

**OSCE
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IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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Warsaw, Poland**

Working Session II: Fundamental Freedoms I, Including Freedom of Expression and Address by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

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Thank you very much Ms./ Mr. Moderator,

My name is Aysel Homko. I am representing here the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association.

I would like to inform you about the freedom of expression in Greece and the violation of this right of the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace.

Ms./Mr. Moderator,

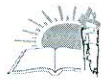
I would like to give you some examples that reveal the Greek violations of international norms.

The Greek authorities violate human and minority rights with their legislations. The Greek media law (3592/2007), which was enacted by the Greek government on 19 July 2007 endangers basic concepts of pluralism, diversity and minority rights by limiting the usage of the Turkish language in Western Thrace.

Another example of restriction of Turkish language occurred last year. A conference was organized in November titled "The Treaty of Lausanne: 90 Years Later – Framing Minority Issues". One of the organizers of the conference was the ELIAMEP, which is the Hellenic Foundation for the European and Foreign Policy. In that conference a Minority member journalist was prevented by an official of our country from delivering his speech in Turkish even though he had been told that he could speak Turkish and also despite the presence of an officially certified translator arranged for that purpose.

The other issue is the 240 Imam Law, the State authorities insistently continue to violate the Minority's rights. The members of the Turkish Minority are absolutely against the implementation of the Law No 4115/2013 which is known as 240 Imam Law that foresees the appointment of Quran teachers to the state schools and to our holy mosques. The Turkish Minority has already expressed its disagreement and strong reaction through public statements. This official Quran courses started in some state schools and our Holy Book which is originally Arabic is now being taught to Turkish Students in Greek language. This is really absurd.

Lastly, the elected Muftis of the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace applied to the European Court of Human Rights against Greece since the Greek government violated Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. On several cases the Court decided that Greece violated article 9 of the



Convention. However, the Greek authorities still continue to violate the right to freedom of expression of the Turkish Minority.

Therefore Ms./Mr. Moderator,

Recalling that the freedom of expression is considered as one of the basic human rights,
Reaffirming the OSCE's sensitivity on the issue,

Western Thrace Minority University Graduates would like to highlight the necessity of democratic pluralism and cultural diversity for the development of global societies.

In this context we would like to recommend Greece,

To respect the right to freedom of expression of all segments of the society especially of the Turkish minority.

To respect and to implement the provisions of international standards that she is a party.

To revise the legislation in conformity with the international standards.

Thank you very much.