

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001113/25
to the Commission
Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew)
(14 March 2025)**

Subject: Stigmatisation of civil society groups in Greece

In the chapter on Greece of the 2024 Rule of Law Report published by the Commission, a number of issues were raised regarding the state of the rule of law in the country and the independence of the judiciary.

The report indicated that concerns persist in the area of civil society, stressing that the registration of NGOs remains an issue, while a study by the Expert Council on NGO Law drew attention to the stigmatisation and criminalisation of their activities.

Meanwhile, vulnerable groups, notably minorities, are stigmatised and targeted in Greece, such as NGOs representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace. In a news article published in October 2021 on [newsbreak.gr](https://www.newsbreak.gr), the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe was stigmatised and discredited with unfounded allegations against it. As a result, the federation opened a claim for damages and the legal process is ongoing.

1. What measures does the Commission intend to take against the serious setbacks in the field of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Greece?
2. What steps can the Commission take to counter the stigmatisation of individuals and NGOs representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace?

Submitted: 15.3.2025

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(26 June 2025)**

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a key role in upholding fundamental rights, democracy and the Rule of Law. The Commission is committed to defending the core values which the EU is founded upon, and to ensuring a safe and enabling environment for civil society can freely defend and uphold these core values in their day-to-day work.

To carry out their functions, CSOs must be protected, supported and empowered. The Commission has a dedicated policy work strand on a thriving civic space ⁽¹⁾, which includes the 2023 Recommendation to Member States on civic engagement ⁽²⁾.

Under the Citizen Equality Rights and Values programme ⁽³⁾, it has also supported almost 1 500 CSOs in all 27 Member States. During its current mandate, the Commission will further step up its engagement with civil society, which will include the development of an EU Civil Society Strategy and further engagement with civil society through a Civil Society Platform.

The Commission also monitors significant developments concerning the situation of civic space in the context of its annual Rule of Law Report.

The 2024 chapter on Greece reports that concerns regarding the space for civil society remain. It also refers to the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases ⁽⁴⁾ decided by the European Court of Human Rights, which have been pending implementation for more than 15 years.

The Commission will continue to monitor developments in this area and will provide an up-to-date assessment in its 2025 Rule of Law Report.

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-fundamental-rights-eu/eu-charter-fundamental-rights/application-charter/thriving-civic-space-protect-fundamental-rights_en?prefLang=es.

⁽²⁾ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2836 of 12 December 2023 on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes, C/2023/8627.

⁽³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cerv>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/eng#%7B%22execidentifier%22%3A%22004-15567%22%7D%7D>.