

Permanent Mission of Greece – Right of reply

I thank you, madame Chair.

Greece would like to exercise its right to reply, following interventions by two NGOs regarding the situation of the Muslim minority in Thrace.

Freedom of expression is well entrenched and protecting, not only in the Greek legal system, but also in the European legal order. In this vein, the Greek state takes pride in applying a long-standing policy of tolerance, mutual understanding, and peaceful coexistence. In this respect, the Muslim minority in Thrace is no exception to the religious and linguistic pluralism of the Greek society. Tens of minority media, both online and offline, are freely operating in the region of Thrace, thanks alone to the members of the minority to communicate their ideas without any censorship or other limitations. To our knowledge, there has been absolutely no targeting of minority members, but at any case, if this happened, the Greek legal and judicial system is [?] to guarantee punishment, including reparation to the victims.

With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, Greece has adopted all the necessary protection measures and provisions in order to ensure the health and well-being of the Muslim minority in Thrace. Besides, on special circumstances, when it was deemed necessary for health reasons, and in order to reduce the spread the COVID-19 virus, local quarantine regimes were imposed in areas where members of the Muslim minority reside in close cooperation with the local authority system and based on impartial and uncontested medical data available at the time. The same measures and provisions were applied to the entirety of the Greek territory and the whole population.

Last but not least, it has to be noted that a landmark judicial ruling has been issued on October 7th, setting new democratic standards for every society. The conviction of tens of far-right politicians and the prohibition of their party conveys the message that racism and hate speech have no place in Greece. I thank you.