

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GREECE

-RIGHT OF REPLY-

Working session 9 (specifically selected topic): Tolerance and non-discrimination

In exercising my right of reply, I would like to stress that Greece is firmly committed to continue its policy to uphold the right to education of the members of the Muslim minority in Thrace.

We are ready, on the one hand to improve the functioning of the existing minority schools in Thrace (130 primary minority schools, 2 secondary and 2 Koranic/Islamic schools) and, on the other, to successfully accommodate the preference to the public educational system shown by the minority members who select it. Such an accommodation is being pursued in parallel with courses aiming at preserving the linguistic and cultural characteristics of persons belonging to the minority who attend public schools.

Furthermore, Law 4115/2013 introduced the teaching of the Holy Quran on a voluntary basis into public schools in Thrace, with the possibility to employ 240 Imams with proven track record in this regard.

A 0.5% quota for the admission to Universities and Higher Technical Educational Institutes of students who are members of the Muslim minority in Thrace has long been introduced in order to improve the access of minority students to the labour market.

Unsurprisingly, such measures and trends are ignored by all those seeking to promote political agendas based on “autonomous structures” rather than integration with respect for diversity and interaction between the majority and the minority.

Finally, in the current challenging economic situation, we will continue to seek further ways and means to meet the needs of the members of the Muslim minority and enhance their progress, prosperity and well-being.