

2008 OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
Working Session 4: Freedom of Movement

Statement of Rainbow - Organisation of the Macedonian minority of Greece

Thank you Mr Moderator.

This afternoon I would like to talk about Greece's denial of the right to freedom of movement to individuals born within its borders. Although Article 9.5 of the Copenhagen document declares 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 into the country. This is the case with ethnic Macedonian economic migrants who left in the period after the Second World War.

Such people are denied entry into Greece because they express a Macedonian ethnic identity in the overseas countries in which they now temporary live. The Greek state has placed these people on a black list for the purpose of refusing their entrance into the country.

Here are a few examples:

Last year, Mr John Markou, a Canadian citizen of Macedonian descent, born in northern Greece, was denied entry into Greece when attempting to cross the border from the Republic of Macedonia. He was given a document by border officials stating he is a *persona non-grata*.*

In another example, Mr Jim Merakovsky, an Australian citizen was denied entry into Greece for identical reasons in November 2007.*

In a related matter, Greek authorities selectively implement article 20 par. 1G of the Greek Citizenship Law when they target ethnic Macedonians economic

migrants who are members of Macedonian associations abroad and who express their Macedonian cultural and linguistic identity.

In other worse examples, ethnic Macedonians from Greece are informed not only about the fact that they have lost their citizenship according to the aforementioned law, but also about the fact that they are no longer allowed to visit their relatives in their birthplaces.

Freedom of movement has also denied to descendants of ethnic Macedonians from Greece. For example, Mr Slavko Mangovski an American citizen tried to enter Greece in February 2008 to visit the graves of his relatives. He was issued a document stating that he was a *persona non-grata*.

Mr Moderator, this practice could be characterized as racist and inhumane.

We demand that Greece guarantees the right to freedom of movement of all of its citizens, including those who identify as ethnic Macedonians. The best way to do this is to implement its commitment to paragraph 9.5 of the Copenhagen document.

I thank you for your attention.

** At this point in the presentation the Representative of Rainbow showed the documents issued by Greek border authorities prohibiting entry.*