



OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION
IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

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Working Session VI: Fundamental freedoms I, including Address by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

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Thank you Ms/Mr Moderator,

The constitution and various laws and regulations consist provisions for freedom of speech and the media in Greece. The Article 14 of the constitution states that “every person may express and propagate his thoughts orally, in writing and through the press in compliance with the laws of the State”. However, there are some legal restrictions, especially for the minority media. It is easy to observe injustice, inequity and arbitrariness of the Greek practice of freedom of media. Defamation and insult are criminal offences, however, the Greek State’s attitude to minority and majority media is totally different from each other and is the indicator of the significant deterioration of human rights and equality principle. While the hate-speech and biased broadcasting of the majority media towards the Turkish Minority’s leading figures and other non-Greek ethnic groups have remained untouched, the small minority media has been oppressed for years. Even after the adoption of hate-crime law, no journalist has been questioned about their degrading expressions. On the other hand, Turkish Minority media has been subjected to various bureaucratic obstacles.

A 2007 media law (No: 3592/2007) adopted without taking into consideration the ethnic minorities and other different segments of the society requires that the main language of radio stations be Greek, and that stations keep certain funds in reserve and hire a minimum number of full-time staff. This places a disproportionate burden on smaller stations. The local, national and international communities, as well as the OSCE expressed their objections towards the unfair provisions of this law. However, up to now no revision has been made.

Ms/Mr Moderator,

The Turkish Minority of Western Thrace calls upon the Greek State,

To respect the right to freedom of expression and free media to protect pluralism in the society,

To revise the related legislation and ensure the equality principle for every segments of the society,

To eliminate disparities between minority and the mainstream media in the practice of legislation,

To take special measures to prevent hate speech towards the minority and the other vulnerable groups while promoting free speech,

Thank you for your attention.