

Macedonian Human Rights Movement in Greece
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Mr Moderator,

We, the ethnic Macedonians have a very difficult fate living in the Greek state. Greece a country which is praising her as a cradle of democracy. For the Macedonians and other minorities living in Greece with no rights and recognition a question should be raised "Is such a state really democratic or does it resemble the times of totalitarian regimes in the respect to minorities? Greece is the only state in the world which is closely linked with a Church. Decisions made by the Church authorities are automatically included into the legislative system of the Greek state violating any democratic procedures respected in all democratic countries. This strange link and cooperation with the Greek state made the Greek Church nationalistic, racist and fanatic. Relations with minorities can be characterized as "very unfriendly". All the people who live in Greece and speak other languages than Greek and are not orthodox Christians are obstructed by the Church and state as well.

We, Macedonians have suffered a lot since 1913 and the most during the reign of the Metaxas dictatorship. During this dark time the Greek Church cooperated with this dictatorship very tightly. During that time lots of Macedonian church books were burned, icons were rewritten from Macedonian into Greek. During the last dictatorship of Papadopoulos (1967-1973) the Macedonian churches in Florina-Lerin were demolished to the ground. The same happened to the very old Macedonian churches built in the Antiquity in the towns of Kastoria-Kostur, Salonika-Solun and in other towns in order to eradicate everything what showed the Macedonian character of new lands which were incorporated to Greece in 1913. The same happened to the Macedonian grave stones which were inscribed in Macedonian Cyrillic were rewritten into Greek or demolished. Regardless these difficult conditions we the ethnic Macedonian were able to built the Macedonian church. Regrettably we must say that the Greek Church with the help of the Greek state frightened the Macedonians in order not to participate in mass performed in the Macedonian language. Lots of Macedonians were interrogated by the police which tried to convince the Macedonians that this Church is connected with "the Skopje Church" (this is a pejorative term used by the official Greek administration stigmatizing all Macedonians living in Greece who express their Macedonian views and feelings which are in contradiction with the official ones). The Greek Church which is historically very influential in the Balkan Peninsula instead of representing Christian love and peace is making politics which aim is to expend the Greek influence in the whole region.

In closing I would like to ask you Mr. Moderator and representatives of all participating countries 'Will the OSCE and other relevant European institutions stop implementing the policy of double standards, regarding the behavior of various member states in all these organizations such as Greece, and truly respecting minority and human rights?'

Thank you very much for your attention