



## **ΔΕΕΕΜ ΟΜΟΝΟΙΑ**

Δημοκρατική Ένωση Εθνικής Ελληνικής Μειονότητας - ΟΜΟΝΟΙΑ  
Bashkimi Demokratik i Minoritetit Etnik Grek - OMONOIA  
Democratic Union of the Greek Minority - OMONOIA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to speak to you. My name is Vasil Kajo and I am President of the Democratic Union of the National Greek Minority “OMONOIA” which represents the Greek National Minority in Albania, the officially recognized largest national minority in the country.

As of today, Albanian citizens of Greek nationality can exercise limited minority rights only if they are residents of 99 villages (which constitute arbitrarily designed minority zones). The Albanian Parliament adopted the Law on the Protection of National Minorities in 2017 and the last most important bylaws, including the right to self-identification and the right to use the minority language, have yet to be adopted. It should be noted that the right to education in Greek must be ensured in twelve school grades and the hate rhetoric must be eliminated from textbooks.

In Albania, the violation of property rights and non-registration of the properties of the members of the Greek national minority continues.

The Census that was carried out between September and November 2023 was very problematic because census officials in numerous instances omitted questions or refused to register answers on ethnicity, mother tongue and religion. In addition to this, media propaganda and intimidation tried to prevent citizens from self-identification.

We are also required to raise the issue of the illegal arrest and pre-detention by the Albanian Authorities of Mr. Fredi Beleri, mayor-elect of Himara and member of the Greek National Minority in Albania. For more than seven months he is not allowed to be sworn into office. We have reason to believe that his arrest and detention are politically motivated in order to prevent a member of the Greek national minority from becoming Mayor of Himara, so that the expropriation of property from members of the Greek minority in the region can continue.

Finally, we would like to mention that almost every reference to the elected mayor by politicians, journalists or even citizens in the media and on social media is imbued with hate speech, xenophobia and anti-Greek sentiments.

Thank you for your attention!