

Hatt-ı Hümayun of Sultan Abdülmecid I 18 February 1856 (10 djémaziul-akhir 1272)

Rescript of Reform – *Islahat Fermanı*

The guarantees promised on our part by the Hatt-ı Hümayun of Gülhane, and in conformity with the Tanzimat, to all the subjects of my Empire, without distinction of classes or of religion, for the security of their persons and property and the preservation of their honour, are today confirmed and consolidated, and efficacious measures shall be taken in order that they may have their full and entire effect.

All the privileges and spiritual immunities granted by my ancestors *ab antiquo*, and at subsequent dates, to all Christian communities or other non-Muslim persuasions established in my empire under my protection, shall be confirmed and maintained.

Every Christian or other non-Muslim community shall be bound, within a fixed period, and with the concurrence of a Commission composed *ad hoc* of members of its own body, to proceed, with my high approbation and under the inspection of my Sublime Porte, to examine into its actual immunities and privileges, and to discuss and submit to my Sublime Porte the reforms required by the progress of civilization and of the age. The powers conceded to the Christian Patriarchs and Bishops by the Sultan Mehmed II and his successors shall be made to harmonize with the new position which my generous and beneficent intentions ensure to these communities.

The principle of nominating the Patriarchs for life, after the revision of the rules of election now in force, shall be exactly carried out, conformable to the tenor of their Firmans of Investiture.

The Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archbishops, Bishops, and Rabbis shall take an oath on their entrance into office according to a form agreed upon in common by my Sublime Porte and the Spritual heads of the different religious communities. The ecclesiastical dues, of whatever sort or nature they be, shall be abolished and replaced by fixed revenues of the Patriarchs and heads of communities, and by the allocation of allowances and salaries equitably proportioned to the importance, the rank, and the dignity of the different members of the clergy.

The property, real or personal, of the different Christian ecclesiastics shall remain intact; the temporal administration of the Christian or other non-Muslim communities shall, however, be placed under the safeguard of an Assembly to be chosen from among the members, both ecclesiastics and laymen, of the said communities.

In the towns, small boroughs and villages, where the whole population is of the same religion, no obstacle shall be offered to the repair, according to their original plan, of buildings set apart for religious worship, for schools, for hospitals, and for cemeteries.

The plans of these different buildings, in case of their new erection, must, after having been approved by the Patriarchs or heads of communities, be submitted to my Sublime Porte, which will approve of them by my Imperial order, or make known its observations upon them within a certain time.

Each sect, in localities where there are no other religious denominations, shall be free from every species of restraint as regards the public exercise of its religion.

In the towns, small boroughs, and villages where different sects are mingled together, each community, inhabiting a distinct quarter, shall, by conforming to the above-mentioned ordinances, have equal power to repair and improve its churches, its hospitals, its schools, and its cemeteries. When there is a question of the erection of new buildings, the necessary authority must be asked for through the Sublime Porte, which will pronounce a Sovereign decision according to that authority, except in the case of administrative obstacles. The intervention of the administrative authority in all measures of this nature will be entirely gratuitous. My Sublime Porte will take energetic measures to ensure to each sect, whatever be the number of its adherents, entire freedom in the exercise of its religion.

Source: Boğaziçi University, Atatürk Institute of Modern Turkish History (
<http://www.ata.boun.edu.tr>) (The translator is unknown)