

WARSAW, 9 October 2006

OSCE HDIM-WORKING SESSION 10:  
Democratic Institutions

STATEMENT BY THE GREEK DELEGATION  
in exercise of the right of Reply

Permit me to say a few things, as a reply to statements made by previous speakers.

1. As to a statement on the Muslim Minority in Greece, I would like to stress that the principles of the State policy towards the Muslim Minority are those of equality before the Law and equal protection of the Law, without any discrimination.

The rights of the members of the Muslim Minority in Thrace are fully guaranteed and effectively protected in a society where the rule of Law prevails.

Our Muslim co-citizens participate actively in the public life of the country and many are members of political parties and local governments. In particular, around three hundred Muslims hold seats in the prefectural and town councils of Xanthi and Komotini.

Concerning the comment of a speaker on reactions to the candidacy of Ms Karachasan, a young Muslim lawyer, for the office of the prefect, let me point out that this candidacy is viewed by the whole spectrum of the Greek political parties as a natural consequence of the full integration of the Muslim community in public life.

2. As to the statement of another speaker, on behalf of the organization "Rainbow coalition", who claimed that he represented what he called "Macedonian minority", I want to stress that such a minority does not exist in Greece. What exists is almost 2,5 million Greek Macedonians, proud of their heritage and traditions which date back thousands of years.

This organization participated absolutely freely in recent elections of all kinds, and has seen that its constituency is non-existent. For example in the parliamentary election it did not receive more than 0.02% of the vote, even though it participated in the elections in coalition with other marginal groups.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that in my country all parties and organizations enjoy, both in law and in practice, full participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life.

