

Democratic Union of the Greek National Minority OMONOIA, ALBANIA

Thank you Madame Chair. Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to address this distinguished audience on behalf of OMONOIA. OMONOIA is an organization that represents, since 1991, the Greek national minority in Albania. The largest national minority in the country. OMONOIA in Greek means “conquer”, a word that introduces perfectly the concept of this year’s Forum. Building trust among minorities and the state authorities is the objective that I could single out from this year’s Forum. This is the catalyst for building trust among the kin-state as well. Despite our consistent efforts with Albanian authorities during the last three and a half decades, we still face vital changes, most of them longstanding, that hinder this trust-building process. This effective implementation in good faith of the legislation remains a key issue. For example, through credible and transparent census procedures and timely data publication. The implementation of minority legislation should be nation-wide and the arbitrary concept of minority zones should be abolished. Establishing an efficient and transparent property registration system is an issue of utmost concern. The problem is more acute along the southern coastal zone where the members of the Greek national minority live traditionally, because of the high economic and touristic potential of the area. Registering and protecting our property from illegal expropriation is of paramount importance. The right to minority education should be guaranteed throughout the country where members of the Greek national minority live traditionally or in substantial numbers without strict requirements. Finally, the revision of school textbooks to exclude irridentist views needs to be addressed in order to combat hate and intolerance.