



**THE
CONSTANTINOPOLITAN
SOCIETY**

GREEKS EXPATRIATED FROM ISTANBUL
BY TURKISH COERCION

2015 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

Warsaw, 21 September - 2 October 2015

Wednesday, 30 September 2015

Working session 15: Fundamental freedoms II (continued), including:

– Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief

The Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey

RECOMMENDATIONS TO OSCE / ODIHR

Due to systematic and ongoing violations of religious freedom, OSCE / ODIHR is called upon to urge the Turkish government to bring its laws and practices into compliance with international standards on freedom of religion or belief.

Specifically:

OSCE / ODIHR are called upon to urge Turkey -as OSCE participating State- to:

- Grant full legal personality to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, so that the latter may enjoy, inter alia, ownership rights and exercise property ownership, administration and management.
- End Turkish citizenship requirements for the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church, and permit them to select and appoint their leadership and members in accordance with their internal guidelines and beliefs.
- Lift the prerequisite that the election of the Ecumenical Patriarch depends on the pre-approval of the Prefecture of Istanbul.

- Reopen without any delay and prerequisite the Theological School of Halki with exactly the same status it held before 1971 to offer religious education and permit students to enroll from both within and outside Turkey.
- Return immediately the three churches of Panayia Kafatiani, Aya Yani and Aya Nikola in the district of Karakoy - Galata in Istanbul, as well as their immovable properties, which have been illegally and forcibly occupied by the self - declared and nonexistent “Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate (TOP)” to their legal owner, which is the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and grant full legal status so as to be able to elect their governing bodies and freely administer and manage its own foundation.
- Comply with decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights by removing the space listing religious affiliation on official identification cards.
- Restore historical Byzantine churches of Haghia Sophia in Nicaea (Iznik) and Haghia Sophia in Trebizond, which were arbitrarily turned into mosques, to their previous function as museums.
- Fully implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by withdrawing reservations that negatively impact religious freedom, and interpret the 1923 Lausanne Treaty so as to provide equal rights to all religious minority communities._