

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw, 11-22 September 2017

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GREECE

RIGHT OF REPLY

Working Session 2: Fundamental Freedoms I:

- *Freedom of peaceful assembly and association,*
- *National human rights institutions and the role of civil society in the protection of human rights*

Thank you for giving the opportunity to inform you briefly how things stand in my country concerning the issues of freedom, of peaceful assembly and association and the role of the civil society in the protection of Human Rights.

Freedom of association is unequivocally, firmly and broadly protected by the Greek Constitution. Several Muslim minority associations and NGOs freely operate in the region of Thrace under the Greek Law. These thriving NGOs have been registered by the competent courts and operate unimpeded, thus promoting the cultural, educational and economic life of the Muslim minority.

There are indeed three cases that have been brought before the ECtHR back in 2007 and 2008 by three Minority Associations. The Greek courts, in practice, take into consideration the CoE (ECtHR) standards set by the rulings of 2007 and 2008 to the effect that since then, other Minority associations that have submitted applications and have been established and duly recognized.

It is not accurate that associations are not registered on the grounds of including the word “Turkish” in their title. Recently, an association was registered, including the denomination “Turkish” in the title but with the difference that it was used to denote mother tongue of its members.

On its part, the Greek Government is constantly considering appropriate ways and means to implement the 2007 and 2008 judgments, including potential legislative adjustments in order to make possible the reopening of relevant domestic procedures.