

Madam Chair,

Greece aligns itself with the EU Statement.

To quote UN Secretary General, hate speech “is moving into the mainstream – in liberal democracies and authoritarian systems alike. And with each broken norm, the pillars of our common humanity are weakened”.

Minorities, unfortunately, are particularly vulnerable to hate speech, both online and offline. Furthermore, the multitude of online fora, websites and social media platforms has created a series of new challenges and issues, such as content control, jurisdiction, effective prosecution and compensation.

Greece is confident that the proscription of hate speech and the flourishing of freedom of expression should be seen as complementary and not the expression of a zero sum game. In this context, the criminalization of hate speech by States should be governed by the principles of legality, proportionality and necessity. The Rabat six-part threshold test provided invaluable criteria in this respect.

In our globalized society, online hate speech against minorities and others necessitates a multi-stakeholder approach for the effective implementation of a comprehensive regulatory and policy framework. States, international organizations, tech companies and minority representatives alike should cooperate in this respect. OHCHR, treaty bodies and special procedure mechanisms need adequate financial resources. OHCHR can contribute through providing technical assistance and capacity building to the States, including through providing a compilation of best practices and elements of a model legislation for preventing hate speech and ensuring accountability. Internet platforms are called upon to control and remove illegal content. Minorities highly benefit from developing and owning their own media, thus avoiding marginalization and ensuring their voice in a pluralistic society.

Special Rapporteur,

Though no State can claim a spotless record on human rights, Greece spares no effort in the implementation of its relative legislation, cornerstone of which is Law 4285/2014, as well as of international standards and we expect for every country to act likewise. We are looking forward to your next report, following the discussions held during this Forum, and you may rely on our support during your mandate.

Thank you