

**Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board**

**Template for delegations commenting on the draft country programme documents**

**2022 first regular session**

***Draft country programme document commenting period: 16 November to 6 December 2021***

Delegations are kindly invited to use this template to share their comments on the draft country programme document being presented to the Executive Board during the forthcoming session.

Delegation name: *Turkey*

Draft country programme document: *Greece*

In accordance with Executive Board decision [2014/1](#), draft country programme documents are considered and approved in one session, on a no-objection basis. All comments received by the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board before the deadline stated above will be posted on the Executive Board website, and considered by the requesting country, in close consultation with UNICEF.

	<b>Delegation's comments</b>	<b>Response(s)</b>
<b>General comments</b>	<p>We find clear reference to the Turkish Minority in the Western Thrace to be lacking in the draft country programme document (CPD).</p> <p>An explicit recognition of the educational rights of the children belonging to the Turkish Minority in the Western Thrace in accordance with Greece's obligations under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne must be added in the CPD.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p>According to the Treaty of Lausanne, the Turkish Minority in the Western Thrace enjoys the right to establish, manage and supervise all kinds of religious or social institutions, schools and similar educational institutions and to use their language and perform religious rituals unhindered. However, the Turkish Minority faces several problems in many fields, mostly on education. Minority's request for opening bilingual minority kindergartens has not been met, with applications pending from 2011. Under these circumstances, Turkish Minority children have no choice but to go to state kindergartens that teach only in Greek.</p>	<p>The Greece Country Programme 2022-2026 is firmly rooted in an approach that seeks to fulfil all rights for all children, everywhere, including in education. This means prioritizing</p>

	<p>Because of the lack of bilingual minority kindergartens, these children are faced with the risk of losing their linguistic and cultural identity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p>Another problem is the closure of Turkish minority primary schools on grounds of a lack of sufficient number of students. The number of minority primary schools decreased from 188 in 2010 to 103 in the 2020/21 school year.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p>The number of minority secondary-high schools is inadequate. There are only 2 minority secondary-high schools in the region. The Greek authorities have not yet responded to the Minority's application to set up new minority schools. The Minority's request to have new premises for the minority secondary-high school in Xanthi has not been met either.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p>	<p>action for those children in Greece that are the most vulnerable, marginalized and left behind, including inter alia those living in poverty, those with disabilities, refugee and migrant children, and those who are members of the Muslim minority in Thrace</p>
<p><b>Comments on specific aspects of the draft country programme document</b></p>	<p>Turkey recommends that the CPD outlines additional detail on how UNICEF is going to work with Greece to address the challenges faced by the Turkish Minority in the Western Thrace.</p> <p>It would be helpful if the document could further elaborate on how all children in Greece, especially those belonging to the Turkish Minority in the Western Thrace would enjoy equitable access to inclusive quality education by 2026 (para. 21)</p>	