



OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION
IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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Warsaw –Poland

Working Session I: Fundamental freedoms I, including freedom of peaceful assembly and association

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Thank you Ms/Mr Moderator,

Distinguished Delegates,

Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association calls upon the Greek State,

To respect and implement the provisions of the international human rights instruments in which the freedom of assembly and association is safeguarded.

To ensure that the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association is enjoyed by the whole society, either individually or as a group, without discrimination and restriction on the basis of ethnic or social origin, To repeal any restrictions on the right to freedom of association discriminating against Turkish minority of Western Thrace,

To recognize and take positive measures to implement the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, To respect the Turkish Minority's self-identification and repeal its decisions regarding the banning of Turkish associations,

To facilitate dialogue with the Turkish Minority's decision making bodies on the related issues to build trust towards the authorities,

Ms/Mr Moderator,

The right to freedom of association is a basic fundamental human right that is stipulated by most of the fundamental human rights instruments. However, as of 2015, the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace, the only officially recognized minority in Greece, is not allowed to use the word "Turk" / "Turkish" in the titles of its associations since these words constitute a threat to public order and territorial integrity.

Three associations of the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace were banned since they have the word "Turk" / "Turkish" in their titles. Also the State authorities do not let the Turkish minority members establish new associations with ethnic Turkish names. In three cases the European Court of Human Rights decided that Greece violated the right to freedom of assembly and association. (Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis and Others v. Greece (no. 26698/05) / Emin and Others v. Greece (no. 34144/05) / Bekir-Ousta and Others v. Greece - 35151/05).

After the ECtHR's decisions in favour of the Minority Associations, the Greek officials started to say that "We strive for the solution of the problem" as a delaying tactic just to gain time and keep the issue pending. It is clear that Greece has no intention to make legal arrangements for the implementation of the ECtHR decisions. As the Greek authorities insistently keep on repeating at various national and international fora that they are working on new regulations for amending the Greek domestic law so as to cease contradicting with the ECtHR's jurisprudence. However, no step has been taken for years to repeal the un-lawful and unacceptable implementations towards the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace.

Thank you for your attention.