

MOVEMENT FOR THE RENAISSANCE OF NORTHERN EPIRUS

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

10 September - 21 September 2018

Warsaw – Poland

Working session 2 (Specifically selected topic): Freedom of the media

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Thank you Mr/Mrs Moderator,

Honorable representatives,

Freedom in the Media for the Greek National Minority in Albania has made some small steps forward in recent years but has never reached the desired levels.

If a National Hellenic Minority member or organization wishes to set up a private radio or television channel to broadcast in his native language, he must first obtain permission from the Albanian authorities. But he will wait in vain simply because he will not receive any answer whatsoever.

If he can get in touch with and talk to the Albanian authorities regarding this issue, he will be surprised to hear the Albanian authorities demand that the broadcast, the news and the music of the station must be overwhelmingly in the Albanian language, leaving just a small percentage of the broadcasting material to be in Greek, that is, in the language of the Greek National Minority. He will also see a tendency of the Albanian authorities to haggle if the Greek language will be 15% or 20% or 25%. But never more than that. Especially for the area of Himara, the percentage is 0%, not one word in Greek.

In April 2018, the station of the State Broadcasting Corporation in Korytsa stopped without any warning and without any explanation the five-minute(!) news bulletin that was being broadcast in Greek every Sunday afternoon. Until then 5 minutes was all the Greek one listen to on the radio. Now it's just zero.

The only Greek broadcast in all of Albania is the broadcast of the local state TV station Argyrokastro (Gjirokaster). One hour every week. That's just all.

Several years ago, in the same city of Argyrokastro, Greek television antennas were placed. The Albanian authorities, however, removed them without any explanation.

Regarding the printing publications sector there are no such problems. But there is something else here. The distribution agencies are discouraged, so to speak, to distribute Greek-language publications such as newspapers. Hence, every Greek publisher must try on his own to distribute his newspaper, literally going from village to village.

These highly undemocratic acts are violations of the right to information in the mother tongue of national minorities, a right derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Thank you very much.