

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GREECE
RIGHT OF REPLY**

**Working Session 11:Tolerance and non discrimination I (continued),
including prevention and responses to hate crimes in the OSCE area and
combatting racism, xenophobia and discrimination, also focusing on
intolerance on religious grounds.**

In reply to two NGO statements, I would like to reiterate the steadfast commitment of the Greek Government to the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In 2014 and 2015, Parliament adopted laws to strengthen our criminal anti-racism legislation, to facilitate its implementation and to introduce more severe penalties for racist crimes. Furthermore, five Special Prosecutors for racist crimes have been appointed in five different cities. Within the Hellenic Police, 2 new Sections and 68 new Offices throughout the country have been established, tasked with the investigation of acts of racist violence.

Regarding the political party "Golden Dawn", I would like to mention that members of that political party, including Members of Parliament, have been brought to trial, which is still ongoing.

Considering the incident mentioned, which took place in Brussels, I would like to stress that the Greek civil society expects from its political leaders and representatives to present no behaviour or rhetoric of intolerance and discrimination. However, no society is immune of phenomena of racism and discrimination. But when representatives of extreme political movements are disrespectful of democratic principles, then they are marginalised within their society.

Finally, regarding the two other incidents of December 2015 and of January 2016, I would like to underline that the Thrace Muslim Minority's relations with the Christian majority in the area are in absolute harmony and there are no crimes that could be designated as hate crimes or discrimination against Muslim by the local community. Two isolated incidents involving Muslim persons and property, are individual cases that do not target the Muslim element as a whole. Yet, there are extended and thorough investigations by the police authorities to identify and punish the perpetrators.