



Republic of Albania

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

Working Session 12: Tolerance and non-discrimination.
Rights of persons belonging to national minorities

Thank you, Mr. Moderator,

I would like to use this statement also to answer to some allegations raised here by the Democratic Union of Greek Minority (OMONIA) and another NGO.

Albania strongly believes that protection of human rights including the rights of minorities is crucial, not only internally, but also for maintaining regional peace and stability. Access to the rights of national minorities can only be ensured in a society where dialogue, understanding, and cultural diversity are seen as sources of values of coexistence.

We consider the national minorities living in Albania as an integral and precious part of our society. Their rights have been traditionally respected and the relationship with the rest of the society has been characterised by harmony, coexistence and tolerance.

In this regard our country has a permanent commitment to the promotion and the protection of the rights of minorities. Their rights are guaranteed by the Albanian Constitution and the domestic law. The Law on Minorities, adopted in 2017 is a major step forward in this regard. The Law is in line with European standards, including the Framework Convention of Council of Europe “for the Protection of National Minorities”. It was drafted in consultation with relevant international organizations, such as OSCE, Council of Europe and the European Union; it was also widely consulted with interested domestic actors and the civil society, including representatives and associations of the Greek minority.

Following the adoption of the Law on Minorities, Albania is working on the package of the relevant secondary laws. So far, seven laws have been adopted and five others are being finalized. In this context, the Albanian citizens enjoy the right of self-identification, based on the subjective criteria (self-identification) and objective criteria. This is a widely applied practice, which ensures not only the respect for human rights, but also an accurate and legitimate process.

The positive record of Albania related to the respect for national minorities has been continuously acknowledged and reported by the international community, including by the EU, CoE, and OSCE.

The Albanian Government is committed to the protection of human rights and in particular to further implement anti-discrimination policies, improve social policies, with special focus on marginalised groups and minors as well as reforms in the area of property rights. The property rights is a constitutional right enjoyed by all citizens, individually, indiscriminately and equally, regardless of their ethnicity.

Thank you!