

## **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

**Warsaw, 10-21 September 2018**

### **GREECE**

#### **RIGHT OF REPLY**

##### **Working Session 11**

In reply to the statement of the representative of the “Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association”, about the situation in Greece, I would like to stress the following.

In Greece, there is only one group of persons 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. Their common denominator is the Muslim faith.

Greece fully respects the principle of individual self-identification. Persons living in Greece are free to declare their origin, speak their language, exercise their religion and observe their particular customs and traditions. What is not acceptable is the attempt to establish a single ethnic identity for the entire Muslim minority in Thrace, so as to subsume Pomak and Roma persons under a Turkish identity which is not their own.

Considering allegations about restrictions in Thrace on freedom of expression I would like to stress that 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.

About European Court of HR 2008 rulings and the new law adopted in 2017 I refer to my reply during today’s morning session

Finally, when it comes to the actual implementation of international treaties by some parties and calls from the same parties to others for proper implementation, consistency is an indicator of reliability and credibility and in this case there are poor records to be noticed. This certainly does not concern my country which fully complies with its obligations under the Lausanne Treaty.