

PRESS RELEASE

ECUMENICAL FEDERATION OF CONSTANTINOPOLITANS

IMVRIAN ASSOCIATION (Athens)

Athens, 5 December 2014

The delegations of Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (consisting of President Nikolaos Ouzounoglou and Secretary General Nikolaos Anagnostopoulos) and Imvrian Association, Athens, Greece (consisting of President Paris Asanakis and former President Konstantinos Christoforidis) met today at Athens Hilton Hotel with Turkish Prime Minister Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu who was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. M. Cavusoglu, the Minister of European Affairs and Chief Negotiator Mr. V. Bozkir, the Minister of Interior Mr. E. Ala, the Minister of Health Mr. M. Muezinoglu, the Minister of Transports Mr. L. Elvan, the Minister of Finance Mr. M. Simsek, the Minister of Customs and Commerce Mr. N. Canikli, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Mr. T. Yildiz and the Minister of Culture Mr. O. Celik, the Turkish Ambassador of Athens Mr. Kerim Uras, the Consul General Mr. Ismail Sefa Yuceer and other high-ranking officials.

The meeting was conducted in a constructive dialogue atmosphere giving the opportunity to the two delegations to give a brief account of the problems encountered by the Greek Orthodox minority of Constantinople (Istanbul), Imvros (Gökçeada) and Tenedos (Bozcaada) with particular emphasis on:

(a) the need for the Turkish State to actively support the repatriation of ethnic Greeks of Turkey to their ancestral homes and especially those of the younger generation by ensuring all necessary conditions required including the adoption of measures of positive discrimination;

(b) the need of establishing a special agency for the provision of legal advice and support relating to the restitution of property, full recognition of the right to inherit, rehabilitation and employment and business opportunities;

(c) the lifting of the prohibition of elections that has been imposed over the last two years in the non-Muslim communities' pious foundations –a major issue of respect of the rule of law;

(d) the return of the historic archives and library of the Hellenic Literature Association of Constantinople (Istanbul).

The Greek Orthodox delegation further stressed the importance of the re-opening of an intermediary school and a high school on the island of Imvros accompanied by the adoption of all special measures required for facilitating re-establishment of ethnic Greeks of Imvros and Tenedos in view of the particular prevailing circumstances.

In the course of the presentation the Turkish Premier was giving orders to the Ministers to address each of the issues falling within their jurisdiction. Mr. Davutoğlu committed himself to lift the prohibition of elections in the non-Muslim pious foundations and reassured the delegation that full secondary school classes shall commence on Imvros in the forthcoming year.

The delegates handed to the Premier and the Ministers two updated memorandums setting out the details of all issues concerning the Greek Orthodox Community of Constantinople, Imvros and Tenedos.

Today's meeting and the unprecedented commitment shown by the Government of Turkey can only be seen as the culmination of the long-lasting common efforts of all Greek Orthodox representative bodies and a further encouragement of escalating the struggle for the practical recognition of the injustices of the past through the adoption of measures ensuring safety, the rule of law and respect of fundamental human rights for the Greek Orthodox populations in Turkey.

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF
ECUMENICAL FEDERATION
OF CONSTANTINOPOLITANS

NIKOLAOS OUZOUNOGLOU
President

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF
IMVRIAN ASSOCIATION

PARIS ASANAKIS
President