



Arbeitsgruppe Anerkennung – gegen Genozid, für Völkerverständigung e.V. (AGA)

Berlin, April 21, 2015

Recognition at last! - Press Statement of the Working Group Recognition - Against Genocide, for International Understanding eV at the upcoming parliamentary decision

With relief, gratitude and hope we have learnt from the news of yesterday night that the German Parliament on 24 April 2015 will vote on a motion of the ruling coalition; this motion eventually qualifies the annihilation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as genocide. With its decision to the only proper and legally appropriate term, the two governing parties end their decades-long silence and evasion and pave the way for a formal genocide recognition in Germany.

We hope that the wording of the German legislature will include the co-victims of the Armenians, namely, according to expert estimates over a million Greek Orthodox Christians of Ottoman nationality, who were genocidally destroyed before, during and after the First World War.

We would have preferred it if a decision of the Bundestag for the recognition of the Ottoman genocide would have been taken already 15 years ago, when a mass petition for recognition from the civil society of Germany has been introduced into the Bundestag. As a result of this delay relevant issues in memory politics remained unattended, in particular in the field of school and extracurricular genocide awareness education. As a result, Germany has become an exclave of official Turkish denialist constructs. Similarly and as a result of the above mentioned delay, local initiatives from the Armenian and Turkey born immigrant communities failed when attempting to erect memorial sites at the places of their residence in Germany. As current examples in the cities of Gütersloh, Leer and Cologne show, such initiatives fail due to the refusal of local authorities.

While the grief and pain of genocide descendants so far were not permitted to manifest themselves in the public space of German towns or cities, leading organizers of the Genocide against the Armenians and also against Greeks are publicly commemorated and revered in Germany, namely on the graveyard of the Şehitlik Mosque ('Martyrs' Mosque) of Berlin-Neukölln, where the 'honorary graves' of Cemal Azmi and Bahaddin Şakir are.

The recognition of the Bundestag will also have a positive effect on the scientific review of the Ottoman genocide and in particular of the role of Germany.



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At this point, our thanks go to all those who have contributed to the change of attitude within the German government parties. But we are especially grateful for the persistency of the Armenian community in Germany. Through them, the German public has been sensitized for the crime of genocide and its continuing effects for generations.

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