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Press Release

The host of the 9th Annual Meeting of FUEN TAG were the Western Thrace Turks**Turkic minorities and communities from the Balkans to the Caucasus came together at the meetings in Western Thrace and demonstrated cooperation and solidarity**

The 9th Annual Meeting of the Working Group of Turkic Minorities/Communities within the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) (TAG) was held in Western Thrace, Greece, hosted by the Turkish community in Western Thrace on 1-4 November 2023.

Representatives from ten Turkic organisations from eight different European countries, bringing together Turkic minorities and communities from the Balkans to the Caucasus attended the meetings which were organised jointly by the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF), Friendship Equality and Peace (FEP) Party and the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA), which together represent the Turkish community in Western Thrace within the framework of FUEN.

ABTTF, FEP Party and WTMUGA, representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace; the Public Organisation of Meskhetian Turks “VATAN” representing the Meskhetian Turks; the Kosovo Youth Union Association representing the Turks in Kosovo; the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People representing the Crimean Tatars (QTMM); the Tatar Democratic Union representing the Romanian Tatars; Kırcaali Turkish Culture and Art Association (TÜRKSAD) representing the Turks in Bulgaria; the Ukrainian Gagauz Union representing the Ukrainian Gagauz people and “Meras” Association, which protects and develops the Gagauz Language and Culture, representing the Gagauz people in Moldova all attended the meetings.

Participants had the opportunity to get to know the Turkish community in Western Thrace and the Western Thrace region closely

Within the framework of the cultural and visit programme hosted by ABTTF, FEP Party and WTMUGA, the participants were received by Aykut Ünal, Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye in Komotini, in the garden of the Consulate General on Thursday, 2 November. Following the meeting with Consul General Ünal, the participants visited the Office of the Elected Mufti of Komotini, FEP Party Headquarters, WTMUGA Headquarters, Western Thrace Minority Culture and Education Company (PEKEM), Komotini Turkish Youth Union (GTGB) and the Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union (BTTÖB). The participants, who were informed about the activities and works of the institutions and organisations in question during the visits, thus gathered the chance to examine the issues of the Turkish community in Western Thrace on site.

Following the visits, the participants visited Komotini city centre accompanied by a guide and attended a cultural night event hosted by GTGB in the evening. At the night, BTTÖB Turkish Classical Music Choir delivered a special concert to the participants.

The participants, who travelled Komotini to Xanthi on Friday, 3 November, first met with the Elected Mufti of Xanthi Mustafa Trampa, and later visited the Xanthi Turkish Union (ITB). During the meetings, the issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace in the field of freedom of

religion and freedom of association were discussed, and participants were informed about ITB's 40-year long struggle for their rights and justice.

A common road map for 2024 was constituted with the opinions and suggestions of the participants

The 9th Annual Meeting of FUEN TAG was held at WIMUGA Xanthi Cultural Centre on Friday afternoon, 3 November. FUEN TAG Spokesman Halit Habip Ođlu indicated that they organised this meeting physically, hosted by the Turkish community in Western Thrace, to which they belong after 2018, due to the pandemic and the subsequent Ukraine-Russia war, and noted that they want to continue all the activities that were previously suspended as of 2024 and visit the FUEN TAG member organisations on site.

FUEN Vice President Nabi Ibrahimcik also revealed information with respect to the latest developments within FUEN in the last year and FUEN's activities.

In the continuation of the meeting, representatives of the host Western Thrace Turks, Meskhetian Turks, Kosovo Turks, Bulgarian Turks, Crimean Tatars, Romanian Tatars, Ukrainian Gagauz, and Moldavian Gagauz conveyed the issues of the Turkic minorities and communities they belong to and the activities of the organisations they represent.

The meeting, where FUEN TAG's 2024 activities were discussed, ended with the constitution of the 2024 activity programme and common road map with the contributions of the participating organisations.

After the meeting, the participants came together at the cultural night hosted by ITB, and the ITB Turkish Classical Music Choir delivered a concert in the evening.