

2006 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

***Tuesday 10 October 2006, 10:00 – 13:00, Working Session 12
Freedom of Movement***

Presentation of Rainbow – organization of the Macedonian minority of Greece

Thank you Mr Moderator.

This morning I would like to talk about Greece's denial of the Freedom of Movement to individuals born within its borders.

Although Article 9.5 of the Copenhagen document states that States will respect the right of everyone to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country Greece has and continues to ignore this OSCE commitment.

Over the last few decades Greek authorities have on many occasions denied people born in Greece entry in the country. This is the case with Macedonian political refugees who left Greece during the civil war 60 years ago. Such people are denied entry into Greece because they express a Macedonian ethnic identity in the countries in which they now reside. The Greek state has placed these people on a black list for the purpose of refusing their entrance into the country.

Some examples. Last year, Gjorgji Plukovski, a Canadian citizen of Macedonian descent, born in Harala/Pozdivista, Kastoria/Kostur, Greece was denied entry into Greece when attempting to enter from the Republic of Macedonia. He was given a document by border officials stating that he "is considered to be a threat to public order, internal security, public health or the international relations of one or more of the Member States of the European Union".

More recently, Done Dimov, an ethnic Macedonian born in Statitsa/Melas, Kostur/Kastoria area of Greece but now residing in Australia attempted to enter Greece two months ago but was refused entry by Greek border authorities.

In another case which occurred just ten days ago, Mr Georgi Saragil, a Canadian citizen, also born in Greece and of an ethnic Macedonian background, landed in Thessaloniki/Solun airport but was denied entry. Mr Saragil was then deported.

In a different set of example, the Greek government continues to denaturalize members of its Macedonian minority who as economic immigrants reside mainly in transoceanic countries. This discriminatory practice has been taking place for the last several decades.

Greek Authorities selectively implement article 20 par. 1G of the Greek Citizenship Law when they target ethnic Macedonians economic immigrants who are active as members of Macedonian associations abroad and who express their Macedonian cultural, linguistic and national identity. Ethnic Macedonians from Greece are informed about their denaturalization only when they try to enter Greece temporarily or for repatriation. Denaturalized individuals are at the same time declared undesirable in Greece (persona non grata) and no entrance to the country of their birth is allowed, even for humanitarian reasons. Last year, Mr. George Mishalis tried to enter Greece in order to attend his father's funeral in his native village Meliti/Voshtarani) in Florina/Lerin. For the last several years, Mr Mishalis has been living and working in Melbourne, Australia.

This practice is appalling, racist and inhumane and must cease immediately. I call upon Greece to implement paragraph 9.5 of the Copenhagen document and call upon all OSCE member states to ensure that this occurs.

I thank you for your attention.