



## Greece

### Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2000](#)

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Greece is a constitutional republic and multiparty parliamentary democracy in which citizens choose their representatives in free and fair elections. The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) won the majority of parliamentary seats for a second consecutive term in parliamentary elections held in April. Its leader, Constantine Simitis, has been Prime Minister since 1996. The New Democracy Party is the main opposition party. The judiciary is independent.

The national police and security services are responsible for internal security. Civilian authorities maintain effective control of all security forces. The police and security services are subject to a broad variety of restraints. Some members of the police and security forces nevertheless committed human rights abuses.

Greece has a market economy with a large public sector that accounts for some 40 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Residents enjoy a relatively advanced standard of living. Structural adjustment funds from the European Union (EU) account for approximately 4 percent of the country's GDP.

The Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens; however, there were problems in some areas. Security force personnel sometimes abused persons. Overcrowding and harsh living conditions continued in some prisons. Police sweeps resulted in the detention of undocumented immigrants under often squalid conditions. There are legal limits on the freedom of association of ethnic minorities. Overall, leaders of minority religions noted a general improvement in government tolerance, but some legal restrictions and administrative obstacles on freedom of religion persisted. The Government sometimes placed human rights monitors, including foreign diplomats, non-Orthodox religious groups, and minority groups under surveillance. Violence against women and trafficking in women for the purpose of forced prostitution are problems. Discrimination against ethnic minorities remained a problem, although it is decreasing. However, Roma continued to suffer widespread discrimination. Although it reaffirmed individuals' right of self-identification, the Government continues formally to recognize as a minority only the Muslim minority specified in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. As a result, some individuals who define themselves as members of a minority find it difficult to express their identity freely and to maintain their culture, although problems in this area decreased during the year. Muslims note positive developments in education and in the living conditions in villages.

#### RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

##### Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

###### a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

There were no reports of political or other extrajudicial killings by government officials.

In the 1998 case of a Romani man killed by police in Partheni, Thessaloniki, the policemen were acquitted in March on all charges. The court found that they fired in self-defense.

In the 1998 case of a foreign student killed by a policeman, the policeman received a sentence of 2 years' imprisonment for involuntary manslaughter in November; he has appealed the judgment.

Isolated incidents of terrorism continued during the year. A British military attaché was shot and killed in June

by the terrorist group November 17. The group has claimed responsibility for 22 killings during the past 25 years, but no one has ever been arrested and charged in these cases.

There was no resolution of the cases of seven doctors accused of manslaughter in 1998 in connection with the case of an alleged hostage-taker in an Athens hospital or of a policeman who in 1996 shot and killed a Romani man at a roadblock in Livadia.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Constitution specifically forbids torture, and a 1984 law (that has never been invoked) makes the use of torture an offense punishable by a sentence of 3 years' to life imprisonment; however, security force personnel occasionally abused persons, including Roma (see Section 5).

In August two foreigners accused police in Crete of mistreatment while under detention.

The 1998 case of three policemen who allegedly beat two Romani teenagers was still pending in September 2000 (see Section 5). The 1996 case of five police officers accused of beating an Iraklion man also remained pending.

In 1997 a man on Rhodes accused three policemen of beating him while in custody. The three accused officers were charged, but the charges were dropped later by the prosecutor in December 1999.

Immigrants--mostly Albanian citizens--accused police of physical, verbal, and other mistreatment (including the confiscation and destruction of their documents), particularly during police sweeps to apprehend illegal immigrants (see Section 2.d.).

Numerous anarchist and terrorist groups attacked a wide spectrum of targets, mostly commercial property, during the year. The firebombing of vehicles, drive-by shootings of buildings, and bombings at commercial establishments, mostly late at night, were widespread.

The Ministry of Public Order opened a Bureau of Internal Affairs in October 1999 to investigate cases of police misbehavior. The Bureau took several disciplinary measures, including dismissal and suspension, against officers involved in corruption. The corruption mostly involved trafficking, bribes for illegal construction, and drugs.

Conditions in some prisons remained harsh due to substantial overcrowding and outdated facilities. As of July, the Ministry of Justice reported that the total prison population was 8,131 (of whom 2,775 were foreigners), while the total capacity of the prison system was 4,825.

Non-EU illegal aliens awaiting deportation at the Drapetsona police detention center in Piraeus staged another hunger strike in April to protest what was described by a human rights organization as a "lack of adequate exercise, lack of natural daylight, insufficient sanitary facilities, restriction on visits, inadequate food, severely limited access to medical treatment, and no access to social services." Poor conditions also were reported at the Amygdaleza detention center for illegal alien women.

The Ministry of Justice continued its program to improve prison conditions and expand capacity. Construction is underway on four new prisons. The Government has been inconsistent in permitting prison visits by nongovernmental organizations (NGO's). There were no reports of restricted prison access this year.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The Constitution requires judicial warrants for all arrests, except during the actual commission of a crime, and the law prohibits arbitrary arrest orders; the authorities respected these provisions in practice. The police by law must bring persons who are detained or arrested before an examining magistrate within 24 hours. The magistrate must issue a detention warrant or order the release of the detainee within 3 days, unless special circumstances require a 2-day extension of this time limit.

Defendants brought to court before the end of the day following the commission of a charged offense may be tried immediately, under an "expedited procedure." Although legal safeguards, including representation by counsel, apply in expedited procedure cases, the short period of time may inhibit defendants' ability to present an adequate defense. Defendants may ask for a delay to provide time to prepare their defense, but the court is not obliged to grant it. The expedited procedure was used in less than 10 percent of misdemeanor cases; it does not apply in felony cases.

The effective maximum duration of pretrial detention is 18 months for felonies and 9 months for misdemeanors. Defense lawyers assert that pretrial detention is exceedingly long and overused by judges. A panel of judges may grant release pending trial, with or without bail. Pretrial detainees made up 31 percent of those incarcerated, contributing to overcrowding, according to government sources. A person convicted of a misdemeanor and sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment or less may, at the court's discretion, pay a fine instead of being imprisoned.

Throughout the year, the police conducted large-scale sweeps and temporarily detained large numbers of foreigners under often squalid conditions while determining their residence status (see Section 2.d.). Some of the foreigners are detained on an indefinite basis with no judicial review, which, according to the NGO Human Rights Watch, constitutes arbitrary detention.

Exile is unconstitutional, and no cases have been reported since the restoration of democracy in 1974. In a significant step, the Government in 1998 repealed Article 19 of the Citizenship Code, which permitted it to revoke the citizenship of Greek citizens of non-Greek ethnic origin who traveled outside Greece. Between 1955 and 1998, according to then-Minister of Interior Papadopoulos, some 60,000 citizens lost their citizenship under the old law. The 1998 law had no provision for retroactive application. About 400 individuals who lost their citizenship in the past under Article 19 continued to reside in Greece. Following the repeal of Article 19, most of these individuals were issued identification documents characterizing them as stateless, but they were permitted to apply to reacquire Greek citizenship. Most of these 400 persons had not had their applications adjudicated by year's end (also see Section 2.d.).

Article 20 of the Citizenship Code, which permits the Government to strip citizenship from those who "commit acts contrary to the interests of Greece for the benefit of a foreign state," remained in force. In the past, this article affected Greek citizens abroad who asserted a "Macedonian" ethnicity. There have been no reports of Article 20 being invoked by the Government since 1998 (also see Section 2.d.).

#### e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for the independence of the judiciary, and it is independent in practice.

The judicial system includes three levels of civil courts, (first instance, appeals, and supreme) and three levels of criminal courts (first instance--divided into misdemeanor and felony divisions, appeals, and supreme), appointed judges, and an examining magistrate system, with trials by judicial panels.

The Constitution provides for public trials, unless the court decides that privacy is required to protect victims and witnesses or the cases involve national security matters. Defendants enjoy a presumption of innocence, the standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, the right to present evidence and call witnesses, the right of access to the prosecution's evidence, the right to cross-examine witnesses, and the right to counsel. Lawyers are provided to defendants who are not able to afford legal counsel only in felony cases. Both the prosecution and the defense may appeal.

Defendants who do not speak Greek have the right to a court-appointed interpreter. According to several immigrant associations in Athens, the low fees paid for such work often result in poor interpretation. Foreign defendants who depend on these interpreters frequently complain that they do not understand the proceedings of their trials.

The legal system does not discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, or nationality; however, there were some exceptions: nonethnic Greek citizens are prohibited legally from settling in a large "supervised zone" near the frontier (although this prohibition is not enforced in practice); and a 1939 law (also not enforced in practice) prohibits the functioning of private schools in buildings owned by non-Orthodox religious foundations.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

#### f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Constitution prohibits the invasion of privacy and searches without warrants, and the law permits the monitoring of personal communications only under strict judicial controls; however, these safeguards do not appear to be entirely effective. The security services continued to monitor some human rights groups, such as the Greek Helsinki Monitor (see Section 4), non-Orthodox religious groups, minority group representatives, and foreign diplomats who met with such individuals. Some human rights monitors reported suspicious openings and diversions of mail. The Government apparently took no steps to stop such practices or to prosecute those involved.

## Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

### a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the Government generally respected these rights in practice. Legal restrictions on free speech nevertheless remain in force.

Articles of the Penal Code that can be used to restrict free speech and the press include Article 141, which forbids exposing the friendly relations of the Greek state with foreign states to danger of disturbance; Article 191, which prohibits spreading false information and rumors liable to create concern and fear among citizens and cause disturbances in the country's international relations and inciting citizens to rivalry and division, leading to disturbance of the peace; and Article 192, which prohibits inciting citizens to acts of violence or to disturbing the peace through disharmony among them. Those convicted in the past were allowed to convert their prison sentences, up to 3 years, into a fine of approximately \$14 (5,000 drachmae) per day.

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), a renowned violinist and a composer were given prison sentences in March for defamation based on statements made during newspaper interviews. In such criminal defamation cases in the past, the defendant typically has been released on bail pending appeal, and no jail time is ever served. In November 1999, according to HRW, two journalists for Eleftherotypia were indicted for defamation for alleging that the Lesbos police were associated with smugglers. Also, in December 1999 an Athens court convicted Dimitris Rizos, publisher of Adesmeftos Typos, of aggravated defamation of the publisher of another newspaper with the same name.

In a 1997 case, two journalists were convicted of publishing classified government documents; their convictions were still under appeal at the Supreme Court in September 2000.

On matters other than the question of ethnic minorities, there is a tradition of outspoken public discourse and a vigorous free press. Satirical and opposition newspapers routinely attack the highest state authorities. Members of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities freely publish periodicals and other publications, often in their native language. The Constitution allows for seizure (though not prior restraint), by order of the public prosecutor, of publications that insult the President, offend religious beliefs, contain obscene articles, advocate violent overthrow of the political system, or disclose military and defense information. However, seizures are very rare; none have occurred since 1998.

A Thessaloniki court of first instance ruled in September in favor of a former Member of Parliament (M.P.), Mimis Androulakis, whose novel "M to the Power of N" was banned from circulation in seven northern prefectures in May as a "blasphemous" book because of sexual connotations regarding the relationship between Christ and Mary Magdalene. The court ruled that the novel was a "work of art" and thus protected by the Constitution.

The Constitution provides that the state exercise "immediate control" over radio and television. Once the state monopoly on radio and television ended in 1989, numerous private stations began operations in an essentially unregulated market while the Government sought to draft and implement legislation on licensing and frequency allocations. The National Radio and Television Council (NRTC) has an advisory role in radio and television licensing, whereas the Ministry of Press and Mass Media has final authority.

A 1995 law established ownership and technical frequency limits on electronic media; the Government and media outlets disputed application procedures and frequency allocations. In December 1998, the Government passed legislation designed to legalize stations operating with pending applications; with more applicants than available frequency spectrum, not all stations will gain licenses. The Government occasionally closes stations for violating intellectual property rights or interfering with civil aviation, military, and law enforcement transmissions. In December 1999, Channel Station 2000, an Evangelical radio station, was closed. The station's owners stated that the closure was because of religious content (although other non-Orthodox stations continue to operate unhindered), whereas the Government asserted that the station's broadcasts sporadically interfered with military channels. In January 2000, the station legally resumed operation. State-run

stations tend to emphasize the Government's views but also report objectively on other parties' programs and positions. Private radio and television stations operate independently of any government control over their reporting. Turkish-language television programs are available widely via satellite in Thrace.

The 1998 conviction of Abdulhalim Dede, the Muslim owner of Radio Isik, for illegal construction of a new radio antenna intended to extend the range of the station, was upheld on appeal in June. The court reduced the sentence from 8 to 2 months in jail but suspended enforcement pending Dede's appeal to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court decided in May 2000 that Abdulhalim Dede did not receive a fair trial on a fifth charge of illegal construction of a new radio antenna intended to extend the range of the station. Dede paid a \$1,368 (500,000 drachmae) fine in lieu of 2 months jail for his initial conviction.

Academic freedom is respected.

#### b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for freedom of assembly, and the Government respects this right in practice. Police permits are issued routinely for public demonstrations, and there were no reports that the permit requirement was abused.

In the spring of 1999, a large number of demonstrations occurred in Athens and Thessaloniki to protest NATO actions in Kosovo, and demonstrations took place against the visit of President Clinton in November 1999. Pro-Serb activists in Thessaloniki continued to demonstrate against the U.S. periodically, most notably in the spring of 2000, when U.S. troops travelling to and from the Kosovo peacekeeping mission were transiting northern Greece. In demonstrations organized by the Orthodox Church, over 100,000 supporters gathered in Athens and Thessaloniki in the summer of 2000 to protest the Government's decision to remove notation of religion on the national ID card.

The Constitution provides for the right of association, which the Government respected; however, the courts continue to place legal restrictions on the names of associations involving ethnic minorities (see Section 5).

Government authorities legally recognize the existence of the Muslim minority but contend that other ethnic/linguistic or religious groups have no legal basis for official recognition as "minorities." The Government has affirmed an individual, but not a collective, right of self-identification. However, in 1997 it signed (but had not yet ratified) the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

#### c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution establishes the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ (Greek Orthodoxy) as the "prevailing" religion; it also provides for the right of all citizens to practice the religion of their choice; however, while the Government respects this right, non-Orthodox groups sometimes face administrative obstacles or legal restrictions on religious practice. The Constitution prohibits proselytizing and stipulates that non-Orthodox rites of worship may not disturb public order or offend moral principles.

The Orthodox Church wields significant political and economic influence. The Ministry of Education and Religion supervises the Church, and the Government provides some financial support by, for example, paying the salaries of clergy, subsidizing their religious training, and financing the construction and maintenance of Orthodox Church buildings.

The Orthodox Church and the Jewish and Muslim religions are considered by law to be "legal persons of public law." Other religions are considered "legal persons of private law." In practice a primary distinction is that establishment of other religions' "houses of prayer" is regulated by the general provisions of the Civil Code regarding corporations. For example other religions cannot, as religious entities, own property; the property must belong to a specifically created legal entity rather than to the church itself. In practice this places an additional legal and administrative burden on non-Orthodox religious community organizations. Parliament passed a law in July 1999 that extended legal recognition to Catholic churches and related entities established prior to 1946.

Two laws from the late 1930's require recognized or "known" religious groups to obtain house of prayer permits from the Ministry of Education and Religion in order to open houses of worship. By law the Ministry may base its decision to issue permits on the opinion of the local Orthodox bishop, but Ministry officials state that they no longer obtain the opinion of the Orthodox bishop when considering house of prayer permit applications. According to ministry officials, once a "known" religion receives a house of prayer permit, applications for additional houses of prayer are approved routinely. Minority religious groups have requested that laws

regulating house of prayer permits be abolished. Many provisions of these laws are not applied in practice, but local police still have the authority to bring minority churches to court, as demonstrated in the case of the 16 churches charged but acquitted on December 12 in Thessaloniki for operating without a house of prayer permit.

The only recent application for recognition as a known religion at the Ministry was submitted in February by the Scientologists of Greece. Although the deadline mandated by law for processing the applications is 3 months, it took the Ministry until October to decide that it would not recognize the Scientologist community as an "official" religion.

A 1997 tax bill imposed three new taxes on all churches and other nonprofit organizations. Leaders of some non-Orthodox religious groups claimed that all taxes on religious organizations were discriminatory, even those that the Orthodox Church has to pay, since the Government subsidizes the Orthodox Church while other groups are self-supporting. The Government also pays the salaries of the two official Muslim religious leaders and provides them with official vehicles.

Approximately 94 to 97 percent of the country's 10.6 million citizens adhere at least nominally to the Greek Orthodox faith. With the exception of the Muslim community (some of whose rights, privileges, and related government obligations are covered by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne), the Government does not keep statistics on the size of religious groups. Ethnic Greeks account for a sizeable percentage of most non-Orthodox religions. The balance of the population is composed of Muslims (officially estimated at 98,000 although some Muslims claim up to 110,000 countrywide); accurate figures for other religions are not available. Protestants, including evangelicals (approximately 30,000); Jehovah's Witnesses (50,000); Catholics (50,000); Jews (5,000); plus small congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), Scientologists, the Baha'i Faith, and other Christian denominations are scattered throughout the country.

Several religious denominations reported difficulties in dealing with the authorities on a variety of administrative matters. Privileges and legal prerogatives granted to the Greek Orthodox Church are not extended routinely to other recognized religions. The non-Greek Orthodox churches must make separate and lengthy applications to government authorities on such matters as gaining permission to move places of worship to larger facilities. In contrast Greek Orthodox officials have an institutionalized link between the church hierarchy and the Ministry of Education and Religion to handle administrative matters.

The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which is still in force, gives Muslims in Western Thrace the right to maintain social and charitable organizations ("wakfs") and provides for muftis (Islamic judges and religious leaders with limited civic responsibilities) to render religious judicial services.

The Muslim population, concentrated in Western Thrace with small communities in Rhodes, Kos, and Athens, is composed mainly of ethnic Turks but also includes Pomaks and Roma. The approximately 10,000 member Muslim community in Athens (composed primarily of economic migrants from Thrace) has no mosque or state-appointed cleric to officiate at various religious functions, including funerals. Members of the Muslim community often transport their deceased back to Thrace for religious burials. In June the Parliament approved a bill allowing construction of the first Islamic cultural center and mosque in the Athens area. According to official sources, a total of 287 mosques operate freely in Western Thrace and others on the islands of Rhodes and Kos. Construction of a long-delayed mosque in Kimmeria, Thrace was completed in 1998, although its minaret remained unfinished. The issue is one of local sensitivities rather than religious motivation, and the religious operation of the mosque has not been affected.

Differences remain within the Muslim community and between segments of the community and the Government over the means of selection of muftis. Under a 1991 law, the Government appointed two muftis and one assistant mufti, all resident in Thrace. The appointments to 10-year terms were based on the recommendations of a committee of Muslim notables selected by the Government. The Government argued that it must appoint the muftis because, in addition to their religious duties, they perform judicial functions in civil and domestic matters under Muslim religious law, for which the State pays them.

Some Muslims accept the authority of the two officially appointed muftis; other Muslims, with support from Turkey, have "elected" two different muftis to serve their communities (although there is no established procedure or practice for election). The courts repeatedly have convicted (14 times in 5 years) one of the elected muftis for usurping the authority of the official mufti. All of the respective sentences remain suspended pending appeal. The other elected mufti, who was convicted in 1991 of usurping the authority of the official mufti, appealed to the European Court of Human Rights. In December 1999, the Court ruled that the conviction violated his freedom of religion and self-expression, but it did not rule on the question of his legal status as mufti.

Controversy between the Muslim community and the Government also continues over the management and self-government of the wakfs, regarding the appointment of officials as well as the degree and type of administrative control. A 1980 law placed the administration of the wakfs in the hands of the appointed muftis and their representatives. In response to objections from some Muslims that this arrangement weakened the financial autonomy of the wakfs and violated the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne, a 1996 presidential decree put the wakfs under the administration of a committee for 3 years as an interim measure pending the resolution of outstanding problems. The interim period was extended indefinitely in 1999.

Muslim activists complained that the Government regularly lodges tax liens against the wakfs although they are in theory tax-free religious foundations. Under a national land and property registry law that came into full effect in January 1999, the wakfs, as with all property holders, must register all of their property with the Government. The law permits the Government to seize any property that owners are not able to document; there are built-in reporting and appeals procedures. The wakfs were established in 1560; however, due to the destruction of files during the two world wars, the wakfs are unable to document ownership of much of their property. They have not registered the property, so they cannot pay assessed taxes. To date the Government has not sought to enforce either the assessments or the registration requirement.

Protestant groups constitute the second largest religious group after the Greek Orthodox Church. Some groups, such as the evangelicals and Jehovah's Witnesses, consist almost entirely of ethnic Greeks. Other groups, such as the Latter-Day Saints and Anglicans, consist of an approximately equal number of ethnic Greeks and non-Greeks. Non-Greek citizen clergy reported difficulty renewing their visas during the year because the Government does not have a distinct visa category for religious workers. The Government, by virtue of the Orthodox Church's status as the prevailing religion, recognizes de facto its canon law. The Catholic Church in 1999 unsuccessfully sought government recognition of its canon law (the official "constitution" of the Church).

As part of new obligations under the Schengen Treaty and the Treaty of Amsterdam, all non-European Union citizens face a more restrictive visa and residence regime than they did in the past.

Although Jehovah's Witnesses are recognized as a "known" religion, they continued to face some harassment in the form of arbitrary identity checks (although reduced from 1998), difficulties in burying their dead, and local officials' resistance to their construction of churches (which in most cases was resolved quickly and favorably). In Thessaloniki in late 1999, the Government Tax Office refused to recognize Jehovah's Witnesses as a nonprofit association and imposed an inheritance tax for property willed to them. The individuals appealed the decision in 2000, and by year's end, the case still was pending. In 1999 a European Court of Human Rights case was resolved when the Government admitted surveillance of an adherent and promised that it would never conduct surveillance of Jehovah's Witnesses again.

In previous years, the armed forces consistently refused to exempt Jehovah's Witnesses' clergy from mandatory military service. In 1998 a law providing an alternative form of mandatory national service for conscientious objectors took effect. All clergy now are exempt from any service. The law provides that conscientious objectors may work in state hospitals or municipal services for 36 months. Conscientious objector groups characterized the legislation as a positive first step but criticized the 36-month alternative service term, which is double the regular 18-month period of military service.

Evangelical parishes are located throughout the country. Members of missionary faiths report difficulties due to constitutional and legal prohibitions on proselytizing. Church officials express concern that antiproselytizing laws remain on the books, although such laws no longer hinder their ministering to the poor and to children. In December 1999, the Government, applying legislation covering radio and television broadcasts, shut down an evangelical radio station over a technical issue on transmission frequency; however, the station resumed operation legally a few months later once the case was adjudicated.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has about 80 missionaries in the country each year, for approximately 2-year terms. Church leaders report that their permanent members (nonmissionaries) do not encounter discriminatory treatment. However, the police occasionally detained Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses (on average every 2 weeks) after receiving complaints that individuals were engaged in proselytizing. In most cases, these Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses were held for several hours at a police station and then released with no charges filed. Many reported that they were not allowed to call their lawyers and that they were verbally abused by police officers for their religious beliefs. In 1998 the European Court of Human Rights found the Government in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights for convicting Protestants of proselytizing in past cases. There were no proselytizing-related court cases during the year.

Scientologists, most of whom are located in the Athens area, practice their faith through a registered nonprofit philosophical organization. According to the president of the Greek Scientologists, the group chose to register

as a philosophical organization because legal counsel advised that the Government would not recognize Scientology as a religion. In a step toward gaining recognition as a religion, Scientologists reapplied for a house of prayer permit in February. The application was rejected by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs on October 17 on the grounds that Scientology "is not a religion."

The Bishop of Athens heads the Roman Catholic Holy Synod. CARITAS, a charitable organization, and the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa's order of nuns) also operate in the country. Legal recognition of the Catholic archdiocese of Athens, earlier denied, was granted in July 1999. The Jewish community numbers approximately 5,000 adherents; the majority live in the Athens and Thessaloniki regions. In October 1999, a rededication of a synagogue in Hania, Crete as a house of prayer and a cultural center was marred by public criticism of the event by the regional governor. The Minister of National Education and Religion, and other government and Greek Orthodox officials lent their support to the rededication.

Religious instruction in Orthodoxy in public primary and secondary schools is mandatory for all Greek Orthodox students. Non-Orthodox students are exempt from this requirement. However, Jehovah's Witnesses have reported some past instances of discrimination related to attendance at religious education classes or other celebrations of religious or nationalistic character. Members of the Muslim community in Athens are lobbying for Islamic religious instruction for their children. The neighborhood schools offer no alternative supervision for the children during the period when religious issues are taught. The community has complained that this forces the parents to have their children attend Orthodox religious instruction by default.

The Government decided in the summer to remove the notation of religious affiliation on national identity cards. This sparked a national debate on the role of the Church in society. For example, the issue led Archbishop Christodoulos to organize religious protest rallies in Thessaloniki and Athens in June. Both demonstrations drew over 100,000 supporters. Archbishop Christodoulos vociferously criticized the Government and has started collecting signatures to petition the Government to allow religious affiliation as an option on national identity cards.

#### d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for these rights, and the Government generally respects them in practice. Unlike in the past, there were no reports of assertions by Muslim leaders that the Government routinely withheld permission from Muslims seeking to change their legal residence, which determines where they vote, from rural to urban communities within western Thrace or from elsewhere in Greece to Thrace.

A section of the Citizenship Code, Article 20, permits the Government to strip citizenship from those who "commit acts contrary to the interests of Greece for the benefit of a foreign state." While the law as written applies equally to all Greeks regardless of ethnic background, to date it has been enforced, in all but one case, only against citizens who identified themselves as members of the "Macedonian" minority. The Government has not revealed the number of Article 20 cases that it pursued. There were no reports of such cases during the year. Dual citizens who are stripped of Greek citizenship under Article 20 sometimes are prevented from entering the country using the passport of their second nationality.

The Government offers asylum under the terms of the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. It cooperates with the local office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In June 1999, a presidential decree took effect that significantly expanded the rights of asylum seekers and brought the law into compliance with UNHCR minimum standards on asylum procedures. UNHCR commented on its good relations with police during the year. The Government did not forcibly deport refugees during the year to countries where they feared persecution.

Individuals recognized as refugees under the terms of the U.N. convention are eligible for the residence and work permits that are necessary to settle permanently. In the first 6 months of 2000, 1,295 individuals submitted applications for refugee status; 132 individuals were recognized as refugees. Another 43 were granted temporary residence on humanitarian grounds until return to their countries becomes possible. The remaining 1,120 cases were pending.

The Government usually does not recognize the concept of first asylum rights for refugees. UNHCR has expressed its concern over the fact that very few applicants are granted asylum on first application to the authorities; most who are granted asylum succeed on their second try, when UNHCR participates. Interpretation services are lacking, as are adequate personnel who would ensure timely access to the asylum process for all those who seek it. UNHCR also has expressed its concern that there exists no publicly funded legal aid system for free counseling to asylum seekers and refugees.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that thousands of individuals from Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iran enter the country illegally each year; only a small percentage eventually apply for official refugee status. Some of those who do not apply remain illegally, often living in camps or in NGO shelters where conditions range from adequate to very poor. Others proceed to Western Europe, often applying for asylum there. In January an accident involving a truck that carried 80 smuggled persons from Turkey killed 6 of them and wounded several dozen. Other accidental deaths occurred in similar circumstances. In the largest immigrant smuggling operation ever reported, a Turkish ship carrying 655 illegal migrants bound for Italy was seized off Chios on October 20. The applications of those aboard who wanted to apply for asylum were being processed; none were forcibly deported. The Government usually does not seek out such individuals for deportation; since Greece and Turkey do not have a readmission agreement, the Government finds it practically impossible to deport formally individuals who enter Greece from Turkey.

Deportations of both illegal and legal immigrants, abusive treatment by police, and inconsistencies and inequities in the way employers provide wages and benefits were common. The police conducted many large-scale sweeps of neighborhoods populated by immigrants, temporarily detaining large numbers of individuals while determining their residence status. The detainees were held in squalid conditions: A report by Human Rights Watch in December cited severe overcrowding and a lack of sufficient exercise, sleeping accommodations, adequate food, or medical care. The only government-funded center for asylum seekers is old and in need of repair.

The Organization for the Employment of Human Resources (OAED), a government agency, reported that by 2000, 386,000 illegal aliens, out of an estimated total alien population of 700,000, had applied for legal status or a "white card," under a program designed to regularize the residency status of illegal, (usually economic) immigrants. A few, mostly Albanian, white card holders were able to meet all the requirements of the law and receive a "green card," which serves as a residence permit and allows the immigrants to live and work in the country for a limited period of time. OAED issued 159,807 green cards by July. Some 80 percent of the green cards issued so far are of 1-year duration. A new application is required to extend the card for an additional year. Holders of a white card may reside and work legally on a short-term basis while meeting the other requirements necessary to obtain a green card. Press reports cite the obstacles of a complex bureaucracy and the unwillingness of employers to pay social security contributions as primary reasons for the limited ability of white cardholders to advance to the green card application process. The OAED estimated that out of a total of 386,000 white cardholders in 1998, 163,000 simply dropped out of the green card application process. Legislation provides for the green card program to remain in effect until the end of 2001. At year's end the Government proposed a bill to establish a new legalization process. Press reports estimated that it would take 3 years just to process the applications already submitted.

### Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

Greece is a multiparty democracy whose Constitution provides for full political rights for all citizens and for the peaceful change of governments and of the Constitution. The Government headed by Prime Minister Constantine Simitis of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) won in free and fair elections in September 1996 and again in April 2000. Parliament elects the President for a 5-year term. Voting is mandatory for those over age 18, but there are many conditions that allow citizens not to vote, and penalties are not applied in practice. Members of the unicameral 300-seat Parliament are elected to maximum 4-year terms by secret ballot. Opposition parties function freely and have broad access to the media.

Women are underrepresented in government and politics, although no legal restrictions hinder their participation, and their numbers are slowly increasing. During the year, women held 2 of 20 ministerial positions in the Government and 3 of 29 subministerial positions. Of the 300 members elected to Parliament in April, 31 were women.

While the Government generally respects citizens' political rights, there are occasionally charges that it limits the right of some individuals to speak publicly and associate freely on the basis of their self-proclaimed ethnic identity, thus impinging on the political rights of such persons. However, in the 2000 parliamentary elections, one Muslim was elected in Thrace, from PASOK. A second Muslim became a Member of Parliament (M.P.) in September after winning a court challenge to the eligibility of the seated M.P. for violating a constitutional provision.

Romani representatives report that local authorities sometimes have deprived Roma of the right to vote by refusing to register them. However, Romani activists also report that some municipalities encourage Roma to register. Municipalities can refuse to register Roma who do not fulfill basic residency requirements, which many Roma have trouble meeting.

In 1996 the Government transferred responsibility for oversight of all rights provided to the Muslim minority

under the Treaty of Lausanne (including education, zoning, administration of the wakfs, and trade) from elected local governors to a government-appointed regional administrative official, the periferiarch of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. Some minority members charged that the transfer reduced their ability to use the democratic process to influence decisions that affect them. The Government stated that it made the change because the central authorities could administer Greece's treaty obligations more effectively. In 1994 the Government set up a system to elect nomarchs to govern at the provincial level. These officials work in close cooperation with both elected mayors and local leaders (Christian and Muslim). Members of the Muslim community noted that this decentralization has been a positive factor in local and regional development.

#### Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

The Government allows domestic human rights organizations to operate, but cooperation with them varies. The security services on occasion monitor contacts of human rights groups, including listening in on conversations held between those groups and human rights investigators and diplomats and questioning contacts (see Section 1.f.). Monitors view this surveillance as a form of intimidation that deters others from meeting with investigators.

The government ombudsman's office, which opened in 1998, received 781 complaints in the first 8 months of the year directly related to human rights issues, of which 455 were processed. Human rights cases constituted 26 percent of all cases, an increase of 30 percent compared with the full year in 1999. The office has proved to be an effective means for resolving human rights and religious freedom concerns.

#### Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution provides for equality before the law irrespective of nationality, race, language, religious or political belief; however, government respect for these rights in practice was uneven.

##### Women

Violence against women is a problem. The incidence of violence against women reported to the authorities is low; however, the General Secretariat for Equality of the Sexes (GSES), an independent government agency that operates the only shelter for battered women in Athens, believes that the actual incidence is "high." According to press and academic estimates, there were approximately 4,500 cases of rape in 1999. Reportedly only 6 to 10 percent of the victims contact the police, and only a small fraction of the cases reaches trial. Conviction rates on rape charges are low for first time accused, but sentences are harsh for repeat offenders. Spousal rape is a crime.

The GSES asserts that police tend to discourage women from pursuing domestic violence charges and instead undertake reconciliation efforts. The GSES also claims that the courts are lenient when dealing with domestic violence cases. GSES, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Order, continued during the year training courses begun in 1999 for police personnel on how to treat domestic violence victims.

Facilities for battered women and their children often are staffed inadequately to handle cases properly. Two government shelters provide relevant services in Athens and Piraeus, including legal and psychological advice. Battered women also can go to state hospitals and regional health centers. In June the Secretariat started operating a 24-hour emergency telephone hot line for abused women to call for help. An interministerial committee composed of the GSES, the Ministry of Public Order, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the Ministry of Justice, was established in 1999 to focus on women's issues.

Prostitution is legal. Prostitutes must register at the local police station and carry a medical card that is updated every 2 weeks. While the number of Greek women entering the profession has declined steadily over the years, according to the police and academic sources, trafficking in women for prostitution, mostly from the former Soviet republics, Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania, has increased sharply in recent years (see Sections 6.c. and 6.f.). It is estimated that fewer than 1,000 prostitutes are ethnic Greeks, and approximately 20,000 are of foreign origin--most in the country illegally.

Most prostitutes who are arrested are foreigners who are apprehended for noncompliance with legal requirements. While national data on such arrests is not available, police reports estimate that 4,197 women were arrested for prostitution from December 1998 through December 2000. A total of 1,693 were arrested during 2000, compared with 2,267 in 1999. Media reports implicated several police officers as participants in prostitution rings. The press alleged on a number of occasions that police accepted bribes from traffickers or pimps or forced illegal immigrants to have sex with them and then channeled them into prostitution rings. The

vice squad unit of the police was disbanded for a couple of weeks in 1998 in part as a result of these allegations.

Trade unions report that lawsuits for sexual harassment are very rare: according to the unions, only four women have filed such charges in the past 3 years. In all four cases, the courts reportedly imposed very lenient civil sentences. The General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) women's section reports that sexual harassment is a widespread phenomenon, but that women are discouraged from filing charges against perpetrators by family members and coworkers since they believe they might be socially stigmatized.

Women enjoy broad constitutional and legal protection, including equal pay for equal work. However, the National Statistical Service's most recent data, for the fourth quarter of 1998, show that women's salaries in manufacturing were 71 percent of those of men in comparable positions; in retail sales, women's salaries were 88 percent of those of men in comparable positions.

Although relatively few women occupy senior positions, in recent years women entered traditionally male-dominated occupations such as the legal and medical professions in larger numbers. However, women still face discrimination when they are considered for promotions in both the public and private sectors. Women also are underrepresented in labor unions' leadership. According to the women's section of the GSEE, 58.6 percent of the country's long-term unemployed are women, while women constitute only 38 percent of the work force. To ameliorate the situation, the GSEE established two regional employment offices for women in Thessaloniki and Patras. It also continued to provide vocational training programs for unemployed women and programs to reinforce entrepreneurship, subsidies to women for setting up an enterprise, information and counseling to unemployed women, and created childcare facilities to assist unemployed women to attend training courses and look for a job.

#### Children

The Government is committed to providing adequate basic health and education services for children. Education is compulsory through the ninth grade, but the legislation does not provide for enforcement or penalties. University education is public and free.

Several government organizations have responsibility for children's issues. The National Welfare Organization, which has a nationwide network of offices, is active in the field of child protection. A 1998 law combined the National Welfare Organization with two similar entities in 1999 to provide better services. The services of the new organization were regionalized to provide greater access to child welfare services and funding prioritized according to regional needs.

Penal law prohibits the mistreatment of children and sets penalties for violators, while welfare legislation provides for preventive and treatment programs for abused children and for children deprived of a family environment; it also seeks to ensure the availability of alternative family care or institutional placement.

There is no societal pattern of abuse of children. No national data exist on the incidence of child abuse; authorities other than police are not required to report such cases. In a 10-year clinical study of 200 cases of abused children, the Institute of Child Health (ICH) reports that 59.5 percent involved physical abuse, 20 percent involved neglect, and 21 percent involved children who were not abused at the time but had a history of abuse. (The study did not cover victims of sexual abuse.) An ICH prevalence study of child sexual abuse among 740 university students revealed an incidence rate of 7 percent among boys and 17 percent among girls prior to age 18. Societal abuse of children in the form of pornography and child labor is rare. Child prostitution is a growing phenomenon, particularly in some parts of immigrant communities of central Athens.

Children's rights advocacy groups claim that the protection of high-risk children in state residential care centers is inadequate and of low quality. They cite lack of coordination between welfare services and the courts, inadequate funding of the welfare system, and poor staffing of residential care centers as systemic weaknesses in the treatment of child abuse. Many NGO's make honest efforts to cover the gap, but they are not manned by professionals, lack supervision from the State, and do not have built-in evaluation systems. Two municipal shelters for battered children opened in Athens in 1999. Child health specialists note that the number of children in residential care facilities is decreasing, while the number in foster care is rising. Child health specialists say that some social groups, such as Roma and illegal immigrants, are underserved.

In recent years, the number of street children who panhandle or peddle at city intersections on behalf of adult family members or for criminal gangs increased. According to the Ministry of Public Order, 78 percent of these children are Albanian, 12 percent are from other Balkan countries, and 10 percent are Romani. The Government implemented measures to combat this phenomenon, which included the institutional placement of

children up to 12 years old, therapeutic consultations with their families, and the deportation of juveniles 12 to 17 year old. Street children are rounded up regularly by police. However, it is believed widely that even those who were deported managed to return eventually.

In August police detained a group of 35 Roma children from Albania, between the ages of 3 months and 11 years old, who were begging or being exploited by beggars in the streets. Police apprehended 20 adults, identified as parents. Police believe that this was the largest child exploitation ring ever uncovered in the country. The group of Roma was deported. A children's NGO, A Child's Smile, claims that many street children are victims of abuse. Based on the findings of a study it carried out in Thessaloniki in 1999, the majority of street children are between the ages of 8 and 14. Some 60 percent of the children are from Albania, and most have been separated from their parents, who remain in their native country. They are brought to Greece by someone posing as their guardian or parent. In most cases, their parents, faced with extreme financial difficulties in Albania, agreed to send their child to Greece in exchange for a small percentage of the monthly earnings.

#### People with Disabilities

Legislation mandates the hiring of disabled persons in public and private enterprises that employ more than 50 persons. However, the law reportedly is enforced poorly, particularly in the private sector. The law states that disabled persons should account for 3 percent of staff in private enterprises. In the civil service, 5 percent of administrative staff and 80 percent of telephone operator positions are reserved for disabled persons. Recent legislation mandates the hiring of disabled persons in the public sector from a priority list. The disabled are exempt from the civil service exam. Persons with disabilities have been appointed to important positions in the civil service.

The Construction Code mandates physical access for disabled persons to private and public buildings, but this law, too, is enforced poorly. A 1997 survey showed that over 60 percent of public buildings are not accessible to persons with mobility problems. Ramps and special curbs for the disabled have been constructed on some Athens streets and at some public buildings, and sound signals have been installed at some city street crossings. Since 1993 the Government has been replacing old city buses with new ones designed to accommodate the disabled. The new Athens subway lines provide full access for the disabled.

#### Religious Minorities

Greeks tend to link religious affiliation very closely to ethnicity. In the minds of many Greeks, an ethnic Greek is also Orthodox Christian. Non-Orthodox citizens have complained of being treated with suspicion or told that they were not truly Greek when they revealed their religious affiliation. Non-Orthodox citizens also have claimed that they face career limits within the military and the civil service due to their religions.

In the military, generally only members of the Greek Orthodox faith become officers, leading some members of other faiths to declare themselves Orthodox. Only two Muslim officers have advanced to the rank of reserve officer.

Although in the past there have been numerous cases of discriminatory denial of Muslim applications for business licenses, tractor ownership, or property construction, both Muslim and Christian leaders report that these discriminatory practices have ended.

Members of minority faiths have reported incidents of societal discrimination, such as local bishops warning parishioners not to visit clergy or members of minority faiths and neighbors requesting that the police arrest missionaries for proselytizing. Some non-Orthodox religious communities believe that they have been unable to communicate with officials of the Orthodox Church and claim that the attitude of the Orthodox Church toward their faiths has increased social intolerance towards their religions. The Orthodox Church has issued a list of practices and religious groups, including Jehovah's Witnesses, Evangelical Protestants, Scientologists, Mormons, Baha'is, and others, which it believes to be sacrilegious. In 1999 there was an incident in which local Orthodox clergy and local government officials mobilized to demolish a government-approved house of prayer in the process of construction by Jehovah's Witnesses in Halkidiki in northern Greece. The incident was resolved swiftly through the intervention of police forces. Officials of the Orthodox Church have acknowledged that they refuse to enter into dialog with religious groups considered harmful to Greek Orthodox worshippers; church leaders instruct Orthodox Greeks to shun members of these faiths.

#### National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

An increase in xenophobia paralleled an increase in the number of non-Greeks living and working in the

country. Antiforeigner sentiment is directed mainly at Albanians (who make up over three-fifths of the alien population). Landlords in Athens and other parts of the country routinely refuse to rent to Albanians, even to that country's diplomats.

Significant numbers of Greek citizens identify themselves as Turks, Pomaks, Vlachs, Roma, Arvanites (Orthodox Christians who speak a dialect of Albanian), or "Macedonians" or "Slavomacedonians." Most are integrated fully into society. The Government formally recognizes only the "Muslim minority" specified in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, although it stated publicly in August 1999 that members of that minority could identify themselves individually as belonging to different ethnic groups. However, the Government failed to acknowledge formally the existence of non-Muslim ethnic groups, principally Slavophones, under the term "minority." As a result, some individuals who define themselves as members of a minority find it difficult to express their identity freely and to maintain their culture. Most of the Muslim minority (officially estimated to number 98,000) are ethnically Turkish or Turcophone and live in Western Thrace. The Muslim minority also includes Pomaks and Roma. Many Greek Muslims, including Pomaks, identify themselves as Turks and say that the Muslim minority as a whole has a Turkish cultural consciousness. While use of the terms "Tourkos" and "Tourkikos" ("Turk" and "Turkish") is prohibited in titles of organizations, individuals legally may call themselves "Tourkos." To most Greeks, the words "Tourkos" and "Tourkikos" connote Turkish identity or loyalties, and many object to their use by Greek citizens of Turkish origin. The 8-month prison sentence of a dozen Muslim teachers, convicted in 1996 for using the name "Turkish Teachers of Western Thrace" in a union document, remained suspended pending appeal. In December the Supreme Court overturned an appeals court decision that upheld a 1986 trial court's order to close the "Turkish Union of Xanthi" because of the use of the word "Turkish" in the organization's name. The Supreme Court stated that the court's decision should be based on the organization's activities and not its name, and it therefore ordered the appeals court to review the case.

The Treaty of Lausanne provides that the Muslim minority has the right to Turkish-language education, with a reciprocal entitlement for the Greek minority in Istanbul (now reduced to about 3,000 persons). Western Thrace has both Koranic and secular Turkish-language schools. Under a 1952 educational protocol, Greece and Turkey may exchange annually 35 teachers on a reciprocal basis for service in Istanbul and Western Thrace. Due to the dwindling needs of the small and aging Greek population in Istanbul, in recent years the Greek side limited the exchanges to 16 teachers per country. There were no complaints during the year from Muslim leaders about bureaucratic barriers preventing Turkish teachers from working in Thrace.

In 1999 the Government approved 19 Turkish textbooks for use in the secular Turkish-language schools (referred to as "minority" schools in Thrace). Under a 1960 bilateral protocol, Turkey provides copies of the approved texts for use in the schools of Western Thrace. The books arrived in May 2000.

In Western Thrace over 8,000 Muslim children attended Turkish-language primary schools. An additional 150 attended 2 bilingual middle schools with a religious curriculum. Approximately 700 attended Turkish-language secondary schools, and approximately 1,300 attended Greek-language secondary schools. In the past, many Muslims reportedly went to high school in Turkey due to both the limited number of places in the Turkish-language secondary schools, which are assigned by lottery, and parent preference. However, the lottery system was not used during the year, and all students who applied were admitted. In 1999 the Government instituted an European Union-funded program for teaching Greek as a second language to Muslim children, primarily for those students in the Greek-language public schools, to improve their academic performance and chance of obtaining postsecondary education in Greece. In addition the Government offered further opportunities for minority students to learn Greek through preschool, kindergarden, afterschool, and summer school courses.

Government incentives encourage Muslim and Christian educators to reside and teach in isolated villages. However, in a 1999 law, the Government cancelled the program of incentives for Christian educators teaching temporarily in minority schools. Teachers Union representatives complained that the move would discourage Christians from seeking temporary teaching positions in minority schools. The law permits the Minister of Education to give special consideration to Muslims for admission to universities and technical institutes. Universities and technical institutes are required to create a certain number of places for Muslim students each year; 400 spaces were available for the 2000-2001 school year. Under this law, 123 Muslim students entered Greek universities and technical institutes during 1999. Approximately 1,700 other Muslim students entered via the national examination process open to all Greeks and were attending universities and technical schools.

The rate of employment of Muslims in the public sector and in state-owned industries and corporations is much lower than the Muslim percentage of the population. Muslims in Western Thrace claim that they are hired only for lower level, part-time work. The Government claims and Muslims and Christians note that a lack of fluency in written and spoken Greek and the need for university degrees for high-level positions limit the number of Muslims eligible for government jobs.

Public offices in Thrace do their business in Greek; the courts provide interpreters as needed. Since 1998 there have been no claims of discrimination against Muslims who apply for business licenses, tractor ownership, or property construction. Muslims and Christians in Thrace commended the Government for the basic public services (electricity, water, and telephone) provided to Muslim villages in recent years.

Other than in one multicultural elementary education "pilot school," the Government does not provide instruction in Greek as a second language to Turcophone children in the Athens area. Muslim parents report that their children are unable to succeed in school as a result of this policy. The Government maintains that Muslims outside Thrace are not covered by the Treaty of Lausanne and therefore do not enjoy those rights provided by the treaty.

Unlike in the past, there were no reports of assertions by Muslim leaders that the Government routinely withheld permission from Muslims seeking to change their legal residence, which determines where they vote, from rural to urban communities within western Thrace or from elsewhere in Greece to Thrace.

The Government refuses to acknowledge formally the existence and "minority" status of ethnic/linguistic groups, such as Vlachs and Slavophones, other than the Muslim minority specified in the Treaty of Lausanne. As a result some individuals who define themselves as members of a minority find it difficult to express their identity freely and to maintain their culture.

Northwestern Greece is home to an indeterminate number (estimates range widely, from under 10,000 to 50,000 or more) of citizens who still speak at home a Slavic dialect, particularly in Florina province. A small number of them identify themselves as belonging to a distinct ethnic group and assert their right to "Macedonian" minority status. Their assertions generate strong objections among the 2.2 million non-Slavophone Greek inhabitants of the northern Greek region of Macedonia, who use the same term to identify themselves. The Government will not recognize the Slavic dialect as a "Macedonian" language distinct from Bulgarian. Members of the minority assert that the Government pursues a policy designed to discourage use of their dialect. Government sensitivity on this issue stems from concern that members of the "Macedonian" minority may have separatist aspirations. Greece's dispute with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia over that country's name heightened this sensitivity. Complaints of government harassment and intimidation directed against these persons decreased significantly since 1998 and ceased in 2000.

In July 1999, three Muslim Members of Parliament and a number of Greek human rights organizations issued a letter calling on the Government to recognize legally the right of self-identification for members of all minorities, including the Muslim and "Macedonian" minorities. Senior government officials in August 1999 reaffirmed an individual, but not a collective, right of self-identification.

Roma continued to face discrimination from some local authorities and society at large. The Prime Minister's Office for Quality of Life, responsible for coordinating government projects for Roma, estimates the total Romani population to be 150,000 to 200,000. Nonofficial sources estimate the total at 250,000 to 300,000. Most of the Roma in Western Thrace are Muslims; elsewhere the majority are Greek Orthodox. Many Roma are settled permanently, mainly in the Athens area. Others are either mobile, working mainly as agricultural laborers, peddlers, and musicians throughout the country, or live in camps. The number of Roma who move around the country is decreasing gradually as families settle mainly into slums and camps around major cities. There are approximately 70 Romani camps with a total camp population between 100,000 and 120,000 persons.

At a September 1999 Implementation Review Meeting in Vienna of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Greek delegation recognized that the situation of Roma in Greece was "unsatisfactory and unacceptable" and committed the Government to remedy the situation. Government representatives identified as impediments to progress the lack of a unified voice from the Roma community and the widespread social prejudice against them.

In 1999 the Ministry of Interior completed a survey on the housing needs of the Roma; in March 2000 it established an interministerial committee to coordinate government action for them. Most Romani camps have no running water or electricity, much less garbage disposals or sewage treatment. Local authorities harass and threaten to evict Roma from their camps. The Roma of Tyrnavos, Thessaly, attempted to build their own lavatories in order to improve their living conditions, but local authorities pulled them down and imposed fines for violating construction codes. The Ministry of Defense allocated land in 1999 and houses in December 2000 at a former army camp (Gonou) for the Roma of Evosmos, Thessaloniki, to occupy. (The 3,500 Roma were evicted in 1998 from their homes of some 30 years and then evicted from 4 other sites in the following 15 days.)

The NGO Greek Helsinki Monitor reported that many communities of Roma tent-dwellers were evicted or

threatened with eviction during the year. A number of evictions took place in Athens from the location that will host the 2004 Olympics. In August 1999, local authorities evicted 30 Roma families from an area in Ioannina, which they had been renting for 7 years. In June 2000, the municipal authority of Nea Kios, Peloponnese, issued a decision to evict all 300 Roma from the region because the municipality claimed that the Roma contributed to the high crime rate. Police were asked to take action and implement the decision within 48 hours. A Roma hut was set on fire by unknown perpetrators. Human rights NGO's held the municipal authority responsible for the arson because of its decision to declare the Roma presence "undesirable." The decision of the municipal authority was repealed following the intervention of the Ombudsman's Office. In August municipal authorities in Crete attempted to evict over 100 Roma from their homes of 15 years in Nea Alikarnasos; the national ombudsman stopped the action.

Roma experience police abuse more frequently than some other groups. In September police were accused of beating Roma during a routine traffic stop in Nafplio. The trial of three policemen accused of beating two Romani teenagers in Mesolonghi in May 1998 still had not begun in September.

Roma frequently face discrimination in employment and in housing, particularly when attempting to rent accommodations. The approximately 400 Roma families in Tyrnavos, Thessaly, live in tents because the authorities refuse to include the area in city planning.

Romani representatives report that some local authorities have refused to register Roma as residents in their municipalities. Until registered with a municipality, no citizen can vote or exercise other civic rights such as obtaining an official marriage, commercial, or driver's license, or contributing to social security.

Government policy is to encourage the integration of Roma. The Prime Minister has designated a member of his staff to coordinate the efforts of all government ministries having a role in their integration, and the Ministry of Interior established an interministerial committee with the same aim. Poverty, illiteracy, and social prejudice nevertheless continue to plague large parts of the Romani population; these problems are most severe among the Roma who are mobile or who live in slums. The illiteracy rate among Roma is estimated at 80 percent. However, the Ministry of Education reported that the illiteracy rate is dropping among the Roma children, because the school enrollment rate increased by 17 percent and the dropout rate decreased to 75 percent as a consequence of an identity card system, set up by the Ministry, which allows students to change schools more easily as their parents move. The idea of setting up satellite elementary schools near Romani camps has been set aside in favor of the policy of integration (except for preschool centers).

The integration of Roma into social security systems is quite low. It is estimated that 90 percent of Roma are not insured by the public social security systems, since they are unable or unwilling to make the required contributions. Like other qualified citizens, indigent Roma are entitled to free health care. However, their access to health care at times is hindered by the fact that their encampments are located far from public health facilities. The Municipality of Pyrgos, Peloponnese, issued health cards to the Roma living permanently in the area and established a preschool center close to the Roma camp near the Alfeios River.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare continued work on projects to address the chronic problems of the Roma community. The projects included training courses for civil servants, policemen, and teachers to "increase sensitivity to the problems of the Roma," the development of teaching materials for Roma children, and the establishment of youth centers in areas close to Roma communities. The Ministry established six such centers.

## Section 6 Worker Rights

### a. The Right of Association

The Constitution and the law provide for the right of association. All workers, with the exception of the military, have the right to form or join unions. Police have the right to form unions but not to strike.

Approximately 26 percent of wage earners (nearly 650,000 persons) are organized in unions. Unions receive most of their funding from a Ministry of Labor organization, the Workers' Hearth, which distributes mandatory contributions from employees and employers. Workers, employers, and the state are represented in equal numbers on the board of directors of the Workers' Hearth. Approximately 10 public sector unions have dues-withholding provisions in their contracts, in addition to receiving Workers' Hearth subsidies.

Over 4,000 unions are grouped into regional and sectoral federations and 2 umbrella confederations, 1 for civil servants (ADEDY) and 1, the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), for private sector employees. Unions are highly politicized, and there are party-affiliated factions within the labor confederations, but day-to-day operations are not controlled by political parties or the Government. There are no restrictions on who may

serve as a union official.

Legal restrictions on strikes include a mandatory period of notice, which is 4 days for public utilities and 24 hours for the private sector. Legislation mandates a skeleton staff during strikes affecting public services, such as electricity, transportation, communications, and banking. Public utility companies, state-owned banks, the postal service, Olympic Airways, and the railroads also are required to maintain a skeleton staff during strikes.

The courts have the power to declare strikes illegal, although such decisions seldom are enforced. However, unions complain that this judicial power serves as a deterrent to some of their members from participating in strikes. The courts declared some strikes illegal during the year for reasons such as failure of the union to give adequate advance notice of the strike or the addition of demands by the union during the course of the strike. However, no striking workers were prosecuted.

Fewer strikes took place during the year than ever before, and those that occurred were fairly brief and nondisruptive. Strikes by public sector employees, including mass transport employees, lasted between 1 and 5 days and primarily concerned securing timely pay increases and greater job security.

Unions are free to join international associations and maintain a variety of international affiliations.

#### b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law provides for the right to organize and bargain collectively in the private sector and in public corporations. These rights are respected in practice. There are no restrictions on collective bargaining for private sector employees.

In 1997 and 1998 civil servants were accorded the right to organize and bargain collectively with the Ministry of Public Administration. The civil servants confederation conducted official negotiations with the Ministry of Interior for the first time in 1999.

In response to union complaints that most labor disputes ended in compulsory arbitration, legislative remedies were enacted in 1989 that provided for mediation procedures, with compulsory arbitration as a last resort. A 1992 law established a National Mediation, Reconciliation, and Arbitration Organization that applies to the private sector and public corporations (the military and civil service excluded).

Antiunion discrimination is prohibited. The Labor Inspectorate or a court investigates complaints of discrimination against union members or organizers. Court rulings have mandated the reinstatement of improperly fired union members.

Three free trade zones operate according to European Union regulations. The labor laws apply equally in these zones.

#### c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The Constitution prohibits all forced or compulsory labor, including that performed by children, and the Ministry of Justice enforces this prohibition; however, women and girls are trafficked into the country for the purpose of forced prostitution (see Sections 5 and 6.f.). The Government may declare the "civil mobilization" of workers in the event of danger to national security, life, property, or the social and economic life of the country. The International Labor Organization (ILO) Committee of Experts has criticized this power as violating the standards of ILO Convention 29 on forced labor. The Government did not resort to civil mobilization during the year.

#### d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

The minimum age for employment in the industrial sector is 15 years, with higher limits for certain activities. The minimum age is 12 years in family businesses, theaters, and the cinema. These age limits are enforced by occasional Labor Inspectorate spot checks and generally are observed. However, families engaged in agriculture, food service, and merchandising often have younger family members assisting them, at least part time. The Constitution contains a blanket prohibition of compulsory labor. Although no specific legislation explicitly prohibits forced and bonded labor by children, such practices are not known to occur (see Section 6.c.), except among some Roma and immigrants (see Section 5).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

Collective bargaining between the GSEE and the Employers' Association determines a nationwide minimum wage. The Ministry of Labor routinely ratifies this minimum wage, which has the force of law and applies to all workers. The minimum wage of \$17.40 (6,986 drachma) daily and \$389.20 (155,943 drachma) monthly, effective July 1, is sufficient to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. The maximum legal workweek is 40 hours in the private sector and 37 1/2 hours in the public sector. The law provides for at least one 24-hour rest period per week, mandates paid vacation of 1 month per year, and sets limits on overtime.

Legislation provides for minimum standards of occupational health and safety. Although the GSEE characterized health and safety legislation as satisfactory, it charged that enforcement, the responsibility of the Labor Inspectorate, was inadequate. Legislation passed in 1999 places the Labor Inspectorate under a central authority in compliance with ILO Convention 81. Workers do not have the legal right to remove themselves from situations that they believe endanger their health. However, they do have the right to lodge a confidential complaint with the Labor Inspectorate. Inspectors have the right to close down machinery or a process for a period of up to 5 days if they see safety or health hazards that they believe represent an imminent danger to the workers.

f. Trafficking in Persons

The law does not specifically criminalize trafficking in persons, but other statutes in the Penal Code are used to prosecute such cases. Arrests and court cases for prostitution by unlicensed foreign women, and cases against their traffickers, have increased, but remain at a very low level. Fines and sentences for traffickers are minimal.

Greece is both a transit and destination country for trafficked women. Trafficking in women for prostitution in Greece has increased sharply in recent years. At any give time, some 16,000 to 20,000 trafficked women are in the country, according to unofficial estimates. Approximately 2,400 trafficked women were deported from Greece during the year; many are quickly brought back into the country, according to official sources. While the Government is stiffening its border controls, in part because of the European Union Schengen Agreement requirements, there are fissures through which many women are brought into the country from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union. Local police corruption also plays a role in facilitating their entry into the country.

According to a Panteion University professor, 75 percent of foreign female prostitutes are not told why they are being brought to Greece. Some women arrive as "tourists" or illegal immigrants who seek work and are lured into prostitution by club owners who threaten them with deportation. Some women are kidnaped from their homes by their fellow countrymen and smuggled into Greece where they are "sold" to local procurers. The victims of this practice are often minors. Frequently connections exist between illegal prostitution and other criminal activities.

[End.]