



Federation of Western
Thrace Turks in Europe



Political Party of Macedonian
Minority in Greece

WITH THE SUPPORT OF



European Free Alliance –
European Political Party



The Greens | EFA
in the European Parliament



Federal Union of
European Nationalities

International Panel Discussion in the European Parliament

The Ignored Minorities in Greece: WESTERN THRACE TURKS and MACEDONIANS

Thursday, 17 April 2008
European Parliament, Brussels
Meeting Room A5G2
15:00 – 18:00

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Western Thrace Turks

Western Thrace is the name of the region stretching out from the Turkish border in North-eastern Greece up to the Karasu River. The size of the minority today is about 150,000 compared with 129,000 in 1923. The Greek state systematically discriminates against the Turkish minority and denies the ethnic identity of the minority, which whether acquired by birth or through acculturation, is Turkish. Greece prefers to use the term “Muslim minority”, a concept based on the Lausanne Peace Treaty and on the rejection of a “Turkish” identity. Greece’s refusal to accept the minority’s Turkish identity has ranged from banning civic organisations bearing the adjective “Turkish” in their titles – as in the case of “Turkish Union of Xanthi”- to prosecuting individuals who publicly identified the minority as “Turkish”.

Macedonians

The Macedonian minority of Greece is concentrated in the northern part of the country. The exact number of ethnic Macedonians and Macedonian-speakers is unknown as questions on ethnicity and language are excluded from the census. Although the Macedonian language is spoken by a large number of persons, it is in danger of becoming extinct as it does not enjoy official state recognition and therefore is not taught in the education system. Furthermore, Macedonian speakers and indeed persons expressing a Macedonian ethnic identity have been persecuted by Greek authorities. Greek courts on multiple occasions since 1989 have refused to register the cultural association “Home of Macedonian Culture”

PROGRAMME

- 14:00 Joint Press Conference of ABTTF, EFA, FUEN and EFA-Rainbow, **PHS 0A50**
- 15:00 Opening speeches
Hans Heinrich Hansen (Panel Chair)
President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)
- Halit Habip Oglou**
President, Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF)
- Nelly Maes**
President, European Free Alliance - European Political Party
- 15:20 *Minorities in the Balkan context*
Kinga Gál, MEP
Vice-Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Human Rights, European Parliament
- 15:35 *Western Thrace Turkish Minority and the Victims of Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code*
Asst. Prof. Dr. Halim Cavusoglu
Department of Sociology, Hacettepe University
- 15:50 *The Macedonian Minority in Greece*
Petros Kazias
Member of the Central Council of EFA-Rainbow
- 16:05 *Tolerance of intolerance towards minorities in Greece*
Panayote Dimitras
Spokesperson, Greek Helsinki Monitor
- 16:20 *Minorities in the Balkans: need for mediation with the governments?*
Lazslo Tökes
MEP for EFA, representing Hungarians in Romania
- 16.35 *Council of Europe standards and Minorities in Greece*
Boriss Cilevičs
Member of the PACE, Chair, Sub-Committee on Rights of Minorities
- 16:50 Interactive Discussion, Question and Answer Session
- 17:50 Closing remarks by **Mikel Irujo Amezaga MEP**, Greens/EFA Group