

2007 Human Dimention Implementation Meeting  
Macedonian Human Rights Movement in Greece  
Wednesday 26, September 2007

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Dear Moderator,

We have been participating in the OSCE Conference for 15 years now and we have been presenting our problems as a Macedonian minority in Greece.

We believe that Greece will finally have to start to respect the human, minority and religious rights of its minorities.

From the beginning of its existence, Greece has banned the religious rights of the Macedonian minority i.e. the Macedonians have been banned from using the Macedonian language during church service, Macedonian icons and gravestones have been rewritten replacing the Old Slavonic or Macedonian inscriptions with Greek ones.

During the baptism ceremony, the Greek government bans the use of modern or ancient Macedonian names and forces the use of Greek names. Macedonian names such as Trajko, Stojanka and Neveno are replaced with Periklis, Pandora and Evghenia.

The decisions made by the Greek Church are automatically included into the legislative system of the Greek state violating any democratic procedures respected in all democratic countries.

It is very difficult for people of different creed to live and express their different religious views other than Greek Orthodox. As in ancient times everyone who was not Greek was regarded as a barbarian today everyone who is not Greek Orthodox is not regarded as Greek. This slogan was used in elections by a nationalistic party which thanks to these slogans managed to gain 10 seats in the Greek parliament.

Nationalism, racism and anti-semitism is deeply rooted in the Greek Orthodox Church.

During Sunday mass phrases of this content are commonly used by the bishops and priests during their teachings.

The Greek Orthodox Church is one of the most chauvinistic churches in the world.

In this difficult situation we, the Macedonians already asked the Ministry of Education and Religion seven times to receive permission to build a Macedonian Orthodox Church. All the demands were rejected based on a belief that in Greece there are no Macedonians and as a consequence of this, there cannot be a Macedonian Orthodox Church. The only one legally acted is the Greek one.

Due to the circumstances we decided to turn to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg on September 13, 2006. The Greek state is expected to give their reply to the High Court on November 2007. If a compromise is not found, the Greek state will be, not for the first time, prosecuted by the High Court in Strasbourg.

Dear Moderator we think that among the European states such behavior is unacceptable and the OSCE should put pressure on Greece demanding it to respect religious and minority rights.

Thank you for your attention!