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# ASIA/TURKEY - Patriarch Bartholomew at the National Assembly to discuss the new Constitution

Istanbul (Agenzia Fides) - The Ecumenical Patriarch of Istanbul Bartholomew I, of the Orthodox Church, will participate in the work of the Turkish National Assembly to discuss the drafting of the new Constitution, in particular on the theme of religious minorities. In February, in fact, a special Commission of the Turkish National Assembly is planning to hear the views of the leaders of the recognized religious communities in Turkey (as well as the Greek, Armenian, Syriac and Hebrew). As Fides sources in Turkey note, the step is seen favorably by the religious minorities, that see more space and consideration reserved for them by the state. According to Fides sources, in particular it is hoped that, in the process of review and reform of the new Charter, legal recognition and legal representation of the Latin Catholic Church is granted.
Among the further steps of openness towards minorities, there is the bill, in preparation at the Ministry of Education, to allow schools of religious minorities to accept children of their community who are not Turkish citizens. The draft law provides that foreign children of the Armenian, Greek and Hebrew communities in Turkey, may receive education in schools in their communities. In this way one faces the risk of closing schools for religious minorities due to lack of students. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 06/02/2012)

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