

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw, 11-22 September 2017

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GREECE

RIGHT OF REPLY

Working Session 1: Fundamental freedoms I: Freedom of Expression, free media and information

I am pleased that I have the opportunity to reiterate what is already known. Due to lack of time I will leave aside all the allegations that do not fall within today's thematic discussion and I will concentrate on freedom of expression.

In Greece, one group of persons is qualified as a “minority”, namely the Muslim minority in Thrace, the status of which was established by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. The minority consists of three distinct groups, whose members are of Turkish, Pomak and Roma origin. Each of these groups has its own spoken language, cultural traditions and heritage, which are fully respected by the Greek state. Their common denominator is the Muslim faith, and this objective fact explains why the minority is recognized as a religious one.

Greece attaches great importance to implementing coherent, comprehensive and effective policies that guarantee, inter alia, equality before the Law respect for human rights/religious freedoms and equality of opportunities for all.

In this framework, Greek citizens of Muslim Faith enjoy the same rights and have the same obligations as all Greek citizens and their religious, cultural and all other rights are fully respected by Greece, as it is the case with every Greek citizen.

In this context, fundamental democratic values such as freedom of expression and media, existence of pluralistic media and free flow of information constitute a basic element of the Greek society.

More specifically, at least five (5) minority radio stations, seven (7) minority newspapers and various minority magazines and websites are part of an open and pluralistic media environment in Thrace, which functions without restrictions.