relevant U.S. authorities.

In its parallel report, ABTTF noted that this year's report on Greece, whose scope has been significantly narrowed, is biased, lacks objectivity, and is pro-government, completely ignoring the human rights violations and systematic breaches of the rule of law occurring in the country. It expressed its disappointment that the report makes no mention whatsoever of the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace or the rights violations it suffers.

Participation in FUEN's working visit to Berlin, 17-28.09.2025 / Berlin, Germany

ABTTF and Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) Vice President Nabi İbraimtzik participated in the working visit organised by FUEN, of which ABTTF is a full member, to Berlin, the capital of Germany, on 17-18 September 2025.



The FUEN delegation, consisting of FUEN Vice Presidents Olivia Schubert, Bernard Gaida and Nabi Ibraimtzik, and FUEN Secretary General Eva Penzes, met with German Federal Parliament (Bundestag) members Klaus-Peter Willsch (CDU/CSU), Kathrin Michel (SPD), Christoph de Vries (CDU/CSU), Knut Abraham (CDU/CSU) and Stefan Seidler (SSW), as well as Maylis Roßberg, President of the European Free Alliance Youth (EFAY).

During the meetings, which covered FUEN's activities, the current situation of European minorities and European minority policy, the Minority Safepack Initiative (MSPI), geo-blocking of internet content, the financing of FUEN's projects and opportunities for closer cooperation between FUEN and the Bundestag were discussed.

Participation in events organised to mark the European Day of Languages, 23.09.2025 / Brussels, Belgium



ABTTF participated in events held in Brussels on the occasion of the European Day of Languages. Deniz Servantie from ABTTF Brussels Office attended the reception organised by the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), of which ABTTF is a full member, on the evening of Tuesday, 23 September, and the event organised by the Intergroup on Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages of the European Parliament (EP) on Wednesday, 24 September.

Representatives of EU institutions and minority organisations attended the reception held at FUEN Brussels Office. FUEN President and MEP Loránt Vincze (EPP, Romania), MEP Anna-Maja Henriksson (Renew Europe, Finland) and Jens A. Christiansen, Chair of the European Dialogue Forum (EDF) at FUEN, underlined the importance of minority languages for a diverse and united Europe in their welcoming remarks at the reception. The following day, at the event titled "Pillars of Diversity: Our linguistic heritage shapes Europe", organised by the EP Intergroup on Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages of the on the 25th anniversary of the European Day of Languages, attention was drawn to the cultural, social and economic importance of Europe's rich multilingual heritage.

Working visit to Strasbourg, 29.09-01.10.2025 / Strasbourg, France

ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu paid a working visit to Strasbourg from 29 September to 1 October 2025, in parallel with the Autumn Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). During the working visit, accompanied by ABTTF Director of International Relations Melek Kirmacı, Habip Oğlu raised the current issues and human rights violations faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace in his meetings with PACE members and Council of Europe bodies.

Habip Oğlu emphasised that Greece has persistently failed to execute the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgments in the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases, which includes Turkish associations in Western Thrace, for over 17 years. He further referred to the unanimous judgment rendered by the Court on 24 June 2025 regarding the case known as "Sagir and Others", which was filed by the Cultural Association of Turkish



Women from the Prefecture of Xanthi, which had not been registered by Greek national courts on grounds of the word “Turkish” in its name. He added that Greece was once again condemned for violating Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Participation in the OSCE Human Dimension Conference, 13-14.10.2025 / 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 held in Warsaw, Poland, from 6 to 17 October 2025. Organised by the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office of Finland with the support of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the ten-day conference addressed the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the OSCE region and celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. The Turkish community in Western Thrace was represented by K. Engin Soyyilmaz from ABTTF and Kerem Abdurahimoğlu from WTMUGA.

Speaking at the conference, which was attended by 57 OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions, international organisations and civil society representatives, ABTTF addressed the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including in the session on tolerance and non-discrimination on 13 October. ABTTF noted that associations bearing the word “Turkish” in their names, representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace whose status and rights were defined by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, operated officially in Greece without any obstacles for approximately 50 years after that date. However, as a result of the Greek state’s policy of denying the Turkish presence and identity in the country, the oldest association of the Turkish community, the Xanthi Turkish Union (TTB), founded in 1927, was dissolved in 1986 because of the word “Turkish” in its name.

Participation to the 69th FUEN Congress, 23-26.10.2025 / Bolzano, Italy

ABTTF, representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace, participated in the 69th annual Congress of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), held in the city of Bozen/Bulsan/Bolzano in Italy’s South Tyrol region from 23 to 26 October 2025. Hosted by the South Tyrolean People’s Party (SVP), which represents the German and Ladin minorities in Italy, the Congress was attended by ABTTF President and TAG Spokesperson Halit Habip Oğlu, ABTTF Vice President and FUEN Vice President Nabi Ibraimtzik, and ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmaci.



The Congress, attended by representatives of autochthonous national minorities, peoples and language groups from 30 different European countries, featured panel sessions discussing barriers to cross-border, access to audiovisual media in minority languages in Europe and how FUEN’s European Citizens’ Initiative known as the Minority SafePack Initiative (MSPI), addressed this issue. The host German and Ladin minorities were introduced with cultural performances.

Elections for the FUEN Presidency and Vice Presidency were held at the FUEN Assembly of Delegates held within the framework of the Congress. Olivia Schubert, a member of the German minority in Hungary, was elected as the new FUEN President, while ABTTF Vice President Nabi Ibraimtzik was re-elected as FUEN Vice President.

Participation in the 7th -annual meeting of the FUEN Education Working Group, 10-13.11.2025 / Western Thrace, Greece



ABTTF, as a full member of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), participated in the 7th Annual Meeting of the Education Working Group held in the city of Komotini in the Western Thrace region of Greece on 10-13 November 2025. ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı participated in the meeting, which was attended by teachers, educators, researchers and academics from different European countries and focused on the theme of “Minority Schooling Systems, Turkish Minority Education in Greece, Minority History Teaching”.

FUEN President Olivia Schubert participated in the meeting via video conference and delivered a welcoming speech. Subsequently, FUEN Education Working Group Coordinator Zora Popova and Thomas Hieber, lawyer and legal expert for FUEN’s European Citizens’ Initiative entitled “Minority Safepack Package (MSPI)”, delivered introductory presentations on minority rights in education.

In its presentation during the panel session titled “Minority Schooling Systems in Europe”, ABTTF addressed the status of the Turkish community in Western Thrace in education and the problems it faces in this area. Emphasising that the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne guaranteed the Turkish community in Western Thrace autonomy in education and education in their mother tongue, Turkish, ABTTF noted that Turkish schools in the Western Thrace region are “autonomous” and therefore have “private school” status and belong to the Turkish community.

Participation to the ELEN 2025 General Assembly, 14-15.11.2025 / Barcelona, Spain

ABTTF, representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace, participated in the General Assembly of the European Language Equality Network (ELEN), of which it is a member, held in Barcelona, Spain, on 14-15 November 2025. Hosted by the Catalonia-based Escarré International Centre for the Ethnic Minorities and Nations (CIEMEN), the General Assembly brought together representatives of national and linguistic minorities from different European countries. ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu attended the Assembly, accompanied by Deniz Servantie from ABTTF Brussels Office.



As part of the General Assembly programme, the ABTTF President participated in a workshop on the first day before noon on the project titled “FOSTERLANG (Fostering Linguistic Capital)”, which aims to protect, and support endangered and minority languages and is funded by the European Union (EU). At the workshop, which focused on intensive education and multilingual classes using the example of Catalonia, representatives from different countries shared their experiences on the preservation, revitalisation and digitisation of endangered and minority languages.

Meeting with UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Nicolas Levrat, 26.11.2025 / Geneva, Switzerland



ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu met with UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Nicolas Levrat, at the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland on 26 November 2025.

Habip Oğlu, accompanied by ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı, raised the fundamental and current issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace in Greece and the human rights violations they are subjected to.

Habip Oğlu indicated that, contrary to the educational autonomy guaranteed to the Turkish community in Western Thrace by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, autonomous and private Turkish primary schools in the Western Thrace region are being closed one by one each year by ministerial decisions on the pretext of low number of pupils. He noted that three more Turkish primary schools are to be closed in the 2025-2026 school year, and that the number of Turkish primary schools, which was 188 in 2011, has now fallen to 83.

Participation to the 18th Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues, 27-28.11.2025 / Geneva, Switzerland

ABTTF and the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA), representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace participated in the 18th session of the United Nations (UN) Forum on Minority Issues held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 27-28 November 2025.

ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu and ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı, along with Dr Pervin Hayrullah and Kerem Abdurahimoğlu from WTMUGA, participated in the session themed “The contribution of minorities to diverse, resilient, and peaceful societies”.



Intervening at the panel session titled “Building trust and social cohesion: addressing barriers to peaceful coexistence”, ABTTF underlined that the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne granted education and religious autonomy to the Turkish community in Western Thrace living in Greece. It was further noted that while Greece initially permitted signboards reading “Turkish school” in both Turkish and Greek to be displayed, it has gradually increased political pressure over the years and today denies the Turkish community’s ethnic Turkish identity.

Participation in the 3rd thematic meeting of the FUEN Women of Minorities Project, 01-03.12.2025 / Budapest, Hungary



ABTTF participated in the 3rd thematic meeting of the “Women of Minorities” project of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), of which it is a full member, held in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, on 1-3 December 2025. ABTTF International Relations Director Melek Kirmacı attended the conference titled “Equality in Political Participation and Representation of Minorities,” hosted by the Landesselbstverwaltung der Ungarndeutschen (LdU) of Germans in Hungary, a member of FUEN, which brought together experts, activists, politicians and minority representatives from various European countries.

The meeting began with a welcome speech by FUEN Secretary General Eva Edel Penzes. Later, as the keynote speaker, Member of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) of the Council of Europe Prof. Dr. Tove Malloy, delivered an introductory presentation on the theme of the meeting.

Intervening in the panel titled “Participation & Representation of Women of Minorities – Country Reports on Barriers and Positive Practices”, ABTTF noted that the ethnic Turkish identity of the Turkish community in Western Thrace living in Greece is denied by the state, and that a cultural association founded by Turkish women in the prefecture of Rodopi in 2001 was not registered by the national courts on grounds of the word “Turkish” in its name. Noting that the association in question won its case before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in 2008, ABTTF indicated that Greece has failed to execute the ECtHR judgments concerning the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases, which also includes this women’s association, for over 17 years.

Written statement to the UN Human Rights Council, 04.12.2025

ABTTF submitted a written statement to the 59th regular session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council titled “Interference with the Freedom of Expression of NGOs and Continuing Violation of the Freedom of Association of the Turkish community in Western Thrace in Greece”.

ABTTF emphasised that it has contributed to the UN Human Rights Council through written and oral presentations as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2006. It indicated that all the terms “Western Thrace” used in the written statements submitted by ABTTF, representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace living in Greece, to the 56th, 57th, and 58th regular sessions of the UN Human Rights Council were changed to “Thrace” after the aforementioned written statements were uploaded to the UN system.

Noting that this constituted a clear intervention in the content of a written statement submitted by an NGO and a violation of Resolution 1996/31 of the UN Economic and Social Council, ABTTF explained in consequence that the freedom of expression of the Turkish community in Western Thrace had been violated.

In its written statement, ABTTF stated that the Turkish community has lived in the Western Thrace region for centuries and has enjoyed educational and religious autonomy since the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, adding that this educational and religious autonomy was in place in Greece until 1967 but was subsequently undermined over the years by various laws and state practices.

Working visit to Brussels, 09.12.2025 / Brussels, Belgium



ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu paid a working visit to Brussels, the capital of the European Union (EU), on 9 December 2025.

Habip Oğlu, accompanied by Deniz Servantie from the ABTTF Brussels Office, paid his last working visit of the year to Members of the European Parliament (EP), including Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew Europe, Bulgaria), and Loránt Vincze (EPP, Romania), a member of the Hungarian minority in Romania and also the Chair of the EP Intergroup on Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages.

During the meetings with MEPs working on minority rights under the EP umbrella, the current issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and recent events in Greece were raised, and developments concerning national minorities in the European Union (EU) in 2025 were assessed.