

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO GREECE – ADD.2

NETHERLANDS

Asylum procedures

- Could you elaborate on the progress that is being made regarding the improvement of the asylum procedures in Greece? How soon do you expect to have the new asylum agency up and running and how soon will the backlog be processed?

Unaccompanied minor immigrants

How many unaccompanied minor immigrants are estimated to enter Greece illegally every year? How many reception locations are there in Greece for minors and what happens in the case that a minor cannot be placed in these locations?

Illegal immigration / detention facilities

What is the timeframe you have in mind regarding the improvement of the quality of the detention facilities in Greece?

Gender equality

Have special measures been taken for unemployed women? Especially now during the economic crisis Greece is facing, women seem to be more prone to unemployment than men.

The implementation of the Sharia in the region of Thrace creates inequality when it comes to the rights of women – (i.e. early marriages, inheritance issues and legal provisions of marriage / and divorce). How are you planning on improving the situation of these Muslim women in Thrace?

Trafficking in human beings

Could you give us a description of the current situation? How many women are being trafficked into / through Greece on a yearly basis according to your estimation?

Roma

How are you planning on further improving the position of Roma in Greek society? Are there measures in order to combat segregation at Greek schools?

TURKEY

- Detainees / Prisoners
- Ill treatments by law enforcement officials (GRC/3-21, 24) as well as poor and overcrowded detention conditions (GRC/3-33) in Greece are worrisome. Those practices and conditions are also major complaint of the Turkish detainees in Greece. Thus, the initiative to draft a law that would establish an

independent Bureau under the direct authority of the Ministry of Citizen's Protection to deal with incidents of arbitrary conduct by law enforcement officials (GRC/3-27) is welcome. Since the situation requires immediate action, necessary measures need to be put in place.

- A mechanism is necessary to overcome the difficulties faced by non-Greek speakers from the very outset of their deprivation of liberty (GRC/3-34, 44). There are many complaints from Turkish citizens, that they are not able to express themselves clearly during their detention and court ruling phases due to poor interpretation services.

1. In light of the above, what are Greece's intentions for improving the detention conditions and initiating a draft law to deal with incidents of arbitrary conduct by law enforcement officials?

2. Is the government considering to upgrade interpretation services for non-Greek speakers, during detention and court ruling phases?

- Immigrants

- The increase of racist violence incidents over the past two years, especially attacks against immigrants and hate speech, is of great concern (GRC/3-17). Considering the possible negative effects of the economic crisis in Greece which could further deteriorate the situation, preemptive measures and combating racist crimes more actively are needed.

What are the intentions of the Greek Government for taking appropriate measures to investigate the attacks against immigrants and to combat racist crimes?

- Lack of a Mosque in Athens and Thessaloniki

- Athens is still the only capital without a mosque in Europe.
- Accelerating the process for the building of a Mosque in Votanikos, Athens, without further delay, and also considering the opening up of one of the historical Mosques in Thessaloniki, where significant number of Muslim population live are necessary.

What is the Greek Government's plan to meet the demands of Muslim population, and is building of a Mosque in Athens and opening up of a Mosque in Thessaloniki on the agenda?

- Western Thrace

- Religious rights of the Turkish Minority in Western Thrace have been safeguarded by international agreements. The freely elected Muftis of Komotini and Xanthi are not recognized. In addition, the Law No.3536/2007

(“appointed imams law”), to which Minority has severely opposed, is another source of concern.

- Revision of the relevant legislation concerning the Waqfs in consultation with the Minority. This would enable the Minority to directly control and to use its own Waqf properties as well as put an end to misuse and expropriation of the Waqf properties.
- It is stated in article 73 of the Report that the Government examines ways and means to execute the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights regarding the applications of the Turkish Union of Xanthi, The Cultural Association of Turkish Women of Rodopi and the Evros Minority Youth Association. However, the Greek courts keep on rejecting relevant applications by the above-mentioned associations- for the implementation of the ECHR Rulings, on the ground that the rulings of the ECHR do not revoke the national courts’ decisions and thus have no direct effect on domestic law. On the other hand, Greek courts also reject similar applications by other Minority NGO’s. The relevant rulings of the ECHR are yet to be implemented by Greece.
- The Greek Government is urged to start the procedures for the opening of Turkish-language kindergartens for Minority children in Komotini and Xanthi.
- Speeding up the process of reinstating the citizenships of approximately 60.000 Greek citizens who were dismissed from Greek citizenship, because of the later repelled article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Law as well as of their descendants is necessary. A mechanism to compensate their losses in terms of ownership rights that occurred as a result of the process should be put in place.
- The recent heavy fines incurred on the Minority press are perceived by the Minority as a means of intimidation. Most recently, Gündem and Millet newspapers have been penalized to pay heavy compensation for their articles about a Greek teacher in the Turkish Minority School in Megalo Derio village. The court ordered them to pay €150,000 and €120,000 respectively, which could lead to bankruptcy of the said newspapers.
- The members of the Minority are also facing heavy fines due to the construction of mosque minarets. These heavy fines are not proportional with their incomes and drag them into a financial bottleneck. Most recently, 3 members of the Minority who had worked at the construction of the minaret of the Avra mosque were sentenced to 3 months in prison and were fined for 122 Euro per person.

1. Is the government envisaging the possibility of allowing the election of the Muftis by the Turkish Minority as safeguarded by international agreements as well as by the Greek legislation i.e. the Law No: 2345 dated 1920?

2. What kind of steps the Greek Government will take to revise the relevant legislation on the Waqfs in consultation with the minority?

3. How does the Greek government envisage to implement the relevant rulings of the ECHR regarding the applications of the Turkish Union of Xanthi, The Cultural Association of Turkish Women of Rodopi and the Evros Minority Youth Association? What steps will it take to solve the problem of denial of ethnic identity?

4. When does the Greek Government plan to start the procedures for the opening of Turkish-language kindergartens in Komotini and Xanthi?

5. Have there been any developments about the process of reinstating the citizenships of approximately 60.000 Greek citizens who were dismissed from Greek citizenship, by the later repelled article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Law? How does the Greek Government plan to compensate their losses in terms of ownership rights that occurred as a result of the process?

6. The recent heavy fines incurred on the Minority press seem as a clear breach of freedom of expression and the press in EU legal area. Does the Greek National Council for Radio and Television consider working on a more liberal Media Law?

7. Does the Greek Government have plans to be more flexible for the preconditions set for minaret construction?

- Rhodes and Kos

- A dialogue with the NGO's of the Turkish communities in Rhodes and Kos for the solution of their problems in the field of religious freedom and resume Turkish-language education which has been denied since 1972, is necessary.

What measures does Greece intend to take in order to find a solution to the problems of the Turkish communities in the field of Turkish-language education and religious freedom on these islands?