

Cultural and Educational Association of Roma Women of Drosero Xanthi Elpida “The Hope”

I will speak on behalf of [inaudible], a Roma woman from Thrace, Greece, who is the President of the Cultural Association of Women of Drosero “The Hope”. The Muslim minority of Thrace is not a uniform group. There are different communities, and the Roma constitute one of those communities within the minority. The main problem the Roma from the Muslim minority face is equal access to education. Neither Greek state schools nor minority schools teach our language, Romani. When Roma children go to minority schools, which is often the only option due to discrimination, the language of instruction is Turkish. This further excludes Roma children from the rest of Greek society. We request adequate support, enough teachers with the necessary expertise, enough places for all children in local state schools. The Greek state that should be protecting and supporting us as Greek citizens is absent. This absence leaves room for external influences. The Turkish consulate intervenes, insisting on presenting all Muslims of Thrace as Turks. This practice openly violates our right to self-determination and self-identification. Roma communities around Greece also face similar problems to us. Living conditions in Roma communities have remained severely lacking for decades, despite funds being allocated for relevant infrastructure, making stricter oversight and accountability essential. Peaceful coexistence, respect for diversity, and equal access to education are rights that must be guaranteed for everyone. Thank you.