

**OSCE/ODIHR
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2015**

**Tolerance and non-discrimination:
Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities**

Warsaw 21/9- 2/10/2015

ECUMENICAL FEDERATION OF CONSTANTINOPOLITANS

**Remedy and Reparations towards the Greek-Orthodox Community of the
Republic of Turkey on the 60th Anniversary of Istanbul Pogrom of 6-7/9/1955**

The Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (EFC) represents the Greek-Orthodox Community of Istanbul, which saw 98 percent of its membership depleted and forced to live under expatriation conditions due of the massive scale of human and minority rights abuses practiced throughout the period 1923-2003 by successive governments of the Republic of Turkey. EFC once more emphasizes the crucial necessity of Remedy and Reparations measures to be taken by Turkey on the 60th Anniversary of the Pogrom of 6-7 September 1955, which has been one of the main reasons for the above-mentioned expatriation. We have recently submitted an appeal to National Grand Parliament of Turkey to re-examine the pending issue of the Istanbul Pogrom.

Although during the period 2004-2010 there have been noticeable steps to alleviate the long-standing severe discriminatory problems against the minority communities there are still many pending problems remaining to be addressed. The prohibition of elections in the Minority Welfare Foundations for the last three years, despite all given promises is a source of serious concern. The pending issues of the return of the confiscated real estate properties, including the 3 churches in Karakoy district occupied by the Turkish state established and backed, Turkish Orthodox Church are serious violations of Lausanne Treaty of 1923 and Minority Rights. The continuing prohibition for the last 45 years of teaching at the Halki Theological School is a very serious violation of religious freedoms. Furthermore once more we emphasize the necessity of extending the hate crimes legislation in cooperation with the improvement of public education on tolerance. The incident of arson attack in the church of Holy Trinity of Kadikoy last June verifies this fact.

As a Federation we have taken as guideline the United Nations recommendation on Remedy of past human violations and have been working with the authorities of the present government of Republic of Turkey on remedy measures towards our Community.

The issues being addressed and on which the Government of Turkey needs to take specific corrective measures are:

- Reinstitution of the right of Turkish citizenship which showed progress but there are still problems to be tackled such as the discriminatory attitude towards the members of our Community on the provision of civil rights recognized to ex-citizens under the "Blue Card" arrangement contrary to the fact that the Law doesn't foresee any such exception.

- Establishment of a long term and state supported repatriation programme, focused especially to young generations, which will guarantee the survival of the shrinking population of Community. Last summer's pilot program in the form of an educational visit by a group of expatriated youngsters, supported by the Department of Citizen Abroad belonging to Prime-Minister's Office, showed the importance of establishing a long-term project.
- Establishment of research centers, as proposed by our federation, in cooperation with Turkey should be taken seriously as a measure of remedy.
- Remedy on the ownership rights by establishing a service department providing legal advice to expatriated citizens.
- Reinstitution of the cultural heritage by approving as a symbolical gesture, the return to Istanbul Foundation the Historic Library and Archive of the Greek Literary Society of Istanbul.
- Take initiatives on the appointment of minority members to public service functions.

The Government of Turkey is asked to expedite the implementation of proposed remedy measures which will be a benefit for all citizens of Turkey.