

PM of Greece

Greece welcomes the focus of this year's Forum. Minorities are an integral part of society, enriching public life and strengthening community resilience. At the same time, they often face barriers, which limits participation and undermines trust and engagement. Effectively addressing these challenges is essential to promoting social cohesion and inclusive societies. The experience of Greece regarding the Muslim minority in Thrace defined on the basis of religion in the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 illustrates this principle in practice and provides a longstanding example of peaceful coexistence between Christian and Muslim populations. The Muslim minority enjoys all rights guaranteed by the Greek Constitution and the EU. Its members freely practice their religion, maintain their traditions, and use their languages, while its demographic growth over the past century reflects its prosperity. Practical measures support participation. Minority schools operate in Thrace, while dedicated quotas facilitate access to universities and the public sector. The region hosts more than 240 mosques and recent legislation has modernized the selection process of muftis, ensuring transparency and participation, including the involvement of women in the advisory committee, in line with international standards. In matters of family and inheritance laws, minority members may choose between civil courts and muftis. They are also active in public life, with representatives in Parliament, local councils, mayors, associations, and a vibrant media presence. In this period, we would like to highlight two general recommendations: 1) minorities should be encouraged and incentivized to fully utilize legal, educational, and participatory mechanisms to strengthen engagement and interaction; 2) when putting in place an overall framework to combat exclusion, states should particularly promote the participation of women in minority institutions and decision-making, while communities themselves should ensure meaningful involvement of women internally. Thank you.