



Declaration nr. 1

Name of the person introducing the motion: Mustafa Ali Cavus

On behalf of the party: *DEB*

Declaration: End hate speech, oppression and discrimination against the Turkish Minority in Greece

WESTERN THRACE TURKISH MINORITY'S VOICE WANTS TO BE SILENCED AND ITS PEOPLE OPPRESSED

Hate based attacks targeting Western Thrace Turks, police raids on institutions and investigations by prosecutors to institution presidents.

In our country Greece, hate- based attacks against our minority continue to increase. The only political party of the Western Thrace Turkish Minority, the Friendship Equality Peace (FEP) Party, was attacked on 8th December 2015. The FEP Party's new Headquarters was attacked by "ΟΙ ΦΡΟΥΡΟΙ ΤΗΣ ΘΡΑΚΗΣ " – Guardians of Thrace, the building was damaged and the museum created for our minority's late leader and party founder Dr. Sadik Ahmet, where his car in which he had an accident was stolen from display. Following an official complaint made on our behalf, the investigation started by the police, like in other hate-based attack and despite the passing of one year has yielded no result. No formal explanation has been made from the authorities.

On 2nd March 2016, the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe's event at the European Parliament about freedom of association was sabotaged by two Golden Dawn MEPs. Participants were exposed to threats and insults.

For the occasion of 10th December World Human Rights Day, the Friendship Equality Peace (FEP) Party and the Greek Helsinki Monitor on Monday 12th December organized an event about 'National Minorities in Greece and Recommendations of International Organizations'. The event was held at the Athens Journalists' Association conference room in Athens.

The event which started with Minority Rights Group Representative Nafsika Papanikoatu as moderator was violently invaded by four MPs from the racist Golden Dawn Party and its sympathizers. FEP Party President Mustafa Ali Cavus was threatened with death, our Party's executives, organizers of the event and the participants were subjected to abuse and threats. The MPs and other group members, who invaded the room, insulted the Western Thrace Turkish Minority and our identity with unmentionable insults.

The Golden Dawn Party, before the 'Search for Justice' march organised by the FEP Party on 24th July 2016 filed a criminal complaint against FEP Party President Mustafa Ali Cavus and Vice President Ozan Ahmetoglu. Following this, prosecutors launched an investigation. Due to the initiated investigation, President Mustafa Ali Cavus, on 30th July 2016 and Vice President Ozan Ahmetoglu, on 8th August along with Acting President and Legal Advisor Ahmet Kara presented their written statements to the Rhodope Police Department.

On 4th October 2016, our member organization Friendship, Equality, Peace (FEP) Party President Mustafa Ali Çavuş made another deposition in relation to an investigation for his speech during the FEP Party 4th General Congress on 22nd May 2016 about the Party's founder and first President Dr. Sadik Ahmet's theft vehicle in which he lost his life.

On 23rd January 2017 the Elected Mufti of Komotini İbrahim Şerif made his second deposition to the police for his speech at the opening ceremony of the new headquarters of the FEP Party in January 2016, in which he chanted the slogan "Europe, Europe, Hear Our Voice" and carried the campaign flag that FEP Party used during the EP elections in 2014 in order to attract attention to the problems of the Minority.

Greece, which does not allow muftis, religious leaders of the Western Thrace Turkish minority to be elected and despite opposition from the minority, appoints people whom they desire. For this reason, in addition to state appointed muftis in the region, there are mufti who have been elected with the will of the minority. Elected Mufti of Xanthi Ahmet Mete and the Imam of Gökçeşinar[Gıflaki] Erkan Azizoğlu will stand on trial on 31 March 2017 for their actions of the funeral of a young minority member who died while performing his military service in the Greek army on 20 July 2016. During the funeral on 20 July 2016 the appointed Mufti of Xanthi who is not recognized by minority members wanted to make the prayer at the funeral and minority members prevented him making the prayer. The Public Prosecutor's Office in Xanthi filed a suit against the Elected Mufti of Xanthi and the Imam of Gökçeşinar. The Elected Mufti will be tried for allegedly usurpation of the office and for allegedly being the instigator for disruption of the public order and the removal of the appointed Mufti from the funeral.

At the same time, Federal Union of European Nationals (FUEN) member Rhodes, Kos and Dodecanese Turks Cultural and Solidarity Association President Mustafa Kaymakci, for a new project carried out a visit to Kos Island, on 30th August 2016 he was arrested and held in custody for the night. Kaymakci, was later deported from Greece and banned from entering Greece on the grounds that he posed a threat to the public order in the country.

Mayor of Yassıkoy (İasmos) Municipality İsmet Kadı, a member of the Turkish minority, was sentenced to a four-month-imprisonment on the ground that he allegedly used the official car outside the municipality borders and for his personal affairs. On 19 December 2016, the Mayor was stopped by the police while driving in the vehicle after leaving his children to the school in the morning. The police took the Mayor into custody immediately and brought him to the Security Directorate in Rhodope. On 30 December 2016, the court ordered a four-month of imprisonment which was appealed by the Mayor to an upper court. Kadı explained that the treatment of the public prosecutor of Komotini and the police officers against himself as a mayor was not proper. The Mayor and institutions of the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace declared that the treatment against the Mayor is an act of intimidation against the Minority itself.

In accordance with legislative amendments made in Greece in 2007, kindergarten education before primary school became compulsory, this change from 2011- 2012 academic year also applied to minority schools. However, within framework of education rights arising from the Lausanne Treaty, since 2011 requests for opening bilingual kindergartens, which will also provide education in Turkish have been left unanswered by the authorities.

The Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association, with a number of branches in the region through volunteering members provided native language reinforcement. All branches were raided by the police and closed with an order from the prosecutor's offices. An investigation was initiated which alleged that the association was operating unauthorised kindergartens and on 29th November 2016, the association's office was searched by police.

In March 2016, the Director of the State Education Department of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace Panayotis Keramaris has banned the use of Turkish by teachers from the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace in their communications. In April 2016, the Director declared that teachers in minority primary schools will speak only Greek with students in their statements, announcements and declarations.

On 30 August 2016, the Director of the State Education Department of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace Panayotis Keramaris decided to close down nine more minority primary schools in the region of Western Thrace on the grounds that these schools do not have sufficient number of students in accordance with the decision of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religion in 2010. Despite, the minority's educational autonomy and their schools having a different status, school closures continue. Since 2010, the number of schools closed has reached 60. Requests to open schools which have closed in spite of increase student numbers have been rejected.

As the Western Thrace Turkish Minority

- 1. We demand that rights of the Turkish Minority which are guaranteed with the Lausanne Treaty are protected, respected and promoted and that the autonomous structure in the field of education and religion are not disrupted and identity recognised.**
- 2. We demand from the Greek Government to end discrimination and eliminate prejudices against the Minority at all levels of government and law enforcement departments.**
- 3. We demand the Greek Government to end the strategy of intimidation and deterrence against members of the minority in full respect of the right to freedom of expression and opinion and to treat members of the Turkish minority as equal citizens of the country.**