

## **Working Session 5**

**Wednesday, 13 September 2017**

### **Ensuring equal enjoyment of rights and equal participation in political and public life**

#### **Statement by the Greek Delegation**

Mr Moderator,

I would like to exercise my right of reply with regard to an intervention made by an NGO member. In this context, I apologize for having to repeat myself and reiterate that in Greece exists a religious and not a national minority.

Having said that, I would like to stress that a number of important measures in favor of the members of the Muslim minority in Thrace have been adopted by the Greek Governments in recent years.

These measures attest Greece's commitment to further pursue, promote and enhance the integration of persons belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace to the wider society they live and prosper. Due to its cardinal importance, particular attention has been paid to education. Other adopted measures aim at promoting and safeguarding the cultural identity of persons belonging to the Muslim minority, as well as at facilitating their access to employment in the public sector.

Additional steps have also been initiated in order to enable members of the Muslim minority, especially women and young persons and persons with disabilities, to be beneficiaries of nationwide programmes and projects, co-financed, in some cases, by the European Union, designed for vulnerable social groups, focusing, in particular, on issues of gender equality, combating racism and xenophobia and promoting equal opportunities, access to employment and inter-cultural dialogue.

Furthermore, please allow me to remind to the esteemed members of the Muslim minority in Greece that they have to understand that they are Greek.

Thank you Mr Moderator.