

## Greece Right of Reply

### Session 6

I would like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the intervention made by the representative of “Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe” (ABTTF).

First of all, it is to be noted that the above mentioned NGO continues to use inaccurately the term “Turkish community” in Thrace instead of Muslim minority which is the correct term used in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne which established the status of the said religious minority in Greece.

It is regretful to see that the statement of the ABTTF is referring to issues that have already been answered by Greece many times.

Freedom of association is unequivocally, firmly and broadly protected by the Greek Constitution. It applies to all citizens, irrespective of ethnic origin, culture or religion.

In Thrace there is a thriving civil society, comprising a large number of Muslim minority associations and NGO’s that have been registered by the competent courts and operate unimpeded.

As regards the 2008 European Court of Human Rights rulings, Greece has done its utmost in order to enable their implementation by the Greek courts. In particular, in October 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.

Although the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeal of Thrace have dismissed the new requests submitted by the minority associations based on Law 4491/2017, an overall assessment of the implementation of this law can only be made after the completion of the ongoing judicial procedures.

In any case the Greek Government has to respect the rulings of the independent Greek judicial system.

It is utterly disappointing to witness once again government NGO’s which follow an intentionally misleading strategy, within the OSCE meetings, hoping for unsubstantiated dividends.