

# GREECE: Five more schools of ethnic Turks closed (Video)

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2416799751975582>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctoES\\_GDLXQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctoES_GDLXQ)

***Halit Habip Oğlu: “The number of primary schools belonging to Western Thrace Turks is rapidly diminishing with decision on closure of schools with no consideration of the autonomous status of Western Thrace Turkish community in education and their granted rights. In violation of the relevant legislation, closing schools on the grounds of low number of students is violation of our children’s right to education”***

European ABTTF (28.08.2019) – <http://www.abttf.org/>  
– According to the decision of the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs published in the Official Gazette on July 31, 2019, five primary schools belonging to the Western Thrace Turkish community will be closed. According to the newspaper Sabah, minority primary schools in Büyük Doğanca (Megalo Dukato), Bulduklu (Thiro), Melikli (Meleti) and Dünderlı (Drosia) in Rhodopi and Zeyneli (Ziloti) in Xanthi would be closed on the grounds of the decreasing number of students in the 2019-2020 school year. With this decision, the number of closed primary schools belonging to the Western Thrace Turkish community has reached to 65 since 2011. Due to the economic crises in 2011, Greece launched a decision to cut costs and started merging schools with low numbers of students. This “unification of schools” was to ensure a better education through reduction of expenses in the education field. Consequently, the number of schools across the country was reduced from 1933 to 877. On the grounds of a decreasing number of students, 14 minority schools belonging to the Western Thrace Turkish community were closed in the first year

of this decision.

Halit Habip Oğlu, President of Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF), made the following statement regarding the issue:

“The number of primary schools belonging to Western Thrace Turks is rapidly diminishing with decision on closure of schools with no consideration of the autonomous status of Western Thrace Turkish community in education and their granted rights. With this final decision the number of Turkish primary schools closed has reached to 65. Closing schools on the grounds that the number of students is low is contrary to the legislation and it is a violation of our children’s right to education. The primary objective of these decisions, where it is clear that the primary goal is not quality education for all, is to dissolve presence of our schools which are vital for maintenance of Western Thrace Turkish identity, language and culture. I regret to say that the main goal here is to transform Western Thrace into Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese. There, too, the right to education in the mother tongue of our fellow citizens was taken away and their schools were closed down in the 1970s without these rights given back once again and a rapid assimilation policy was implemented. We shall never allow Western Thrace to be transformed into Rhodes and Kos!!”

See also HRWF reports: **Ethnic Turks in Greece, a Muslim minority** and **Greece: Ethnic Turks in Rhodes and Kos** at <https://hrwf.eu/human-rights/our-reports/>.