



**OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION  
IMPLEMENTATION MEETING**  
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**Working Session XVII: Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including rights of persons belonging to national minorities**

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Thank you Ms/Mr Moderator,

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to draw your kind attention to the violation of education rights of Western Thrace Turkish Minority in Greece. The Turkish Minority of Western Thrace urges Greece:

- To take into consideration its international obligations and respect to the Turkish Minority's right to education,
- To eliminate the inequality within the educational system and provide equal opportunity for all segments of the society to access to compulsory education, especially for the Turkish minority which is the only recognized minority in Greece,
- To promote the mother tongue education that is Turkish within the compulsory education system in Western Thrace,
- To allow the Turkish Minority to establish its bilingual nursery schools,
- To give bilingual education in public nursery schools where the Turkish students/ children attend until the bilingual minority ones are established,
- To stop state-hand discrimination within the education system,
- To have a concrete dialogue with the Turkish Minority representatives during the legislation process,

Right to education is one of the basic components of human and minority rights standards. The Turkish Minority of Western Thrace is a unique minority whose rights were guaranteed by international and bilateral treaties as well as international human and minority rights documents. (With the Greek Minority in Istanbul).

The Greek authorities, however, have almost never exercised their international responsibilities.

We would like to give a very recent example of state-hand discrimination in field of education. The Article 66 of the Law 4310/2014 (Government gazette 258 Issue A/8-12-2014) states that "... only the members of the Muslim Minority of Thrace who graduated from the Departments of Primary Education of Greek Universities have right to education at the Teaching Unit for the Minority Program Instructors...". This means that the teachers who graduated from the equivalent departments of foreign universities do not have the right to attend this Teaching Unit. This article reflects the racist intension of the Greek authorities and is totally against the equality principle of the Greek Constitution.

Ms/Mr Moderator,

We will be honored if a fact finding mission of OSCE High Commission for National Minorities pay a visit to Western Thrace to see the real situation in one of the most backward areas of the EU.

**Thank you very much.**