

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

**Working Session 13: Tolerance and non-discrimination II (concluded)
including combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, also focusing on
intolerance on religious grounds (30.9.2014)**

In reply to references made to the situation in Greece, I would like to stress that over the last years, and in particular during the period 2012-2013, there has been an important surge in the number of attacks against foreigners living in Greece, and Greek citizens as well. Extremist organizations or individuals have attempted to exploit the anger or the discontent of some segments of the population severely affected by the economic crisis, against the background of an unprecedented rise in irregular migration. A number of measures have been taken at the level of law enforcement, criminal legislation and the justice system. Since September 2013, the leader and members of “Golden Dawn” have been placed under judicial investigation for membership of a “criminal organization”; the measure of pre-trial detention, or other restrictive conditions, have been imposed by the competent judicial authorities to a number of suspects, including Members of Parliament. State financing has been suspended.

Furthermore, a new tightened anti-racism law was adopted three weeks ago, on 9 September 2014, adjusting the country’s legislative framework with the 2008/913/JHA EU Council Framework Decision and strengthening the existing criminal anti-racism legislation in terms both of the acts criminalized and the penalties foreseen.

In addition, racist acts and hate crimes have been condemned in the strongest possible terms by members of the political leadership of the country at the highest level, conveying an unequivocal message of zero tolerance.

Finally, in contrast to allegations about hate speech and hate crimes, Thrace is an example of a smooth and well-functioning “living together”, to use a term highlighted recently by the European Court of Human Rights,, of the Christian majority and the Muslim minority.