

WARSAW, 26 September 2007

**OSCE HDIM-WORKING SESSION 4 :
Fundamental Freedoms I**

**STATEMENT BY THE GREEK DELEGATION
in exercise of its Right of Reply**

1. Within the framework of positive measures regarding the Muslim minority in Thrace, the Muslim religious foundations (wakifs) are exempted, following a law adopted in 2007, from the obligation to pay the Major Land Property Tax which Greek citizens have to pay. In addition, loans and mortgages raised on their properties are lifted by the provisions of the abovementioned law.

2. As far as the mass media are concerned, I would like to inform you of the following:

The Greek Government recently introduced minimum standards for the operation of radio stations, through Law No 3592/2007. These standards focus on safeguarding pluralism in broadcasting and information, as well as quality and viability of the radio stations. These principles are in full conformity with both national and Community Law. The above mentioned Law is the outcome of a lengthy co-operation (over a six months period) between the European Commission and the Secretariat General for Communication / Information in Greece.

The said Law does not include any provisions hindering local or regional media from obtaining licenses for radio stations. On the contrary, through a specific provision, (article 8 paras. 2 and 3 of the Media Law) the licenses are being granted at a prefecture level, or other, at district level.

In the same media Law the right to information of everyone living in Greece has been taken into serious consideration. To this end, in article 8 para 13(a) of the media Law, Greek is provided for as main but not exclusive language of broadcasting. By this provision, which is only of a guiding nature, the Law provides for the use of the Greek language in conformity with the principles of the European Union which ensure and promote linguistic pluralism within the European area. Otherwise, spoken

programming can be broadcast in languages other than Greek, thus ensuring the right to the free flow of information, freedom of expression and pluralism, free from any sort of language or any other discrimination.

3. Concerning the so-called “Macedonian minority” of Greece, we would like to stress that the existence of a small number of persons who live in Northern Greece and use, without restrictions, in addition to the Greek language, Slavic oral idioms, confined to family or colloquial use, does not indicate the existence of a minority. This group of Greek citizens living in the region of Macedonia have been freely participating with their own political party in parliamentary elections in Greece, each time being able to gather an insignificant number of votes, covering no more than 0,02% of the electoral vote.