



POLICY BRIEF



STRATEGIC OUTLOOK
Adequatio intellectus et rei

MUSLIM TURKISH MINORITY IN WESTERN THRACE

Çağdaş Duman, Expert, Strategic Outlook.

The great effort Mustafa Kemal showed and the mutual trust coming with the Treaty of Lausanne affected Turkish-Greek relations positively and ushered to the stability to be supplied in the Balkans but this period didn't last long. Western Thrace where 90% of the population became Muslim Turkish with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 remained in Greece borders. Western Thrace is in the north-east of Greece and is covered with Evros River in the east, Macedonia in the west, Bulgaria in the north and Aegean Sea in the south. Western Thrace is composed of Alexandroupoli, Komotini and Xanthi cities. Turkish commission expressed there were 150.000 Turkish in the western Thrace in Lausanne Conference. According to this number if we consider the birth rate as measure, in western Thrace there must be a million Turkish. The number of people who became Turkish citizens by immigrating to Turkey from western Thrace is about 800.000 today. The decision of closing all associations belonging to Turkish by Greece High Court's reason of that no Turkish existed there is the most obvious proof of that our nation is underestimated there.



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There is unemployability in public utilities in the regions where western Thrace Muslim Turkish people was born and grew up in Greece which became member of the EU in 1981. When the reason of this is asked, it is referred to the problems about knowing language. Besides, that 3% barrage is brought for the ones who will attend elections independently in parliamentary elections is preventing western Thracian Turkish independent candidates from being elected. On the other hand the cities where Muslim Turkish live with 'Plan of Kapadistrias' carried in regional managements and the cities where Orthodox people live were united in a way in favour of Greece and it was handicapped for Turkish to elect governor or mayor. So, the gate of the state has been closed for Muslims Turkish people in Greece.

Western Thrace Turkish people having right to found their own education institutions and assign teacher according to the Treaty of Lausanne is facing with the policy of ignorance. 1953 and 1968 Turkish-Greek Education Treaty signed to supply Turkish people to benefit from contemporary education isn't being implemented. Minority schools in Western Thrace weren't possessed by Greece. The schools used to be managed by committee chosen by the minority and earnings of teachers used to be paid by parents. All of these were terminated and when the schools were entering into the ownership of Greece, the students faced with the situation of not learning Turkish language and the quality of education was decreasing.

Western Thracian Turkish people have problems about religious topics as in so many topics. The Treaty of Lausanne organized the religion and freedom of conscious rights. According to the law, Western Thracian Turkish minority forms their religious corporations with their own will and they are responsible to choose muftis. But in spite of this, muftis chosen were blamed with statue fraud because they used their appellations in writing and were found guilty of forgery. A presidency decree required the law no 2345 to be abolished contrary to the Treaty of Athens in 1990. According to this it was decided the election of muftis to be assigned by the governors of cities. The decree, point of issue, is against both the Treaty of Athens and the Treaty of Lausanne.

According to 40th article of the Treaty of Lausanne, it was decided to have equal rights to found, manage and inspect each kind of charitable institution, religion and social institutions, to use



their own languages freely here and to perform their own religious celebrations. In spite of this, it is being prevented foundation managers from acceding by election and possessing domain. Foundation managers are directly assigned by Greece statues.

The fruitful areas in Western Thrace belonging to Turkish people are being condemned to found university, industrial area or military area. It is offered to give fruitless areas as condemnation appraisal. Areas in western Thrace were changed by Greek management to disadvantageous of the minorities. While the areas Western Thrace Muslim Turkish minority had possessed in 1923 according to the official channels of Lausanne Peace Conference composed 84% of the region, this ratio decreased to 25% today. The reasons behind the change are to foster Greek citizens to buy real property from Turkish minority by being presented advantageous credits, not to be accepted Ottoman taboos and properties, to occupy the lands of Turkish minority arbitrarily and Greek people coming from old USSR to be settled in the region.

So many minority members were denaturalized because of 19th article of citizenship law conflicting 4th article of Greece Treaty. The constitutional charter's famous 19th article which had to carry its laws to the standards of Europe and was prepared to assimilate Western Thrace Turkish people and caused 60.000 Turkish to have been denaturalized since 1955 was abrogated on August 31, 1998. Nonetheless, contrary to the expectations, Greece government declared that abrogation of law hadn't retroactive effect and it wouldn't be given back their citizenships assumed to Turkish people who remained without country.

Western Thrace Turkish people who were Greek alien have some problems with Turkish states as they have with Greece. One of these problems is residence problem. Western Thrace Turkish people who were Greek alien have right of residence for 3 months as from they come into Turkey with Greek passport. If they exceed the prescribed period, they have to pay fine when they are returning. Turkish people who were Greek alien must be able to take the permission to stay in Turkey for 5 years. If a Western Thrace Turkish has a real estate in Turkey, even all his children migrated to Turkey and became Turkish citizen, it won't be given residency permission to even the old people who wants to live his old age by his children and to go to Greece sometimes. However a German who comes to



Turkey from Germany, a member of the EU, can stay by buying a house in Bodrum or Kuşadası and can live in Turkey.

Another problem of Turkish people who are Greek alien is the problem of taking the permission of working in Turkey. If a Greek alien Turkish wants to employee in Turkey, it is not given permission in order to prevent Turkish population from decreasing in the regions where Turkish people live densely. A Western Thrace Turkish who is Greek alien can only take the permission of employing as depending on a company from Undersecretariat of Treasury and Foreign Trade. Recently, it has been imperative to take employing visa from Turkish consulate or the Ambassadorship of Turkey in the country where they come from to Turkey for the employing permissions given by Undersecretariat of Treasury and Foreign Trade, too.

Greek alien Turkish people also face with problems while buying real estate in Turkey. Being bought and sold of real estates must be done with the Turkish certificate taken from Ambassadorship of Turkey in Komotini in Greece. The person who has the certificate and the person who hasn't may be treated differently because Greek people in Istanbul who have the certificate proving that they are Greek alien have the same rights with Greek citizens to buy or sell real estate, to found a company, to administer their jobs. Turkish people who has Turkish certificate evaluated their earnings to buy real estate in Turkey. Greek alien Turkish people in Turkey must be benefited from dual citizenship. If Turkey makes being citizen of the EU countries easier for a Turkish citizen employing in emigrant worker statue in the EU countries such as Germany, Turkey must also make easier for Greek alien Turkish people having Turkish certificate who wants to gain the Turkish citizenship.

In conclusion, unless any solution is found for Western Thrace Turkish people who are Greek alien, Western Thracian people who cannot move in Western Thrace will find the solution in coming to Turkey by leaving Greek alien, yielding Greek management or immigrating to Germany. These rights must be accepted for Western Thracian Turkish people by preventing them from leaving Greek alien. Addition to Turkish people living in the EU countries more than 2.5 million, 150.000 Western Thracian Turkish people play important roles in economy, politics and lobbying Europe.

