

THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN SOCIETY
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Working session 5:
Tolerance and non-discrimination I – National Minorities
Warsaw, October 1, 2008

RECOMMENDATIONS

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- In its E.U. accession process, Turkey has a clear obligation to respect human and minority rights, as it is the case with the Greek Minority, in other words an obligation towards its own citizens. Turkey has also to abide by relevant International Treaties and especially the Lausanne Treaty. The following measures could make a significant contribution to allow Minority to continue its existence and expatriated people to return back home.
- Turkey should take immediate action so as to redress past injustices and to build, both politically and in every day life, a sense of tolerance and safety within the members of the Minority.
- Turkey should cease to interfere with the title of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, should officially recognize its legal entity and reopen the Theological School of Halki. The Ecumenical Patriarchate should have the right to call and employ priests from abroad without any residency constraints. The Ecumenical Patriarchate printing facility has to re-operate in order to perform its own spiritual mission by publishing religious journals, treatises and books.
- Turkey should relinquish its claim that the Spiritual Leader of 300 millions Orthodox Christians all over the world should possess the Turkish citizenship.
- The Churches and Community Foundations, along with their property, that have been seized ("mazbut") by the Turkish Directorate General of Foundations, through various arbitrary and unchecked practices, should be given back promptly to the Greek Minority. An end has to be put to the administrative interventions in the Minority Foundations regarding the confiscation, by the Turkish state, of their property. In a broader context, the 5737 Law on the *Vakif (charitable Institutions)* should be fully implemented, in its letter and spirit, so as to avert anything of the like to happen in the future, and Turkey should proceed to additional remedial actions to address those major problems which are not solved by the above – mentioned new Turkish Law.
- The Turkish Authorities should permit without any obstacles the appointment of teachers from the Greek Minority. Also, they should review the appointment of a Turkish deputy schoolmaster in Minority Schools, and put no limitations on the registration of students in the Minority Schools.
- The officially approved schoolbooks in the public educational system should have no references to the Ecumenical Patriarchate that might evoke any hostile impressions upon the Turkish public opinion or the Turkish students against the Patriarchate and the Greek Minority, so as the latter not to become a target of terror organizations, such as *Ergenekon* and others.
- Turkey should take a series of effective measures – we believe to the benefit of its society as whole – in order to ensure the facilitation of the coming home of the expatriated members of the Minority in Istanbul and in the Gokceada (Imvros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos) islands; in compliance with the 28/6/2008 Resolution of the Council of Europe regarding Imvros and Tenedos. There should also be no limitations as far as the acquisition of property is concerned on the part of foreign citizens and last, but certainly not least, Greek citizen's succession rights should be fully respected with the view of having them enjoyed the possession of the inherited property.