

**Forum on Minority Issues**  
Geneva, 15-16 December 2008

Statement by the Representative of the Hellenic Government  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Greece  
Ambassador M. Diamessis

Thematic focus on  
**"Minorities and the Right to Education"**  
16 December 2008  
(during agenda item VII)

Madame Chair,

We understand and we welcome the fact that the representatives of two entities, one association and one Greek political party, have expressed in this forum their views concerning the situation of minorities in Greece.

What we cannot understand is the repetition of these very same allegations for a fourth or fifth time today, in every agenda time, although they have been answered clearly by the Greek delegation since yesterday morning.

The purpose of this forum is to address minority educational rights.

It is not the intention of the Greek delegation to follow the same pattern and monopolize the discussion, regarding unfounded allegations for the minority situation in one European Union country which abides by the provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights.

We have been trying to engage constructively in the dialogue by providing specific input regarding the draft recommendations provided by Mrs McDougall who recently was invited and visited my country under her capacity as the Independent Expert on Minorities.

Of course we are ready to correct any inefficiencies of our minority education system and that is the reason why the Secretary for intercultural

education of the Greek Ministry of Education is attending this meeting and has addressed this forum, earlier in the day.

Nevertheless, we strongly believe that the situation concerning minority education in Thrace can be considered as a model for many countries and that is why we distributed relevant documentation this morning. We will appreciate it if the Secretariat of the Forum, which we thank for their invaluable work, includes that document into the proceedings of the Forum.