

BULGARIAN DELEGATION  
2006 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

Working Session 10  
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Right to reply

Though this issue stays somewhat outside of the topic of today's session, I nevertheless have to state, that Bulgaria strictly adheres to the principle that ethnic identity is a matter of free personal choice for any individual. The Constitution expressly recognizes ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity in the country.

The existence of Bulgarian citizens who identify themselves as Macedonians has been duly reflected in the official results of the national census – a total of 5071 individuals as of 1 March 2001. This objective fact does not require any further special act of acknowledgement by the Bulgarian state.

It should be reiterated, however, that those 5071 individuals enjoy fully and effectively, without any discrimination, all rights and freedoms guaranteed to all Bulgarian citizens, including the right to freedom of assembly, in full conformity with the Bulgarian Constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as the relevant provision of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe.

Finally, with regard to the issue of the registration of any political party in the country, and in this vein – of the “OMO Ilinden – PIRIN” group as a political party, this is within the exclusive competencies of the Court. Substantiated reports indicate that members of the said group have been offering payment for the signatures required for its registration as a political party, but it is up to the Court to establish the facts – if and when documents for registration are submitted by these individuals.