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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Note verbale dated 30 March 2026 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to provide herewith the comments of the Government of Greece in relation to the written statement submitted by the “Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe”, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status (A/HRC/61/NGO/81).

The Permanent Mission of Greece kindly requests the Office of the High Commissioner to circulate the present note verbale and the annex thereto* as a document of the sixty-first Session of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 3.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.



Annex to the note verbale dated 30 March 2026 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Greece's Policy on Safeguarding the Educational Rights of the Muslim Minority in Thrace

Greece remains firmly committed to safeguarding the educational rights of the Muslim Minority in Thrace, in full respect of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. The central objective of this policy is clear: to ensure that every child of the Minority benefits from the highest possible quality education, enabling full participation in society and equal opportunities for the future.

The Muslim Minority, recognized as a religious minority under the Lausanne Treaty, comprises more than 120,000 Greek citizens. Its members enjoy all rights guaranteed by the Constitution and European law, alongside specific protections in education, religion, and civil life.

Education lies at the heart of this policy. The Greek State fully finances Minority primary schools, as well as secondary schools in Komotini and Xanthi and religious schools (madrasas). At the same time, students are free to attend public schools, where a significant number of Minority students are enrolled. A dedicated university quota further facilitates access to higher education.

The priority is not only access, but quality. Greece ensures that educational structures promote strong learning outcomes, effective socialization, and equal opportunities. In this context, the temporary suspension of Minority schools is applied only when the minimum number of pupils is not met, in order to preserve appropriate class sizes and teaching standards. In all such cases, the State fully covers transportation to the nearest school. This measure is applied with flexibility, particularly in remote or isolated areas, where schools may continue to operate even with fewer students to avoid hardship.

It is important to stress that this policy is non-discriminatory and consistent with the approach applied across the national education system. Moreover, temporarily suspended Minority schools may reopen if demand increases. Public authorities also ensure that such school buildings are properly maintained and protected.

With regard to a recent incident in January 2026 at a temporarily suspended Minority school in the village of Aratos, local authorities concluded that it was accidental in nature and in no way linked to discrimination or hate-motivated intent.

With regard to the function and role of the School Boards of the Minority schools, their duties are exhaustively outlined in Ministerial Decision No. 62092/2002 and are restricted to the management of the school's proceeds and operational expenses. For the execution of their duties, School Boards receive state funding on a regular basis, as well as in the form of extraordinary payments. There is no legislative provision granting School Boards any consultative role on other matters relevant to the operation of the schools. According to national legislation, School Boards are not entitled to use school rooms or offices on a permanent basis, neither in public schools, including Minority schools, nor in private schools.

Teachers in Minority schools are highly qualified graduates of Greek universities, members of the Minority, and public servants selected through national procedures, ensuring both academic excellence and cultural understanding.

Overall, Greece's policy is guided by inclusion, equal opportunity, and educational excellence. By continuously strengthening the quality of education provided, the State seeks to equip young members of the Minority with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking necessary to thrive in modern society.

Greece remains steadfast in this commitment, recognizing that high-quality education is the most effective foundation for resilience and the full realization of individual rights.