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SECRETARIAT OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS
SECRÉTARIAT DU COMITÉ DES MINISTRES



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Documents distributed at the request of a Representative shall be under the sole responsibility of the said Representative, without prejudice to the legal or political position of the Committee of Ministers.

Meeting: 1521st meeting (March 2025) (DH)

Communication from the authorities (18/12/2024) concerning the case of HOUSE OF MACEDONIAN CIVILIZATION AND OTHERS v. Greece (Application No. 1295/10).

Information made available under Rule 8.2a of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of the execution of judgments and of the terms of friendly settlements.

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Réunion : 1521^e réunion (mars 2025) (DH)

Communication des autorités (18/12/2024) relative à l'affaire HOUSE OF MACEDONIAN CIVILIZATION ET AUTRES c. Grèce (requête n° 1295/10) **[anglais uniquement]**.

Informations mises à disposition en vertu de la Règle 8.2a des Règles du Comité des Ministres pour la surveillance de l'exécution des arrêts et des termes des règlements amiables.

DGI

18 DEC. 2024

SERVICE DE L'EXECUTION
DES ARRETS DE LA CEDH

1521st CMDH Meeting (4-6 March 2025)

House of Macedonian Civilization and Others v. Greece (application No. 1295/10)

Communication by the Greek Authorities

Following the last Action Report submitted by the Greek Authorities on this case [DD-DH(2019)1114] and the relevant CM Decision in the 1362nd CMDH meeting (3-5 December 2019), we would like to provide the Committee of Ministers with the following updated information:

I. Individual measures

We reiterate our position that the examination of the individual measures should be closed, given that the applicants have chosen not to make use of their right to reopen examination of their case before the national courts under law 4491/2017, which amended art.758 of the Civil Procedural Code. To our knowledge, the applicants have not made any subsequent efforts until today to achieve registration of their association.

II. General measures

Since the last examination of the case and in conformity with the relevant CM-DH decision, which *"invites the authorities to keep the Committee informed of any developments in Greek case-law of relevance to the present case (...)"*, we note the following developments:

- On 20.11.2018 the association with the name *"Macedonian Movement for the Promotion of the Mother Tongue"* has been registered in the Court of First Instance of Edessa (decision No. 5/2018). According to our information, this association has not been dissolved until today.

- In 2019 the Court of First Instance of Serres dissolved the association *"Brotherhood of Native of Serres"* (judgment no. 185/2019) repealing its registration by the Magistrate of the District Court (Ειρηνοδίκηο) of Sindiki (decision no.10/2017). One of the aims of the association was the promotion of the "native" language, which according to some of its members was the "macedonian/slav-macedonian" language. The Court noted *inter alia* that the ambiguity of the terminology "native language" created confusion among its members, which lead, eventually, to the withdrawal of participation of many of them from the association.

In 2021 the Court of Appeal of Thessaloniki (judgment no. 117.2021) validated the judgment of the Court of First Instance of Serres underlining that the number of the members of the association has been reduced below the minimum required by law (20

members), whereas *“four members have stated that they don’t wish to continue their legal actions, something that denotes the acceptance of the judgment by the Court of First Instance [i.e. for the dissolution of the association]”*. The applicants chose not to lodge a further appeal with the Court of Cassation.

- In 2022 the Magistrate of the District Court (Ειρηνοδίκης) of Florina (decision no. 27/2022) approved the registration of the association with the name *“Centre for Macedonian Language in Greece – ЦЕНТАР ЗА МАКЕДОНСКИ ЈАЗИК ВО ГРЦИЈА”*. The aims of this association are the promotion of the Macedonian language in Greece and the support for its introduction as an optional course in public education.

In 2023 the Court of First Instance of Florina rejected multiple objections by intervening third parties and validated the above-mentioned decision of the Magistrate of the District Court of Florina. It highlighted *inter alia* the compatibility of the association with the 2018 Prespa Agreement between Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia.

In 2024 the Court of Appeal of Kozani (judgments no. 82/2024 and 83/2024) repealed the judgments of the Court of First Instance of Florina and ordered the dissolution of the association. It underlined –among others- that one of the ultimate aims of the association –publicly promoted on the internet- was the introduction of the Macedonian language as a minority language and the preparation of the relevant teaching material in public education. It added further, that the latter aim is beyond the legal competences of a private association and the only competent authorities for shaping the educational policy are the State authorities.

Consequently, applications for further appeal have been lodged with the Court of Cassation (applications No. 34/2024 and 35/2024). At this point the applicants have not exercised their right to ask for the setting of a date for the discussion of their applications before the Court of Cassation in Athens. It should be further noted that the applicants have not exercised their right to apply for the suspension of the execution of the judgment of the Court of Appeal.

- In 2023 some persons who object the aims of associations similar to the *“House of Macedonian Civilization”*, applied to the Magistrate of the District Court (Ειρηνοδίκης) of Giannitsa for the registration of an association with the name *“Centre of Macedonian Language in Greece”* (it regards an association with a similar name, but different from the association mentioned in the previous paragraph).

The aim of this association is the opposite of the aims of all the above-mentioned associations; its aim is to promote the “Macedonian language” as *“an ancient Greek language with special characteristics used by the ancient Greek Macedonians in the ancient Greek Kingdom of Macedonia”*. In 19.04.2023 the Magistrate of the District Court (Ειρηνοδίκης) of Giannitsa (Decision No. 20/2023) rejected the application underlining that this aim is not compatible with the 2018 Prespa Agreement between Greece and the

Republic of North Macedonia, according to which (art.1, par.3c) *“the Macedonian Language shall be the official language of the Second Party [i.e. the Republic of North Macedonia]”*.

In conclusion, it derives from all the above that the domestic legal order is not unfavorable to the registration and functioning of associations relevant to *“House of Macedonian Civilization”*. Moreover, regarding the association, whose application is currently pending before the Court of Cassation, it should be noted that the domestic remedies have not yet been exhausted.