



RAINBOW (VINOZHITO) – European Movement

Member of the European Free Alliance (EFA)

ВИНОЖИТО - Европско Движење

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According to the statement from the press representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr Beglitis (1-7-2003) Macedonian political refugees of the civil war will be allowed to visit their birthplaces during the period of 10 August to 31 October 2003. The Macedonian refugees will have the right to visit relatives, friends and their villages for 20 days, without restrictions, which exist even today regarding their visits. We welcome the decision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and we consider this the first step for the final resolution regarding the issue of the political refugees. Rainbow has referred to this subject many times. It's most recent report being the following press release.

In this issue we have also published an exceptionally interesting interview with Mr Loverdos (Under Secretary) from the newspaper "Eleftherotipia"
http://maknews.com/html/articles/loverdos_ios.html.

<p>PRESS RELEASE</p>

Florina – Lerin 30 April 2003

...ΑΥΤΑΡ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ ΙΕΜΕΝΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΝΟΝ ΑΠΟΘΡΩΣΚΟΝΤΑ ΝΟΗΣΑΙ ΗΣ
ΓΑΙΗΣ, ΘΑΝΕΙΝ ΙΜΕΠΙΕΤΑΙ...

...yet Odysseus still longs only to see his country's smoke leap from her chimney tops,
and death asks....

(*Odyssey* by Homer, Book 1, Verse 57)

More than FIFTY YEARS have passed since the Greek Civil War, yet the Macedonian freedom fighters, soldiers of the Democratic Army, as well as thousands of refugee children, victims of that war, still find themselves in forced exile.

Tashkent, Bucharest, Varna, Warsaw, Budapest, Prague, and Skopje still hold in their arms these grandparents, fathers, sons and daughters, far from their families, relatives and friends.

With their inhumane decision, the Greek Ministries of Internal Affairs and Public Order keep shut the doors of return.

THE JOINT DECISION OF THE GREEK MINISTRIES OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
AND PUBLIC ORDER

Athens 29 December 1982

Topic: Free repatriation and restoration of Greek Citizenship to political refugees.

Keeping in mind:

The provisions of Law 400 / 76 “Concerning the Ministerial Council and Ministries” as amended by Law 1266 / 1982 and with in the framework of the Greek government’s policy on national reconciliation and compassion

WE HAVE DECIDED:

...can return to Greece all **Greeks by genus*** (emphasis ours) who left Greece during the Civil War of 1946-1949 and because of which went abroad as political refugees, even if they have lost their Greek citizenship...

(*The word genus is synonymous with the word race and was deliberately used to discriminate against Macedonian political refugees on the basis of their ethnicity.)

(Signed)

THE MINISTERS
OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC ORDER
George Yennimatas, John Skoularikis

How is it possible for a European country such as Greece to produce a legal document containing apartheid-like phrases that discriminate against its citizens on the basis of “genus,” or race?

It is obvious that with the phrase “Greeks by genus” this decision aims to exclude certain persons from the unalienable right of return. They are the persons who were called Bulgarians, Slav-speaking, Slavomacedonians, bilingual, nonexistent and so forth, and still are by some – depending on where their interests lie.

The racist inspired decision of the Greek Ministries of Internal Affairs and Public Order keeps the doors of return closed. Many of these refugees have been placed on black lists as *persona non grata* and are not even permitted to visit Greece.

What right does Greece have to still keep families apart, thereby depriving them of their right to share all of life’s joys and heartaches?

One often hears of the plight of the Greeks from the now Turkish islands of Imvros and Tenedos, of the Greeks of Istanbul / Constantinople, of the Greek minority in Southern Albania, of human rights...

Today, with the Turkish-Cypriot leader Denktash’s decision to open the border, all of Greece is talking about the Greek-Cypriot refugees, and of the emotions they felt when they saw their family homes for the first time after thirty years. All of Greece is talking

about their display of patience and fortitude while waiting to cross the dividing line to see their homes and fields, to smell the lemon trees in their yards.

Greece is a member-state of the European Union. It claims to be the birthplace of Democracy. It has hosted successful EU Summit Meetings. In the Greece of 2003, which will host the 2004 Olympics under the banner “For a culture of all cultures,” the aforementioned decision to deprive Macedonian political refugees of their right to visit Greece should be an insult to the conscience of all democratic citizens. What is surely an insult is the guilty silence of politicians, journalists, intellectuals, etc.

What a pity for 21st century Greece: the “Denktash regime” has a better grasp of Homer’s verses.

**The Political Secretariat
RAINBOW**

OPEN LETTER

To: the Right Honorable
Costas Simitis
Prime Minister of Greece

From: Dr. Georgios Nakratzas
Physician and Writer
Netherlands

Rotterdam, 3 May 2003

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Two years ago I visited Turkey as a member of an international delegation in support of persecuted Turkish writers.

During the course of this visit I made a pilgrimage to the home of my father in the village he was forced to abandon when he fled as a refugee in 1922. This tragedy was a consequence of the forced population exchange, which was proposed and implemented by the government of Eleftherios Venizelos – and not by the Turks, as Greek propaganda claims.

Despite all we hear in Greece about Turkish barbarity, no one prohibited me from entering Turkey or from visiting the land of my ancestors.

Recently, we have witnessed the free movement of refugees on the island of Cyprus, once again as a result of a Turkish initiative.

During a recent visit to Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia, I witnessed the keen emotions felt by the children of the Civil War of 1946-1949, the children who were driven from Greece during the hostilities and are now middle-aged like us.

These people are denied the right to return to their homeland, to return to the homes and fields of their forebears. Some of them are even denied the right to pay a simple visit to Greece.

Sir, do you believe that our country, a country currently presiding over the European Union, is conducting itself in the humane fashion befitting a modern European state?

I am writing to convey to you the cry of despair and protest of Rainbow, the party of Greece's ethnic Macedonians. A copy of this letter in English will be forwarded to the European Commission, the members of the European Parliament, and the entire global community.

Yours faithfully,
Dr. Georgios Nakratzas

Yet Another Entry Denied to a Macedonian-Australian

23 May 2003

The office of Rainbow has received yet another case of entry prohibition to a Macedonian, (his nationality currently Australian) who had abandoned Greece during the civil war and whose descent is from the village Korifi – Turije in Florina – Lerin.

Coming from the Rep. of Macedonia Mr. Kosta Lazarof attempted to visit his village in Greece from the border station of Niki in Florina.

During passport control there was not the slightest problem and the authorization to enter Greece was granted to him. He was also given the necessary proof (stamp) in his passport with the date of entry 23-05-03-85>Niki k 064GR.

Mr Lazarof managed to walk only a few meters without any problems with hope and desire to see his friends, relatives and birthplace, when an officer called him back to the border station declaring that he was not allowed to enter Greece.

Automatically, his authorization was cancelled and he was sent back to the Rep. of Macedonia. The conclusive acknowledgements of entry prohibition (AA: 74/03 25-5-2003) referring to the causes of prohibition do not report and specific reasons fro entry prohibition.

* **Read extra inset of info Zora “IOS Press”**

http://maknews.com/html/articles/loverdos_ios.html.

Parliamentary Questions
WRITTEN QUESTION E-1140/03
From Stavros Xarchakos (PPE-DE) to the European Commission

(19 March 2003)

Subject: EBLUL and the systematic defamation of an EU Member State

It is a known fact that in Greece democratic freedoms and cultural diversity are fully protected and safeguarded. Accordingly, the growing Muslim minority in the Greek region of Thrace enjoys comprehensive media access (newspapers, radio stations, unimpeded reception of Turkish satellite stations, many of which constantly vilify Greece, etc.). It is represented by elected Muslim deputies in the Greek parliament, and has numerous places of worship, built and restored with Greek government funding.

All other minority groups, however small, enjoy similar freedoms. For example, the tiny Slav-speaking community in Florina has created its own political party (it has offices and newspapers; it openly propagandizes its ideas that never fail to vilify Greece and the Greeks) that enters a negligible contingent in all Greek electoral contests. Of late, anti-Greek propaganda has been stepped up, spearheaded by the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages (EBLUL). Recently, a book (co-funded by the Commission as stated on p. 2) full of “advice” and “recommendations” (p. 6 and elsewhere) on Greece was distributed to MEPs. Page 5 contains a reference to “Macedonian” speakers in Greece, while EBLUL President Brezigar recommends (p. 12) that “Greeks should learn English as well as Macedonian (!).”

Does the Commission (which is apparently providing funding for the Bureau’s activities) share Mr. Brezigar’s historically questionable views regarding the existence of a “Macedonian” language? Exactly what funding (itemized amounts) has the Bureau received from the European Union, and for which years? Why is funding being provided to a Bureau, which disseminates propaganda against a member-state? What action is the Bureau taking in countries where minority cultures are being oppressed – such as in the Greek communities in Albania and Turkey? Does the Commission know whether or not EBLUL Committees in member-states of the EU contain extreme nationalistic elements, which are being systematically incited by third countries to create tensions in specific regions of the EU? What are the names of the members of the Greek EBLUL Committee, and what are their precise professions and credentials?

PRESS RELEASE

Concerning the parliamentary question by the New Democracy MEP and composer Stavros Xarchakos on the subject “The European Bureau of Lesser-Used Languages and the systematic defamation of an EU member state,” which was tabled to the Commission on 19 March 2003, we wish to point out the following:

Mr. Xarchakos states at the beginning of his question, *“It is a known fact that in Greece democratic freedoms and cultural diversity are fully protected and safeguarded.”*

Could the worthy composer please cite the legislature that safeguards cultural diversity in Greece and what protective measures the state takes?

Is he aware that Greek citizens who have gone abroad to work have had their citizenship revoked because they identify themselves as ethnic Macedonians (Article 20, Paragraph 1g of the Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Greece)? Is he also aware that Macedonian political refugees who left Greece during the Greek Civil War have been prohibited from returning because, according to legislation, “they are not Greeks by genus” (Law 1266/1982)?

Is he aware that Greece still has not ratified the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on National Minorities, and that it still has not signed the Charter for the Protection of Minorities and Regional Languages?

In reference to the freedoms enjoyed, according to his accounts, by the “Muslim minority,” he claims that *“all other minority groups, however small, enjoy similar freedoms. For example, the tiny Slav-speaking community in Florina has created its own political party (it has offices and newspapers; it openly propagandizes its ideas that never fail to vilify Greece and the Greeks) that enters a negligible contingent in all Greek electoral contests.”*

We first of all welcome his statement that Greece has other minority groups. This is a democratic position and one contrary to the fixed position of all Greek governments to date that the only minority in Greece is the Muslim minority of Thrace.

Is Mr. Xarchakos aware of the judicial prosecution in the recent past of members of the Macedonian minority for the public use of their mother tongue?

Is he aware that the Greek court deems that it unnecessary to prosecute the “vandals” who destroyed the Rainbow offices, despite the suit brought against them by party members?

Can he cite any text or vilifying statement made by Rainbow against the Greeks or our country? If he cannot, is he willing to make a public apology for his libel? Perhaps the worthy composer sees as a vilification of our country Rainbow’s views concerning the respect for the rights of the Macedonian minority in Greece?

Is Mr. Xarchakos aware that the number of votes that a party has does not determine the number of members in a minority? Is he aware that the number of members in a minority is determined by census, which Greece systematically refuses to carry out on this level?

Why doesn’t he propose to our government to take a census containing questions about the mother tongue, the national consciousness, or the cultural diversity of the inhabitants of Greece?

Is Mr. Xarchakos aware that the “official” number of votes received by the Rainbow party in elections is triple that of the number of members of the Greek minority in Istanbul, the rights of whom he is so worried about in his question to the Commission?

Finally, does Mr. Xarchakos agree that those rights that the Greek minority in Istanbul or southern Albania enjoy or should enjoy are the same rights that the Macedonian minority in Greece should enjoy?

Is he willing to table a question with similar content to the Commission?

**The Political Secretariat
RAINBOW**

<p>OBSERVATIONS ON THE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION TABLED BY NEW DEMOCRACY MEP STAVROS XARCHAKOS TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION</p>

12 April 2003

On 19 March 2003 the Stavros Xarchakos, MEP, submitted a question to the European Commission titled “EBLUL and the systematic defamation of an EU member-state.”

The question one should be asking is whether Mr. Xarchakos is informing or misinforming the European Commission on this matter. Please note that these observations are being forwarded in English to all 600 MEPs and to interested parties around the world.

To allow readers to determine whether or not the information provided by Mr. Xarchakos is accurate I will frame these observations as clarifications of various parts of the question.

Mr. Xarchakos claims that:

“It is a known fact that in Greece democratic freedoms and cultural diversity are fully protected and safeguarded. Accordingly, the growing Muslim minority in the Greek region of Thrace ... has numerous places of worship, built and restored with Greek government funding.”

Mr. Xarchakos forgets:

1. The extent to which cultural diversity is safeguarded in Greece. This was demonstrated on 2 February 2001 when Sotiris Bletsas, the president of the Society for Vlach Culture, was sentenced to fifteen months imprisonment. Mr. Bletsas’ crime was to distribute an EBLUL leaflet at a meeting of Vlachs in the city of Naoussa, which maintained that five minority languages are spoken in Greece in addition to the Greek language. Mr. Bletsas was later acquitted, thanks to a massive mobilization of democratic forces abroad. To be sure, the misinformation peddled by Mr. Xarchakos on this point causes a shiver of indignation in any fair-minded person.

2. The Greek state is financially supported by the tax-paying citizens of Greece, who include the members of the Turkish minority in Greek Thrace.
3. A portion of the salaries of the Orthodox Christian Metropolitans, which are paid by the entire body of Greek tax-payers, is distributed in the form of special benefits to large families that are exclusively Orthodox Christian. Large families in the Turkish community are not eligible for these benefits.

Mr. Xarchakos goes on to ask:

“What are the activities of EBLUL in countries where the cultural identity of minorities is suppressed, as is the case, for example, with the Greeks ...in Turkey?”

Mr. Xarchakos is either unaware or pretends to be unaware that:

1. As a semi-official body of the European Union, EBLUL is committed to occupying itself exclusively with the linguistic or cultural minorities of its member-states. Turkey is not yet a member of the EU.
2. In the same question Mr. Xarchakos refers to the oppressed Greek minority in Turkey, while in the case of Greece he speaks of a Muslim minority. The Euro-parliamentarian aligns himself with the nationalistic policy particular to the New Democracy party, which denies a segment of the Greek citizenry the right to define itself ethnically as a Turkish minority. At the same time, however, he describes the Greeks of Turkey not as members of the Orthodox Christian minority but as Greeks. Mr. Xarchakos' position is a typical example of egocentric nationalism. The question is, what should Mr. Xarchakos call the unfortunate leftist members of Greek society who, after losing their faith in Allah, continue to speak their mother Muslim tongue?

Mr. Xarchakos also says:

“Similar freedom is enjoyed by other minority groups, no matter how small they may be. An example is the tiny Slav-speaking community in the region of Florina, which has established its own political party that enjoys complete freedom of action (it has offices and newspapers; it is free to disseminate its ideas, and does not fail to revile Greece and the Greeks).”

Mr. Xarchakos again is either unaware or pretends to be unaware of the facts concerning the development and current situation of the Macedonian minority in Greece and its political party, Rainbow.

1. In the relatively recent past, Rainbow was forbidden by the courts from participating in Greek elections. It was only after the intervention of the European Rainbow, in Brussels, that Rainbow was allowed at the last minute to put up candidates, after an urgent decision by the Supreme Court.

2. In 1995 Greek ultra-nationalists from Florina and the surrounding region destroyed Rainbow's Florina office. The act was committed at the instigation of the mayor or the city, the municipal council and the local church, all of which issued decrees to this effect.
3. Despite the fact that they themselves were victims of this barbarous act, four leading Rainbow members were prosecuted for "inciting discord among the citizens of Florina." Officials from the so-called leftwing parties in Florina appeared as witnesses for the prosecution.
4. On 15 September 1998 four members of Rainbow were taken to court by the authorities for the attack on their offices in 1995. They were eventually acquitted thanks to the vigorous protests of foreign MEPs, and the appearance of Greek democrats and human rights NGOs in their defense.
5. The lawsuit seeking material damages for the destruction of furniture and equipment in their offices in 1995, brought by Rainbow against these Greek ultra-nationalists, was refused by the courts on the grounds that: there is no reason to accept the suit, since the preliminary hearings ascertained the existence of no offence and no culpability. It is also possible that these preliminary hearings attributed the damage to an earthquake that, curiously, was not felt by anyone else at the time.
The sequel of these sad events would be written in the near future in the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.
6. The Greek courts have also prohibited the establishment of a cultural association (The Home of Macedonian Culture) in Florina. Consequently there was a judgment against Greece at the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg. To date, however, obstructions by Florina attorneys have made it impossible to secure legal recognition for the Home of Macedonian Culture.

Mr. Xarchakos also refers to what he describes as Greece's protective policy regarding cultural diversity in this country:

"Does the Commission (which apparently provides funding for the Bureau's activities) share Mr. Brezigar's historically questionable views regarding the existence of a 'Macedonian' language?"

Mr. Xarchakos is of the opinion that in addition to being a composer – a field in which he is knowledgeable – he is also an expert in linguistics and ventures to question the existence of an entire language.

1. Is Mr. Xarchakos aware that Saints Cyril and Methodius used the Slav dialect of the Thessaloniki region – in essence the precursor of contemporary Macedonian – and translated the Holy Scriptures into this language?

2. Is Mr. Xarchakos aware that this Slav language, i.e. Macedonian, was introduced by the Bulgarians, whose language up until that point had been a Turkish-Mongolian dialect or language?
3. Is Mr. Xarchakos aware that Macedonian is spoken today in the regions of Kastoria, Kozani, Edessa, Naousa, Veroia, in the countryside around Thessaloniki, Axioupolis, and in the northern environs of Serres and Drama – in addition to Florina?
4. By using the phrase “concerning the alleged existence of a Macedonian language,” Mr. Xarchakos characterizes the opinion of Mr. Brezigar, the President of EBLUL, as historically groundless. This is a typical example of the distinguished composer mistaking himself for a linguist.

Mr. Xarchakos asks:

“What are the names of the members of the Greek Committee of EBLUL, and what are their precise professions or other credentials?”

The names of the members of the Greek Committee of EBLUL have been made publicly available to all Greek MEPs and to the Greek government. What exactly does Mr. Xarchakos mean by “precise professions or other credentials”? Perhaps he means the ethnic, religious or sexual orientation of the Committee members or their advisor?

The Church of Greece, supported by reactionary political elements, recently waged a positively medieval political campaign to have the religious denomination of every Greek citizen recorded on his/her national identity card. This same measure was enforced in 1936 by the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas. Mr. Xarchakos and his New Democracy party lost this battle against progress and knowledge.

Rotterdam, Holland
 Dr. George Nakratzas
 Physician - Writer

<p>Turkish Minority Movement for Human and Minority Rights</p>
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<p>PRESS RELEASE</p>

Komotini 29-4-03

AN OFF-KEY VOICE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In a recent parliamentary question (19-3-03) put to the Committee, New Democracy MEP Stavros Xarchakos, a well-known composer, asked to be informed as to what exactly is this EBLUL (European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages). This EBLUL, he went on, which systematically advances the defamation of a member state of the EU, Greece, and is surrounded by ultra-nationalistic elements that are incited by third countries to systematically create tensions. He has ascertained that, of late, EBLUL has spearheaded an intensifying anti-Greek propaganda and questions why the EU is funding a bureau that propagandizes against one of its member-states, etc. He even asks to be apprised of the names of the members of the Greek Committee of EBLUL and their precise professions and other credentials.

According to Mr. Xarchakos, Greece is a paradise for minorities, since cultural diversity is fully protected and provided for by law. And in this context, the population of the Muslim minority is increasing and, among other things, has unimpeded reception of Turkish satellite channels. The tiny Slav-speaking community in Florina, whose political party does not hesitate to revile Greece and the Greek people, enjoys similar freedoms. What's more the notion of the existence of a so-called Macedonian language, which is spoken in Greece, is historically questionable.

Lastly, Mr. Xarchakos, being ignorant or pretending to be ignorant, advises EBLUL to concern itself with the oppressed Greek minorities, such as those in Albania and Turkey, and hence to exceed its statutes and the borders of the EU, which is its exclusive sphere of involvement.

One could overlook all these picturesque excesses if they were not indicative of a mentality still endemic in Greece and if they did not come from this particular person – an unpleasant surprise, but certainly not one off. In his question, Mr. Xarchakos touches on many sensitive issues. But we will resist the provocation and confine ourselves to a summary critique.

Initially, one could truly be awestruck by all these inaccuracies, distortions, fear-mongering, anachronistic and out of place positions, the ignorance or feigned ignorance, the nationalistic complacency and egocentrism, the un- and anti-European mentality, the ideological fixation on the period of the Balkan Wars, the cold-war, and the narrow-minded perceptions of diversity and the minority phenomenon that directly leads to conflict and paves the road to racism. Which of all the anachronisms packed in Mr. Xarchakos' question does one marvel at first? His political timepiece appears to have stopped sometime in the early 20th century.

Observe the cogent, disarming argument of the breadth of the freedom enjoyed by our Turkish minority with their satellite reception of Turkish television channels. Perhaps he meant that they should be grateful that their satellites were not shot down, as one former politician threatened to do.

No one is claiming that Chinese is spoken in Greece. That indeed would be historically inaccurate. However, one of the lesser-used languages in Greece is also that of its neighboring country, called (albeit with the acronym FYROM) Macedonia. And as it happens in these cases, the language and the country are homonymous. Likewise, our own minority does not speak “Muslim,” but rather Turkish, which is the language of another neighboring country.

Does Mr. Xarchakos see the European Committee as a form of Intelligence Service that monitors European citizens, recording their activities and personal data, and for this reason he could ask it to supply him with the names of the Greek committee members along with their precise professions and other credentials? Does he expect a reply on the order of “it is Mr. So-and-so, who declares himself to be a farmer, but this credential of his is false because he is really working as an agent of such-and-such country according to reports from our own agents, and his sexual preference is...”?

EBLUL is involved exclusively with the project of linguistic diversity, and advocates for the lesser-used languages of EU countries. It does not deal with minorities, under penalty of suspension of duties. More crucially, it does not stir up minority issues. This is what Mr. Xarchakos is doing with his inappropriate question. We are not criticizing him for this; we are simply noting that that it was out of order.

Mr. Xarchakos does not realize that with his stand and his words he is causing the most unsuspecting person to suspect that that the truth is probably the exact opposite of what he is claiming, attempting to deny and/or wishing to put forth himself. Malicious individuals compromise themselves when they fall into this common trap.

Greece was the last EU country to form an EBLUL commission. This delay was due to the “particular” conditions in Greece vis-a-vis the problems of expression of linguistic and all other aspects of cultural diversity. The occasion arose when these “particular” conditions indirectly led to EBLUL itself being tried before the Greek court. Sotiris Bletsas, a Vlach-speaking Greek citizen, was tried and sentenced to 15 months imprisonment for distributing an EBLUL pamphlet. The document listed the lesser-spoken languages of the EU countries, mentioning that the Vlach language (Vlachika) was spoken in Greece. He was convicted for disseminating false information.

Several months ago, the first international EBLUL congress in Greece took place in Thessaloniki. At the time, some 150 people at the request of the local media had gathered outside the hotel where the events were being held to demonstrate against the congress participants, which included many delegates from various European organizations. Fortunately, there was ample police presence and unpleasant incidents were averted. The European delegates watched the goings on outside the hotel in wide-eyed amazement. “These is the Balkans. It’s no laughing matter.” Stavros Xarchakos has proved this, too.

<p>Speech by Pavlos Voskopoulos at the 1st Convention of the New Reformed Movement of the Left (AEKA)</p>

The first two-day **Convention of the New Reformed Movement of the Left** (Ananeotiki Eksynchronistiki Kinisi tis Aristeras, or AEKA) took place on Saturday, 24/5/2003, at the Holiday Inn in Athens. This was the third anniversary of the movement's formation. The Convention's main slogan was "The Counterattack by the Center-Left."

Pavlos Voskopoulos, the spokesperson for the Rainbow party, was invited by convention organizers to present the positions of the Macedonian minority in Greece. The following is a transcript of that speech.

Dear Friends,

I would like to begin by thanking AEKA for inviting Rainbow to participate in its first Convention. If I am not mistaken, this is the first time since 1949 that a member of the Macedonian minority has been invited to formally express its positions at a meeting of a Greek political body.

Obviously you are expecting to hear about the Macedonian minority in Greece. Permit me, however, to first express our own views on the political situation in this country. Rainbow members believe that Greece currently contains two political and social poles, two ideological currents with their respective practices.

One is the majority, which is characterized by an anti-European and more generalized anti-Western orientation. It is inward focused and nationalistic, strongly anti-Turkish, conservative, and permeates virtually the entire spectrum of political forces in our country. That its primary voices are generally accepted, or at least tolerated, in Greek politics and society, was evident in the relatively recent past and during the war in the former Yugoslavia. At that time, the flags of the ultra-rightwing organization Chryssi Avgghi waved side by side with the red flags of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) against Europe and in favor of Milosevic under the banner of the two-headed Byzantine eagle of the Orthodox Church.

The other current has a clearly European orientation. It is extroverted, anti-nationalistic, and democratic. But this currently is a minority position, maintained by minor political parties and individuals in various political arenas in an attempt to counteract the majority current.

We believe that AEKA is part of the second current, and we consider it to be an ideological ally in the same democratic camp with Rainbow. I mention all this because it is the context and prism through which we must deal with the issue of minority rights, given that basic principle that minority issues involve and must be positively dealt with by society as a whole. Minority issues and the general attitude toward diversity are crucial to the development of political democracy in our country. It is not simply a matter of respect for minority rights.

The Macedonian minority in Greece was also a victim of the national Greek myth or, rather, the consequences of that myth as far as the implementation of the national political homogenization of our country's population.

From its founding, the modern Greek state believed that its citizens had to be the descendants of Pericles and Socrates, with their rich civilization, and hence a chosen or blessed people. It proceeded to politically discriminate against and absorb whatever departed from the dominant ideology. We believe that Greek society must be liberated from the bonds of its national myth. We are not – permit me here to use the first person plural since we minorities are also in a way the product of the same system – more superior or inferior to any other people or country. And with this in mind, let us all contribute majority and minorities together toward the further democratization of Greece and the progress our overall society.

In recent weeks the media has been showing us images of Greek-Cypriote refugees on the dividing line of Cyprus. We witness their emotions and resolve while waiting to cross into the Turkish sector and see their homes once again, after thirty years. Indeed, these are very moving, human moments - resulting from the decision of the Turkish Cypriots and Denktash to open the border. I wonder how many of you are aware that, as we speak, the Macedonian political refugees of the Greek Civil War still do not have the right even to visit their family homes, because the Foreign Ministry blacklists them as politically undesirable.

As for the policy of a minority itself, Rainbow has repeatedly stated that along with advocating for its own rights, it has a responsibility to reassure the general population that it does not desire the change of existing borders through the exercise of those rights. This is especially necessary where the Balkans are concerned. We can learn a lot from the recent events in our region.

For an example of this policy I cite our position on the introduction of the Macedonian language in the Greek educational system. We do not want to have separate schools for this purpose, because that would have a segregating effect. Instead, we wish to see Macedonian as part of the curriculum in the Greek schools in regions where the language is spoken.

In addition, concerning the policy of minorities toward neighboring countries, permit me to quote a friend who is in the same ideological bulwark and has formulated the theory of the prophylactic. The prophylactic is very useful, and is highly effective in the job for which it was intended. But it is useless afterwards, and gets tossed out. This, in a way, is the fate of a minority if it becomes the victim of interstate conflict and antagonism, especially, if it allows itself to be used as a political tool that serves the interests of one side or the other.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you once again for inviting me, and to reiterate my conviction that minority issues must be discussed and solved by the majority and minority together. In this way, all democratic citizens contribute to the democratization of our country, for a better society and a promising tomorrow.

Thank you.

Athens 24 May 2003

**Participation of Rainbow at 48th FUEN Congress on
European Nationalities,
Bolzano, Italy 28 May - 1 June 2003**

The **Federal Union of European Nationalities** (FUEN) was founded in 1949. Today it comprises 73 member-organizations from 30 states. FUEN has become a respected advisor to governments in many European states as well as to numerous international organizations. As a Union and functioning as an umbrella for many national minority organizations, FUEN plays an important role in advancing the rights of national minorities both in their particular countries and in Europe as a whole.

RAINBOW is currently an associate member of FUEN and soon to become a full member.

A RAINBOW delegation participated in the four-day FUEN congress on the topic of **“European Minorities in the New Europe: Where are we, what have we learned from the past, and where are we going?”**

Speaking at the Congress were:

Dr. Bruno Hosp – Director of the Cultural Division, on behalf of the autonomous region of Bolzano (Northern Italy); and **Dr. Richard Theiner** – MP, on behalf of the autonomous region of Trentino.

Participating in the workshops were:

Dr. Mich Ebner, MEP; **Mr. John Packer** – Special Commissioner for National Minorities from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); **Mr. Tom Trier** from the European Center for Minority Issues, headquartered in Flensburg; **Mr. Markus Warasin** – Secretary General of EBLUL; **Ms. Clive Baldwin** – Minority Rights Group International (MRGI); **Mr. Gabriel Von Toggenburg** – European Academy of Bolzano; and other individuals and organizations involved in these issues.

The Congress program included a discussion, a portion of which was dedicated to the Macedonian minority in Greece. RAINBOW delegates had the opportunity to present the party’s positions as well as the general situation of national minorities in Greece and to exchange views and experiences with other Congress participants.

**Nothing Stays a Secret...
AN EXAMPLE OF EVASION**

The document below is a typical example of the way in which some “professional patriots” have engaged in a witch-hunt in our region in previous years. The text is part of a legal brief and as such arrived in our hands.

The document was introduced in the Greek court by the defendant George Kapsalis, publisher of the extreme-right newspaper *Stochos*, in an attempt to evade conviction in the suit brought against him by the plaintiff Stefanos Dimtsis. The defendant’s argument

was that the letter was published in *Stochos* under the pseudonym ILARCHOS. Kapsalis filed the original letter with the bench to prove that the article was not libelous.

For those who are not familiar with the weekly *Stochos*, it has for years exclusively undertaken to slander, sully, and intimidate the residents of Florina, among others.

One wonders if ILARCHOS is currently continuing his “national project” and by what methods.

Read the original text in Greek:

http://florina.org/html/info_zora/info_zora_11/nalpandidis.html

To: Newspaper “Stohos” (=Target)/ Attention: Mr. Kapsalis

Dear Mr. Kapsalis,

My name is Lazaros Nalpadithis, son of Anastasios, I come from the village Pili in the region of Prespa in the prefecture of Florina, and I work as a parochial secretary at the Parish of Kolhiki and at the Parish of St. Ahilius of the same prefecture.

I am a fanatic reader of our newspaper and I believe that this is the only newspaper that presents the facts objectively and without prejudice, having as its gnomon the welfare of our Nation; therefore, I pray Almighty God to give you strength to continue the combat for the benefit of our Fatherland. These little words as an introduction; I shall send you the necessary documents in order to become an associate of our newspaper.

Mr. Kapsalis, as you yourself know only too well, in our area the Slavic propaganda is reveling and the Slavic language is currently overtly spoken and in local fairs autonomist songs are played by local bands (fairs of Meliti and Sitaria). However, what is most horrible of all, is that the Greek State rewards such rascals that want to disband our country.

Hereunder, I am writing a recent, living example: There is a certain Dimtsis Stefanos, son of Kiriakos, from the village Klines of Florina, who serves as chief-guard (=sergeant) of the Hellenic Police (how he joined the Police I do not know); he has a plentiful autonomist action and has displayed it openly on many occasions: at his wedding party autonomist dances were played, which he himself was dancing, at a fair he himself was singing autonomist songs, e.g. “Begajite Grcka, begajte za Makedonija”, which is interpreted “Leave Greeks from Macedonia” and so on and so forth. For this his action he was transferred from the airport of Thessalonica where he was serving to a police station in Evritania, but with the interference of Petsos, as he was saying around, he was sent to Larisa and thence back to Thessalonica again. Today, even now that I am writing to you, he is in Athens as a student at the Police Officers’ Academy, apparently again with the support of Petsos. What is left now is for him to be sent in two years’ time back to Macedonia to continue his destructive work, this time from a position of authority.

I make it known to you that this scoundrel had participated in the examinations for the same Academy last year, but he failed, thanks to the intervention of some services, about which you know.

The aforementioned event made a great impression in our area and gave immense disappointment and bitterness to those who love our Fatherland and especially to the local Pontians who shall give again their blood for the entirety of that location called Macedonia that was and shall be Greek and the borders of which are not those of today, but much greater ones.

What I have written above is very accurate and comes from trustworthy sources, which I cannot expose in my letter. Whatever news comes to my perception, I shall write it to you at once, so that we do not allow the enemies of our Nation to accomplish their plans (I shall be writing with the pseudonym "Ilarhos" for well known reasons).

My telephone numbers are home 24903, office 70400 and at the village every weekend 51389.

LONG LIVE THE NATION

Florina 15-9-1987

Lazaros Nalpadithis

English Translation by P. Somalis

