

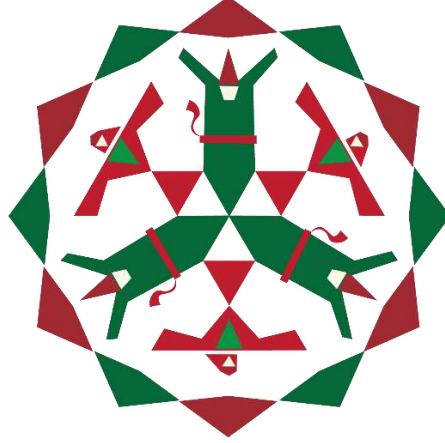
ADO

Alevi Philosophy Center

**IMPLEMENTATION OF ECtHR JUDGEMENTS  
MONITORING REPORT – VII  
JULY 2024**



**TURKEY**  
**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM – ALEVI ISSUES**



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Alevi Philosophy Center

**IMPLEMENTATION OF ECtHR JUDGEMENTS**  
**MONITORING REPORT – VII**  
**JULY 2024**

**Prepared by:**

**ADO -Alevi Philosophy Center Associations**

[www.aleviocagi.org](http://www.aleviocagi.org)

İstiklal Cad. No: 76. Fl: 4-13  
Ph: +90 212 293 2230-31



Beyoğlu – İstanbul / TÜRKİYE  
mail@aleviocagi.org



## **ABOUT THE "MONITORING REPORT VII" ON THE JUDGEMENTS OF THE ECtHR**

The Alevi community's search for equal rights and common life within the law, which started in the 1960s, turned into a civil society resistance, especially after the MADIMAK massacre of 1993, and this large and gigantic civil society disobedience continued with the establishment of numerous associations and foundations in order to seek and provide legal guarantees for Alevi masses who migrated to the cities mostly during second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century.. The process in question, perhaps the most peaceful and massive civil society resistance or disobedience of the 20th century, has not yet been sufficiently researched from a historical and sociological perspective, and there is still a need for many studies to be performed by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, theologians and other social science researchers. Various studies are being carried out in Turkey and abroad, and we expect the number and quality of these studies to increase in coming periods.

The need to find its place in the law, which emerged immediately after the Alevi institutionalization, has been a playground for politicians for a very long time between 1993-2005.

There has been another important stage in the process of ALEVI LAWSUITS, which started with the submission of the applications prepared by a CEM FOUNDATION committee of lawyers between 1996-2002 to the relevant ministries in 2005 by the representatives of the founders of AVF Federation of Alevi Foundations. Those applications were carried to ECtHR by 2009 and a series of judgments were finalized between 2014-16 by ECtHR in favor of Alevi community and other belief groups of the country. However, due to STATE of EMERGENCY in Turkey between 2015-18 no steps were taken by Council of Europe to follow up the implementations of the judgments. Only in 2019 Committee of Ministers started taking the ALEVI case judgments to their follow up agendas. Cases were focused on benefiting from the support and services provided by the state to worship places<sup>1</sup>, obtaining equal legal rights for all belief groups<sup>2</sup> and achieving exemption of "Compulsory Religious Lessons"<sup>3</sup> for the children of non – Sunni communities.

Türkiye finally established a department within Ministry of Culture on 2022 and while still ignoring the worship place statute of Cem houses (CEMEVI) provided some support partially parallel to benefits provided to worship places. Based on this development Council of Europe Committee of Ministers decided to close follow up procedures of case 32093/10.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which met for its 1501th meeting on 11-13 June 2024, considered the explanations and defensive approach presented in Turkey's road map of 26 March 2024 regarding the "Alevi Bektashi Culture and Cemevleri Presidency", which Turkey is in process of establishing under the Ministry of Culture, as sufficient and decided to close the "İzzettin Doğan and others" case file no. 62649/10 of the ECHR, despite the fact that the Committee of Ministers had been repeatedly informed by the reports of ADO Alevi Philosophy Centre, İÖG Faith Freedoms Initiative and the status report co-signed by ABF Alevi Bektashi Federation, ADO Alevi Thought Centre, AVF Alevi Foundations Federation, ESİT Association for Monitoring Equal Rights, İHGD Human Rights Agenda Association and Norwegian Helsinki Committee Freedom of Belief Initiative that the judgements in the case had not yet been implemented.

Currently the last file left in implementation follow-up agenda of Committee of Ministers is Compulsory Religious Lessons. CM has asked Turkey to present explanations by the end of 2024 about this case.

<sup>1</sup> Cumhuriyetçi Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı v. Turkey Application no. 32093/10

<sup>2</sup> Case of İzzettin Doğan and others v. Turkey Application no 62649/10

<sup>3</sup> Case of Hasan Eylem Zengin App. No 1448/04 and Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey App.no 21163/11



In the annexes you will find the decision of the 3rd Chamber of the Court of Cassation in 2015 judges that "CEM houses are worship places". The fact that Alevi organizations should follow national and international law more closely and take the necessary steps in a timely manner is a fact that has come to the fore again with this decision.

With the decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers at this meeting, the Committee requested from the Republic of Turkey to submit explanations regarding the "Mansur Yalçın and Others" file numbered 21163/11, known in our public opinion as the COMPULSORY RELIGIOUS TEACHING CASE until the end of December 2024.

Thus, from the group of Alevi Lawsuits that started in 2005 and continued until today, the only file that continues to be followed up is the case file of COMPULSORY RELIGIOUS COURSES.

In this document you will find the following information:

- Decision of the CoE Committee of Ministers (CM) 1498<sup>th</sup> meeting of 5-7 June 2023. Page 3
- Decisions of the CM of 1501<sup>st</sup> meeting of 11-13 June 2024 Page 5
- Interim Decision No. 62649/10 of the CM in the case of İzzettin Doğan and Others. Page 6
- INTERIM DECISION of the CM in the case of Mansur Yalçın and Others No.21163/11. Page 7
- ROADMAP dated 26 March 2024 submitted by the Republic of Turkey to the EC Decision Enforcement and Implementation Section Page 8
- ADO's STATUS REPORT dated 10 April 2024 and annexes (Turkish translations) Page 31
- EXPLANATION REPORT dated 22 April 2024 submitted by six organizations (ABF-ADO-AVF-ESIT-İHGD- NHK İÖG) to the CoE Decision Enforcement and Implementation Department. Page 44
- Report of the Republic of Turkey to the Execution Chamber of the ECHR in response to the various NGO reports dated 15 May. 2024. Page 61
- ADO's 2nd Status Report dated 13 May 2024 regarding the new curriculum announced by the Ministry of National Education at the end of APRIL 2024 and its annexes Page 64
- 3rd Status Report of ADO dated 27 May 2024 Page 97

In the long and exhausting process of the struggle for equal rights of the Alevi community, we have observed the need for more punctual, sensitive and responsible actions of Alevi organizations in the follow-up process, as well as the need to explain and share our problems with all layers of society.

With the hope of achieving more successful results in the future stages of our EQUAL RIGHTS and RELIGIOUS FREEDOM struggle.

Best regards. / 23 June 2024

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## 1468<sup>th</sup> meeting, 5-7 June 2023 (DH)

### H46-32 Cumhuriyetçi Eğitim Ve Kültür Merkezi Vakfı group (Application No. 32093/10), and Hasan and Eylem Zengin group (Application No. 1448/04) v. Turkey

Supervision of the execution of the European Court's judgments

Reference document

CM/Notes/1468/H46-32

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#### *Decisions*

##### The Deputies

1. recalling that the judgments in this group concern the authorities' unjustified refusal to recognise the religious nature of the Alevi faith, which resulted *inter alia* in the discriminatory treatment of their followers and places of worship compared to followers and worships of the majority understanding of Islam, who benefit from legal recognition and religious public services financed by the State; they relate also to the limited compulsory nature of the religious culture and ethics classes, with only limited possibilities of exemption offering no appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam;

##### *As regards individual measures*

2. recalling that the applicants' children are beyond the age of primary and secondary school education, decided to close the *Hasan and Eylem Zengin* case and continue supervision of the general measures concerning compulsory religious culture and ethics classes under the *Mansur Yalçın and Others* case and adopted Final Resolution CM/ResDH(2023)143;

3. noted that no further individual measures are required in the *Cumhuriyetçi Eğitim ve Kültür Merkezi Vakfı*;

##### *As regards general measures*

4. welcomed the recent developments capable of partially eliminating the imbalance in religious public services provided by the State and invited the authorities to provide information on the practical impact of these measures; called on the authorities to provide their assessment on whether and if so to what extent recent measures adopted have addressed the other legal, organisational or financial problems encountered by the Alevi community, such as lack of recognition of their religious leaders, impossibility to receive donations or state subsidies taking also into account the recommendations reached by consensus in 2010 in the Alevi initiative workshops' final report;

5. welcoming the legislative measures taken to ensure that lighting costs of the *cemevis* are reimbursed by the State, decided to close their examination of the *Cumhuriyetçi Eğitim ve Kültür Merkezi Vakfı* case dealing solely with this issue; and adopted Final Resolution CM/ResDH(2023)144;

6. noted with deep regret that the authorities failed to take any measure to address the shortcomings identified by the Court as regards the compulsory religious culture and ethics classes; therefore strongly urged the authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure that the Turkish education system fulfils the State's duty of neutrality and impartiality towards the various religions, denominations and beliefs, respecting the principles of pluralism and objectivity, and offers appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam to opt out of compulsory religious education, without pupils' parents being obliged to disclose their religious or philosophical convictions;

7. decided to resume consideration of these cases at their DH meeting in June 2024 at the latest and, in view of the absence of any progress on the issue of compulsory religious culture and ethics classes since the first judgment on this issue became final in 2008, instructed the Secretariat to prepare a draft interim resolution for consideration by the Committee at its next examination of this group, in the absence of signs of concrete progress as regards the general measures.

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## 1501<sup>st</sup> meeting, 11-13 June 2024 (DH)

### H46-33 İzzettin Doğan and Others (Application No. 62649/10), and Mansur Yalçın and Others (Application No. 21163/11) v. Turkey

Supervision of the execution of the European Court's judgments

Reference document

CM/Notes/1501/H46-33

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#### *Decisions*

The Deputies

1. recalling that the judgments in this group concern the authorities' unjustified refusal to recognise the religious nature of the Alevi faith, which resulted *inter alia* in the discriminatory treatment of their followers and places of worship compared to followers and worships of the majority understanding of Islam, who benefit from legal recognition and religious public services financed by the State; they relate also to the limited compulsory nature of the religious culture and ethics classes, with only limited possibilities of exemption offering no appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam;

*As regards individual measures*

recalled that the applicants' children are beyond the age of primary and secondary school in the *Mansur Yalçın and Others* case and that individual measures are linked with general measures in the *İzzettin Doğan and Others* case;

*As regards general measures*

3. welcomed the legislative measures taken by the authorities and their practical impact providing the Alevi community with public religious service financed by the State in the form of: 1) construction and maintenance of places of worship, 2) payment of their electricity, water and gas fees, 3) recognition and recruitment of religious leaders as civil servants and 4) organisation of activities paid by the State budget;

4. considering the margin of appreciation of States in the organisation of their cooperation with religious communities and that the adopted measures appear capable of eliminating the imbalance in the religious public services provided by the State, decided to close their supervision of the case of *İzzettin Doğan and Others* and adopted Final Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)124;

5. adopted Interim Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)125 concerning the issue of compulsory religious culture and ethics classes.

## Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)124

### Execution of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights

#### İzzettin Doğan and Others against Turkey

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 June 2024  
at the 1501<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

Application No.	Case	Judgment of	Final on
62649/10	İZZETTİN DOĞAN AND OTHERS	26/04/2016	Grand Chamber

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 46, paragraph 2, of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which provides that the Committee supervises the execution of final judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (hereinafter "the Convention" and "the Court");

Having regard to the final judgment transmitted by the Court to the Committee in this case and to the violations established;

Recalling the respondent State's obligation, under Article 46, paragraph 1, of the Convention, to abide by all final judgments in cases to which it has been a party and that this obligation entails, over and above the payment of any sums awarded by the Court, the adoption by the authorities of the respondent State, where required:

- of individual measures to put an end to violations established and erase their consequences so as to achieve as far as possible *restitutio in integrum*; and
- of general measures preventing similar violations;

Having invited the government of the respondent State to inform the Committee of the measures taken to comply with the above-mentioned obligation;

Having examined the action report provided by the government, indicating the measures adopted to give effect to the judgment including the information provided regarding the payment of the just satisfaction awarded by the Court (see document DH-DD(2024)344);

Having satisfied itself that all the measures required by Article 46, paragraph 1, have been adopted,

DECLARES that it has exercised its functions under Article 46, paragraph 2, of the Convention in this case and

DECIDES to close the examination thereof.



## Interim Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)125

### Execution of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights

#### Mansur Yalçın and Others against Turkey

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 June 2024  
at the 1501<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

Application	Case	Judgment of	Final on
21163/11	MANSUR YALÇIN AND OTHERS	16/09/2014	16/02/2015

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 46, paragraph 2, of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which provides that the Committee supervises the execution of final judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (hereinafter "the Convention" and "the Court");

Having regard to the final judgment transmitted by the Court concerning violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 of the Convention on account of the compulsory nature of the religious culture and ethics classes in primary and secondary schools, with only limited possibilities of exemption, that offer no appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam;

Recalling that this issue has been pending before the Committee since 2008;

Noting with deep regret that despite the Court's clear findings and the Committee's repeated calls, religious culture and ethics classes remain compulsory, with very limited exemption procedure which is likely to subject pupils' parents to a heavy burden and to the necessity of disclosing their religious or philosophical convictions in order to have their children exempted from the lessons in religion;

Recalling that revised curriculum of the compulsory religious culture and ethics classes cannot alleviate the need for appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam to opt out of compulsory religious education, without pupils' parents being obliged to disclose their religious or philosophical convictions;

Underlining the obligation of every State, under the terms of Article 46, paragraph 1, of the Convention to abide by the final judgments of the Court to which they are a party, fully, effectively and promptly;

**STRONGLY URGED** the authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure that the Turkish education system fulfils the State's duty of neutrality and impartiality towards the various religions, denominations and beliefs, respecting the principles of pluralism and objectivity, and offers appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam to opt out of compulsory religious education, without pupils' parents being obliged to disclose their religious philosophical convictions;

**INVITED** the authorities to provide information on the envisaged measures by the end of December 20

**SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT**

SECRETARIAT OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS  
SECRÉTARIAT DU COMITÉ DES MINISTRES

COMMITTEE  
OF MINISTERS  
COMITÉ  
DES MINISTRES



Contact: Zoe Bryanston-Cross  
Tel: 03.90.21.59.62

Date: 28/03/2024

**DH-DD(2024)344**

Documents distributed at the request of a Representative shall be under the sole responsibility of the said Representative, without prejudice to the legal or political position of the Committee of Ministers.

Meeting: 1501<sup>st</sup> meeting (June 2024) (DH)

Item reference: Action Plan (28/03/2024)

Communication from Türkiye concerning the cases of IZZETTIN DOGAN AND OTHERS v. Turkey and MANSUR YALCIN AND OTHERS v. Turkey (Application Nos 62649/10, 21163/11)

\* \* \* \* \*

Les documents distribués à la demande d'un/e Représentant/e le sont sous la seule responsabilité dudit/de ladite Représentant/e, sans préjuger de la position juridique ou politique du Comité des Ministres.

Réunion : 1501<sup>e</sup> réunion (juin 2024) (DH)

Référence du point : Plan d'action (28/03/2024)

Communication de la Türkiye concernant les affaires IZZETTIN DOGAN ET AUTRES c. Turquie et MANSUR YALCIN ET AUTRES c. Turquie (requêtes n° 62649/10, 21163/11) (**anglais uniquement**)

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*Permanent Representation  
of Türkiye  
to the Council of Europe*

DGI

28 MARS 2024

SERVICE DE L'EXECUTION  
DES ARRETS DE LA CEDH

Strasbourg, 26.03.2024

2024/33766324/37797046

İzzettin Doğan and Others (28749/18), Mansur Yalçın and Others (21163/11) v. Türkiye

Ms Ovey,

I enclose herewith the Action Plan concerning the execution of the above-mentioned judgment.

Please accept, Ms Ovey, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ferda YILDIRIM

Deputy to the Permanent Representative

Encl.: As stated

**Ms Clare OVEY**  
**Head of Department**  
**Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECHR**  
**Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law**  
**Council of Europe**

March, 2024

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## ACTION PLAN

*İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Türkiye (62649/10)*

definitive judgment of 26 April 2016

*Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Türkiye (21163/11)*

judgment of 16 September 2014, final on 16 February 2015

DGI

28 MARS 2024

SERVICE DE L'EXECUTION  
DES ARRETS DE LA CEDH

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### I. CASE DESCRIPTION

1. In the *İzzettin Doğan and Others* case, the European Court of Human Rights (“the Court”, “the ECtHR” or “the European Court”) found a violation of the right to freedom of religion in conjunction with Article 14 of the Convention, holding that the attitude of the State authorities towards the Alevi community, its religious practices and its places of worship are incompatible with the State’s duty of neutrality and impartiality and with the right of religious communities to an autonomous existence.

2. The *Mansur Yalçın and Others* case concerns a violation of Article 2 of the Protocol No.1 to the Convention on account of the compulsory nature of the religious culture and ethics knowledge (RCE) classes involving subjects that do not meet the criteria of objectivity and pluralism.

### II. INDIVIDUAL MEASURES

3. The authorities have taken measures to ensure that the violations at hand have been ceased and that the applicants have been redressed for the negative consequences.

#### A. JUST SATISFACTION

4. In *İzzettin Doğan and Others*, the Court did not make any award in respect of pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages. However, it awarded the applicants EUR 3,000 in respect of costs and expenses. The applicants did not submit their bank account information. Therefore, the amount awarded by the Court was deposited into an escrow account on 26 July 2016 and the applicants were notified of the placement. As of today, this amount is still pending in the escrow account as the applicants have failed to provide relevant documents for payment.

5. In *Mansur Yalçın and Others*, the applicants did not submit any claim for just satisfaction. Accordingly, the Court did not make any award to that end.

March, 2024

## **B. OTHER INDIVIDUAL MEASURES**

6. In *Mansur Yalçın and Others*, the applicants' children have passed the age of compulsory religious culture and ethics lessons. Therefore, no further individual measures are required as also acknowledged by the Committee of Ministers at their last examination of the case in June 2023 (see CM/Notes/1468/H46- 32, 7 June 2023).

7. In *İzzettin Doğan and Others*, the individual measures are linked with the general measures the details of which are explained below.

## **III. GENERAL MEASURES**

8. The authorities would first like to underline that the Republic of Türkiye is a democratic and secular State governed by the rule of law where everyone is equal regardless of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion or membership in any religious movement or any other grounds. The authorities state at the same time that Türkiye is also a State where everyone enjoys the freedom of conscience, religion, and thought, and where acts of worship, religious rites, and ceremonies can be freely performed as long as they are in line with the Article 14 of the Constitution.

9. Türkiye is always committed to the international human rights obligations as a party to the core universal and regional human rights treaties. In this context, it has taken necessary steps and measures in the course of time to protect these values. For the freedom of religion, Türkiye has abolished certain restrictive and outworn provisions on the basis of the freedom of religion, such as the headscarf ban in public spaces. Furthermore, the 2014 amendment to the Turkish Criminal Code led to the criminalisation of interferences with persons' lifestyles based on their beliefs, thoughts, and convictions. Moreover, a set of significant steps has been taken regarding the property rights of foundations of non-Muslim communities. In this framework, the property issues affecting such foundations have been mostly resolved thanks to the substantial legislative amendments.

10. In line with the principles enshrined in the Constitution and the international conventions to which Türkiye is a party, all institutions and organisations of the State perform their activities with the reference to the equality of everyone before the law without any discrimination based on political view, philosophical belief, religion, sect or other similar reasons. In this context, the State equally treats all faiths and religions, and it is impartial towards different faiths. Nevertheless, there appear social and economic issues in the society

March, 2024

from time to time, such as the current issue, that have a complex nature in essence and the deep-rooted issues arising from them might be a matter of debate.

11. In the light of the above-mentioned explanations, it must be noted that addressing the issues mentioned in the judgements of the ECtHR requires extremely meticulous attention which is the approach that the authorities take. In this connection, the general measures that have been taken so far may be explained as follows.

**A. VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 9 AND ARTICLE 14 IN CONJUNCTION WITH ARTICLE 9**

12. The Court's findings in the case of *İzzettin Doğan and Others* may be summarised as follows:

- The ability to build places of worship was uncertain and was subject to the goodwill of the central or local authorities,
- The Alevi-Bektashi community did not officially benefit from State subsidies,
- The religious services provided for the Alevi-Bektashi community were not regarded as a public service,
- Alevi-Bektashi community did not enjoy any of the benefits of religious public service such as being part of their education system,

13. The authorities note that they were aware of the issues even before the Court delivered its judgment. To this end, a series of workshops had been set up. Detailed information in this context had been provided in the action report submitted to the Committee's 1419<sup>th</sup> meeting. In order to avoid repetition, the authorities confine themselves to referring to the information provided therein.<sup>1</sup>

14. Thereafter, as explained in the latest action plan of 30 March 2023 (see DH-DD (2023)407) new developments have taken place in this field. The authorities consider that the current reform process is capable of remedying all the shortcomings identified by the Court. These new developments include series of reforms such as establishment of the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and other legislative amendments put in force. Detailed information regarding these new developments is provided below. Before describing these new developments, the authorities would like to explain the preparatory works for this reform process.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/eng?i=DH-DD\(2021\)1007E](https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/eng?i=DH-DD(2021)1007E)

March, 2024

## **1. Preparatory Works Prior to the Recent Reforms about the Alevi-Bektashi Community**

15. In 2018, a series of activities were held in order to respond to the requests of the Alevi-Bektashi communities. In this context, representatives from the Ministry of Interior together with civil society representatives and academics working on this field carried out provincial visits. In this scope, 1656 cemevis in 58 cities of the country were visited.

16. In this period, the Ministry of Interior collected demands from the Alevi communities to determine their needs. These requests mainly concerned the construction and maintenance works of cemevis; in particular, heating, electricity, water and staff requirements, furnishing and books for cemevis. Through these provincial visits, almost 70% of these demands were fulfilled by either the Governors' Offices or the District Governors' Offices.

17. Within this context in particular and in line with the Alevi-Bektashi citizens' demands, in October 2022, construction of seven new cemevis began and 4 new cemevis started to serve. These activities were declared to the public by the President on 7 October 2022.

18. Further, the Ministry of Interior coordinated a working group which included representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, academics working on Alevi-Bektashi matters as well as Alevi-Bektashi civil society organisations.

19. Having concluded these works, it was subsequently decided to establish an administrative department to make it easier for authorities to fulfil demands of the Alevi-Bektashi people and accordingly to provide an institutional addressee within the administrative structure.

## **2. Establishment of the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis**

20. In *İzzettin Doğan and Others*, the Court found that the denial of religious public services in respect of the Alevi-Bektashi community was discriminatory. In particular, the Court mentioned the absence of an administrative body in respect of the realisation of religious services as public service for Alevi-Bektashi community. This shortcoming has been remedied with the establishment of the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis.

21. Namely, on 9 November 2022 the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis ("the Presidency") was established under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism through the Presidential Decree no. 112 which amended Presidential Decree no. 1.

March, 2024

22. With this amendment, functions of the Presidency are regulated in Article 292/A of the Presidential Decree no. 1. According to the Presidential Decree, the Presidency will be responsible for carrying out the following tasks:

- To carry out works for determining the needs of cemevis and to coordinate the cemevi services to ensure that they are effective and efficient,
- To carry out works and procedures related to the transfer of funds to local administrations and investment monitoring and coordination directorates to ensure provision of the cemevi services determined by the Presidency,
- To conduct social and human sciences researches regarding all the aspects of Alevism-Bektashism and to organise seminars, symposiums, conferences and similar national and international events on these subjects; to prepare a suitable environment for the production of original studies, to publish and support studies conducted in this field,
- To co-operate with universities and other relevant institutions and organisations to support academic studies on Alevism-Bektashism,
- To conduct scientific researches on Alevism-Bektashism both domestically and abroad, and to compile and support such researches,
- To follow up both national and international institutes' and organisations' scientific studies and publications within the scope of their field of duty, and to ensure that the necessary ones are translated, printed and published,
- To conduct and support educational and cultural activities about Alevism-Bektashism,
- To perform other duties assigned by the Minister.

23. On 3 February 2023 the head of the Presidency was appointed. Afterwards, two deputy heads of the Presidency were appointed. Additionally, the Department of Cemevi Services, the Department of Strategy and Legislation, the Department of Administrative Services, the Department of Training and Publication and the Department of Cultural, Social and Foreign Affairs were established within the Presidency, and a head of department was appointed to each of them. Furthermore, under the Decree, it is envisaged to establish an advisory board consisting of the chairperson and 11 members.

24. In this scope, on 19 January 2024 “the Regulation on the Working Procedures and Principles of the Advisory Board of the Presidency of the Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis”



March, 2024

entered into force upon its promulgation in the Official Gazette. It is envisaged that the Advisory Board, established for the purpose of providing opinions and recommendations to the Presidency of the Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis in the processes relating to the planning and development of works in the field of Alevism-Bektashism, will render the Alevi-Bektashi faith and culture more efficient and effective by the Regulation in question.

### 3. Other Legislative Amendments

25. In *İzzettin Doğan and Others* -as well as in the closed case of *Cumhuriyetçi Eğitim ve Kültür Merkezi*- the Court found that the absence of a mechanism allowing cemevis to be exempted from lighting costs and to enjoy other state benefits was discriminatory towards the Alevi-Bektashi community. Within the scope of the recent reform process, by virtue of the legislative amendments of 16 November 2022 introduced with the Law no. 7421 (entered into force on 26 November 2022), the shortcomings indicated in the Court's judgments in this respect have been remedied. These amendments can be presented in detail as follows.

26. With Law no. 7421, a new Article was added to the Electricity Market Law (Law no. 6446). Additional Article 6 of Law no. 6446 regarding the lighting costs of cemevis now reads as follows;

*“The lighting expenses of cemevis shall be covered by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.”*

27. In the same reform process, series of legislative amendments were also introduced in order to ensure that the Alevi-Bektashi people enjoy State subsidies and other benefits. The authorities would like to emphasise that the below explained comprehensive measures ensure equal treatment of the Alevi-Bektashi community. These may be explained as follows.

28. Law no. 7421 introduced a new sub-paragraph to Article 7 of the Metropolitan Municipality Law (Law no. 5216) regarding the construction and maintenance of cemevis. It sets out the duties of the Metropolitan Municipalities. The following was included among their duties:

*“bb) (Added on 16 November 2022 by Article 14 of the Law no. 7421) To construct buildings and facilities for cemevis when necessary, to carry out all kinds of maintenance and repair of these buildings and facilities and to provide the necessary material support.  
g) (Added on 16 November 2022 by Article 14 of the Law no. 7421) Construction, maintenance and repair of cemevis”*

March, 2024

29. Law no. 7421 introduced Additional Article 10 to the Urban Planning Law (Law no. 3194) regarding the allocation of space for cemevis in the preparation of zoning plans. It reads as follows:

*“ADDITIONAL ARTICLE 10- (Added on 16 November 2022 by Article 8 of the Law no. 7421)*

*In the preparation of zoning plans, the necessary cemevi places shall be allocated by taking into account the conditions and future needs of the planned town and region.*

*In provinces and districts, cemevis may be built provided that the permission of the local administrative authority is obtained and that they comply with the zoning legislation.*

*Cemevi places may not be allocated for other purposes in violation of the zoning legislation.”*

30. Law no. 7421 also introduced a new sub-paragraph to Article 6 of the Special Provincial Administration Law (Law no. 5302) regarding the construction, maintenance and repair of cemevis.

*“(Additional paragraph: Added on 16 November 2022 by Article 15 of the Law no. 7421) Special provincial administration may construct, maintain and repair temples, cultural and natural heritage, historical texture and places of importance in terms of urban history and cemevis within the provincial borders.”*

31. Law no. 7421 further amended Article 14 of the Law on Municipalities (Law no. 5393) to ensure that the construction, maintenance and repair works of cemevis are carried out by the Municipalities. Article 15 of Law no. 5393 was also amended to ensure that water costs are either paid in full or discounted by the Municipalities or organisations affiliated to the Municipalities.

32. In addition to these, “employment of contracted personnel at the posts of the Alevi-Bektashi Cemevi Leader and the Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevi Expert” was added to “Procedures Related to Employment of Contracted Personnel” by the Presidential Decree no. 6364 on the “Procedures for Amendment of the Procedures Related to the Employment of Contracted Personnel” which was promulgated in the Official Gazette no. 32008 dated 9 November 2022.

33. Furthermore, most recently, Article 1 of the Presidential Decree no. 144 on the System Usage Costs Associated with Natural Gas Consumption promulgated on 1 May 2023 introduced the following provision which allows for the Cemevis to consume natural gas free of charge to

March, 2024

a certain amount: *“The objective of this Presidential Decree is to set out the rules and procedures regarding the coverage of the system usage costs and other sums associated with the natural gas consumption of domicile, place of worship and cemevi subscribers by the budget of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources”.*

34. The authorities highlight that all these reforms about cemevis ensure that the Alevi-Bektashi community enjoy State subsidies. Especially the introduction of a new mechanism regarding coverage of lighting costs and water costs of cemevis, state-funded construction and maintenance of cemevis resolve the main areas that the Court had found to be discriminatory against the Alevi-Bektashi community.

35. In the light of these explanations, the authorities consider that all necessary general measures have been taken in response to the violations of Articles 9 and 14 established by the Court.

#### **4. Practical Impacts of the Legislative Amendments and the Other Activities Carried out by the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis in the Reform Process**

36. In their last examination of the group, the Committee of Ministers invited the authorities to provide information on the practical impact of the measures explained above. In response to this, the authorities would like to provide the following information.

➤ Works regarding the Alevi-Bektashi Cemevi Leader Post

37. As mentioned above, “employment of contracted personnel at the posts of the Alevi-Bektashi Cemevi Leader and the Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevi Expert” was added to “Procedures Related to Employment of Contracted Personnel” by the Presidential Decree no. 6364 of 2022. On the basis of this Decree, the rules and procedures regarding the employment of persons to be appointed to the Alevi-Bektashi Leader post were laid down by the Ministerial Approval no. 3602996 dated 27 March 2023 regarding “Rules and Procedures for Recruitment to the Alevi-Bektashi Cemevi Leader post at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism”. This regulation is a step towards recognition of the Alevi-Bektashi citizens’ religious leaders; in the course of this process, 756 requests were received in total for the Alevi-Bektashi Cemevi Leader post and the assessment process is currently ongoing.

➤ Works regarding the Construction, Assistance, Maintenance, Repair and Furnishing Services for Cemevis

March, 2024

38. In accordance with the amendments made to Articles 14 and 15 of the Law no. 5393, municipalities may construct cemevis and undertake the maintenance-repair works of cemevis. In this scope, municipalities do construct cemevis and carry out their maintenance-repair works. Municipalities allow cemevis to use potable water either free of charge or with a discount. In conducting the acts regarding cemevis which fall within the scope of their duties and responsibilities, municipalities work in consultation with the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis.

39. In accordance with the amendments made to Article 6 of the Law no. 5302, provincial special administrations may construct cemevis and undertake the maintenance-repair works of cemevis. In this scope, provincial special administrations do construct cemevis and carry out their maintenance-repair works. Provincial special administrations allow cemevis to use potable water either free of charge or with a discount. In conducting the acts regarding cemevis which fall within the scope of their duties and responsibilities, provincial special administrations work in consultation with the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis.

40. In accordance with the amendments made to Article 7 of the Law no. 5216, metropolitan municipalities may construct cemevis and undertake the maintenance-repair works of cemevis. In this scope, metropolitan municipalities do construct cemevis and carry out their maintenance-repair works. Metropolitan municipalities allow cemevis to use potable water either free of charge or with a discount. In conducting the acts regarding cemevis which fall within the scope of their duties and responsibilities, metropolitan municipalities work in consultation with the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis.

41. Relevant institutions take Additional Article 10 of the Law no. 3194 into account in their zoning plan works in order to designate areas in the zoning plan for the new cemevis to be constructed in accordance with the provision in question.

42. In the scope of the regulation under Additional Article 6 of the Electricity Market Law no. 6446, 703 cemevis have made a request for payment of their lightning costs and accordingly their lightning costs are currently being covered by the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis in full and support is provided to enable the Alevi-Bektashi community to live its faith in a more efficient and effective manner.

43. As from its establishment, the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis paid 2012 visits to cemevis and received requests for coverage of maintenance, repair, furnishing and land allocation costs in 1245 cemevis.

March, 2024

44. The Presidency fulfilled the requests for purchase of furnishings made by 55 cemevis which were damaged in the earthquake of 6 February 2023 and by 24 cemevis which are not in the area affected by the earthquake; and the related maintenance and repair works are currently ongoing.

45. Moreover, in connection with the Maintenance, Repair and Furnishing Services for Cemevis, the Presidency plans to conduct works and acts concerning the maintenance, repair and furnishing purchases of 475 cemevis in 2024.

➤ Socio-cultural Activities

46. Within the scope of the Month of Muharram Karbala Programs conducted in cooperation with the Turkish Radio and Television Cooperation (“TRT”) between 19-28 July 2023, thirty-minute ‘Hadikatüs Süeda’ readings in the TRT Radio for 10 days; one-hour ‘Garden of the Blissful’ (*Saadete Ermişlerin Bahçesi*) program in the TRT 2 channel for 10 days; two-minute ‘Month of Muharram’ (*Mah-ı Muharrem*) elegies in the TRT Music channel for 10 days; and two-hour Karbala Special program in the TRT 1 channel on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram (28 July 2023) were broadcast.

47. On 28 July 2023 “the Mourning of Muharram Fast-Breaking Program” (*Yas-ı Muharrem Oruç Açma Programı*) was held with the participation of (150 persons including) President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN in the Ali Baba Sultan Ocağı Cemevi.

48. On 12 August 2023 “the Commemoration of the 752<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Death of Haji Bektash Veli” (*Hacı Bektaş Veli'nin Hakka Yürüyüşünün 752. Yıl Dönümü Anma Etkinliği*) was held with the participation of Deputy President (and 1,780 domestic guests from 53 provinces and 14 guests from 3 countries) in the Hacı Bektaş Veli Dervish Convent situated in the Hacı Bektaş District of the Nevşehir Province.

49. On 22-26 August 2023 “the ‘Let Us Be One, Great and Alive’ Hacı Bektaş Youth Camp” (*Bir Olalım, İri Olalım, Diri Olalım' Hacı Bektaş Gençlik Kampı*) was held in the Dedebağı premises situated in the Hacı Bektaş District of the Nevşehir Province under the cooperation between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Interior.

50. On 30 August-4 September 2023 “the Visit to the Balkans Following the Footsteps of Otman Baba Program” (*Otman Baba'nın İzinden Balkanlar Ziyaret Programı*) was held with the participation of 50 young persons within the scope of the Alevi-Bektashi Dervish Lodges and Convents Visitation Programs in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

March, 2024

51. On 23 November 2023 “the Alevism-Bektashism Workshop” was held with the participation of the officials from the research centres and institutes of universities in Türkiye engaging in activities in the field of Alevism-Bektashism.

52. On 24 November 2023 the conference titled “Alevism: From Satuk Buğra Han to the Path of Haqq-Muhammad-Ali” (*Satuk Buğra Han'dan Hakk Muhammed Ali Yoluna Alevilik*) was held in cooperation with the Federation of Alevi Groups (*Alevi Ocakları Federasyonu*).

53. On 7 December 2023 the panel titled “Alevi-Bektashis in the 100<sup>th</sup> Year of the Establishment of our Republic” was held. On 14 December 2023 the music concert and panel titled “From Aşık Veysel's Heart's Eye” (*Aşık Veysel'in Gönül Gözünden*) took place and on 14-21 December 2023 an art exhibition showcasing the paintings of students from the Istanbul Aşık Veysel Fine Arts High-School was displayed in the foyer area.

54. On 31 January 2024 the panel titled “Hunqar Haji Bektash Veli is Commemorated by His Children” (*Evlatları Hüinkar Hacı Baktaş Veli 'yi Anıyor*) was held.

55. On 5 February 2024 “the Workshop on Alevism-Bektashism Encyclopaedia” was held.

56. On 6 February 2024 “the Workshop on Written Sources of Alevism” was held.

57. On 12 February “the Workshop on Alevi Tribes and Clans” (*Alevi Boy ve Aşiretleri Çalıştayı*) and on 19 February 2024 “the Workshop on Alevi Groups” (*Alevi Ocakları Çalıştayı*) were held and it is planned to publish in printed and digital format various works regarding Alevism-Bektashism in line with the assessments resulting from the Workshops in question.

58. In addition to the above-mentioned activities, it is planned that the Presidency will carry out the following socio-cultural activities in the remainder of 2024:

59. It is planned that in April 2024 “the Little Woman-Mother Panel” (*Kadıncık Ana Paneli*), in May 2024 “the Symposium on Balkans”, in June 2024 “the Symposium on Şah Hatayi in the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Death”, in September 2024 “the Symposium on Tunceli, the Khorasan of Anatolia” (*Anadolu'nun Horasanı Tunceli Sempozyumu*) and in October 2024 “the Symposium on Alevi Groups” (*Alevi Ocakları Sempozyumu*) will be held.

60. It has been deemed appropriate to establish “the Kaygusuz Abdal Alevism-Bektashism Specialisation Library” within the Presidency, and the protocol regarding the matter is at the signing stage.

61. It is planned that a peer-reviewed journal will be published biannually.

March, 2024

## **B. VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 2 OF PROTOCOL NO. 1**

62. The authorities would like to make the following statements concerning the violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention.

63. First of all, it should be underlined that in its judgment of *Hasan and Eylem Zengin* (no. 1448/04, § 75, 9 October 2007), the Court considered that the exemption procedure was not an appropriate method and did not provide sufficient protection to parents. According to the Court, this kind of exemption may compel parents to inform the school authorities of their religious or philosophical convictions and this situation makes it an inappropriate means of ensuring respect for their freedom of conviction.

64. The Court maintained its stance in *Mansur Yalçın and others* as well. The European Court found that the procedure for exemption was likely to subject pupils' parents to a heavy burden and to the necessity of disclosing their religious or philosophical convictions in order to have their children exempted from the lessons in religion (§ 76 of the judgment).

65. On this basis, the Turkish authorities are of the opinion that the most appropriate measure would be overhauling of the content of the RCE lessons rather than broadening the extent of exemption from these lessons. In this respect, the authorities would further like to note that in *Hasan and Eylem Zengin*, the Court clearly emphasised that the setting and planning of the curriculum fell in principle within the competence of the Contracting States (§ 51). The Court stated that the second sentence of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 does not prevent the States from disseminating in State schools, by means of the teaching given, objective information or knowledge of a directly or indirectly religious or philosophical kind. Moreover, according to the Court, it did not even permit parents to object to the integration of such teaching or education in the school curriculum, for otherwise all institutionalised teaching would run the risk of proving impracticable.

66. As can be seen, the Court did not point out a concrete practice to eliminate the violation caused by the situation at that time. On the contrary, it left the issue to the State's margin of appreciation.

67. Taking into account the views of the Court on the "exemption procedure", the authorities have taken various steps in the field of redressing the violation. In the first place, the Turkish authorities would like to clarify that the existence of a compulsory RCE lesson was not considered a violation in itself in the ECtHR's judgment (see *Mansur Yalçın and Others v.*

March, 2024

*Türkiye*, no. 21163/11, 16 September 2014, § 64). In its judgment finding a violation, the Court underlined the content of the curriculum of RCE lessons.

68. Within this scope, in the sense of solving the problem, a number of general measures have been taken regarding these issues.

69. The Turkish authorities indicate that concerning the violations found in *Mansur Yalçın* and *Hasan and Eylem Zengin* (21163/11 and 1448/04, respectively); a number of workshops were organised under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education between June 2016 and January 2017 with the participation of representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Education, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, scholars and NGO's. The commission held workshops on 2 June 2016, 14 June 2016, 22 September 2016, 3 November 2016, 7 December 2016 and 25-27 January 2017.

70. In the report, attention was drawn to the fact that religion has an important role in life, to the importance of knowing different religions and beliefs along with socialisation, to the students' ability for critical thinking, and to the effect of religion on the formation of culture and civilisation. It was also taken into account that the implementation of the RCE lessons is a work of a long experience. It includes assessments that the content of the curriculum intends to play a role in eliminating the prejudices faced in the society by creating an environment in which differences between people are an asset rather than a problem.

71. At the working meetings of the commission, having regard to the fact that the State may use its margin of appreciation to make this lesson compulsory with the aim of protecting the national identity of the society and including social values in the system, particular importance was attached to the idea that it would be appropriate to objectively redevelop the content of the RCE lesson so as to incorporate the Alevi-Bektashi tradition into it.

72. Based on the advisory report by the Commission, a draft curriculum was prepared with the participation of relevant persons (mentioned-above) in January and February 2017. In July 2017 the draft curriculum was published for a period of time on the website of the Ministry of National Education in order to take into consideration criticisms, arguments, and assessments made by the students, parents, and by the public at large. With the publication of the draft curriculum, it was ensured that instructors, NGOs, academics, parents, and students expressed their opinions and carried out an evaluation online concerning the curriculum. All of the incoming opinions and evaluations were reported and reflected in the curricula.



March, 2024

73. Upon the completion of the period during which the draft curriculum had been published and assessments had been gathered from the interested parties, the draft report was sent to the Universities in Türkiye in order to include their recommendations in the curriculum. On 20 October 2017 another workshop was set up, composed of academics as well, by the Ministry of National Education to finalise the draft. On 19 January 2018 the draft was approved by the Board of Education of the Ministry of National Education (*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı*). It can be accessed through the following link: <https://dogm.meb.gov.tr/www/ogretim-programlari/icerik/14>

74. The draft report was prepared with the participation of a wide range of individuals coming from different backgrounds. It includes assessments that the content of the curriculum intends to play a role in eliminating the prejudices faced in the society by creating an environment in which differences between people are an asset rather than a problem.

75. The commission, set up to draft the above-cited curriculum, also signified the importance of the existence and mandatory nature of the classes of RCE. The subjects such as Alevism and Bektashism, among others, were objectively explained in detail in the textbooks by benefiting from opinions and articles published by religious and spiritual leaders of Alawite (*alevi dedeleri*).

76. Following the completion of the opinion and evaluation process with a broad participation, the draft curriculum was put into final form and then submitted to the Board of Education. By its decision of 19 January 2018, the Board of Education approved the implementation of the new RCE lesson curriculum in schools during the school year 2018-2019.

77. Consequently, the implementation of the Action Plan prepared in relation to the execution of the Court's judgment, the Working Group's meetings, and reporting and preparation of curriculum and lesson materials are conducted in a participatory process by having regard to the transparent and ethical values.

78. At this point, the authorities would like to state that the criteria of objectivism and pluralism have been satisfied owing to the significant contributions from the working group, composed of each part of the society, which had held 6 meetings from 2016 to 2017, thus creating an educational environment in which each student could learn general information objectively on religion and different schools of thoughts therein without having to follow from only one perspective the subjects discussed in the classes.

March, 2024

79. The authorities emphasise that Türkiye acts in line with the TOLEDO Guiding Principles in the RCE lesson and regards all beliefs and world views objectively and in line with the principles of pluralism. Accordingly, the RCE lessons are provided within the framework of the following principles: *“If the compulsory RCE lesson is objective in public schools, then it is in compliance with freedom of religion and belief. Wider coverage may be given to the religion prevailing in a place where education of religion and belief is provided. If Religious Culture and Ethics education is provided in an objective way, the issue as to whether it is compulsory or elective does not constitute a problem. Curriculum should be fact-based, impartial and in line with academic and occupational standards.”*

### **1.Content of the Compulsory Religious Culture and Ethics Knowledge Lesson**

80. The authorities submit the following statements as regards the RCE classes in primary and secondary schools at the present.

81. In this regard, the authorities’ view is that the new curriculum of the compulsory RCE classes, which is currently being implemented, and the purpose of these classes are compatible with the principles of pluralism and objectivity embodied in Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 of the Convention.

82. With the new RCE classes designed with a supra-denominational approach, it has been aimed to *“ensure that all the different groups of the society live under a single umbrella in harmony within the framework of mutual respect and toleration for each other with no one being alienated”*. The current instruction programs of the RCE classes have given more room to the various religious formations of Islam living in Türkiye and the information about different religions. The instruction programs of the RCE classes have not been drawn up on the basis of the issues on which the interpretation of faith and the theological interpretation differed from each other, but on the basis of the Quran and Sunnah (*Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Türkiye (no. 21163/11)*) which have been acknowledged as a common source by both of the interpretations. This approach does not mean, in any way, that the different understandings have been disregarded or overlooked. On the contrary, it has been aimed with the programme to provide information about the interpretations of faith and the theological interpretations that emerged in Islam, the Sufi thoughts and other religious formations, to make their similarities and differences recognised and to establish empathy.

83. Furthermore, the instruction programs of the RCE classes have not confined themselves to include the religious thoughts and movements that are found only in

March, 2024

Türkiye, but they have also aimed “to recognize the basic characteristics of other religions and to act with tolerance towards their followers”. The Ministry of National Education prepares the curriculum for the RCE courses that are taught to students receiving education between 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in middle and high-school. The curriculum of RCE has been developed through a participatory process involving representatives who define themselves as a member of religious groups (such as Alevi-Bektashi), and also the experts of theology, sociologists, experts on the history of religions and religious education, and representatives from non-governmental organizations. Draft curriculum is presented for comments and evaluation through an online platform accessible to the whole public for approximately one month. The curriculum takes its final form within the framework of the opinions and evaluations received.

84. Textbooks are prepared by the relevant authorship, including private publishing houses, within the framework of the curriculum and presented to Board of Education of the Ministry of National Education. It is approved by the experts following an examination carried out according to certain criteria such as scientific rigour, legal compliance, and the standards for visibility. Textbooks are prepared by the authors of the Ministry of National Education and private publishing houses on the basis of the curriculum. Textbooks have validation for a certain period of time. In this process, the pages of the textbooks may differ depending on the expression of the authors. The Ministry conducts an inspection as to whether a book includes all learning outcomes or not.

85. In addition, the RCE lessons should be assessed taking into account that it is a course involving information about religions and also information about cultural, national, and moral values. In line with the TOLEDO Guiding Principles, information concerning religions and Islam is given with a supra-denominational understanding and an objective approach in the textbooks.

86. Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching About Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools proposes criteria for teaching about religions and beliefs. Some important criteria are as follows:

-Teaching about religions and beliefs must be provided in ways that are fair, accurate and based on sound scholarship. Students should learn about religions and beliefs in an environment respectful of human rights, fundamental freedoms and civic values.

-Those who teach about religions and beliefs should have a commitment to religious freedom that contributes to a school environment and practices that foster protection

March, 2024

of the rights of others in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding among members of the school community.

- Teaching about religions and beliefs is a major responsibility of schools, but the manner in which this teaching takes place should not undermine or ignore the role of families and religious or belief organizations in transmitting values to successive generations.

-Efforts should be made to establish advisory bodies at different levels that take an inclusive approach to involving different stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of curricula and in the training of teachers.

-Where a compulsory programme involving teaching about religions and beliefs is not sufficiently objective, efforts should be made to revise it to make it more balanced and impartial, but where this is not possible, or cannot be accomplished immediately, recognizing opt-out rights may be a satisfactory solution for parents and pupils, provided that the opt-out arrangements are structured in a sensitive and non-discriminatory way.

-Those who teach about religions and beliefs should be adequately educated to do so. Such teachers need to have the knowledge, attitude and skills to teach about religions and beliefs in a fair and balanced way. Teachers need not only subject-matter competence but pedagogical skills so that they can interact with students and help students interact with each other in sensitive and respectful ways.

-Preparation of curricula, textbooks and educational materials for teaching about religions and beliefs should take into account religious and non-religious views in a way that is inclusive, fair, and respectful. Care should be taken to avoid inaccurate or prejudicial material, particularly when this reinforces negative stereotypes.

-Curricula should be developed in accordance with recognized professional standards in order to ensure a balanced approach to study about religions and beliefs. Development and implementation of curricula should also include open and fair procedures that give all interested parties appropriate opportunities to offer comments and advice.

-Quality curricula in the area of teaching about religions and beliefs can only contribute effectively to the educational aims of the Toledo Guiding Principles if teachers are professionally trained to use the curricula and receive ongoing training to

March, 2024

further develop their knowledge and competences regarding this subject matter. Any basic teacher preparation should be framed and developed according to democratic and human rights principles and include insight into cultural and religious diversity in society.

- Curricula focusing on teaching about religions and beliefs should give attention to key historical and contemporary developments pertaining to religion and belief, and reflect global and local issues. They should be sensitive to different local manifestations of religious and secular plurality found in schools and the communities they serve. Such sensitivities will help address the concerns of students, parents and other stakeholders in education.

87. The RCE curriculum meets all the necessary factors issued in the TOLEDO Guidelines in terms of attainment and teaching methods.

88. The objectives and method of the RCE lesson in the curriculum are explained as follows, (see <http://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/ProgramDetay.aspx?PID=318>)

.....

#### 2.1. Basic Philosophy and General Objectives of the Program

The course of RCE aims to teach Islam and other religions with a descriptive approach. Within the scope of RCE courses, Islam was conveyed to the students within the framework of the basic principles set forth by the Quran and Sunnah. The interpretations that emerged in Islamic philosophy were handled with a scientific method and a supra-sectarian approach. On the other hand, the other existing religions were discussed with a scientific method and factual approach.

.....

#### 2.3. Principles and Explanations Regarding the Implementation of the Program and Book Writing

.....

4) A factual approach is adopted both in the teaching of different religions and beliefs, and in the teaching of the interpretations of Islamic thought. In this context, religions, beliefs, and interpretations in Islamic thought are subject to teaching based on their own texts, sources and acceptances.

March, 2024

.....

8) Students are not forced to memorise the verses of the Quran, hadiths, and surahs which are involved in the units.

.....

9) Approaches, attitudes and behaviours that harm freedom of religion, conscience, and thought are avoided. In this context, students are not forced to express their religious feelings and thoughts, and to perform religious practices in which they have knowledge.

.....

16) Students are encouraged to behave in a way that respects human beings, opinions, freedom, morality, and cultural heritage.”

89. However, the RCE should be evaluated on the grounds that it is not only a course that includes information about religions, but also a course that is obliged to give information about national culture and universal moral values that are the common ground of citizens living in Türkiye. In line with the Toledo principles, the elements of national culture and universal moral values are included in the textbooks and information about other religions and Islam is explained with an objective approach.

90. To give some examples, the following subjects are included in the textbooks regarding the general values and characteristics of the Turkish society: "The Basis of Human Relations: Love and Respect", "I Keep My Body and Clothes Clean", "I Keep My Home and School Clean", "I Keep My Environment Clean", "Rules of Courtesy", "Greetings Manners", "Communication and Speaking Manners", "Table Manners", "Some Harmful Habits", "Reasons for Starting Harmful Habits", "Ways to Avoid Harmful Habits", "Core Values Uniting Our Society", "Good Moral Attitudes and Behaviours : Justice, Friendship, Honesty, Self-control, Patience, Respect, Love, Responsibility, Patriotism and Benevolence", "Values and the Source of Values", "The Place and Importance of Values in Youth's Personality Development", "Basic Values: Wisdom, Justice, Chastity and Courage", "Relationship of Morality and Discipline", "Religion is Good Morality", "Traces of Religion in Our Architecture", "Traces of Religion in Our Music", "Traces of Religion in Our Literature", "Traces of Religion in Our Customs and Customs". As seen from the above-mentioned issues, the RCE lessons include information about religions, national culture and universal moral values in line with the Toledo principles.

March, 2024

91. Examining the RCE textbooks, which are the publication of the Ministry of National Education, it is seen that a total of 186 pages are related to religious beliefs and worship with respect to Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Sunnism, Hanafism, Alevism-Bektashism, Hanbalism, Shafiism, Malikism, Asharism, Yesevism, Rifaism, Kadirism, Mevlevism and Naqshbandism. In these sections, several religions and religious beliefs and worships are explained. Alevism and Bektashism are also mentioned in 21 pages out of 186 pages. When it is considered in comparison to the other beliefs included in the textbooks, this ratio is remarkable. Thus, it cannot be argued that less coverage is given to Alevism in the textbooks.

92. The curricula and textbooks of this course are approved by the Board of Education. In the content of the RCE courses, considering the development levels of the students, the main issues in the field of religion and morality are dealt with objectively with a theological approach based on the basic resources. It is not the aim of the course to impose or dictate any religious practice. This course prioritises enlightenment/acclturation about religion and morality. Therefore, a kind of denominational religious education is not given in this course; on the contrary, a way of informing and acculturation is taken as a basis.

93. As a result, the Authorities notes that all curricula in Türkiye are prepared in compliance with the principles of scientificity, pedagogy, and legal compliance. In this respect, objective contents are provided within the textbooks without any discrimination in terms of beliefs. This situation presents the impartial, objective, and scientific attitude of the Turkish education system.

94. In addition to all of these, the Government would like to state that the Ministry of National Education is currently conducting the works for a new curricula covering all lessons which are planned to be implemented as from the school year 2024-2025 within the framework of the “Türkiye’s Century Education Model”. The authorities will provide the Committee of Ministers with more comprehensive information once the works in question are completed.

## **2. Constitutional Court’s Case Law on the RCE lessons**

95. The authorities would like note that the Constitutional Court has developed a Convention compliant practice on the topic of compulsory RCE lessons.

96. On 7 April 2022 the Turkish Constitutional Court delivered its first judgment concerning the compulsory RCE lessons. In its judgment of *Hüseyin El and Nazlı Şirin El*

March, 2024

(Docket No: 2014/15345)<sup>2</sup>, it considered that the 2011/2012 syllabus of the RCE lessons lacked the criteria of objectivity and pluralism. It further observed that the system had not provided an efficient exemption procedure, nor had it provided other alternative solutions. In the light of these, the Constitutional Court concluded that the rejection of the applicant's request for exemption from this class had violated the right of parents to demand respect for their religious and philosophical beliefs in education, as guaranteed by Article 24 of the Constitution.

97. It should be underlined that in reaching the above conclusion, the Constitutional Court made specific reference to the Court's findings in the cases of *Hasan and Eylem Zengin* and *Mansur Yalçın and Others*.

### **C. Translation and Dissemination of the Judgment**

98. The authorities ensured that publication and dissemination measures have been taken. To this end, the European Court's judgments have been translated into Turkish and made available on the Court's website.

99. Furthermore, the European Court's judgments have been transmitted, together with an explanatory note on the European Court's findings, to the Religious Affairs Department, Ministry of National Education, the Council of Judges and Prosecutors, the Ombudsman Institution and to the domestic courts involved in these cases as well as to other relevant court such as the Constitutional Court and the Court of Cassation.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

100. The authorities consider that the individual measures taken ensured that the violations at hand have ceased and that the applicants have been provided redress for the negative consequences.

101. The authorities furthermore consider that the general measures regarding Articles 9 and 14 have been taken. The authorities therefore kindly invite the Committee of Ministers to close the examination of the case of *İzzettin Doğan and Others*.

102. As regards the outstanding issues with respect to *Mansur Yalçın and Others*, the Turkish authorities will keep the Committee updated.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2014/15345>



Istanbul 10.April.2023

## COMMUNICATION

### **In accordance with Rule 9.2. of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers regarding the supervision of the execution of judgments and of terms of friendly settlements**

#### **1. Introduction**

This Rule 9.2 submission is made in accordance with Rules of the Committee of Ministers regarding the supervision of the execution of judgments and of terms of friendly settlements. It concerns the individual and general measures required for implementation of cases “İzzettin Doğan and Others” 62649/10 and “Mansur Yalcın and Others” (21163/11)

With respect to decisions of CM 1468<sup>th</sup> meeting, we are submitting our views about the developments as well as comments about implementation process of ECtHR judgments with references made to recent [Action Plan of Turkish authorities](#) dated 26.03.2024

The submission is made by the Alevi Philosophy Center Association. A Turkish NGO dealing with Alevi Cultural Heritage, Philosophy and Religious Freedom issues.

#### **2. Case summaries:**

These cases concern the failure within the Turkish legal framework to grant legal recognition to the Alevi faith, thus depriving its followers of the right fully to practice their faith (violations of Article 9) and discriminatory difference in treatment between followers of the Alevi faith and followers of the Sunna majority understanding of Islam, who benefit from legal recognition and religious public services financed by the State through the Religious Affairs Department (“RAD”) (violation of Article 14 taken in conjunction with Article 9). This difference of treatment includes the failure to extend to Alevi premises (Cemevi) the exemption from the cost of electric lighting that is granted to places of worship (Article 14 in conjunction with Article 9).

The Court found that the content of the religious culture and ethics classes in primary and secondary schools, and their compulsory nature with only limited possibilities of exemption, “offers no appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam” (violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1). Generally, the Court found that “the attitude of the State authorities towards the Alevi community, its religious practices and its places of worship is incompatible with the State’s duty of neutrality and impartiality and with the right of religious communities to an autonomous existence”.



### 3. Just Satisfaction

We believe that unless the court decisions are fully implemented and local laws and regulations are regulated in a way to prevent the same problems from occurring again, a healthy Just Satisfaction cannot be achieved.

### 4. General measures

#### 62649/10 – İzzettin Dogan and Others.

The Government's Action Plan is focused on the recent steps taken in implementation process of the Court judgments. However, there are some basic points that are missing, such as recognition of Alevism as an Islamic denomination, disproportionate distribution of state subsidies provided to religious entities and necessary judicial corrections to protect sustainability of religions groups including Alevi belief.

-Establishment of the “Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevi Presidency” (ABP): Establishment of the ABP in 2022 has been a positive signal of recognition of the Alevi existence in the country. However related Compendium Law and regulations failed to recognize status of Cemevi as a worship place. Failure to communicate with Alevi organizations, to include Alevi NGOs representatives even in the ABP advisory board and failure to take any measures for securing sustainability of the Alevi faith by allowing clergy training are main problem areas.

According to current legitimation of the country:

- The faith characteristics of Alevism is not recognised,
- The status and characteristic of Cem houses as places of worship, which has been clarified by ECtHR judgements, is also not recognized in these regulations.
- No solution has been produced for the need to train qualified clergy and religious leaders, which is as important as places of worship for the sustainability of a belief.
- As it is confirmed by the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Turkey dated 7/4/2022 and numbered 2014/15345 published in the Official Gazette No. 31906 on 28/7/2022, the religious belief of the families should be the priority in the education of children, but violations of the Constitution and the Civil Code continue due to non-compliance with this requirement, and no regulation has been included in this regard.

The Alevi Community expects an approach in line with ECtHR judgment: **“Nevertheless, if a State introduced a privileged status for places of worship, all religious groups which so wished had to be offered a fair possibility of seeking the benefit of such status and the established criteria had to be applied in a non-discriminatory manner.”**

Detailed explanations and further information about this section of the Action Plan is presented in Annex 1.





## 21163/11 - Mansur Yalcin and Others. Compulsory Religious classes.

Unfortunately, in this field new regressive initiatives have come into force as of 2023-24 educational year and overall situation have further declined. Compulsory status of existing syllabus has maintained with some additional measures on RCE lessons and involvement of RAD changes.

At the beginning of the school year of 2023-24, selection of at least one elective lesson offered in schools was made compulsory and although there is a list of selective lessons, schools are able to provide only few religious based elective lessons of that list and in practice religious education hours increased from 2 to 4 hours per week; furthermore, with the CEDES protocol, which is supposedly aimed at value education, RAD staff (clergy) without any pedagogical training are now allowed to participate or dominate education as Value system club coordinators or advisors in schools. This initiative has tendency of further polarization of the syllabus and educational system. Case has been referred in latest Annual reports of UN HRC High Commissioner (Annex 3) and UN HRC Special Rapporteur of UN for freedom of Religion and Belief (Annex 4) as carrying risks of further polarization, stigmatization and rising hate speech.

1468<sup>th</sup> meeting of CoM decisions; **“urged the authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure that the Turkish education system fulfils the State’s duty of neutrality and impartiality towards the various religions, denominations and beliefs, respecting the principles of pluralism and objectivity, and offers appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam to opt out of compulsory religious education, without pupils’ parents being obliged to disclose their religious or philosophical convictions;”**

3

However, in matters related to education, no steps have been taken to relieve families and children from compulsory religious lessons either by allowing exemptions or by changing the syllabus to a neutral curriculum *as per* the Toledo agreements.

The case has a representative nature. In Turkey, there are millions of children of schooling age who are being subjected to the same curriculum and under serious assimilative pressure

Detailed explanations and further info about points indicated in Action Plan of Turkey is presented with Annex 2.

### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Case of “Izzettin Dogan and Others” is a highly complex case. Implementation of the judgment may take long time in country which is trying to apply different procedures and legitimacy to different religions and belief groups. Policies towards beliefs should be a uniform and identical for all belief groups of the country.

Case of “Compulsory Religious Courses” is one of the major cases of our country. In a multi-religious and multi-faith country, compulsory education based on a single denomination of a faith creates major problems not only in terms of education but also in terms of pluralistic social life and we believe that solving this problem as soon as possible will contribute greatly to political and social peace in the country.





ADO  
Alevis Philosophy Center

We would also like to reiterate our conviction that the creation of an educational environment in which different religious groups can train their own clergy is one of the most important needs in our country.

Kindest regards

Dogan Bermek

Annex 1- Information about case no 62649/10 and comments about Action Plan of authorities.  
Annex 2 - Information about case no 21163/11 and comments about Action Plan of authorities.  
Annex 3. Excerpt from the report of UN HRC Special Rapporteur  
Annex 4 - Excerpt from the report of UN HRC High Commissioner.





Annex 1. ADO Submission to HUDOC-EXEC Dept. prior to 1501th. meeting of “Committee of Ministers.”

This annex analyses the Paragraphs 12 to 61 of Action Plan of Turkish authorities submitted to CoE on 26. March.2024 related to ECtHR case no 62649/10 “İzzettin Dogan and Others.”

**“Violation of Article 9 and Article 14 in conjunction with 9”**

(Action Plan, Para. 11-38)

The implementation of these judgments requires equal treatment for all belief groups; the judgments clarify that Cemevis are worship places that must benefit from all advantages and state-support provided to worship places and belief groups.

Although the Presidency set up a state entity named as “Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis (ABP)”, the department is formed as a unit under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, while the Sunni religion has an individual state entity “Religious Affairs Department (RAD)” with an individual establishment law for the organization and reports to the directly Presidency of the country (RAD) not to any ministry.

The ABP is established with the promise that Cemevis will benefit from all advantages provided to other worship places and a compendium Law no.7214 which does not cover many aspects of the requirements of an entity of this kind. Cemevis are not accepted as worship places, nor will the Alevi belief system will be recognized as a belief. Furthermore, the legislation prepared for the ABP brings additional restrictions by subjecting any new Cemevi construction to the permission of local governors, in addition to already existing official requirements.

The ABP is not yet fully active, it was declared in Oct.2022 and still awaiting appointment of the advisory Committee (which will be appointed by the President of the state for three-year periods). The Alevi community and organizations do not have any right of vote in appointments and the discussed frame is far away from being objective and egalitarian due to the points listed below. Regulations that ABP will work with are not publicly announced yet. There are many blurry areas in how Law 7421 and Presidential Decrees will be implemented.

Paragraph 12. Most of Court ‘s findings are still valid, such as:

- Ability to build worship places are still uncertain and subject to goodwill or authorities,
- According to 2024 budget of Türkiye, RAD ‘s budget is 97 billion TL (3 billion euro) , ABP budget is 250 million TL (7.8 million euro). In our country of 85 million while the lowest estimate of Alevi population is about 15 million there is a great proportional disadvantage. RAD has an enormous number of staff over 115.000, so far ABP has hired 40 staff yet and the budget allocated to ABP is barely enough to cover costs of hired staff and sustaining the organization.
- Religious services are still not regarded as public service as Cem houses are not accepted as worship places.
- Alevi community has no right to train its clergy while we have over thousand Sunnah clergy schools (Imam-Hatip).

We may add further items to this list.

15.16.17.18.19 – Preparatory works of ABP have been done with staff of Min. of Interior and Alevi organizations neither participated in the field works, nor in the activities of working group formed by

three ministries. So, all decisions about Alevi faith have been taken without participation or consulting Alevi organizations.

20.21.22.23.24 – The narrative of ABP establishment has been subject to major criticism together with Compendium Law. Currently, two applications for cancellation and stay of execution applications filed by the major opposition party, CHP on this issue are standing before the Constitutional Court. ABP has changed president in between and still no appointments are made to Advisory Council.

25-43- Some benefits were offered to Alevi cem houses however incomparable with benefits offered to Sunnah worship places. These offers made discriminations much more visible to society. Appointments of applied religious leaders are pending and their expected duties and responsibilities are not clarified at all. So far ABP only hired about 40 staff and collected applications from some potential Cem house clergy.

38-43.- Most of the services listed were already provided by local municipalities to Cem houses. During this period, we did not see any new or wider support provided.

44.45.- We are pleased to see that 55 Cemevi have benefited from earthquake area first-aid and restoration activities and hope 2024 activities may be fulfilled as planned.

46-61.- The time allocated to Alevi belief in official media (TRT) channels are not comparable to the time allocated to Sunnah belief organizations while a full-time channel is allocated to RAD. We also would like to point out that all religions of Türkiye should be able to use official media channels.

Annex 2 of ADO submission to HUDOC-EXEC Dept. prior to 1501th meeting of Committee of Ministers.

Our observations about Compulsory Religious Lessons and comments to the Action Plan submitted to CoE, CoM are summarized as follows:

#### VIOLATION of ARTICLE 2 of PROTOCOL No.1

62.-94.- At the beginning of the school year 2023-24, selection of at least one electives offered in schools was made compulsory and although there is a list of selective lessons schools are able to provide only few religious based electives in practice religious education hours increased from 2 to 4 hours per week; furthermore, with the CEDES protocol, which is supposedly aimed at value education, RAD staff without any pedagogical training are now allowed to participate or dominate education as Value system club coordinators in schools.

The Turkish government, in its communication to the CoM on 2023 March, had argued that the textbooks were compatible with the criteria of objectivity and pluralism and that there was no need to expand the exemption mechanism. However, despite the changes made to the textbooks, however there are still serious shortcomings that are frequently reflected in various reports. Paragraph 91 of latest Action Plan itself is a proof of the situation. Out of the 1800 pages over 1600 pages are dedicated to Sunnah Muslim and only 186 pages are containing references to all other beliefs and non-Sunnah denominations of Muslim. One may find name of Alevi or Bektashi only in 21 pages. This disproportion itself is a proof of the discriminatory approach and structure of the RCE lessons.

It is difficult for us to conduct researches or to access certain research, but the schools, parents, teachers or students we interviewed still point to the fact that a pluralistic and inclusive approach has not been adopted, especially in some regions and school types. Therefore, the need for the curriculum to stand at an equal distance to all religions and beliefs in a much clearer way continues. In other words, it is of critical importance that adopting an understanding of morality that is not based on a particular religion, and transforming that understanding into RCE education based on the principles of impartiality, objectivity and pluralism. Naturally exemption procedures are still a major and vital requirement which has again been reconfirmed with Turkish Constitutional Court Judgment of April 2022.

Furthermore, as referred above, with the changes made just at the beginning of 2023 academical year, students of 4.-8. classes are obliged to select one, 9.-12. class students are obliged to select two electives from three group of electives namely Human society-science, religion- ethics and culture-art.-sport. Although list includes three group of electives a very high percentage of schools are only able to provide education on only religion- ethics group of lessons due to lack of staff, therefore students are forced to select another religion-based lesson. In other words, with these arrangements RCE lesson hours are doubled to four hours/week for 4-12 grades. As result of these changes RCE courses are practically doubled and in return foreign language course hours are reduced.

Values education referred in Paragraph 90 of the Action Plan, which is predominantly based on religious teachings, and extra-curricular activities carried out within the framework of electives and CEDES or similar co-operation protocols, do not comply with the universal definition and objectives of values education and harbor various risks and violations in terms of Children's Rights. Because elements related to a particular religion, such as God, prayers, heaven and hell, worship, etc., may not be perceived in the same way from one society to another, by different belief groups, or even by belief groups within the same community. In particular, cooperation protocols such as CEDES continue to attract strong reactions from a wide cross-section of society.



We would also like to point out that values education should be carried out with great care in terms of polarization, stigmatization, hate speech, targeting and discrimination. The UN Special Rapporteur and the High Commissioner of the Human Rights Council have pointed out the existence of these risks in Turkey in their reports to the 55th session of the UN- Human Rights Council. (Annex 3 - 4)

Finally, the revised syllabus, which has been applied with minor changes since 2018 (paras 71-76), has been the subject of a case before the Turkish Constitutional Court, which reaffirmed in its ruling no. 2014/ 15345 of April 2022 that the application of the current exemption procedures and the syllabus of RCE lessons leads to "violations of the Constitution and the Civil Code" (paras 94-97). We have not yet seen any initiative by the authorities to ensure compliance with the ruling of our Supreme Court.

In the current situation, the rulings of the Turkish Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights are in complete agreement. However, the authorities choose to ignore both rulings and even increase the level of violations despite the agreement between the rulings of the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights. So far, no correction has been made to put an end to the violations of the Civil Code and the Constitution, we are in a situation where the violations in question are being extended even further.



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
8 January 2024

Original: English

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Hatred on the basis of religion or belief**

### **Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Nazila Ghanea**

#### *Summary*

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Nazila Ghanea, calls for greater efforts to counter hate speech, promote freedom of religion or belief, foster interfaith and intercultural dialogue and understanding and protect religious and belief minorities while upholding all human rights. To ensure effectiveness, hatred on the basis of religion or belief must be addressed by States in a human rights-compliant manner. The Special Rapporteur also offers recommendations to non-State actors, including engagement in transnational advocacy networks, for addressing hatred based on religion or belief with ongoing vigilance.



or other historical atrocities;<sup>23</sup> the attribution of responsibility to religious or belief minorities for the actions of their perceived “kin” elsewhere;<sup>24</sup> the use of biased or discriminatory language by public figures in mainstream or widely-publicized forums or popular culture;<sup>25</sup> the broad designation of religious or belief minorities as “blasphemers” or “apostates”;<sup>26</sup> exclusion from economic life;<sup>27</sup> the public desecration of religious symbols;<sup>28</sup> and biased media coverage.<sup>29</sup> While such expressions may not all reach the threshold of incitement, although some will (see sect. III below), they should nevertheless serve as warning signs of prejudicial attitudes that must be addressed.

15. Structural factors contribute to conditions for the development of hateful discourse. As pointed out by previous mandate holders, situations of political authoritarianism, corruption, lack of transparency and lack of trust in public institutions provide conditions for the scapegoating of religious or belief communities.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the marginalization and dehumanization of members belonging to religious or belief minorities is often expressed through the constitution and other laws, as well as in the functioning of the institutions of State and society, especially in education.<sup>31</sup> In that way, one religion or belief is associated with Statehood and Government and with national, ethnic, cultural or racial identity or superiority,<sup>32</sup> and its norms are established as the “normal” baseline, against which the dignity and rights of religious or belief minorities are contrasted and measured.<sup>33</sup> Political projects of this kind may find legitimacy in the existence or propagation of legal provisions, such as anti-blasphemy or anti-conversion/anti-apostasy laws, which stigmatize certain religions or beliefs or their expressions as criminal.<sup>34</sup> Counter-terrorism laws may also put religious or belief minorities at increased risk of stigmatization and targeting.<sup>35</sup> These structural factors generate and normalize religious discrimination and, in turn, create conditions that expose the vulnerability of religious or belief minorities to direct expressions of hatred, including physical violence.

16. Furthermore, religious or belief-based hatred is often mediated, facilitated and exacerbated by online platforms and social media, which can rapidly escalate tensions. In many submissions it was highlighted that the online environment facilitates and amplifies disinformation, advocacy of hatred and subsequent incitement to violence. Myths, conspiracy theories and calls for violence now spread with greater speed and reach than ever before, often meaning that local events can have global consequences.<sup>36</sup>

### C. Ends served by hatred based on religion or belief

17. Hatred on the basis of religion or belief can be motivated and aggravated by factors relating to religions or beliefs and their doctrines. Its proliferation and the violence that it engenders, whether direct or structural, are understood by some as legitimate and desirable

<sup>23</sup> Submissions from Australian Human Rights Commission and World Jewish Congress.

<sup>24</sup> Submission by Christian Solidarity Worldwide.

<sup>25</sup> Submissions by Equality Myanmar; Northern Justice Watch; and South Asia Collective.

<sup>26</sup> Submissions by Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Set My People Free.

<sup>27</sup> Submissions by Open Doors International and National Christian Evangelical Alliance Sri Lanka.

<sup>28</sup> Submissions by Pakistan and Türkiye.

<sup>29</sup> Submission by Sweden.

<sup>30</sup> See [A/HRC/25/58](#).

<sup>31</sup> Submissions by Alevi Philosophy Center; Baha’i International Community; Christian Solidarity Worldwide; Coordination des Organisations Musulmanes de Centrafrique; Open Doors International; and Office of Public Information of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

<sup>32</sup> Submissions by Coalition for Genocide Response; Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action Partners, Indonesia; and Justice for All.

<sup>33</sup> Submissions by Memorial; SOVA Research Centre.

<sup>34</sup> See communications sent to India (IND 8/2023), Nigeria (NGA 1/2023) and Pakistan (PAK 2/2023). With regard to the risk of refoisement arising in the context of such laws or religious persecution, see communications sent to Bangladesh (BGD 5/2023), Japan (JPN 1/2023) and Türkiye (TUR 3/2023).

<sup>35</sup> See communications sent to the Philippines (PHL 4/2023) and Sri Lanka (LKA 4/2023). Submission by National Council of Churches of the Philippines.

<sup>36</sup> Submissions by Memorial; World Evangelical Alliance; World Jewish Congress. See also communications sent to Nigeria (NGA 1/2023) and Sri Lanka (LKA 5/2023).



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
18 January 2024

Original: English

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda items 2 and 9

### Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related  
forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation  
of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

## **Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief**

### **Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 52/38, in which the Council called upon States to take a number of actions to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief. The present report contains information provided by States and other stakeholders on the efforts and measures taken for the implementation of the action plan and views on potential follow-up measures for further improvement of its implementation. It also contains recommendations with regard to implementing the action plan, including through training initiatives for law enforcement officers, members of the judiciary, faith-based actors, teachers and media professionals on combating religious hatred. States should effectively counter religious profiling, act expeditiously on hate crimes and protect religious or belief minorities, including their places of worship. States must also uphold their international obligations to enact and enforce comprehensive anti-discrimination laws.



expression, peaceful assembly, association, thought, conscience and religion.<sup>44</sup> In her briefing to the Security Council of 17 November 2023, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights called upon all parties, while the armed conflict and occupation persisted, to ensure that all people in Ukraine had full freedom to manifest and practice their religion or belief, in line with international human rights law.<sup>45</sup>

43. In reaction to recurrent incidents of Qur'an burning in some European countries during 2023, the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations stated that those acts were disrespectful and provocative and stressed that violence was never an appropriate response to provocation.<sup>46</sup> Against the backdrop of the rise in antisemitism around the world, the High Representative, in his capacity as the United Nations focal point to monitor antisemitism and enhance a system-wide response, continued to engage with major Jewish organizations and with envoys and coordinators to combat antisemitism. He was vocal in condemning antisemitic incidents and hate crimes against Jews and their places of worship.

44. The Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye noted that it was mandated to examine, decide on and monitor any discrimination, including on the basis of religion or belief, ex officio or upon an application. With regard to reports about a high school football team allegedly performing Nazi salutes during celebrations of goals scored at a match against the team of another school, the Institution emphasized that that behaviour had constituted prejudice, targeting Jews as an excluded community and subjecting them to hostile and inhumane treatment. In 2023, the Institution also published two press releases about provocative attacks against Alevi institutions and their places of worship in Ankara and about social media posts with hateful content directed at individuals belonging to the Alevi faith.

Council of Europe had strongly urged the authorities to take the measures necessary to ensure towards various religions, denominations and beliefs, respecting the principles of pluralism and objectivity, and offered appropriate options for the children of parents who had a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam to opt out of compulsory philosophical convictions.<sup>47</sup>

## **K. Representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their religion, in all sectors of society**

46. Iraq noted that article 2 of the Constitution guaranteed full religious rights to freedom of belief and practice for all individuals, such as Christians, Yazidis and Mandaean Sabaeans. Iraq highlighted that the national election laws ensured adequate representation for minorities by granting them their own quotas in the House of Representatives and local councils. The Ministry of Education worked to support religious and national specificity through the activities of the general directorates of Turkmen, Kurdish, Syriac and Christian studies.

47. In June 2023 in Marrakesh, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of Morocco, in cooperation with Religions for Peace and with the support of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Mohammadia League of Religious Scholars, hosted the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue on the theme "Working together for our common future". The conference concluded with the Marrakesh communiqué,<sup>48</sup> in which participants encouraged parliaments to ensure that all religions, beliefs and faith-based organizations were treated equally and without discrimination under the law and to include representatives of religions, beliefs and faith-based organizations alongside other civil

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., para. 144 (x).

<sup>45</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/11/asg-brands-kehris-briefs-security-council-ukraine>.

<sup>46</sup> See <https://www.unaoc.org/2023/07/press-statement-on-the-desecration-of-the-holy-quran-in-sweden-and-the-violence-in-iraq/>.

<sup>47</sup> See [https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result\\_details.aspx?objectid=0900001680ab822b](https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=0900001680ab822b), para. 6.

<sup>48</sup> See <https://www.ipu.org/file/17036/download>.



Norwegian  
Helsinki Committee



DGI Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law  
Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR  
FRANCE  
Email: DGI-Execution@coe.int

22 April 2024

## COMMUNICATION

**In accordance with Rule 9.2. of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers regarding the supervision of the execution of judgments and of terms of friendly settlements by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee's Freedom of Belief Initiative regarding the Judgments of the Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey; İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey.**

### 1. Background

The [Alevi Bektaşî Federation](#) is a faith based organisation dedicated to researching the Alevi culture and teaching while fostering solidarity and coordination among its constituents. The [Alevi Philosophy Association](#) endeavours to amplify the voices of Alevis, articulating their demands and challenges and supporting Alevi community's legal efforts to regain access to their historic lodges and worship places. The [Federation of Alevi Foundations](#) is a faith based organisation committed to promote the Alevi Islamic faith, as well as solidarity and coordination of its network. The [Association for Monitoring Equal Rights](#) monitors, supports and advocates for the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and freedoms and contributes to the prevention of all types of discrimination. The [Human Rights Agenda Association](#) is committed to advancing human rights in line with international human rights standards in Türkiye. The [Norwegian Helsinki Committee's Freedom of Belief Initiative](#) is a human rights project that systematically monitors and reports on legislative, judicial, and administrative developments related to freedom of religion or belief in Turkey and advocates for protecting this right for all.<sup>1</sup> The project monitors the implementation of freedom of religion or belief-related European Court of Human Rights judgments.

This submission aims to provide information on the status of the implementation of the general measures that the Turkish government must take in the context of the enforcement of the ECtHR judgments on the *Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey* and *İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey* and the compatibility of these measures with the European Convention on

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Norwegian Helsinki Committee see [www.nhc.no](http://www.nhc.no) and for more information on the Freedom of Belief Initiative see [www.inancozgurlugurgirisimi.org/en](http://www.inancozgurlugurgirisimi.org/en).

Human Rights (ECHR, or the Convention).<sup>2</sup> All these cases remain under the enhanced supervision of the Committee of Ministers (CM).

The Turkish authorities have not taken sufficient actions to address the [CM Decision](#) of 5 December 2019 and the [CM Decision](#) of 2 December 2021.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Case Descriptions and Findings of the ECtHR

### 2.1. Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey

The ECtHR has

- found that Turkey has violated the right to education that is protected under Article 2 of Protocol I of the ECHR in *Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey*;
- also found that, with regard to the teaching of religious studies, the education system of the respondent State still does not provide appropriate means in order to ensure that parents' convictions are respected.
- noted that the Turkish education system offers no appropriate options for the children of parents who have a religious or philosophical conviction other than that of Sunni Islam, and that the very limited procedure for exemption is likely to subject pupils' parents to a heavy burden and to the necessity of disclosing their religious or philosophical convictions in order to have their children exempted from the lessons in religion.
- observed the inadequacy of the Turkish education system in meeting the requirements of objectivity and pluralism and providing an appropriate method for ensuring respect for parents' convictions;
- asked the authorities to bring the Turkish educational system and domestic legislation into conformity with The Convention (*Hasan and Eylem Zengin v. Turkey*, para. 84);
- asked the authorities to make the necessary means available without delay, effective exemption mechanism and without pupils' parents being obliged to disclose their religious or philosophical convictions to make use of them (*Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey* para. 76 and 77 and 84).

The *Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey* case concerned applicants who stated that they are of the Alevi faith. They claimed that the compulsory Religious Culture and Knowledge of Ethics (RCKE, hereafter) courses taught in middle and high school violate their rights under the second part of Article 2 of Protocol I of the European Convention of Human Rights.

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<sup>2</sup> *Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey*, Application no. 21163/11, 16 September 2014.; ECtHR (Second Chamber); ECtHR (Grand Chamber), *Izzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey*, Application No. 62649/10, 26 April 2016.

<sup>3</sup> DH-DD(2020)493 3 June 2020 and [CM/Del/Dec\(2019\)1362/H46-32](#), 5 December 2019 and [CM/Del/Dec\(2021\)1419/H46-36](#), 2 December 2021.

## 2.2. İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey

The *İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey* case concerned the refusal by Turkish authorities of the request by followers of the Alevi faith that services connected with the practice of the Alevi faith constitute public service, that Alevi *cemevis* be granted the status of places of worship, that Alevi religious leaders be recruited as civil servants and that special provision be made in the budget for the practice of the Alevi faith.<sup>4</sup>

The Grand Chamber of the ECtHR found that

- Turkey had violated Article 9 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion) and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) taken together with Article 9 of the ECHR since the differential treatment that the applicants were subjected to was not based on objective and reasonable grounds;
- the situation ... amounts to denying the Alevi community the recognition that would allow its members – and in particular the applicants – to effectively enjoy their right to freedom of religion. In particular, the refusal complained of has had the effect of denying the autonomous existence of the Alevi community and has made it impossible for its members to use their places of worship (*cemevis*) and the title denoting their religious leaders (*dede*) in full conformity with the legislation (para. 135);
- [there was a] glaring imbalance between the applicants' situation and that of persons who benefit from the religious public service. Not only is the Alevi community regarded as a "Sufi order (*tarikāt*)" and made subject to a legal regime that entails numerous and significant restrictions (see paragraphs 126 to 127), but the members of the community are also denied the benefits of the religious public service. Whereas the Muslim religion in Turkey as understood by the RAD [Directorate of Religious Affairs] is almost wholly subsidised by the State, virtually none of the religious public services – with the exception of some studies on the different religious interpretations and the temporary assignment of religious functionaries for fixed periods – benefit the Alevi community as such, and its specific characteristics are almost entirely overlooked in that regard (para. 180);
- the choice made by the respondent State appears to the Court to be manifestly disproportionate to the aim pursued (para. 184);
- the legal regime governing religious denominations in Turkey appears to lack neutral criteria and to be virtually inaccessible to the Alevi faith, as it offers no safeguards apt to ensure that it does not become a source of *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination towards the adherents of other religions or beliefs (para. 182);
- whatever form [of cooperation with the various religious communities] is chosen, the State has a duty to put in place objective and non-discriminatory criteria so that religious communities which so wish are given a fair opportunity to apply for a status which confers specific advantages on religious denomination (para. 183).

<sup>4</sup> ECtHR (Grand Chamber), *İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey*, Application No. 62649/10, 26 April 2016.



### **3. The Committee of Ministers Decision**

The CM's latest deliberation on the Alevi cases took place in June 2023.

### **4. Government response and implementation**

Most recently, the Turkish authorities have provided the Committee of Ministers with the [Action Plan](#) on 28 March 2024.<sup>5</sup>

The Turkish authorities informed the CM in their [Rule 8.2a Communication](#) of June 2020 that preparatory steps have been taken to prepare a Human Rights Action Plan, that consultation meetings have taken place. However, on account of the extraordinary developments in the context of the Pandemic, it was not possible to take the preparation of the Human Rights Action Plan further and prepare an action plan regarding the execution of the judgments that constitute the subject matter of the CM decision taken during the 1362nd DH Meeting (December 2019).<sup>6</sup>

### **5. Comments on Government Response and Recommendations**

We welcome the [Human Rights Action Plan](#) that was announced in March 2021. Two goals are relevant to the Alevi cases:

Action 4.3.a Relevant legislation and practice will be reviewed in line with international human rights standards to guarantee the freedom of religion and conscience in the widest way possible. The Ministry of Justice will realize this goal within a year.

Action 4.4.g. Educational materials will continue to be prepared to include all segments of society, considering the principles of objectivity, impartiality, and pluralism. The Ministry of Education will realize this goal continuously.

Regretfully, however, these action points do not refer to any concrete measures to prevent similar violations from happening. Furthermore, to date, the authorities have not made public any specific and relevant measures that would be taken regarding Action 4.3.a and 4.4.g.

#### *Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey*

The Human Rights Action Plan 2021 refers to the “*continuation of the preparation of education materials in line with neutrality, pluralism and inclusiveness*” under Combatting Hate Discrimination and Hate Speech. However, the Action Plan does not refer to the RCKE courses, the enforcement of the then Zengin groups of cases or exemption from the compulsory RCKE. Therefore, the extent to which the intended work on education materials is relevant for implementing the judgments on the Zengin Group of cases remains unclear.

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<sup>5</sup> Communication from Türkiye: DH-DD(2024)344, March 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Communication from Turkey: DH-DD (2020)493 3 June 2020.

Consequently, the time-specific and urgent follow-up recommendations we propose below are more important and relevant.

While there may be exceptions, generally, domestic courts reject claims that the rejection of exemption claims is contrary to law. The 2017 Court of Cassation decision found that the content of the RCKE course constituted religious culture and religious instruction.<sup>7</sup> In the aftermath of this decision, regional administrative courts have continued to follow this position and rejected exemption claims.<sup>8</sup>

In April 2022, the Turkish Constitutional Court's General Assembly (Anayasa Mahkemesi, AYM hereafter) found in the case of Hüseyin El ve Nazlı Şirin El that Article 24 of the Turkish Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and conscience was violated.<sup>13</sup> The applicants claimed that because the student was denied exemption from the RCKE course, the parent's right to raise their child according to their religious or philosophical views was violated. The individual application was made in 2014. However, the AYM considered this important case only in 2022, with a substantial delay, and did not consider the current RCKE curricula.

The length of proceedings demonstrates that the AYM is not an effective domestic remedy. A transparent criterion on how the agenda of the AYM General Assembly and the different sections are determined is lacking. The president of the AYM is authorised to determine the organisation's agenda. As is evident in the case of Hüseyin El and Nazlı Şirin, the consideration by the AYM can take a long time. The decision may be delivered even after the child graduates high school. In addition, since the consideration of the application takes a long time, the curriculum will likely be revised and changed. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the AYM will deliver a decision on the current curriculum.

Furthermore, we would like to draw the CM's attention to the findings of a recent human-rights-based evaluation of the RCKE lesson textbooks used throughout 4-12<sup>th</sup> Grades in the Turkish education system.<sup>9</sup> We submitted a detailed account of the findings of this report, including excerpts from the textbooks, in our [Submission](#) of 1 March 2021.

As shown below, again, the review demonstrates the incompatibility of the teaching materials with the general measures indicated by the ECtHR as well as the Toledo Guidelines on Teaching About Religions or Belief in Public Schools<sup>10</sup> (Toledo Guidelines) – to which the authorities also allude in their March 2024 Action Plan. Toledo Guidelines offer criteria to consider when teaching **about** religions and beliefs in public schools. Accordingly:

- Teaching about religions and beliefs must be provided in ways that are fair, accurate and based on sound scholarship.
- Preparing curricula, textbooks, and educational materials for teaching about religions and beliefs should consider religious and non-religious views in an inclusive, fair, and

<sup>7</sup> Court of Cassation 8th Chamber, E2015/12002 K2017/8377, 23.11.2017.

<sup>8</sup> See for example, Konya Regional Administrative Court 4th Administrative Chamber E2020/1083 K2020/1389, 22 September 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Yildirim, M. "[Türkiye'de Zorunlu Din Eğitimi: Din Kültürü Ahlak Bilgisi Dersi ve Kitapları Hakkında İnsan Hakları Temelli bir Değerlendirme](#)", Association for Monitoring Equal Rights ESHİD, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, [Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions or Beliefs in Public Schools](#), 2007.

respectful way. Care should be taken to avoid inaccurate or prejudicial material, particularly when this reinforces negative stereotypes.

- Efforts should be made to establish advisory bodies at diverse levels that take an inclusive approach to involving different stakeholders in preparing the curricula.
- Where a compulsory programme involving teaching about religions and beliefs is not sufficiently objective, efforts should be made to revise it to make it more balanced and impartial. However, where this is not possible or cannot be accomplished immediately, recognizing opt-out rights may be a satisfactory solution for parents and pupils, provided that the opt-out arrangements are structured sensitively and non-discriminatory.

### ***Impartial / Non-doctrinal***

Teaching about religions should be carried out impartially, objectively, and non-doctrinally.<sup>11</sup> In the RCKE textbooks, information on the existence and nature of God, the Holy Qur'an, information about the Prophet Mohammad, the formation of the world, the purpose of human beings and life, death, the afterlife, angels and demons are presented from within the Islamic theological outlook and with reference to the doctrines of the religion of Islam in the form of positive propositions. Some examples include:

We learn about angels from the Quran and from the words of Muhammad. Angels protect and care for people, pray for them and seek the well-being of people. Some angels record people's actions. People who believe in the existence of angels stay away from immoral behaviour and have peace of mind knowing that the angels pray for them. (Grade 4 p.33)

Allah sent divine books to guide people to the right path and teach them what they do not know. The last divine book sent by Allah to Muhammad is the Quran. The Quran is the word of Almighty Allah from beginning to end. (4th Grade, p.42)

What are the first things that come to mind when you talk about the hereafter?

Every person dies after living the life set for her / him. Because his mission in this world is over. Nobody can escape death. Even the planets and the whole universe turn upside down and disappear at the right time. Every person who has died until the Day of Judgment, when the life of this world will end, is kept in a world called *barzakh* between the world and the hereafter. Resurrection takes place after the doomsday. All people are resurrected by the order of Allah and gather at the place of Judgment, they are considered by Allah. All he has done while in this world is weighed in the scales of divine justice called trial balance. People now have only one road (*Sirat Bridge*) left. Those who pass the order will enter Paradise with the permission of Allah, and those who cannot enter Hell. (Grade 7 p.23)

Similarly, topics such as heaven and hell, the formation of the universe, the existence of God, the existence of prophets, fortune, destiny, angels, demons are conveyed from within religion by referring to an unquestionable authority, Allah, or the Quran:

When a person dies, his soul is kept in the realm called the *barzakh* between the world and the hereafter until the doomsday comes and resurrection occurs. The Prophet says that death will be the first stop of the person hereafter life's by stating that "The grave is the first of the

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

stops in the hereafter. If someone escapes from that stop, the next stops are easier to pass. If not, it will be more difficult to pass the next ones."

Every person who dies is questioned by the angels of Munker and Nekir in his grave. (Grade 7, p.24)

### ***Inclusive***

RCKE includes information on different religions and Islamic interpretations in separate chapters.

Alevism<sup>12</sup> is discussed in its broadest form in the 5th Chapter titled "Interpretations in Islamic Thought" in the 7th Grade textbook and in the 3rd Chapter titled Sufi Interpretations in the 12th Grade Textbook.

Sufi interpretations are riches that facilitate the understanding of the religion of Islam, reach a wide audience and ensure that different ideas are respected. (Grade 12, p.75)

The brevity of the sections devoted to Alevism in all the RCKE textbooks continues to be a matter of criticism.<sup>13</sup> In addition, it is not stated that the *cemevis*, which are considered places of worship of the Alevi community by this community, are places of worship, and that the Alevi prayer *semah* is a form of worship. According to Yaman,<sup>14</sup> previous criticisms of the books are still valid:

- Content is not supra-denominational, but sectarian. Among the classes 4-12, Sunnism is covered in different sections under the name of sectarianism but, for example, Alevi worship is not included in the worship sections in those books. After the prayer *cem* and fasting, there are no Muharram and Khidr fasts after fasting are not included.
- After explaining Sunni practices in hundreds of pages, content on the Alevi faith is covered in separate sections in 4-6. grades books and 8-11 grades books and they are at the end of year. The logic here is, "first learn the correct practice of belief in Islam, then you can do *cem*, you can do Khidr fast".
- The subject of *semah* is mixed with the Sunni understanding. The Semah is accompanied by the words of Pir Sultan and Alevi, "It is called one of the beautiful names of Allah and one of the most important practices. *Cemevi* is not called a place of worship.
- The sects, which are considered as prohibited due to Law No. 677, are discussed in a separate section (Sufi Interpretations in Islamic Thought). Since Alevism is taught under this Section, it is seen as a prohibited sect. Considering it as a Sufi interpretation is not enough to put it in the same category with Naqshilik and Qadiriyya. Naqshis and Kadiris do not have a Djemevi and a difference of religious understanding like Alevi.

Although information about Christianity and Judaism is included in the textbooks, according to Christian and Jewish theologians in Turkey, the textbook contains inaccuracies or incompatibilities with the basic teachings of Christianity and Judaism. In particular, the

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<sup>12</sup>Bas emir, H. Y. (2011). Din dersleri ve Aleviligin aktarılması (Religious Courses and Instruction of Alevism), *Liberal Thinking*, 16(63), 59- 72.

<sup>13</sup>Yaman, A., "Alevism Education in Public Schools of Turkey", *Religious Diversity at School*, Springer 2021.

<sup>14</sup> This evaluation regarding the Alevism-related parts of RCMK textbooks was made by Prof Dr Ali Yaman. February 11, 2021.

assumption of the Islamic view that their scriptures which constitute the main sources of Christianity and Judaism, "have been tampered with" has a prominent place in the book.

(2) Torah: Hz. It is a divine book sent to Moses. It is the holy book of the Jews. After Moses, Torah was distorted by the Jews and could not preserve its original. Jews call the Torah "Tora". There are verses about the Torah in the Quran. In one of them, the following is stated: "We have sent down the Torah even though there is true guidance and light in it. The prophets devoted to Allah have reigned over Jews with it..." (1) The Torah is also called Ahd-ı Atik (Old Testament). The events of Moses and his tribe play a key role. In addition, this book contains religious and moral orders and prohibitions. According to the determination of Islamic interpreters and researchers, the Torah could not keep the state in which he was sent down to Moses.

(3) The Psalm has been distorted like the Torah and could not preserve the form it descended from Allah. Example: The lies and slanders that Christians invent about Jesus are answered as follows in the Quran. "... Christians said," Jesus Christ is the Son of God. "This is their (lie) words spoken by their mouths. Their words are similar to what people who have previously denied. God damn them. " (MEB Publications, Grade 7, p.36)

Bible: It was revealed to Jesus. The Bible is also called Ahd-ı Cedid (New Testament). The Bible was written years after Jesus. Therefore, the Bible has not survived until today as it came from Almighty Allah. It has undergone many changes in the historical process. ... However, those who wrote the Bible have never seen Jesus. According to our religion, it is obligatory to believe in the way the Torah, Psalms, and the Bible as they were revealed from Allah. (Grade 6, p.22)

In Judaism, Allah, who was named Jehovah, was made the special god of the Jews and Judaism lost its universal character and evolved into a national religion. Christianity has also moved away from the monotheistic belief by placing the trinity (trilogy), consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, at the center of religion. (Grade 4, p.99)

The 5th unit of the 11th grade textbook contains the following information about the scriptures of Judaism:

The scriptures of Judaism are of two groups, written and oral. Written texts; It consists of three parts: Torah (Torah), Nebiim (prophets) and Ketuvim (books). Of these, the Torah was given to Moses and is called Tanakh. The Torah contains the events that took place until the death of Moses and the laws God sent to Moses. However, today's Torah is different from the divine book given to Moses (pbuh). Because the Torah could not preserve its original because it was distorted in later periods. (Grade 11, p.133)

In addition, the following information about Judaism is given:

One of the primary features of Judaism is the idea of a chosen nation. Accordingly, Jews are different and superior to other people. God chose the Jews among other nations to represent His will on earth and made them superior.

Theism, deism, atheism, and agnosticism are discussed in the 4th unit of the RCMK 11th Grade textbook under the heading "Issues Regarding Faith". It is dealt with Islamic

explanations / apologetics on these, and its teachings are not presented objectively. Example:

Islam firmly rejects the deist approach. According to our religion, it is Allah who created the universe and everything in the universe. His dominance over the universe continues all the time. Everything in the universe exists and continues to exist thanks to the infinite might, knowledge and creativity of Allah. (Grade 11, p.102)

Atheism is an understanding contrary to human nature. Because in human nature, belief in Allah is innate. For this reason, even those who claim to be atheists take refuge in Allah when they are in a difficult situation and when they are desperate. (11th Grade, p. 111)

One of the aims of the RCMK program is that students adopt "national values". These values, however, do not consider religious and other diversity in Turkey. Instead, narratives on places of worship, cultural heritage, and traditions of commemorating or celebrating important stages of life ignore the "different ones".

### ***The child's right to freedom of religion or belief***

Every child has the right to freedom of thought, religion and conscience and may exercise this right to the extent of his/her evolving capacity.<sup>15</sup> The child uses his/her right, not through their parents or anyone else. The examples given below demonstrate that children must give the "right" answers (as accepted by the curricula) to doctrinal matters that are not presented objectively and that children are led to certain behaviours as "right" behaviour.

Considering that the RCKE course performance of children will be evaluated through exams, homework, or in-class participation and that the grade they will receive will have a significant effect on their academic life, it is evident that the child must perform by doctrinally approving of the information provided within the course. This exposes the child to conditions in which he or she may have to act against his/her thoughts, conscience, or religion.

It is the name given to all blessings created by Allah for living creatures. What we eat, what we drink, what we wear, knowledge, wisdom, the air we breathe, in short, material and all spiritual needs are evaluated within this scope.

Which of the following is the concept defined?

A) Sustenance B) Will C) Life D) Accident (8th Grade, p.41)

"O Believers! Alcohol, gambling, idols, and fortune-telling are undoubtedly devilish, avoid them so that you can enjoy happiness. " (Maide Sura, verse 90.)

Which of the following cannot be deduced from this verse?

A) Islam prohibits alcohol and gambling.

B) It is stated in the verse that fortune telling, and arrows of chance should be avoided.

C) The religion of Islam wanted people to stay away from things that harm their mental health.

D) It is okay to drink enough to not get drunk. (Grade 8 p.88)

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<sup>15</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12.

Islam shapes our life with its orders and recommendations. It wants our words and actions to be in accordance with these orders and recommendations. It reminds us that even our simple tasks in our daily life are carried out with the permission and name of Allah. Therefore, when we start a job, we will mention the name of Allah (c.c.) by using *basmala*. (4th Grade p.13)

The child is expected to write a prayer:

Write a prayer based on the prayers of the Prophet (Grade 5, p.27).

Read the *Rabbena* prayer and write a prayer in your own words. (Grade 5, p.55)

B. Answer the multiple-choice questions below.

1. Hümeýra: We should pray with the beautiful names of Allah.

Erdem: We should ask for clean and beautiful things.

Dilek: We just must pray for ourselves.

Ibrahim: We must pray in secret and wholeheartedly.

The teacher asked the class "How should we pray?" Which of the students gave the wrong answer to this question?

A) Hümeýra B) Erdem C) Dilek D) Ibrahim (5<sup>th</sup> Grade, p. 34)

The child who does not adopt the idea of creation in her/his world of belief or is raised in a household where his/her parents reject creation, will experience contradiction in the expected answer to the following question:

5. Which of the following statements is false?

A) Beings in the universe came into being by chance.

B) Allah is the creator of everything.

C) Allah knows everything we do.

D) Allah has power over all things. (Grade 5, p.35)

The child is expected to approve statements that amount to accepting religious doctrines:

Ç. Write "T" before the true ones among the information given below and "F" for the wrong ones.

..... The names of 35 prophets are mentioned in the Quran.

..... The verses of the Quran were sent down to the Prophet in the form of a book.

..... The Quran was both written and memorized in the time of our Prophet

..... The Quran is the last divine book sent by Allah.

..... The Quran is a universal book sent to all humanity.

..... All the divine books have survived until today as they were downloaded.

..... Nübüvvet and Risalet are two concepts that mean prophethood. (Grade 6, p.31)

Although not in all new RCKE textbooks, expressions such as "our religion", "our prophet", "our holy book, the Quran," which are signs of a language that teaches religion from within, continue to be used in many books:

Zakat is the fact that a Muslim who is considered rich by our religion gives a certain amount of his property to the needy every year with the intention of worshiping. (4th Grade, p.39)

Ablution is the washing and wiping of certain organs in our body as required by our religion. (4th Grade, p.105)

Example: "Let us know that prayer is an especially important act of worship required in our religion. Let's give importance to fulfil our duty of servitude by praying. Your prayers we perform. It means to appear before Allah, to talk to our Lord, to communicate with him without intermediaries. (MEB Publications, Grade 6 p.35)

Explain the importance of prayer in our religion with verses and hadiths. Why do we pray? Explain. (Grade 6, p.62)

### ***The right of parents to raise their children in line with their own religious or philosophical views***

The doctrinal information set out above may not be compatible with some parents' religious or philosophical views. The formation process of the universe and human beings and the purpose of human existence are subjects about which many religions, beliefs or thought systems offer explanations. Therefore, the doctrinal teachings, examples of which are given above, are incompatible with the obligation of states to respect the right of parents to raise their children in line with their religious and philosophical convictions.

As demonstrated above, the content of RCKE textbooks continues to have elements that do not comply with a neutral, objective, and inclusive teaching about religions in public schools. **Beyond the volume of the "space allocated to Islam or sects within Islam, different traditions and to other religions or beliefs" in the teaching content, how they are presented is the most crucial factor that determines the quality of the course.**

**The content of the RCKE textbooks interferes with both the freedom of thought, religion, and conscience of the child and the right of parents to raise their children in line with their own religious or philosophical views.** Throughout grades 4-12, the child is exposed to this religious education for a significant part of his/her teaching life and must fulfill his/her homework and/or exam responsibilities for course evaluation. The performance requirement increases the impact and prevalence of this interference.

As shown above, the current teaching materials of the compulsory RCKE course constitute religious education/instruction and not objective teaching about religions. Therefore, the course cannot be compulsory under international human rights law. If it is compulsory, a non-discriminatory exemption procedure must be adopted. Turkish authorities have not put in place a non-discriminatory exemption mechanism extended to all who wish to be exempt from the RCKE course without declaring their religion or belief.

As a result of the non-implementation of the ECtHR judgments on the Zengin group of cases, potentially thousands of students' and their parents' rights at the intersection of freedom of religion or belief (Article 9) in the context of education (Article 2 Protocol I) continue to be violated.



### *İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey*

The Government has not yet taken sufficient measures to address the central findings of the *İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey* judgement. The glaring “imbalance between the applicants’ situation and that of persons who benefit from the religious public service” (*İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey*, para. 180) and the “lack of recognition of the religious nature of the Alevi faith, resulting from an assessment of that faith” (*İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey*, para. 92) remains. The significant restrictions on the manifestation of religion or belief in practice for Sufi orders remain in force.

***Establishment of the Presidency of the Alevi Bektashi Culture and Cemevi*** - As also indicated in the 2024 Action Plan provided by the Government in November 2022, the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis (the Presidency) for the Alevi religious minority was set up under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism through a presidential decree with a mandate to carry out cultural research and oversee cemevis.<sup>16</sup>

The mandate of the Presidency includes:

- to carry out activities to determine the needs of the cemevis and coordinate the effective implementation of the services in cemevis
- Execute measures for allocating funds to local governments or presidencies on monitoring and coordination to ensure that services needed by the cemevi are provided.
- and to carry out scientific studies regarding Alevism and Bektashism.<sup>17</sup>

The agency will have an advisory committee of 11 members, all of which will be selected by the president.<sup>18</sup>

The Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis will oversee the cemevis across the country and cover their expenses, such as water and electricity.

While it is still not clear how the Presidency and its relationship and provision of services to cemevis will be operationalised, President Erdoğan’s explanation in a speech in October 2022 envisions the management of cemevi by the Presidency:

The Alevi Bektashi Culture and Cemevi Presidency will manage all the cemevis affiliated to mukhtars, associations, municipalities, and federations. All work, from cemevi services to educational activities, will be carried out under this institutional structure with the support and supervision of public assurance.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Presidential Decree no 112, Official Gazette no. 32008, 9 November 2022.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, article 3/1.

<sup>18</sup> *Supra* 16, article 3/2.

<sup>19</sup> Anadolu Agency, [Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Alevi-Bektashi Kültür ve Cemevi Başkanlığı kuracağız](#), 7 October 2022.

The description of operationalisation above is extremely concerning since it will compel cemevi to become institutionally and hierarchically linked to the Presidency to benefit from services.

Many Alevi groups have opposed the establishment of the Presidency under the Ministry of Culture, which they say is the continuation of the government's denial of recognition of the Alevis as a separate religious group from the Sunni Muslim majority, rather than a cultural group.

Several Alevi groups and MPs gathered outside the Grand National Assembly to protest the vote.<sup>20</sup> A statement that read in the name of the group said, "The Alevi issue cannot be solved by items like basic expenses. Cemevis, which are the worshiping places of Alevis, are made to look problematic with this law."<sup>21</sup> The Great Alevi Congress for Secular and Democratic Türkiye was held in December 2022, and the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis was rejected by statements made in the name of the seven Alevi Bektashi umbrella organisations; Alevi Bektaşî Federasyonu, Avrupa Alevi Birlikleri Konfederasyonu, Alevi Dernekleri Federasyonu, Hacı Bektaşî Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı, Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği, Demokratik Alevi Dernekleri.<sup>22</sup> The adopted Declaration of the Congress rejected the Presidency and called for, among others:

- the recognition of cemevis' status as places of worship and granting all the rights that come with this status;
- the abolishment of the mandatory Religious Culture and Knowledge of Ethics lessons;
- the adoption of measures for the liquidation of the Presidency of Religious Affairs;

Reportedly, the consultation process leading to the establishment of the Presidency did not include the inclusion of the three main Alevi Federations, namely, Alevi Bektaşî Federasyonu, Alevi Vakıfları Federasyonu and Alevi Dernekleri Federasyonu'ndan.<sup>23</sup>

Historically the Alevis were subjected to atrocities, most notably the 1978 Maraş Massacre, the 1980 Çorum Massacre, the 1993 Sivas Massacre and the 1996 Gazi Massacre.

The Regulation of the Advisory Board of the Presidency was published in January 2024. This advisory board will monitor the work of the Presidency and make recommendations about its work (Article 5). Despite these essential functions, it is alarming that there is no transparent or public information regarding the selection of the members of the Advisory Board which is yet to be established.

**Legislative changes** – Several legislative amendments have been made to make it possible to provide state subsidies and benefits to cemevi. However, they fail to recognise the religious

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<sup>20</sup> Rudaw, [Erdoğan: Alevi-Bektaşî Kültür ve Cemevi Başkanlığı kuruldu](#), 9 November 2022.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> [Alevi Dernekleri Federasyonu Başkanı Fırat: "Alevi cumhurbaşkanı olmaz diyorlar. Bal aibi olur](#), Politik Yok, 25 December 2022.

<sup>23</sup> [Alevi Vakıfları Federasyonu Başkanı Doğan: Alevilik bir kültür değil, inançtır; Alevilerle ilgili bir birim oluşturulacaksa direkt Cumhurbaşkanlığı'na bağlanmalıdır](#), T24, 2 October 2022.

nature of the Alevi faith. This is evident in the fact that, as shown below, the relevant provisions refer to cemevi as a separate category than places of worship.

- Article 1 of Presidential Decree no. 144 on the System Usage Costs Associated with Natural Gas Consumption promulgated on 1 May 2023 includes the following provision: “The objective of this Presidential Decree is to set out the rules and procedures regarding the coverage of the system usage costs and other sums associated with the natural gas consumption of domicile, **place of worship** and **cemevi** subscribers by the budget of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.”
- Law no. 742 includes a new sub-paragraph to Article 6 of the Special Provincial Administration Law (Law no. 5302) regarding the construction, maintenance, and repair of cemevis. “(Additional paragraph: Added on 16 November 2022 by Article 15 of the Law no. 7421) Special provincial administration may construct, maintain and repair **temples**, cultural and natural heritage, historical texture and places of importance in terms of urban history and **cemevis** within the provincial borders.”
- 29. Law no. 7421 includes the Additional Article 10 to the Urban Planning Law (Law no. 3194) regarding the allocation of space for cemevis in the preparation of zoning plans: “Additional Article 10- (Added on 16 November 2022 by Article 8 of the Law no. 7421) In the preparation of zoning plans, the necessary cemevi places shall be allocated by taking into account the conditions and future needs of the planned town and region. In provinces and districts, **cemevis** may be built provided that the permission of the local administrative authority is obtained and that they comply with the zoning legislation. Cemevi places may not be allocated for other purposes in violation of the zoning legislation.”

Whereas in the Urban Planning Law no 3194 under Additional Article 2 it is already stated that “in the preparation of zoning plans, necessary places of worship” will be allocated. Therefore by not including the cemevi under the “place of worship” category and introducing it as a separate category their status is not recognised on par with other places of worship such as mosques, churches and sinagogs, and the religious nature of the Alevi faith and its place of worship is not recognised.

Law no. 7421 introduced a new sub-paragraph to Article 7 of the Metropolitan Municipality Law (Law no. 5216) regarding the construction and maintenance of cemevis. Under the responsibilities and duties of the Metropolitan Municipalities the following is introduced:

“bb) (Added on 16 November 2022 by Article 14 of the Law no. 7421) To construct buildings and facilities for cemevis when necessary, to carry out all kinds of maintenance and repair of these buildings and facilities and to provide the necessary material support.

g) (Added on 16 November 2022 by Article 14 of the Law no. 7421) Construction, maintenance and repair of cemevis”

It is important to note that municipalities do not have duties under the same law to construct places of worship and consequently, again, cemevi are categorised in a different way than worship places. The construction of municipalities is also dependent on the permission of the local administrative authority.

Furthermore, if and when municipalities construct cemevi the ownership of these, the allocation of them to Alevi community as well as the management and use of the cemevi raise important questions and may even risk controls being established over the Alevi communities. For example, in August 2023 the Maltepe Cemevi Association declared that the Maltepe Municipality considered them occupiers and opened a court case against them thus blocking their bank accounts.<sup>24</sup> The construction of the Maltepe Cemevi was completed by the Maltepe Municipality and then allocated to the use of the Alevi community. There is a lack of framework that ensures the autonomy of the Alevi community.

26. With Law no. 7421, a new Article was added to the Electricity Market Law (Law no. 6446). Additional Article 6 of Law no. 6446 regarding the lighting costs of cemevis now reads:

“The lighting expenses of cemevis shall be covered by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.”

The lighting expenses of places of worship are paid by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, again a different category is used for cemevi by making the payments through the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. An objective criteria for this differential treatment is not put forward by the authorities.

***Alevi religious leaders and teachers*** – The legal restrictions on the use of the Alevi religious title, “dede” remains in place although in practice it is not enforced. Furthermore, steps to provide funds for Alevi communities to pay the salaries of their leaders and teachers have not been put in place. As stated in the Action Plan provided by the Turkish authorities, “employment of contracted personnel at the posts of the Alevi-Bektashi Cemevi Leader and the Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevi Expert” was added to “Procedures Related to Employment of Contracted Personnel” by the Presidential Decree no. 6364 on the “Procedures for Amendment of the Procedures Related to the Employment of Contracted Personnel” which was promulgated in the Official Gazette no. 32008 dated 9 November 2022. However, the implication of this provision is yet to be seen. A significant group among the Alevi community object to being compelled to become staff of the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevi under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The formula used to financially support the Alevi religious leaders must not amount to interference in the internal affairs of the religious community.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The non-implementation of the ECtHR judgments on the Alevi cases continues to have a negative impact on the right to freedom of religion or belief of millions of Alevis, including children, in Türkiye. Alevi faith is not recognized, do not receive public religious services despite paying taxes that are directed to the budget of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, *cemevis* where Alevis worship are not recognized as places of worship and thus cannot

---

<sup>24</sup> Artigerçek, [Maltepe Cemevi inşaatına dair belediyenin actığı 'haksız işgal' davasının duruşması varın](#), 20 April 2022.

benefit from privileges, Alevi parents cannot raise their children in line with their religious views and children's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is interfered with.

About the *Mansur Yalçın and Others v Turkey* case, in light of the delay in enforcement, the systematic nature of the non-compliance and the great number of pupils and parents affected by the failure to enforce the judgement, **we strongly recommend that the Committee of Ministers adopt an interim resolution urging Turkish authorities to comply with the ECtHR judgements** – in particular, by remedying the shortcomings in the current arrangements.

We also recommend that the Committee of Ministers requests the Turkish government

- to inform the CM about any work on the implementation of the judgement;
- to take steps to implement non-discriminatory exemptions;
- to provide statistics on the exemption applications made by parents and first degree and high domestic court decisions taken on the denial of exemption claims;
- to start an inclusive, open, and transparent consultation process before revising the compulsory Religious Culture and Ethics lessons curricula and books;
- to provide a new Action Plan with a timetable, setting out plans to bring about these changes.

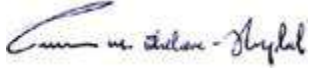
Regarding *İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey* case we recommend that the Committee of Ministers requests the Turkish authorities:

- to start an inclusive consultation process, with the participation of relevant civil society organisations to address the freedom of religion or belief issues raised by the judgement, specifically on how public religious services could be provided to the Alevi community;
- to enact draft legislation to enable religious or belief communities to acquire legal personality, as such, in line with Article 9 and Article 11 of the ECHR and the OSCE/VC Joint Guidelines on Legal Personality of Religious or Belief Communities;
- to ensure that equality and neutrality are observed in religious public services and the allocation of public funds and recognition of places of worship;
- to revise legislation that does not recognize the religious nature of the Alevi faith;
- to take measures to address the restrictions on the right to freedom of religion or belief of the Alevi community, including the lifting of the prohibitions on the use of religious titles and recognizing the status of *cemevis*.

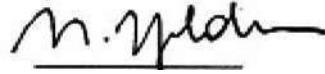
Finally, we kindly request that the CM re-examine the cases in December 2024.

We call on the CM to request the authorities to prepare a speedy timetable for the measures to be put in place and that the CM review the implementation of the timetable soon, given the extensive delays already involved in these cases.

Sincerely yours,



Gunnar M. Ekelove-Slydal  
Deputy Secretary General



Dr. Mine Yildirim  
Head of the Freedom of Belief Initiative



Dr. Haydar Baki Doğan  
AVF President



Doğan Bermek  
Alevi Philosophy Association  
President



Mustafa Aslan  
Alevi Bektashi Federation  
President



Nejat Taştan  
Eşit Haklar İçin İzleme Derneği  
President



Zahide Beyda Tıraş Öneri  
Human Rights Agenda Association  
President

**SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT**

SECRETARIAT OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS  
SECRÉTARIAT DU COMITÉ DES MINISTRES

COMMITTEE  
OF MINISTERS  
COMITÉ  
DES MINISTRES



Contact: Zoë Bryanston-Cross  
Tel: 03.90.21.59.62

Date: 16/05/2024

**DH-DD(2024)551**

Documents distributed at the request of a Representative shall be under the sole responsibility of the said Representative, without prejudice to the legal or political position of the Committee of Ministers.

Meeting: 1501<sup>st</sup> meeting (June 2024) (DH)

Reply from the authorities (14/05/2024) following communications from NGOs (10/04/2024, 22/04/2024, 24/04/2024) concerning the case of IZZETTIN DOGAN AND OTHERS v. Turkey (Application No. 62649/10).

Information made available under Rule 9.6 of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of the execution of judgments and of the terms of friendly settlements.

\* \* \* \* \*

Les documents distribués à la demande d'un/e Représentant/e le sont sous la seule responsabilité dudit/de ladite Représentant/e, sans préjuger de la position juridique ou politique du Comité des Ministres.

Réunion : 1501<sup>e</sup> réunion (juin 2024) (DH)

Réponse des autorités (14/05/2024) suite à des communications d'ONG (10/04/2024, 22/04/2024, 24/04/2024) relative à l'affaire IZZETTIN DOGAN ET AUTRES c. Turquie (requête n° 62649/10)

**[anglais uniquement]**

Informations mises à disposition en vertu de la Règle 9.6 des Règles du Comité des Ministres pour la surveillance de l'exécution des arrêts et des termes des règlements amiables.

May, 2024

DGI

14 MAI 2024

SERVICE DE L'EXECUTION  
DES ARRETS DE LA CEDH

**THE GOVERNMENT OF TÜRKİYE'S RESPONSE TO THE**  
**RULE 9.2 SUBMISSIONS IN THE CASES OF**  
***İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Türkiye (62649/10)***  
***and***  
***Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Türkiye (21163/11)***

1. The Government of Türkiye would like to make the following explanations concerning the submissions of the NGO “Alevi Philosophy Center Association (ADO)” dated 10 April 2024, the NGO “Norwegian Helsinki Committee” dated 22 April 2024 and the NGOs “Alevi Bektaşî Federation, Alevi Philosophy Association, Federation of Alevi Foundations, Association for Monitoring Equal Rights, Human Rights Agenda Association, Norwegian Helsinki Committee” dated 24 April 2024.
2. At the outset, the Government would like to reiterate the information provided in their previous submissions in particular the Action Plan dated 28 March 2024. The Government also finds it useful to provide the following information.
3. The authorities reiterate that the current reform process is capable of remedying all the shortcomings identified by the Court found in the case of *İzzettin Doğan and Others*.
4. These new developments include series of reforms such as establishment of the Presidency of Alevi Bektashi Culture and Cemevis within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and other legislative amendments put in force.
5. To elaborate, on 9 November 2022 the Presidency of Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevis (“the Presidency”) was established under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism through the Presidential Decree no. 112 which amended Presidential Decree no. 1.
6. The Presidency is tasked; to carry out works for determining the needs of cemevis and to coordinate the cemevi services to ensure that they are effective and efficient, to carry out works and procedures related to the transfer of funds to local administrations and investment monitoring and coordination directorates to ensure provision of the cemevi services determined by the Presidency, to conduct social and human sciences researches regarding all the aspects of Alevism-Bektashism and to organise seminars, symposiums, conferences and similar national and international events on these subjects, to prepare a suitable environment for the production of original studies, to publish and support studies conducted in this field, to co-operate with universities and other relevant institutions and organisations to support academic studies on Alevism-Bektashism, to conduct scientific



May, 2024

researches on Alevism-Bektashism both domestically and abroad, and to compile and support such researches, to follow up both national and international institutes' and organisations' scientific studies and publications within the scope of their field of duty, and to ensure that the necessary ones are translated, printed and published, to conduct and support educational and cultural activities about Alevism -Bektashism and to perform other duties assigned by the Minister.

7. The Presidency has carried out a number of activities in line with its duties since its establishment and details to this end were provided in the recent Action Plan submitted by the authorities.
8. Concerning the legislative amendments put in place within the scope of the recent reform process; by virtue of the legislative amendments of 16 November 2022 introduced by the Law no. 7421 (entered into force on 26 November 2022), the shortcomings indicated in the Court's judgment have been remedied.
9. These amendments introduced provisions resolving the issues concerning the lighting costs of cemevis, ensuring that the Alevi-Bektashi people enjoy State subsidies and other benefits such as construction and maintenance of cemevis, employment of contracted personnel at the posts of the Alevi Bektashi Cemevi Leader and the Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevi Expert.
10. Further detailed information on these legislative amendments and that of the practical impact of these amendments was also provided in the most recent Action plan submitted by the authorities.
11. Concerning the issued raised by the Court in the case of in ***Mansur Yalçın and Others***; the authorities indicate that Türkiye acts in line with the TOLEDO Guiding Principles in the religious culture and ethics knowledge (RCE) lessons and concerns all beliefs and world views objectively and in line with the principles of pluralism. Accordingly, the RCE lessons are provided within the framework of the following principles: *"If the compulsory RCE lesson is objective in public schools, then it is in compliance with freedom of religion and belief. Wider coverage may be given to the religion prevailing in a place where education of religion and belief is provided. If Religious Culture and Ethics education is provided in an objective way, the issue as to whether it is compulsory or elective does not constitute a problem. Curriculum should be fact-based, impartial and in line with academic and occupational standards."* In line with the TOLEDO Guiding Principles, information concerning religions and Islam is given with a supra-denominational

May, 2024

understanding and with an objective approach in the textbooks. In the content of the RCE courses, considering the development levels of the students, the main issues in the field of religion and morality are dealt with objectively with a theological approach based on the basic resources. It is not the aim of the course to impose or dictate any religious practice. This course prioritizes enlightenment/acculturation about religion and morality. Therefore, a kind of denominational religious education is not given in this course. On the contrary a way of informing and acculturation is taken as a basis.

12. As a result, the authorities note that the curricula of the RCE lessons in Türkiye is prepared in compliance with the principles of scientificity, pedagogy, and legal compliance. In this respect, objective contents are provided within the textbooks without any discrimination in terms of beliefs. This situation presents the impartial, objective, and scientific attitude of Turkish education system.
13. Lastly, the Turkish authorities observe that, in the rule 9.2 communications in question, there are speculations on issues falling outside the scope of the findings of the Court in the present cases. The Turkish authorities find it unnecessary to comment on these issues that are of speculative nature.
14. The Government of Türkiye kindly invites the Committee of Ministers to take into consideration the above-mentioned explanations within the scope of the execution of the present groups of cases.
15. The Committee of Ministers will be duly informed on further developments in these cases.



**DGI Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law Department for the  
Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR**

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
FRANCE

Email: DGI-Execution@coe.int

İstanbul 13.May.2024

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **In accordance with Rule 9.2. of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers regarding the supervision of the execution of judgments and of terms of friendly settlements**

#### **1. Introduction.**

The Turkish Ministry of Education has published a new curriculum for pre-school, primary and secondary education to be applied from the school year 2024-25 under the title "Education Model for the Next Century".

The proposed draft, which is over 3000 pages includes 26 (syllabus) curricula, was opened to public debates just for a week, which was extended to 11 days after very strong protests complaining about the lack of time.

#### **2. Summary,**

Although the new curriculum is facing very serious criticism from education experts, teachers' syndicates and civil society actors, the main points that may affect our area of interest in relation with ECtHR judgment 21163/11 are as follows:

- The new curriculum is designed to increase the number of religious lessons by reorganizing selective lessons into curricula. Especially in the middle level students are forced to have 6 hours of elective lessons every week and at least one of the electives must be from the religious education group (religion - beliefs and values).

- This move effectively doubles the hours of compulsory religious instruction in the country's education system, in stark contrast to the ECtHR and Turkish Constitutional Court judgments and CoM decisions of the 1468<sup>th</sup>. session.

- This move effectively doubles the hours of compulsory religious lessons in the country's education system in a major contrast with the judgment and CoM decisions of 1468<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The new model includes many other points that have been criticized by various education staff syndicates such as Eđitim-Sen <https://egitimsen.org.tr/> many NGOs and ERG- Educational Reform Initiative <https://www.egitimreformugirisimi.org/> , which was formed by major business groups and has been closely monitoring the education system since 2003.





Translations of a recent statement from a prominent Education Syndicate (Egitim-Sen) (Att:1) and a monitoring report of ERG about the new curriculum are attached to our submission (Att:2).

### 3. Conclusion

While we are only a few weeks away from the CoM meeting, which will also discuss the long-standing issue of compulsory religious education in Turkey, this action by the Ministry of Education is clearly in contradiction with the rulings of the Turkish Constitutional Court and the ECHR judgment 21163/11, and it is interesting that while the Ministry of Education claims that this curriculum has been in preparation for the last 10 years, the action plan submitted on April 28<sup>th</sup> did not even mention such a preparation.

We are quite disturbed by this unexpected development and wanted to bring the situation to the attention of the Execution Department and Committee of Ministers.

Kindest regards

Dogan Bermek

Attachment 1- A recent statement from an educational staff syndicate (EGITIM SEN)

Attachment 2- An analytical report of ERG prepared in a very short time.



## **Attachment 1 - Translation of a prominent educational staff syndicate (Egitim-Sen) declaration:**

<https://egitimsen.org.tr/iktidarini-siyasi-programina-paralel-hazirlanan-laiklik-ve-bilim-karsiti-yeni-mufredati-reddediyoruz/>

### **We Reject the New Curriculum against Secularism and Science, Prepared in Parallel to the Political Program of the Government!**

May 2, 2024

Last Friday, the Ministry of National Education (MNE) published a draft of new amendments to the curriculum, which had been changed twice before, in 2006 and 2017.

Curriculum amendments are important and important regulations concerning the content of the courses to be taught in preschool, primary, middle and high schools, and are of concern to the whole society. Normally, the content of curriculum changes should be determined by discussing all aspects of the proposed changes with the opinions of scientists, educational scientists and education unions. However, what the MoNE has been trying to do from the beginning to the end of the process has been to act as if it is 'as if it is running away from a fire' on such an important issue that closely concerns the present and future of the country.

In terms of the education system, the process of determining and selecting the knowledge to be imparted to students and the process of transferring it to students through curricula and textbooks is political from beginning to end.

The most concrete aspect of the adaptation of the education curriculum to the political-ideological line of the government, rather than the real needs of children, youth, society and the country, is what information will be given in schools, how, through which tools and examples. The current government has prepared the curriculum according to how it approaches the child or the individual, what kind of human model it wants to raise, and what characteristics it wants the individuals it raises to have.

Let us remember what they said:

- We want to raise a religious and spiteful generation. (R.T. Erdoğan)
- Secularism should be removed from the Constitution (Parliament Speaker)
- We will continue to make protocols with institutions that you call sects and we call NGOs (sect-sect extensions). (Minister Yusuf Tekin)
- Diyanet will not only provide religious services, but will also assume important responsibilities in raising the generation of my generation. (President)
- Within the scope of ÇEDES; young volunteers will meet with child volunteers (Abla-Abi-Diyanet)
- We made an explanation as a curriculum trick (Biology - the constituents of the curriculum)
- We said there is not a single faith or sect in this country, abolish compulsory religion classes. 3 more elective (compulsory) classes were introduced (AKP).
- The principles of educational science were destroyed. The content of history, philosophy and biology courses was narrowed step by step. (AKP)
- Anatolian high schools were abolished. Now they have abolished project schools. The only project schools left are science high schools and İ.H.L. (AKP-Yusuf Tekin)

While secular and scientific education is pushed to the background in curriculum changes, 'national and spiritual values' are at the center of all textbooks. The emphasis on national and spiritual values is used to cover up all the inequalities created. The primary goal of the MoNE is to transfer the political ideology of the government to students explicitly and implicitly through the curriculum and textbooks.

The fact that the title of the draft curriculum is "Turkey's Century Education Model" confirms this observation.

Is that all?

- Why is the name *maarif* and not education (the language used is meant to break the link between the republic and enlightenment)
- Religious and suggestive, not scientific (The approach of determining lifestyles through religious suggestions is dominant)
- Close to dogmatic and patriarchal thinking, far from science and gender equality.
- Close to religious values of uniformization and assimilation, far from pluralism, universal and democratic values.
- Prone to obedience to authority, far from critical thinking and questioning.

And we are faced with a curriculum whose preparation processes were not carried out in accordance with the educational programming method (1000 people, workshops, etc.). Of course we do not accept this curriculum as it is. It must be withdrawn immediately. Minister Yusuf Tekin should also resign.

In addition to the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which the Ministry of National Education has opened a field of activity within the education system through projects and protocols such as ÇEDES and similar projects, religious foundations and communities with economic and political ties to the government have surrounded the entire education system like a spider web with the direct support of the government through schools, dormitories, courses, etc.

MoNE's 'new curriculum' is designed to raise generations that do not think, question, criticize or object. While many points related to scientific education in the curricula have been carefully 'simplified' or 'weeded out', it is understood that they want to create a 'religious' and 'national' curriculum by placing all the goals of the one-man regime in the textbooks through explicit and implicit (hidden) goals and values.

We do not criticize the curriculum changes only from a pedagogical point of view, and we do not evaluate the changes made in the course contents based on the basic principles of educational science. Today, we are faced with an education curriculum that has been prepared in line with the political program of the government, rather than technical changes to the curriculum. Therefore, our criticism of the new curriculum is not only technical and pedagogical, but also political.

We know from the 4+4+4 process that the human model that the AKP wants in its social imagination is behind the times and does not coincide with scientific facts, and that it has a bad record in the field of education. Therefore, we do not accept this curriculum change that will create irreparable negativity in the education of children. We reject the anti-secularism and anti-science curriculum that pursues the political-ideological goals of the political power and is based on the model of society that the one-man regime is trying to create. We also call on the Minister of National Education Yusuf Tekin, who prepared and published this curriculum, to resign.

The new education curriculum, which is mingled with individualism, nationalism, religious and national values and rivalry, shallow in terms of science, art and aesthetics, and uses a language based largely on religious rules and references, has nothing to offer to our children and students. The curriculum must be secular, scientific and multilingual, based on the mother tongue, and include learning experiences that will serve the multifaceted development of children and young people, aiming to provide students with an understanding of life as a whole.

# Educ at ion Suspen ded

*the education reform initiative*

**REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE MINISTRY OF  
NATIONAL EDUCATION'S DRAFT PROGRAMS**

May 2024

## Table of Contents

<b>About ERG</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>General Status and Basic Needs of Education in Turkey</b>	<b>5</b>
Current Status	5
Basic Needs	6
<b>Curriculum Evaluation Framework</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Program Development and Opinion Giving Process and Procedure</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Basic Philosophical Approach</b>	<b>9</b>
Education Model and Values Education	9
Human Target to be Trained	10
<b>Content</b>	<b>10</b>
Concepts	11
Inclusive Education	11
Gender Equality	12
Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy	13
<b>Student</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Skill-Based Approach</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Measurement and Evaluation</b>	<b>17</b>
Lack of Pilot Implementation	17
Applicability of Curricula	17
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Source</b>	<b>23</b>



## About ERG

The Education Reform Initiative (ERI) is an independent, non-profit initiative that contributes to the structural transformation of education for the development of children and society through quality data, constructive dialogue and the creation of common sense from different views. The main elements of structural transformation are that decision-making processes in education should be based on data, should be realized with the participation of stakeholders, and that every child's access to quality education should be guaranteed.

Founded in 2003, ERG is a good example for Turkish civil society as it is an initiative supported by Turkey's leading foundations.

ERG carries out its work through its Education Observatory and Education Laboratory units and is the coordinator of the Teacher Network.

ERG is supported by the Mother Child Education Foundation, Aydın Doğan Foundation, Borusan Kocabiyik Foundation, Elginkan Foundation, ENKA Foundation, MV Holding, Sabancı University, Tekfen Foundation, Vehbi Koç Foundation and Yapı Merkezi.

**KURUMSAL  
DESTEKÇİLER**



Burcu Meltem Arık, Kayıhan Nedim Kesbiç, Ekin Gamze Gencer, Şeyma Dağistan Terzi, Özgenur Korlu, Günalp Turan, Helin Su Kotan, Umay Aktaş Salman, Yaprak Sarıışık, Serdar Güneri, İrmak Akıncı Canbaz

## Thank you

ERI consulted with respected academics, field experts and civil society organizations, recognizing that it is important to evaluate programs holistically and that this should be done from the perspectives of different disciplines. During the preparation of this document, the following experts and organizations were consulted and their opinions were sought in their areas of work and expertise. Teachers were also consulted. This report has been prepared by the ERG team following the feedback received, and ERG bears full responsibility for its preparation. The experts and civil society organizations consulted will see this report in its entirety together with the public.

Education in Disaster Sharing Group  
Mother Child Education Foundation  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayse Nur Kutluca  
Canbulat Science Academy  
Science Academy Young Scientists  
Prof. Dr. Çağatay Tavşanoğlu  
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology  
Association EŞİK - Women's Platform  
for Equality Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emre Er  
Prof. Dr. Emre Erdoğan  
Dr. Esin Düzel  
Gozde Durmus  
Prof. Dr. Güliz Karaarslan Semiz  
Gülsün Kaya  
Prof. Dr. İpek Gürkaynak  
Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali Alpar  
Assoc. Dr. Mehmet Toran  
Dr. Melis Cin  
Melisa Soran  
Prof. Dr. Mustafa Sever  
Prof. Dr. Lecturer Ahmet Faik Kurtulmuş  
Teacher Network  
Prof. Dr. Ömer Kutlu  
Prof. Dr. Orhan Yenigün  
Dr. Selçuk Doğan  
Assoc. Prof. Dr.  
Serhat Süral Assoc.  
Prof. Dr. Serkan  
Özel Dr. Sinem Hızlı  
Alkan Sinem Sefa  
Akay  
Dr. Ulaş Karan  
Prof. Dr. Yelkin Diker Coşkun  
Prof. Dr. Zeynep Aycan

## Presentation

Curricula and textbooks should contribute to students internalizing democratic values and becoming active citizens who respect human rights and pluralism. They should be diverse and adaptable to meet the different interests and needs of students.

In order to prevent curricula from becoming a subject of contention or taking sides, they should be finalized through an inclusive, democratic consensus. In the current situation, although it is stated that public opinion is consulted during the updating of the curricula, it is unclear how and to what extent the opinions received are utilized.

Following the media coverage in the summer that the curricula would be revised, ERI aimed to use our experience in bringing together teachers, academics, experts and civil society representatives, and our active stakeholder network to evaluate the draft curricula. However, the insufficient time allotted made it impossible to establish review committees, conduct in-depth evaluations, and prepare holistic and inclusive reports. This report presents the results of the initial and rapid evaluation of the draft new curricula, which was suspended for a short period of one week.

Our aim is to contribute to ensuring that curricula and all policy decisions and changes related to education are not made within the framework of narrow conflicts, but within the framework of the basic approach that all children's right to education is guaranteed and that they receive a quality education.

ERI's views and recommendations are based on the assumption that the education system can be improved with wisdom, patience and common solutions. Therefore, we demand that the Ministry of National Education allow sufficient time for feedback and implement a scientific, transparent and inclusive program development and evaluation process.

Sincerely,

Erdal  
Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Education Reform  
Initiative

YildirimBuket Sonmez  
Director  
InitiativeEducation Reform

## General Status and Basic Needs of Education in Turkey

Curricula cannot be evaluated independently from the educational ecosystem of which<sup>1</sup> they are a part. The success of these programs depends as much on their relationship with the ecosystem as on the extent to which they can respond to current needs. It is often the weakening of the responsiveness of existing programs to the problems in educational ecosystems that creates the need for a new curriculum. In this context, the primary step in both curriculum development and curriculum evaluation is to identify the current state and basic needs of the educational ecosystem.

### Current Status

There are 19 million 162 thousand 29 children in the 3-17 age group in Turkey.<sup>2</sup> For these children, the education system provides early childhood education services for the 3-5 age group, and compulsory education services for children in the 6-17 age group at the primary school (6-9 years), secondary school (10-13 years) and secondary education (14-17 years) levels. A total of 1,154,383 teachers work at all these levels. Although there is no precise information on the number of parents, the fact that there is at least one child in 26 million 75 thousand 365 households may give an idea of the size of the parent population. **When all these data are considered together, it can be said that more than half of the country's population is directly involved in education services. Considering the impact of education systems on social life and the future, this number increases exponentially. In other words, the decisions taken in the education system directly or indirectly affect almost everyone. This situation requires that all decisions regarding education be taken in a participatory, transparent and accountable manner.**

To summarize the current state of education in Turkey, enrollment rates by age, proficiency levels in PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) 2022, and teachers' views on the value society places on their profession in TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) 2018 can be used as indicators. Enrollment rates by age show what proportion of children at a given age level are enrolled in an educational institution. Proficiency levels in PISA 2022 provide an understanding of the cognitive skills of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science. Teacher opinions in TALIS 2022 allow inferences to be drawn about teachers' job satisfaction.

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<sup>1</sup> ERG prefers to use the term "curriculum" rather than "curriculum" as it refers to a network of specific elements and the dynamic relationships between these elements. Throughout this report, the terms "program" and "curriculum" are used interchangeably,

It is used to describe a collection of 27 different documents released on April 26, 2024. Where the curriculum of a particular subject is mentioned, it is mentioned in the text. As mentioned in the previous section, due to time constraints, the evaluations largely focus on the "common text" document.

<sup>2</sup>TurkStat, February 6, 2024.

Looking at enrollment rates by age, the 3-5 age group has the lowest rate with 52.2%.<sup>3</sup> Preschool education, which is not part of compulsory education but was emphasized as free of charge by the MoNE in previous years, started to be charged as a contribution from parents with the amendment<sup>4</sup> made in 2023.<sup>5</sup> The enrollment rates of other age groups in order of size are as follows: 14-17 age group (94.5%), 10-13 age group (98.4%), 6-9 age group (98.6%). **The fact that enrollment rates by age have not reached 100% even at these levels of compulsory education means that there are problems in access to education, which is the first step towards the right to quality education.** According to 2023 data, approximately 442,643 children of Turkish citizens are out of education.<sup>6</sup> When approximately 454,872 children defined as "foreign nationals" are added to this number, the total number approaches 900,000.<sup>7</sup> ERI's monitoring studies conducted since 2007 show that groups such as girls, children with disabilities, working children, children whose mother tongue is not Turkish, and rural children are at high risk of being out of education.

The PISA 2022 results indicate that 18.5% of 15-year-old students in Turkey, almost one in every five students, do not have basic competencies in the three core subjects measured by PISA (reading, mathematics and science).<sup>8</sup> **The fact that such a high proportion of these students, who have been in education for at least eight years, have not even reached the basic proficiency level is an important sign that there are problems in the education system regarding attainment.**

According to the TALIS 2018 survey, 26.7% of primary school teachers, 26.0% of secondary school teachers and 30.0% of secondary school teachers in Turkey "agree" or "strongly agree" that the teaching profession is valued in society.<sup>9</sup> **The fact that almost only 3 out of every 10 teachers at all levels of compulsory education think that their profession is valued in society shows that there is an urgent need for interventions on the status and dignity of teaching and the well-being of teachers.**

### ***Basic Needs***

The three main indicators used to determine the current state of education in Turkey reveal that there are needs in terms of increasing access to quality education for all children, improving students' basic competencies and teachers' professional satisfaction. Interventions to address these needs are all related to curricula.

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<sup>3</sup> MONE SGB, 2023

<sup>4</sup> MoNE, October 14, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Gencer et al. 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Korlu, November 24, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> OECD Education GPS, n.d.

<sup>9</sup> OECD, 2020.

can be related. Curricula can contribute to meeting the basic needs of the education system if they contribute to increasing the school belonging of students at high risk of dropping out, improve learning processes for the acquisition of basic skills, enable teachers to establish meaningful relationships with colleagues, students and parents, and reduce their workload. **However, curricula alone cannot meet the needs of the education system.**

In addition to these needs, which can be identified through basic indicators, the *MoNE Strategic Plan 2024-2028* identifies the weaknesses of the education system based on the experiences of previous strategic plan periods. Weaknesses related to pre-university levels include differences in achievement and opportunities between schools, dual education, lack of reading and foreign language skills, inadequate practices to address the climate and biodiversity crisis, the need for playgrounds in schools, and deficiencies in extracurricular activities (scientific, cultural, artistic, sports and social responsibility programs).<sup>10</sup> In addition to these, MoNE also states that data-based policy development and an integrated data system are not at the desired level.<sup>11</sup> In the same document, the Ministry lists emergencies and crises, regional economic development gaps and financial constraints within the general budget as factors that threaten the education system.<sup>12</sup>

ERI's education monitoring studies, which have been conducted regularly since 2007, confirm the needs shared in the *MoNE Strategic Plan 2024-2028*, but reveal that these needs are not limited to these. Socioeconomic status, and therefore differences in household opportunities, affect children's educational experience.<sup>13</sup> The proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion reached 45.2%, while<sup>14</sup> schools still do not provide free and healthy school meals.<sup>15</sup> PISA 2022 results reveal score gaps between school types; 203 points between science high schools and vocational and technical Anatolian Anatolian high schools corresponds to a difference of 10 school years.<sup>16</sup> The limitations of the high school transition system and the differences between schools condemn children to schools that are not in their areas of interest. The pressure to take exams makes play, art, sports and music increasingly less important in education.

**It is clear that solving all problems and meeting basic needs cannot be achieved only through curriculum change. It is undeniable that curricula can contribute to the solution if they are designed correctly. However, the primary reform needed in education is not curriculum change.** The current state of education policies shows that the priority steps that need to be taken are to **put the well-being of the child and the teacher at the center of all policy processes, to include stakeholders in decision-making processes, and**

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<sup>10</sup> MoNE SGB, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Korlu, July 21, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Eurostat, n.d.

<sup>15</sup> On the importance of school meals as an intervention program, see Korlu, 13 December 2023.

<sup>16</sup> MoNE, 2024a.

**strengthening participation, building a space for free, rational and critical thinking, preventing polarization, ensuring continuity in policies and practices, and establishing effective monitoring and evaluation systems.**

## **Curriculum Evaluation Framework**

Research indicates that curricula will become more critical in shaping the skills of the future through education.<sup>17</sup> Studies have proven that curricula are not neutral, and that a certain segment of society greatly influences curricula.<sup>18</sup> However, efforts to homogenize and uniformize students from different social groups also fail.<sup>19</sup> Children and social peace are negatively affected by these approaches.

Since 2003, Education Reform Initiative has been working with the vision of quality education for all, and is aware that curricula are key to a quality education. ERI attaches importance to ensuring that the process of preparing and evaluating draft curricula is data-driven, transparent and with the participation of stakeholders. In this context, it has initiated a study to evaluate the draft curricula from a holistic perspective. An Advisory Board on Curricula was established and a working group consisting of experts from the Education Observatory, Education Laboratory, Teacher Network, Communication Coordinator and Media Coordinator was established. With the support of the Advisory Board, opinions were received from experts and institutions. The opinions received were predominantly based on the Common Text of the Curricula. Due to the limited time available for feedback, course reviews could only be conducted to a limited extent. Two background reports were also prepared. In this document, prepared as a synthesis of all these studies and evaluations, curricula are evaluated under the following headings:

- Program Development and Opinion Giving Process and Procedure
- Basic Philosophical Approach
- Content
- Learning and Teaching Process
- Measurement and Evaluation
- Recommendations

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<sup>17</sup> OECD, n.d.; Taguma and Frid, 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Somel et al., 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

## Program Development and Opinion Giving Process and Procedure

On April 26, 2024, the Ministry of National Education presented the draft curricula titled "Education Model for the Turkish Century" for public comment. The public was given a one-week period for feedback on the grounds that it had been discussed for a long time and stakeholders were prepared to provide feedback. In the previous curriculum change, a one-month period was given for feedback.

The draft curriculum, which consists of 27 texts, including a common text and curricula for 26 subjects, is intended to replace the curriculum used since 2017. However, no impact-evaluation study on the curriculum used since 2017 has been shared with the public; the draft curriculum does not include the missing points of the previous curriculum, which innovations were made in the new curriculum and why, and the reasons for the changes and simplifications made in the curriculum.

The extent to which inclusiveness was ensured in the preparation process of the draft curriculum, and which field experts, teachers and civil society organizations took part in the curriculum preparation committees are among the other points not shared with the public. The lack of any references in the program, which uses an academically dense language and conceptual framework, is also one of the most striking points.

### ***Philosophical Approach***

Frameworks that allow for questioning the meaning and source of being (ontology), value (axiology), knowledge (epistemology) and ethics when analyzing different areas of philosophy can only make sense when a particular philosophy is clearly shared. The curriculum does not explicitly mention educational philosophies such as essentialism and perennialism, which are subject-centered; progressivism, which is student-centered; and critical pedagogy<sup>20</sup>, which is teacher- and student-centered. As it stands, the program mentions educational philosophies such as essentialism and progressivism. However, since there is no clear language, no coherence, no references, and no clear relationship between the arguments, it is not possible to make a clear inference as to what the philosophy of education is in this model. This stands out as a serious shortcoming of the model, which is shared as the result of ten years of work.

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<sup>20</sup> Ornstein et al., (2017).



Although the words "change" and "transformation", which are frequently mentioned in the Common Text of the Curricula of the Turkish Century Education Model, seem to be related to pragmatic philosophy, values are one of the dominant structures in the curriculum. The traditional educational philosophies known as perennialism and essentialism are the equivalent of value transmission in an educational program in the educational sciences literature. In the Maarif model, it is seen that the value education approach called **the Virtue-Value-Action Model** is organized to be included in the entire program. There are 20 core values and nearly 200 indicators related to them in the preschool program alone. Principles and guidelines for the implementation of the Virtue-Value-Action Model are also included. Thus, it is emphasized that practices related to values education are concretized. However, it is seen that some of the values addressed in value education are open to personal interpretation. For example, the value of "valor and bravery" is quite variable and open to interpretation by students, teachers and parents according to age, gender and social characteristics. In addition, it is seen that values are included in many curricula by making some forced connections. For example, the middle school mathematics curriculum includes the following statement: "It also enables students to discover the contributions of different cultures to mathematics and to gain the value of love by recognizing cultural richness."<sup>21</sup>

Just like the values, the definitions of the dispositions in the curriculum model have dense academic language and are open to interpretation. Practical justifications for why the dispositions are included in this structure are not shared. It needs to be explained which pilot study on dispositions was found to be productive and included in the program. There is also a need to inform teachers on these issues through concrete examples. For example, while defining and exemplifying intellectual dispositions is difficult even in the academic literature, it may not be realistic to expect teachers to make applications, observations and evaluations related to dispositions in classroom practices at primary and secondary education level.

### ***The new model and moral values***

The new curriculum has "raising competent and virtuous people" as its main goal, with a discourse dominated by spirituality. While the program is based on moral and national values, it targets areas such as social contribution and holistic development. However, the values that stand out here are constructed as elements that students can passively acquire rather than elements that can be questioned with an ethical perception based on concrete, scientific knowledge. In other words, these concepts and values, which follow a normative approach and cannot be questioned and concretized, are diametrically opposed to the concept of critical thinking, which is frequently discussed in the program. Although it is stated that human beings are at the center of the program, the real needs of the child are not taken into account.

## Content

The Turkish Century Education Model Curriculum Common Text states that values are considered "as a meaningful phenomenon that integrates the system from a broad perspective". According to the Curriculum Common Text, the values in the model are based on "our national and spiritual values, which are the references of our own civilization world", but "the universal dimension of values is not ignored".<sup>22</sup> The lack of clear boundaries of concepts such as morality and values education and the fact that their meanings vary from person to person can pave the way for majoritarian education programs that reduce morality to religiosity and religion to a single dominant belief. Programs should be free from indoctrination and the right to freedom of thought, religion or belief should be protected.

In the new curricula presented by the MoNE, it is stated that "a 35 percent dilution" has been made.<sup>23</sup> Simplifying course content without changing the number and duration of courses and without a holistic view of the entire curriculum may lead to the separation of related components and the loss of important connections between subjects.

It is important that programs are internally coherent, but also that they maintain continuity across levels and are coherent as a whole. This necessitates a comprehensive and detailed evaluation of program content. The limited feedback period currently precludes detailed content reviews. The one-week suspension period for programs makes it impossible to read and analyze the content in a holistic manner.

## Concepts

In the draft curriculum presented by the Ministry of National Education, it is not clear why certain terms and concepts were chosen and for what need. It seems that the connections between the numerous new concepts and definitions are left up in the air within the programs. For example, the term outcomes in the previous curriculum was abandoned and the terminology of learning outcomes in 2006 was reverted to, but it is seen that the term outcomes is still used when talking about the curriculum. Having many new conceptualizations in curriculum design poses risks in terms of finding the right equivalent in practice. Learning outcomes and attainment are different concepts; learning outcomes refer to the outcome, not the learning process. A concept that cannot be agreed upon may not be put into practice effectively, and without consensus, effective, meaningful and scientific measurement and evaluation of the program may not be possible. In educational sciences, it is especially important that the conceptualization processes arising from needs are based on field studies in terms of scientificity.

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<sup>22</sup>MoNE, 2024a.

<sup>23</sup>MoNE, 2024a

## ***Inclusive Change***

Support and enrichment practices, which are addressed under differentiation titles in the curriculum, are important in terms of aiming to provide a learning environment that covers individual differences among students. However, it should be underlined that the program only addresses the differences between students on the basis of skills. Developing inclusive practices for children with different mother tongues, with cultural differences, refugees and other vulnerable groups is also essential to prevent skill differences that are the result of these differences.

## ***Communal gender equality***

Some content in the curricula, such as in the My Family and Society module in the Life Science course, can deepen gender inequality by contributing to the dissemination of traditional gender roles and reinforcing the unequal distribution of roles between men and women in the household. The concepts included in the programs will be learned and taught, especially by children, and teachers will need training and support for proper guidance. This may lead to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles as generally accepted responsibilities, affecting children's lives, narrowing their dreams and horizons, and limiting their free will. It can also lead to negative consequences such as exclusion of children from different family structures, loss of self-confidence and feelings of guilt.

The following questions are critical when designing programs as a result of program evaluation and feedback:

- What is the place and importance of gender equality among the objectives of curricula?
- What are the practices and mechanisms to ensure gender equality in the preparation and approval of textbooks and teaching materials?
- What are the practices for teachers and administrators to acquire values and attitudes that support gender equality in in-service trainings to be provided for the implementation of the programs?

It should be emphasized that gender equality is a part of the constitutional principle of equality and the importance of the principle of equality in the Constitution. It should be taught that the constitutional state should be understood with its founding principles, that rights and freedoms cannot be protected without the secular, democratic, social and legal state determined by the Constitution, and that gender equality can be realized together with these rights.

Gender equality includes the prevention of discrimination based on sex and the fight against such discrimination. Eliminating all forms of discrimination in education related to gender equality is a fundamental principle of justice and human rights. Education

The prerequisite for equal enjoyment of the right to education is gender equality. The state's obligation in the fulfillment of the right to education covers two important areas of rights. The first is to ensure equal rights, freedoms, conditions and opportunities in the education system for girls and boys to realize their potential; the second is to transform the dominant values and dynamics in society in a way that supports gender equality. Education is essential to protect children against socioeconomic and ecosocial injustices and gender bias. It is also an extremely important area for children to become empowered, self-sufficient, self-actualized and free individuals. Through education, it may be possible to eliminate existing inequalities in the social sphere instead of reinforcing them. In this context, the absence of gender equality in the draft programs is a very important deficiency. Gender equality should be mainstreamed into all programs and modules, and additional measures should be taken to transform and equalize traditional roles and stereotypes of women and men in both domestic and social life.

The one-week period given by MoNE for evaluation does not allow for a holistic analysis of the extent to which the draft curricula support or hinder gender equality in education. It is essential that the curricula are evaluated holistically with a framework that targets gender equality and redesigned according to the results of the evaluation.

Implementation, measurement and evaluation processes related to the program should be handled in a way that takes gender equality into account. Instead of reinforcing gender stereotypes, course content should be designed in such a way that students adopt the principles of equality, respect and justice. Textbooks, visual materials and other learning tools should be selected and used to reflect gender equality. Strategies should be developed to prevent gender-based discrimination in classroom interaction. Teachers should be sensitized and equipped in this regard. Gender equality should be included in curricula, textbooks and teaching materials. It should also be a national education strategy and priority.

The content of the training should emphasize that it is the obligation of the state to ensure gender equality; in order for equality to be realized, deficiencies in the functioning of the state and the legal system must be eliminated. Equality cannot be realized automatically; for this reason, basic rights should be taught in order to understand the importance of rights. In addition to constitutional rights, international conventions to which Turkey is a party, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN's Twin Conventions, CEDAW and the Lanzarote Convention, should be considered as the source of rights and equality.

### ***Human rights, Citizenship and Democracy***

In the field of Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy, the emphasis is on duties and responsibilities rather than rights and freedoms. Even when the subject of freedom is covered, it is observed that the basic freedoms in democratic societies are not included, and the reasons why freedom should be limited are emphasized rather than the importance of freedoms. This approach, which focuses heavily on duties and responsibilities and does not include topics such as freedom of expression, freedom of religion and conscience, prevents

students from acquiring information about their rights and freedoms. By framing rights and freedoms as something that can be easily given up for the common good, the curriculum prevents students from learning about basic human rights and violates the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Turkey signed in 1990.

## Student

The common basic philosophy of the curricula shared in 2017 was an approach that puts the student at the center and aims to raise them as individuals who are responsible for their own knowledge acquisition, who can produce knowledge by using it instead of memorizing it, who are innovative, problem solvers, open to cooperation and who can express themselves. In order to observe the extent to which this approach is reflected in the implementation of curricula, monitoring and evaluation studies need to be shared transparently.

In the draft curriculum shared in 2024, although the student-centered approach is maintained in writing, the main emphasis is placed on the goal of "raising competent and virtuous individuals"<sup>24</sup>. The goal of "competent and virtuous person" is summarized under the heading "student profile" in "two areas of integrity" and ten sub-headings.<sup>25</sup> The explanations of the "areas of integrity" shared as "body" and "soul" are not scientifically based explanations, and they are not more than a set of statements that are difficult to observe and whose subjectivity cannot be traced because the source is not specified.

The characteristics that students are targeted to have, or "profile characteristics" according to MoNE, are shared as productive, wise, courageous, compassionate, patriotic, aesthetic, moral, healthy, strong-willed and questioning. **While student-centered approaches emphasize the rights and freedoms of students, the characteristics mentioned in the "competent and virtuous person" target seem to emphasize duties and responsibilities more than student-centered approaches.** In addition, there are no details on how these traits will be observed or measured. For example, under the trait of courageous

It is unclear how the sub-features of "valiant and courageous" will be observed or measured. When setting goals, it is important that they are achievable and observable.

In addition, expressions of frameworks that allow for the interrogation of the meaning and source of being (ontology), value (axiology), knowledge (epistemology) and ethics used for the study of educational philosophies and foundational philosophies are seen in the student profile section with the concepts of axiological maturity, epistemological integrity, ontological integrity, temporal integrity. It is claimed that these concepts are shared to ensure a "holistic approach to education". However, these concepts can only be meaningful if they are shared under the title of educational philosophy, which is adopted to describe an approach that includes not only the student but also other stakeholders of education.

## Teacher

Although the documents published within the scope of the draft curricula and the public statements made to the public indicate that teachers participated in the process, there is no information on how and

to what extent teacher participation took place in the curriculum development process. More in-depth information on teacher involvement, such as how teachers were selected, decision-making processes, resources used, and challenges encountered, should be shared with the public. Teachers should be involved not only in the preparation of the curriculum, but also in its revision after its suspension. The programs included and the statements in the joint text indicate that the problems encountered in the field and the problems faced by educators are not given enough space, that the participation mentioned is quite limited, and that teachers are not involved in important steps of the program development processes.

Curricula should also be evaluated in relation to teacher well-being, especially in recent years. Although the statements claim to address the problem of curriculum density, which teachers have been voicing for many years, an examination of the draft curricula reveals that this is not the case. Accordingly, in many branches, the number of outcomes, skills and values has increased numerically. For example, while the pre-school education program was 185 pages in its revised version last year, the newly announced program text is 392 pages long.

Although the statements about School-Based Planning are positive steps towards teacher autonomy and flexibility, it is not clear how to ensure the quality of the support opportunities and the quality of the support that will be offered to teachers both in this process and in the programs as a whole. How to overcome the lack of environment, funding and support for teacher autonomy should be discussed realistically. In this context, good examples from the public sector, such as the "Teacher Support Points" previously planned by MoNE but not put into practice, as well as the work of universities and civil society organizations on this issue, should be used to support teachers.

should be reconsidered for their potential to directly impact professional development and well-being locally.

The resources and skills that teachers need to be able to act in emergencies and crises are either not addressed at all or are included in a limited way in the program content. The resources provided in areas such as migration, climate crisis, gender inequality, intergroup conflicts, economic problems, and vulnerable groups, where teachers need to work in cooperation with different disciplines, are limited and insufficient.

In the past, the issue of supporting teachers' adaptation to curricula had been considered within the scope of Teacher Support Points. However, following the changes in the MoNE organization, no further steps were taken in this regard. Within the scope of the draft curricula, it was not shared how the preparation process of teachers for the curricula would be carried out. Similarly, it is unclear how the change will change the workload of teachers. Considering the adaptation process, it needs to be shared how it will change teachers' workload. While it is important to include current concepts such as literacy and social-emotional skills in the curricula, if teachers are not supported through pre-service and in-service trainings, problems may arise in the acquisition of the targeted skills.

#### Skill-Based Approach

It is shared that the programs are prepared by focusing on a skills-based approach. The skills-centered approach can be considered as a solution to the difficulties that children in Turkey face in putting the knowledge they have learned into practice, as revealed in international assessments.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, it can be seen that many countries follow a similar path, giving more importance to skills in the knowledge-skills dichotomy. However, it is important to underline that students need knowledge in order to reach a certain skill level. Therefore, the need to establish a healthy relationship between knowledge and skills gains importance. Following a program that focuses only on skills can lead to situations such as the one encountered in Scotland where the choice of content becomes instrumental and distracts from the aims

of education.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, a curriculum that focuses only on skills can lead to significant differences between schools.<sup>28</sup>

## Learning Outcomes

In the evaluation of the curriculum that started to be implemented in the 2005-2006 academic year, the ERG had defined the preference for the term "outcome", which was used for the first time instead of "aim", "target" and "target behaviors", as "an attitude that is more student-centered".<sup>29</sup> The term "outcome", which continued to be used in subsequent curricula, was changed to "learning outcome" in the new draft curriculum. A "learning outcome" refers to a measurable and concrete description of what students have learned, understood or are able to do at the end of the process. The abandonment of the term "gains" can be interpreted as prioritizing measurable skills rather than the hard-to-measure skills that students acquire during the process.

## Measurement and Evaluation

Measurement and evaluation is an important process for identifying and improving the positive and negative aspects of educational programs.<sup>30</sup> An effective assessment and evaluation system is an important component as it operates an evidence-based process. Measurement and evaluation components are intensively addressed in the program. However, the high number of indicators required for assessment and evaluation processes in some areas risks increasing the intensity of the program and the workload of teachers. The inclusion of teacher reflection activities is a positive step in terms of showing that programs are living documents and open to improvement.

### ***Lack of Pilot Implementation***

The lack of any pilot implementation of the curriculum stands out as one of the most important shortcomings. For example, the curriculum prepared in 2004 was implemented in pilot schools for the first year. This pilot implementation provided an opportunity to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the program before it was implemented throughout Turkey. It has not been shared what kind of monitoring and evaluation model the curriculum, which is planned to be implemented in the 2024-25 academic year, will be subjected to. In order to adapt to changing conditions and in the light of negative feedback, the development of such a model for curricula, which are documents open to improvement, and how this process will proceed should be shared with the public.

In addition, curricula prepared in the absence of adequate feedback and pilot implementations can be used as a basis for the development of textbooks due to possible changes in the coming years.

<sup>24</sup> MoNE, 2024a.

<sup>25</sup> MoNE, 2024a.

<sup>26</sup>TUSIAD, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Smith, 2019.

<sup>28</sup>Shapiraetal.,2023.

<sup>29</sup> ERG, 2005

## ***Adaptability of Learning Programs***

In their current form, curricula contain many abstract and unclearly defined concepts. The lack of concrete, observable and measurable evidence of learning and assessment processes makes curricula less realistic and applicable. In order to offer flexible solutions that are suitable for the different abilities and interests of each student, it is necessary to prepare teachers and educational institutions, transform the pedagogical methods used, and adapt them to the backgrounds of students. Completing the training of teachers and administrators and preparing the infrastructure of schools before the implementation of the curricula is crucial for the applicability of the curricula.

For example, it was shared that the content framework, which is said to address both vertical and horizontal dimensions, provides flexibility and aims to increase the depth and ensure continuity according to the grade level. What is meant by depth is not fully explained, and how flexibility, which is important for applicability, can be handled by teachers and school administrators is not elaborated. In addition, although effective feedback by the teacher and active participation of students in teaching and learning processes are important for the applicability of the curricula, it is seen that how teachers or students will be prepared and ready to realize them is not mentioned.

## **Recommendations**

ERG, whose mission is to contribute to the structural transformation in education for the development of children and society through quality data, constructive dialogue and the creation of common sense from different views, presents the following recommendations to the Ministry of National Education and the public in the light of the evaluations presented in the previous sections in order to guarantee every child's right to quality education, to ensure gender equality and to protect pluralistic discussion processes in which different beliefs, including non-belief, are represented.

### **Development of programs**

- Curricula should be developed in accordance with scientific studies based on research and practice and the results of these studies. A curriculum based on scientific research



The curriculum promotes approaches, models and techniques that have proven effective in supporting children's learning and development.

- New programs should be informed by the current curriculum, national and international best practices and future projections.<sup>31</sup>
- It is possible to keep curriculum development out of political controversies by working within the framework of the principles and innovations in educational sciences. Changes in the education ecosystem that are not scientific and systematic, and whose basis is not explained, damage the trust in education.
- It is unclear how scientific field studies were used in the development of the "Education Model for Turkey's Century" shared by MoNE, except for workshops with a limited number of participants. For example, the public should be informed about the survey questions that were supposedly administered to 1,000 teachers and how the results were transferred to the draft program, and whether there is a sample that reflects the number of active teachers.
- The curricula, their competencies, areas of expertise for each course, implementation schedule, budget plan and bibliography should be made public.
- Needs analysis studies should be compulsory in curriculum development and needs should be identified through studies based on scientific methods and techniques. In addition to the needs of teachers, students and parents in different regions, school types and grade levels in Turkey, the needs of universities, non-governmental organizations and the public should also be analytically assessed.
- Analyses are needed to identify individual and societal needs on themes such as building a culture of coexistence, gender equality, increasing resilience to emergencies and crises, localization of technology and innovation, nature, energy, production and efficiency.<sup>32</sup>
- It is also essential that the needs analysis study is shared transparently with the public. Gains, subjects or methods that are removed, changed and/or added should be justified to the public.
- It is important that the draft curricula should be kept on hold for at least one month and be subject to technical review by many experts. Criticisms, opinions and experiences of students, teachers, parents, universities, the private sector and civil society should be given space and the right to participate in educational decision-making processes should be ensured for all stakeholders.

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<sup>31</sup> UNESCO, 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Coşkun, 2017.

- How feedback on learning programs is reflected in the programs should be transparently shared with the public. It is important to monitor what changes the suspension period brings to the draft program.
- Program development processes at the national level should be scientific, needs-based, participatory, transparent and accountable as a prerequisite for achieving valid results in the implementation of a program. Realistic assessments of the applicability of programs in the field should be made and these assessments should guide the program development process.

### **Content of the programs**

- It is important to ensure that programs address student well-being and the best interests of the child, and that they are relevant to students' future plans or aspirations. It is a good time to think about how the program can make schools more democratic, sustainable, inclusive and productive, and how it can work to pave the way for these learning pathways. In doing so, children, youth and teachers should be placed at the center of all program-related processes.
- Programs should be free from indoctrination and the right to freedom of thought, religion or belief should be protected. Every child has the freedom to have or not to have a religion; therefore, States cannot force a child to adopt or not to adopt a religion.
- A good learning program helps all students to reach their individual potential as learners and to fully develop themselves. For the principle of inclusion to be realized, gender equality must be mainstreamed in all programs. Inclusive content that supports gender equality should be produced; inclusive sexual and reproductive health and rights should be included in programs.
- There is a need for social consensus on curriculum concepts. In Turkey, the terms program, curriculum, education program and curriculum are used interchangeably.<sup>33</sup> The term "curriculum" should be preferred over "curriculum" as it refers to a network of specific elements and dynamic relationships between these elements.<sup>34</sup> Failure to understand why certain terminology and concepts are chosen and what needs they address can lead to different interpretations of the curriculum and create areas of conflict.

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<sup>33</sup> Günkör, 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Coşkun, 2017.

- The new curricula are based on the newly developed Turkish Century Education Model. Bringing back the outdated word *maarif* carries the risk of creating an inward-looking civilization rather than one that integrates with the world. The main thing is to fill in the concept of education, expand its scope and ensure a more pluralistic perspective.
- For the validity and reliability of the models and approaches, methods and techniques presented, they need to be subject to more than one study, examined with qualitative and quantitative analyses in terms of various variables, and the results of piloting should be shared with field experts and practitioners.
- Emphasis on human rights and the binding force of law, which were included in previous curricula, are not included in the specific objectives of the draft curriculum. Moving away from universal values, rights and principles in the curriculum narrows the space for children's rights, diversity and inclusion throughout the education system.
- Associations between programs are very important for the integrity and continuity of the characteristics, skills and values that are tried to be developed through education. Simplification of course content without changing the number and duration of courses, separation of a series of interrelated components during simplification, and loss of important links that can establish relationships between subjects can make learning difficult and cause academic deficiency. When finalizing the draft curriculum, changes in the building blocks (indicators, subjects, etc.) should be re-evaluated holistically, in a cause-and-effect relationship.
- The main aim of science is scientific literacy. Without understanding the theory of evolution, many sciences are incomplete. The goal should be to raise individuals who know and use the basic facts of science, think analytically, respect different opinions and therefore have a democratic attitude.
- The lack of explanation on how and in which lesson the values in the Virtue-Value-Action model will be acquired by students is one of the primary deficiencies of the draft program that needs to be eliminated.
- While the aim of "raising spiritually peaceful, competent and virtuous people" is placed at the center of the curriculum approach and concepts such as heart and soul are frequently included in the curriculum, it is a problem area that the **role of guidance and psychological counselors** and the content of the classroom guidance course are not determined.

#### **Implementation of programs**

- In the new programs, learning-teaching processes and the role of the teacher are discussed in more detail than in previous programs. Courses are based on field skills

enable teachers need time and academic and pedagogical background to internalize the integrated skills and process components. It is important to establish work environments and resource centers that teachers to work and produce in school.

- Teachers may have difficulty in implementing the curriculum without theoretical and practical training. For the successful implementation of new programs, there is a need for a comprehensive in-service training model to be prepared together with teachers.
- Skill-oriented education, which is the basis of the education model, requires well-equipped learning environments. It is essential that schools are provided with the resources required by the programs (equipment, learning materials, reduced class sizes, etc.) in order to prevent further differences between schools when implementing skill-based programs.
- The content on which the learning outcomes will be based is critical. Therefore, the process of preparing textbooks in line with the new curriculum should be shared with the public. Draft textbooks should also be reviewed by all stakeholders before implementation and finalized in line with their suggestions.
- It is obvious that the components of the student profile defined as a "competent and virtuous person", such as balanced nutrition and sensitivity to arts and culture, cannot be provided to students through the curriculum alone. In this respect, it is imperative to align educational policies that are contrary to the objectives of the program, such as stopping school meals and reducing the weight of sports and arts in elective courses, with the content of the program.
- If school environments that support the holistic development of students cannot be created, the impact of the programs will be limited. For this reason, curricula and therefore schools should be made conducive to applications in science, art, sports and music, and class hours should be organized accordingly.
- Directives should be given to relevant institutions to ensure that the educational environments and teaching materials to be prepared for the implementation of the programs do not include content and images that feed gender prejudices and stereotypes. Social and cultural activities included in the curricula should be organized in a way to improve the life qualities of girls.

### **Measurement and evaluation processes of programs**

- In the new curricula, assessment and evaluation is not only about evaluating the learning outcome but also the process. However, it is not clear how evidence of learning and indicators will function in practice.

has not been achieved. Indicators have not been identified for many of the targets in the document. For example, there are no monitoring indicators for the intended student profile. It seems difficult to objectively measure the indicators that have been identified. It is necessary to establish the right indicators for measurement and evaluation.

- While the program introduces a skills-based model, transition systems between levels continue to be based on knowledge acquisition. This difference may cause problems in the classroom implementation of the program.
- Considering the academic structures, skills, trends, literacies, interdisciplinary associations, indicators, and the need to reflect all these in assessment and evaluation, there is a risk of increasing the workload of teachers. Working hours and in-school responsibilities should be updated in the light of new practices.
- Assessment and evaluation is included in the curriculum as an important topic that determines the quality of the learning process. However, as in the previous curriculum, there are no suggestions and detailed explanations regarding the measurement and evaluation of achievements. Success criteria should be determined for the programs and these criteria should be used in program evaluation studies and the results should be shared with the public.

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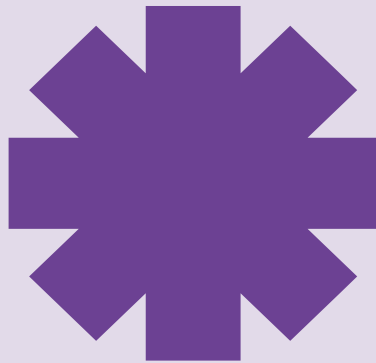
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**ADO 3<sup>rd</sup> Submission:**

**DGI Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law  
Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
FRANCE  
Email: DGI-Execution@coe.int  
İstanbul 27. May.2024**

### **COMMUNICATION**

**In accordance with Rule 9.2. of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers regarding the supervision of the execution of judgments and of terms of friendly settlements**

**Re: Mansur Yalçın and Others v. Turkey (Application No. 21163/11).**

#### **Introduction:**

Above case is on the agenda of CM 1501th. meeting. We informed DGI-Execution on May 13. about a draft curriculum that was opened to discussions by Ministry of Education on 26<sup>th</sup> of April. which includes contradicting items with related Action Plan that was submitted by the related authorities.

The I draft curriculum of the Turkish Ministry of Education which was subject to our submission dated May 13, has been approved by “Board of Education” of the ministry, signed by minister and published in following link of official web site of the Ministry of education to be applied as of 2024-2025 educational year. <https://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/>

So in practice all compulsory Religious Courses hours are doubled with the new curriculum by adding an additional elective Religious Leeson to existing syllabuses.

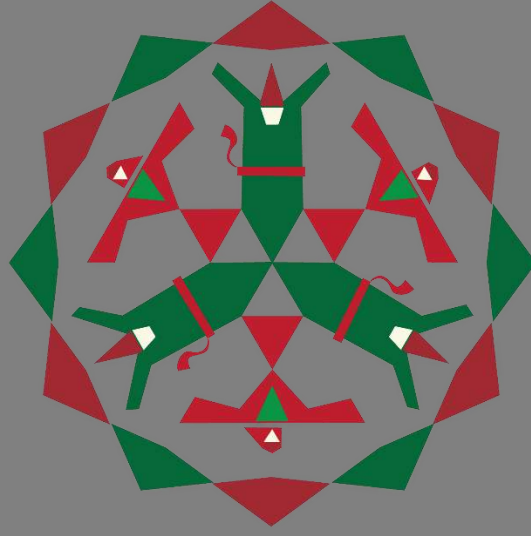
#### **Conclusion:**

The exemption system, which is the Court's main reason of finding a violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 in both Zengin and Yalçın judgements, remains intact.

Please kindly be informed.

Kindest regards  
Dogan Bermek





ADO

Alevi Philosophy Center

**ADO – ALEVI PHILOSOPHY CENTER  
ASSOCIATION**

**Istiklal Cad. No .76 Fl. 4/13**

**İstanbul – Turkey**

**Ph: +90 212 293 2230-31**

**[www.aleviocagi.org](http://www.aleviocagi.org)**

