**Press Release June 23, 2025**

**Summary**

**The Rhodes and Kos Turks should also be granted the right to get organize with their Turkish cultural identity.**

In the latest decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, taken on June 16, 2025, it was emphasized that the Greek government should grant the Turks in Western Thrace the right to form associations with their Turkish cultural identity.

Reminding that 17 years have already passed since the decision of the European Court of Human Rights, the Committee states that the closure of associations that use the word “Turkish” in their official titles is against the law.

As the sole representative of the Turks of the Dodecanese organized in Turkey,the Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association demandsimmediate implementation of this decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe by Greece.

We would like to express that it is necessary to grant the same right to the Rhodes and Kos Turks in compliance with the agreements to which Greece is a party.

Prof.Dr.Mustafa Kaymakçı

President of The Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association

The term “Greek Turks” is thought to be associated with Western Thrace Turks in gereal. Western Thrace Turks have had to deal with many problems ranging from education to construction, from cultural rights to identity issues, and from economy to political rights. Nevertheless, the assimilation policy that has been implemented for years remains the most important problem. In this regard, the Greek authorities has banned the use of the word “Turk”. According to official Greek policy, the "Turkish" minority is referred to as "Muslim".

On the other hand, there is a Turkish population of over 9,000 living in the Dodecanese, mainly in the islands of Rhodes and Kos. After taking over the islands in 1947, the Greecehas declined to implement the cultural rights of our compatriots on the pretext that the Dodecanese were under Italian administration when the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1923.

This asssumptionbrought forth by Greece is in violation of the provisions of treaties such as the Protocol No. 3 annexed to the 1913 Treaty of Athens, the Greek Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920, the Exchange Agreement of 30 January 1923, Article 45 of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923: the 1926 Athens and 1930 and 1933 Ankara Treaties as well as the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty. Since the above-cited treaties were made valid for “all the territories of Greece”, they should still be in force today and are legally binding for the Dodecanese. The decision taken by the International Court of Justice regarding Article 15 of the 1978 Vienna Convention on the Succession of States in respect of treaties is also along these lines. The decision once again stipulated that the concept of “status of the country’s territory” should be interpreted in a manner that includes not only the territory at the time of the agreement but also the territory acquired by the country later on.

Ultimately, as the Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association, which is the sole representative of the Dodecanese Turks organized in Turkey, we demand immediate implementation of this decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe by Greece.

We would like to declare that the same right should also be granted to the Rhodes and Kos Turks in compliance with the agreements to which Greece is a party.