

Thank you Madam Chairperson for giving me this opportunity. We are pleased to participate in this first forum minorities.

On behalf of my NGO and our community I would like to thank and congratulate Ms. McDougall and Mr. Foggs during their visit to our country in Greece.

An estimate number of 150,000 ethnic Turks live in the northeast part of Greece and the legal status of this minority was established by the Peace Treaty of Lausanne and other international instruments.

In the recent years the situation of the minority has slightly improved however still much remains to be done. Western Thrace minority education system is based and protected by international treaties and bilateral agreements. These legal instruments provide autonomy education in Western Thrace.

Unfortunately authorities systematically undermine the autonomy of the minority education system throughout different ways. The Greek state since 1923 has put enforce more than 70 laws, decrees and governmental decisions regarding the minority education. While these new regulations are more in favour for the improvement of the state language instruction which is in Greek, they undermine the autonomy and increase the weaknesses of the instruction of the Turkish curriculum.

At this state I would like to focus of the issues of the training of teachers for minority communities and the involvement of minority communities and the involvement of representatives from minority communities in the school management system. In the minority primary schools across the region of Western Thrace where the instruction is on Greek and in Turkish, the Greek state in the last ten years has taken major positive steps by using the EU financial resources for improving the curriculum of the Greek language. Some of this important steps were also described earlier by Professor Frangoudaki and Professor Dragonas, however no major step has been taken for the improvement of the Turkish curriculum. Actually the main problem of these schools is the poor..... I am out of time. And my report is there if you are interested in the NGOs desk. Thank you!