

## **Working Session 4**

**Wednesday, 13 September 2017**

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

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

Mr Moderator,

In reply to allegations made by a member of an NGO, please allow me to stress that in Greece, only one group of persons is qualified as a “minority”, namely the Muslim minority in Thrace, consisting of three distinct groups, whose members are of Turkish, Pomak and Roma origin. The status of the Muslim Minority in Thrace was established by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which qualifies this minority as a religious and not a national one.

In this framework, please allow me to stress that it of great surprise the fact that some NGO members put into doubt International Treaties.

In reply, also, to allegations made by another NGO member, I would like to state that in almost all successive parliamentary elections held in Greece since 1927, candidates that were members of the Muslim minority in Thrace have been elected as Members of Parliament (MPs) with the governing party, the opposition or, in most cases, on both sides of the Parliament. Currently, there are four MPs that are members of the said minority.

Furthermore, the members of the minority do actively participate in all levels of the region’s Local Administration. This continues to be the case, following the most recent (May 2014) regional and local elections. Roughly 120 Greek citizens – members of the Muslim Minority – were elected at the local and regional Councils in Thrace: among them three mayors in the cities of Arriana, Iasmos (Rodopi constituency) and Miki (Xanthi constituency).

In addition to that, a quota of 0,5 % to the State exams system for civil service has been established in favor of persons belonging to the Muslim minority with the obvious intention to enhance their active participation in the public sector.

Thank you Mr Moderator.