

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw, 10-21 September 2018

GREECE

RIGHT OF REPLY

Working Session 10

I would like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the intervention made by the representative of “Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association”. In this context, I apologise for repeating once again that in Greece there is only one minority existing and this is a religious and not a national one. Freedom of association is unequivocally, firmly and broadly protected by the Greek Constitution. Several Muslim minority associations and NGO’s freely operate in the region of Thrace under the Greek law. These thriving NGOs have been registered by the competent courts and operate unimpeded.

It is not accurate that associations are not registered on the ground of including the word “Turkish” in their title.

Greece has done its utmost in order to enable implementation by the Greek courts of the European Court of Human Rights 2008 rulings on minority association in Greece. On October 10,2017 the Greek Parliament adopted the law 4491/2017, which introduced an amendment to the Code of Civil Procedure, allowing for the re-examination of the case of minority union by the Greek courts.

Unsurprisingly all measures and amendments are ignored by all those seeking to promote political agendas based on “autonomous structures” rather than integration with respect to diversity and integration between the majority and the minority.

Finally, we are aware of the judgements of the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeal of Thrace (N.96/2018, 22.6.2018) which were dismissive of the new requests by the minority associations. Nevertheless, everyone, including the Greek government has to respect the rulings of the independent Greek Judicial System.