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October 18, 2006

Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC

with 35,000 Hellenic members and  
34 Hellenic associations in the US and abroad

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We are contacting the editorial department at the NY Times to make known our concerns in response to the October 17 editorial "France in Denial." While we appreciate the well intended sentiments expressed in the editorial, we are disturbed by the misguided critique towards the issues of Turkey and its

policies of Genocide denial. We would like to express an opposing view and

to share you with you views which we believe have unjustly been omitted from

your editorial policies toward the Turkish Republic.

First, in addition to the Genocide of the Armenians, Turkey is responsible for the Genocide of the Greek and Assyrian Christian populations of Asia Minor. There are numerous historical accounts emanating from eyewitnesses, survivors, missionaries,

diplomats, and physicians that became available despite efforts of the Kemalist dictatorship of the 1920's to destroy the evidence. In contrast to the assertions of the Times editorial, the denial of the Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian Genocides does a great deal of harm to members of these national groups up to the present day. We believe that France was entirely justified in outlawing denial of the Armenian Genocide, and that the Greek and Assyrian Genocides should be universally acknowledged.

It is interesting that the Times raises the issue of anti-Semitism. Is the Times aware that Hitler's Mein Kampf was the best selling book in Turkey during the spring of 2005? Or that persecution of Jews in Turkey has occurred during outbreaks of violence against Christians such as the Greeks? During the Second World War, when Turkey declined from participating in the fight against Hitler, (despite its obligations under the terms of the Balkan Pact of 1934) Jewish citizens of Turkey were systematically rounded up with Christian Greeks and Armenians and shipped off to labor camps in Anatolia after being economically ruined by the imposition of harsh taxes. During the anti-Greek pogroms which the Turkish government sponsored in 1955, no non-Muslim community remained unscathed. The Jewish Community was hit by the pogroms alongside the Armenians and foreign residents of Turkey.

The October 17 editorial is disappointing in that it showcases a blatant bias toward Turkey, and against the victims of Turkish Genocide and aggression. At the present time, 30,000 Turkish soldiers responsible for the ethnic cleansing of over 200,000 Greek Cypriots prevent the refugees of Cyprus from returning to their homes. In complete disregard of the European Union's demand that Turkey recognize Cyprus and open its ports to Cypriot ships, Turkey remains defiant. Furthermore, the continued insistence of

the Turkish military on remaining active in civilian affairs and Ankara's open support for the violation of minority rights and religious freedom, attested to by the tragedy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, indicates that Turkey should not enter the European Union.

The obsessive stance of the Times in promoting Turkish membership in the European Union (which is observed by previous editorials) is nothing less than bizarre and propagandistic considering how many crucial issues have been ignored by the Times in formulating its assessment. The law that was passed in France was the result of democratic debate and discussion. This is an affair for the French, who are to be commended for resisting Turkish bullying. What the Times advocates in its editorial is nothing less than appeasement of a bloody and tyrannical dictatorship.

The NY Times' criticisms should not be directed at France's democracy, but at the authoritarian and chaotic Turkish Republic which remains torn between fanatical Generals on the one side, and Islamic extremists on the other. The French example represents a victory for democracy, and Paris should be commended. If only the United States government which has bowed numerous times to Turkish pressure on the Armenian Genocide had such integrity.

On behalf of Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC) [www.greece.org](http://www.greece.org)

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Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC) is a non-profit US organization with international membership. HEC was incorporated in the state of Delaware in 1995