



Republic of Albania

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 16 - 27 September 2019

Working Session 10: Rule of Law I, including: Independence of judiciary; Democratic law-making; Ensuring equal enjoyment of rights and equal participation in political and public life.

Right of Reply

Thank you, Mr. Moderator,

I am constrained to exercise the right of reply in response to the distorted picture and disinformation about the situation of the Greek minority in my country, presented in this forum by an NGO, which neither operates in Albania, nor represents any national minority there. We regret that the HDIM continues to be misused as a tribune by some extremist organizations, which claim territories of other participating States.

The Albanian government is committed to respecting the rights of the Greek minority in Albania, in accordance with all relevant international standards, including the property rights. We consider the Greek minority not only a genuine bridge for our longstanding friendship, but also a precious asset of our country's fundament and values.

The right of persons belonging to national minorities are guaranteed by the Albanian Constitution and the domestic legal framework. This includes the property right, which is enjoyed by all citizens, individually indiscriminately and equally, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity. Moreover, all citizens enjoy the right to appeal effectively to court instances in case of alleged violations of these rights. As a European country, member of the European Convention on Human Rights, Albania recognizes the jurisdiction of the Strasbourg Court and applies its decisions. The Law on Minorities, adopted by Albania in 2017 provides further guarantees for the enjoyment of rights by national minorities. This law is in line with European standards, including the Framework Convention of Council of Europe "for the Protection of National Minorities". It was prepared in close collaboration with international actors, such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union; it was also widely consulted with numerous relevant domestic stakeholders and the civil society, including associations of the Greek national minority.

The incident of Bularat was not a case of violations of minority rights. It was an entirely isolated incident and a flagrant case of an extremist who carried out an armed aggression against the Albanian structures of law enforcement and endangered the lives of the other inhabitants of the village. The actions and response of the law enforcement structures were proportionate and in line with the law, regardless of the nationality, religion affiliation or birthplace of the perpetrator.

The Rule of Law and the Independence of the Judiciary remain among the top priorities of the Albanian Government, including in the context of our European integration agenda. Albania is determined to guarantee the constitutional order, the inviolability of the territorial integrity, rule of law and the respect of the lives of its citizens.

Thank You.