

**Question for written answer E-003756/2012  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Protection of the rights of the Turkish minority in western Thrace (Greece))

The legal status and rights of the Turkish minority in western Thrace (Greece) are determined by the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, and Greece is obliged to act in accordance with the provisions of Section III of that treaty dealing with the protection of minorities (Articles 37 to 45).

The obligations assumed by Greece under Section III of this treaty dealing with the protection of minorities include upholding the minorities' equal right to establish, manage and control, at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions and any schools or other establishments for instruction and education, together with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.

In the period following the Colonels' coup of 1967, the Turkish minority in western Thrace suffered systematic repression and discrimination. During that period, the rights of the members of that minority were systematically violated by the junta, and the autonomous structures guaranteed by the Treaty of Lausanne were destroyed with persistent and massive violations of human rights, in clear breach of that treaty and of other international treaties to which Greece is a party, as well as of the principles and values inspiring the European Union.

While there have been some improvements in terms of the individual rights of members of the Turkish minority in western Thrace, many of the major problems regarding the collective exercise of minority rights remain. The autonomous structures in the fields of religion and education have not fully been restored by the Greek government.

In the light of the above, can the Greek government be urged to respect, protect and promote the rights enshrined in the Treaty of Lausanne and allow the restoration of the autonomous structures of this minority, thus acting in full compliance with the provisions of that treaty and the core international human rights treaties to which Greece is a party?

What does the Commission intend to do to protect the rights of members of traditional minorities and national and language communities in the Member States, given that the latter are, under the Treaty of Lisbon and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, obliged to respect the rights of members of minorities?