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Ethnic and linguistic minorities in the border region of Albania, Greece, and Macedonia: An overview of legal and societal status

This article examines the legal and societal status of ethnic and linguistic minorities and minority politics in the tri-border region of Albania, Greece, and Macedonia. Our goal is to provide a much-needed overview of the current situation, which is characterized by fast-changing political and social landscapes, transformation processes that began with the fall of Socialism in the early 1990s, and the economic crisis of the late 2000s. The present circumstances of minorities in this region are illustrated by contrasting official documents with field data collected by the authors, mainly in June of 2015, and recent academic research on the topic.

Contents of the article

1 Introduction: The tri-border region and its ethnic and linguistic minorities

The borders in the region of the Central Balkans were largely established in the early twentieth century. Drawing these boundaries had the effect of taking territory which had been an amalgam of diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic groups and dividing it into a number of nation states in which only one ethnicity and one language were assigned preferred official status. For instance, in the former Yugoslavia and in the later independent Republic of Macedonia, the Slavic-speaking Orthodox population was given dominant status. Meanwhile, in the nation states of Albania and Greece, the same Slavic population remained a minority, whose rights were often limited in varying degrees of severity over the years. Similar processes took place with the Albanian populations in Greece and Macedonia. In addition, the Aromanians, Roms, Egyptians, and Turks were permanently relegated to an undesirable position in all of the new states.

For purposes of this article, we included in our analysis those groups that speak a language different from the majority language of their respective countries. We also narrowed our analysis to the minority groups that continue to live within the current boundaries of a given country, at least since the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913, when the present borders of the Central Balkans came into existence. Yet there are some small, traditional groups who are not included in this inquiry, for example, the Sephardic Jews and Tsakonian Greeks.

An additional task is the naming and definition of the various ethnic and linguistic minorities. This is a complicated task, since, in the Balkans, these definitions often exist at the point where among national and nationalistic ideologies, short-term political interests, and attempts at self-identification by the minorities themselves collide. In this article, we endeavor to use primarily the names that are based on the self-identifications of those belonging to a given group (see Framework 1995, Art. 3), while acknowledging that there will be some individuals in any community who may have a variety of other, sometimes context-bound, identities and self-identifications.[2] When there were several options available, we preferred a term with the most specificity and established in the academic literature. To avoid ambiguity, we have also

[2] Cf., for instance, the terms used by members of one and the same community in Golloborda, Albania, for self-identification: Macedonians, Muslims, Turks, *naši*, *sl'avoi̯*, *bullgarët e lashtë* (“Ancient Bulgarians”), among others (Sobolev & Novik 2013, 177–182).

tried to include the autonyms for the respective groups at first mention if these differ from the term we have chosen to use.

One instance of naming nevertheless requires closer scrutiny here. The Slavic minority in Albania and Greece has been subjected to a decades-old debate between Bulgarian and Macedonian scholars as well as an ongoing Macedonian-Greek political dispute regarding the name of the Republic of Macedonia. In this article, the term "Macedonian" will be applied to members of the respective minorities in Albania and Greece. Our choice is based on the following arguments: 1) the term Macedonian was used by the overwhelming majority of informants during the Central Balkans field expedition of the Helsinki Area & Language Studies (HALS) initiative in June 2015, and also during other surveys conducted in this region by members of our team within the last five years; 2) a variety of initiatives has been launched by members of the minority, promoting Macedonian identity among the local Slavic population, both in Albania and in Greece; 3) Standard Macedonian is the closest possible Slavic *Dachsprache* for the respective dialects; 4) in Albania, the Macedonian minority is officially recognized by the state.

This article is divided into three main sections, each of which addresses the situation in one of the three countries. Each section is divided into two subsections, introducing the groups individually and discussing the status of the minorities and the problems these communities face. We have endeavored to include information about the current legal status of each group, the regions where they are found, their religions, dialects/language(s), and the use of their dialects/language(s) in the media and in education. The size of the minority groups is in general highly contested; official records are either lacking (as in Greece) or show major discrepancies or inconsistencies (as in Albania). For these reasons, reliable, if unfortunately somewhat outdated, statistics could be presented only for Macedonia; for Albania and Greece, we chose to concentrate on describing the areas in which the respective minorities can be found, for instance, by identifying the names of villages and larger regions. We have also attempted to provide an up-to-date list of references for further information. Yet an exhaustive bibliography on the topic is beyond the scope of this article.

2 Albania

The Republic of Albania has a population of 2,886,026 (1 January, 2016, see Popullsia 2016). The official records of minorities, including their number, names, and places of settlement, differ, depending on the account. Moreover,

these data are often politically contested. The latest census, conducted in 2011, was criticized as being unreliable by members of the minorities themselves and by the Council of Europe (Advisory 2012). The main focus of criticism has been the latest amendments to the Albanian legislation, which introduce fines for "incorrect" responses to the census questionnaire, meaning answers that are inconsistent with the identity previously declared by the same person or inconsistent with the information on record in registration offices (Alb. *Gjendje Civile*) (ibid.).[3] The discrepancy between the answers given for "Population according to mother tongue" and those for "Population according to ethnic and cultural affiliation" (Census 2011), together with the large number of people who did not answer the latter question (more than 450,000 chose the options "prefer not to answer" or "not relevant/not stated"), has left a gray area, making it almost impossible to provide reliable figures for minorities. For this reason, the aim here is a qualitative analysis of these communities, providing information about the types of settlements – whether monoethnic or multiethnic, dense or dispersed – and their locations, whether in central or peripheral parts of the country. These data are also reflected in the preservation of the native linguistic varieties.

Official policies that regulate the status of linguistic and ethnic minorities mandate a three-part classification into national minorities, linguistic minority groups, and so-called communities. National minorities (Alb. *minoritete kombëtare*) include groups that can be perceived as having a kin-state outside Albania (cf. Advisory 2012, 9). In socialist Albania, two of these national minorities were institutionalized by introducing so-called minority zones populated by Macedonians (9 villages in the Prespa region) and Greeks (99 villages in the district of Gjirokastra; see Pettifer 2001, 6). However, despite having kin-states, the Serbian-Montenegrin minority was never institutionalized in a similar way. Only within these minority zones were the cultural and educational rights of the minorities recognized and the members of these groups permitted to attend public schools in their own languages. The Lake Prespa region, where the officially recognized Macedonian communities live, was kept isolated from the rest of the country. The only

[3] Representatives of the Macedonian minority have highlighted this issue on several occasions by providing evidence of intimidation or fines being handed down for "wrong" answers. According to Jani Mavromati (personal communication to Maxim Makartsev), the leader of the Greek cultural organization OMONIA in Tirana, the problem with the census of the Greek minority is the large number of seasonal migrants; the census was intentionally held at a time when many members of the migrant communities were abroad (on these migrant communities, see Cohen & Sirkeci 2011).

road connecting it with the rest of Albania had a check-point through which only those with special permission were authorized to pass. In addition, several villages (including Zaroshkë; Mac. *Zrnosko*) existed as enclaves within an enclave and were surrounded by barbed wire; the dwellers had to obtain a special permit even to approach Lake Prespa (Makartsev et al. [forthcoming]).

Linguistic minority groups (Alb. *pakica gjuhësore*) are those that do not have a kin-state. According to Albanian officials, there is no difference in the treatment of minorities, regardless of whether they constitute a national or a linguistic minority (Advisory 2011, 9). Nevertheless, there is one clear difference that sets minorities apart: they do not receive state-funded education in their own language. The only minority for which the Albanian government takes affirmative action is the Roms, who are defined as a linguistic minority, not a national minority; the government encourages their registration in civil registry offices and supports their enrollment in schools (Third Report 2011, 8).

"Communities" (Alb. *komunitete*) is a vague term that covers smaller groups while excluding them from the legal framework for minorities (Hada 2015). These communities include the Egyptians and Bosniaks (more on this term below). In the following subsection, the minority groups are presented in the same order as here, starting with the national minorities.

2.1 Minorities in Albania

GREEKS (Alb. *grekë*; autonym *Éllines*) live mainly in the southern part of Albania, that is, in Himara,[4] Delvina, Saranda, Gjirokastra, and especially the Dropull area. In nationalist Greek discourse, this region is referred to as Northern Epirus (Gr. Vorios Ipiros). Traditionally, the inhabitants are Orthodox Christians. Albania's Greek community was significantly affected by the opening of the borders in the 1990s, and many of its members left for Greece.[5] Traditionally, the Greek minority settlements are dominated by Greek culture and Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and the communities are closely knit. Every week Television *Gjirokastra* broadcasts a one-hour program in Greek (*Perpatóntas ston tópo mas* or "Walking through our

[4] This list of settlements is by no means exhaustive; however, in the villages listed here, the existence of a significant number of members of a minority is confirmed by our experience from the field.

[5] According to Hada (2015, 65), many villages in the area of Dropull saw the emigration to Greece of 50–70 % of the population. However, Hada does not provide any sources to support this claim.

Land"), while Radio Gjirokastra airs a daily program in Greek. There are three Greek-language newspapers in Albania: *To órama tou néou aióna*, *I foní tis Omónoias*, and *Krataiós lógos.* For more information on the Greek minority, see Tsitselikis and Christopoulos (2003), Nitsiakos (2010), and Brown and Joseph (2013).

MACEDONIANS (Alb. *maqedonas*; autonym *Makedonci*)[6] live in the municipalities of Pustec, Golloborda, Gora,[7] and Devoll (in the village of Vërnik), as well as in larger Albanian cities such as Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, and Korça (see, e.g., Makartsev 2014). Traditionally, the Macedonians are Orthodox Christians. Two cities are especially important for the Macedonian minority – Korça and Bilisht – and have become centers of gravity for various groups of Macedonians: the Prespans, people from the village of Vërnik, and the Aegean Macedonians, who were forced to leave Greece after the fall of the Democratic Army there in 1949 following the Greek civil war.[8] The Macedonians speak various western dialects of the Macedonian language (Vidoeski 1998, 339–352).[9] Standard Macedonian is taught in the schools of the Prespa region. The spoken varieties used include local dialects, standard Macedonian, and regional Macedonian koines (e.g., a Debar regional koine), depending on where the speakers obtained their education. In the cities, a large number of heritage speakers with strong proficiency can be found, even though Albanian becomes the primary language as soon as youngsters start school. Since 1989, many of the members of the community have left for

[6] In the region of Korça, the Macedonians are sometimes called *shule* in Albanian, a term considered derogatory by members of the community.

[7] In the annual report by the office of the people's ombudsman (*Avokati i Popullit*), the Gorans, who in Kosovo form a group of Slavic-speaking Muslims, are mentioned as holding the status of *komunitet* (Raporti 2014, 89 et passim). It seems, however, that, unlike the Gorans in Kosovo, no further information is available about their status in Albania. The annual report is the only source that acknowledges their separate status in Albania, and we suspect that the author of the report uncritically applied the status of the Gorans in Kosovo to the Gorans in Albania. Cf. the statement, "Im Gegensatz zu den Gorani im Kosovo besitzen die albanischen Gorani keinerlei staatlich anerkannte Minderheitenrechte" ["Unlike the Gorani in Kosovo, the Gorani in Albania do not enjoy any minority rights acknowledged by the state"] in Schmidinger (2013, 99).

[8] There is a Macedonian market in Korça called Shulet. At the beginning of the 1990s, the market's emergence was supported by a simplified visa requirement for members of the Macedonian community in Albania, which allowed them to control many trans-border activities in the region between Macedonia and Albania, especially trade.

[9] Yet the migrants from Aegean Macedonia are mostly heritage speakers of various southern Macedonian dialects (Nestorion, Kastoria, Florina, etc.). The dialects of Boboshtica and Vërnik belong to southeastern Macedonian dialects, according to Vidoeski's classification.

Macedonia, which means that some of the traditionally Macedonian regions have very few Macedonians left.[10] Many Albanian villages in the Dibra region are connected with the Macedonian town of Debar by weekly visits to its marketplaces, which means that many of the Albanians are able to communicate in Macedonian. Radio Korça airs a daily program in the Macedonian language. There is also a Macedonian-language magazine called *Ilinden*. The publication of the newspaper *Prespa* was recently closed due to financial problems. A project for broadcasting television programs in Macedonian (on Television Kristal in Korça) was launched in 2010, but did not succeed. Recent studies on the Macedonian minority include Mazniku and Cfarku (2009), Sobolev and Novik (2013); in addition, there are Steinke and Ylli (2008) on Golloborda; Dugušina, Ermolin, and Morozova (2012), Steinke and Ylli (2010), Schmidinger (2013), Pleushku and Pleushku (2014) on Gora; and Steinke and Ylli (2007) on Prespa and Vërnik.[11]

SERBS (Alb. *serbë*; autonym *Srbi*) and MONTENEGRINS (Alb. *malazezë*; autonym *Crnogorci*) are treated as one group by the Albanian state (*minoriteti serbo-malazez*). These peoples inhabit the villages on the southern shore of Lake Shkodra. In the villages of the Vraka area and the surrounding areas, the population is traditionally Orthodox, but Fier and the surrounding villages are inhabited by a group of Slavic Muslim migrants, who left the Sandžak region in Southern Serbia in 1924 (for further details, see Makartsev [forthcoming]).[12] From a dialectological point of view, the Vraka area continues the BCMS (Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian) dialects of the Zeta-Raška region (Okuka 2008, 318). In Fier and the vicinity, migrants from Sandžak use the Novi Pazar-Sjenica dialect. Although in Vraka and its vicinity the village inhabitants still speak dialectal BCMS, in Fier, the third and fourth generations of the migrant community have largely switched to Albanian. They learn Standard Serbian in language courses created by local initiatives, but this is not enough for them to communicate successfully in the language. A recent study of the Serbs and Montenegrins in Vraka and the

[10] Only two families remain in Herbel, which used to host a large community before the fall of the communism; one person remains in Kërçisht i Epërm; in Kërçisht i Sipërm there are no longer any Macedonians, but the local Albanians can speak the Macedonian dialect, which they learned mostly as children (Maxim Makartsev's field data, 2013).

[11] None of the remaining speakers in Boboshtica and Drenova has a Macedonian (or a Bulgarian) identity. See Makartsev 2016 on the identity of Slavic speakers in Boboshtica.

[12] Note, however, that this part of the community was not present in Albania in 1913, having arrived only later.

vicinity is Steinke and Ylli (2012). On the Serbian minority in Fier and its surrounding, see Makartsev (forthcoming).

AROMANIANS (Alb. pl. *arumunë* or *vlleh*; autonym *rrãmãni* or *armãni*)[13] are located in settlements in the areas between Lushnja, Fier, Berat, Vlora, Korça, Përmet, Gjirokastra, Saranda and their surroundings.[14] An important center for the Aromanians is Voskopoja (Arom. Moscopole), today a village, but in the eighteenth century, the second largest city in the Balkans based on the number of inhabitants and boasting its own university and a printing house. Voskopoja was nearly destroyed in 1788 and was abandoned. Today's rise in the Aromanian population is a recent development, which began in the 1990s. The closing of the borders during Enver Hoxha's regime in Albania and the sedenterization of the Aromanians have led to significant changes in the ethnic make-up of several regions of Albania. In the region of Korça, two different processes took place: a large-scale migration of the Slavic population from Boboshtica and Drenova to Korça and other Albanian cities and the sedentarization of the local Aromanians.[15]

There are two, contradictory, nation-wide discourses regarding the Aromanians. The pro-Romanian discourse holds that Aromanians speak a dialect of the Romanian language, whereas the pro-Greek discourse claims that the Aromanians are *vlachófonoi* (or *latinófonoi*) *Éllines* – "Aromanian/Latin-speaking Greeks." There is an Aromanian-language newspaper, *Fratia*,[16] and TV Apollon in Fier broadcasts in Aromanian, yet both activities are on hold at the moment.[17] Further information on Aromanians in Albania as well as a more exhaustive bibliography will be found in Andrei Dumitrescu's article in this volume.

ROMS (Alb. pl. *romë*; Rom. *rroma*; other exonyms include *gabelë* in the north of the country, *arixhinj* in the south, and *kurbatë* in Korça; see Gëdeshi & Miluka 2012). Many Roms used to be nomads and became sedentary only

[13] The exonym *çobanë* (*çobançë* for the language; in Standard Albanian *çoban* means "shepherd") is considered pejorative by some members of the group, although some of our informants used it as an autonym.
[14] See the map in T. Kahl (2009).
[15] Similar processes took place in Northern Greece: after many Macedonians were forced to leave the vicinity of Kastoria at the end of the 1940s, owing to the fall of the Democratic Army, their private estates were used as land for settling Aromanians.
[16] The magazine *Arumunët / Vllehët Albania* published by Valentin Mustaka was closed for financial reasons (Valentin Mustaka, pc.).
[17] The television channel is currently planning to continue.

relatively recently (Hasluck 1938).[18] The Roms traditionally share the religion of their surrounding community, which in Albania means mostly Islam or Orthodox Christianity. Their religious practices sometimes include elements of syncretism. A good recent sociological study of the Roms (and Egyptians; see below) in Albania is by Gëdeshi and Miluka (2012). The Roms in Albania speak various Romani dialects, and they live in several, often closely located, settlements, yet the dialects display relatively little intermixture due to a prevalent endogamous tradition. The distribution of Romani dialects in Albania has not yet received an exhaustive study. TV Kristal in Korça has a bilingual (Albanian and Romani) half-hour television program, *Na njihni, pastaj na paragjykoni!* ("First get to know us and only then judge!"), broadcast every week by a local station and transmitted to several other towns in the region. More information on Roms in Albania can be found in Gëdeshi and Miluka (2012) and Koinova (2000).

EGYPTIANS (also (*h*)*ashkali*; Alb. *egjiptianë*;[19] other terms include *magjypë* in Shkodra, *evgjitë* in Korça and Berat, and *jevgj* in Elbasan; see Gëdeshi & Miluka 2012, 16) live in the bigger Albanian cities such as Shkodra, Berat, Elbasan, and Korça (Hada 2015, 118). In a recent study, Gëdeshi and Miluka (2012, 18) characterized the religion of the Egyptians as syncretic, with a combination of elements of Islam, Orthodox Christianity, and animism. The Egyptians speak Albanian exclusively and are distinguished from the rest of the population by their perceived physical characteristics and their social status, being, along with the Roms, the most marginalized group in Albanian society. Traditionally, Egyptians are blacksmiths and musicians. Earlier in the Balkans, the group was not generally considered separate from the Roms, and only after the war in Kosovo when their suffering and large-scale migration from Kosovo into neighboring countries gained attention did they become known internationally as *Ashkali* (Marushiakova & Popov 2001). The

[18] Gëdeshi & Miluka (2012, 17) give a list of Albanian NGOs that deal with Romani and Egyptian issues. Unfortunately, there is no information about whether the organizations are currently active. These groups include *Amaro Dives*, *Amaro Drom*, *Rromani Baxt*, *Alb Rrom*, *Shoqata e Romëve për Integrim*, *Rromani Kham, Unioni Demokratik i Egjiptianëve*, *Kabaja*, *Gratë Rome*, *Romët e Veriut*, *Zemra e Nënës*, and *Roms Active Albania*. The organization *Disutni Albania* is currently active in the region of Korça.

[19] This group does not speak any language other than Albanian, which is why their name in Albanian is also an autonym. We decided to include this group in our survey because of its special status, even though they cannot be considered to have the status of a linguistic minority. Until recently, Egyptians were (and sometimes still are) considered a distinct group of Roms, and since the latter are a separate linguistic minority, it is important to acknowledge this difference between the groups.

endonym "Egyptians" is based on an ethnogenetic myth, still upheld by the community (cf. the etymology of "Gypsy" and related terms). For more information about the Egyptians, see Gëdeshi and Miluka (2012) and Koinova (2000).

BOSNIAKS (Alb. pl. *boshnjakë*; autonym *Bosanci*) inhabit the village of Borakaj (also known as Borake) near Durrës and its satellite settlement Koxhas, the people having migrated from there to the larger region of Shijak. According to oral tradition, the Bosniaks arrived in 1875 from the region of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In recent decades, the Bosniaks of Borakaj have developed a range of economic activities connected to Highway SH2, the state road between Durrës and Tirana, the village of Borakaj being located only a few hundred meters from the highway. Relations between the Bosniak and the Serbian and Montenegrin communities are contentious, with the name of the Bosnian language and the autonym *bosanci* being in dispute, as is the case for all languages that emerged out of the common Serbo-Croatian standard language of the former Yugoslavia. Various activities in the village of Borakaj are sponsored by a local businessman, who was given the title of honorary consul of Bosnia and Herzegovina. More information on the Bosniaks in Albania can be found in the recent publication by Steinke and Ylli (2012).

2.2 Minority rights and challenges in Albania[20]

Currently, legislation on the status of linguistic and ethnic minorities in Albania is being harmonized within the European framework.[21] The three most important authorities regulating minority issues are the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination (Alb. *Komisioneri për Mbrojtjen nga Diskriminimi*; see Law 10221, Ch. 5, passed on 4 February, 2010); the people's ombudsman (Alb. *Avokati i Popullit*; see Law no. 8454 [4 February1999], amended by Laws no. 8600 [10 April, 2000], no. 9398 [12

[20] Here, we would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Nikolla Gjurgjaj, head of the Macedonian Cultural Organization *Ilinden-Tirana*. During our interview with him, he provided important information on the current status of the minorities and the legal framework that affects them. Here it is possible to give only an outline of the legal situation.

[21] An important milestone was the signing of the "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" (ratified by Law 8496 on 3 June, 1999). According to the Albanian Constitution (Art. 122/2), every international agreement ratified by the parliament becomes part of the national legislative framework. Nevertheless, Albania has not yet adopted the European Charter for regional and minority languages (Enlargement 2015, 60).

May, 2005], and no. 155/2014); and the State Minority Council (Alb. *Komiteti Shtetëror i Minoriteteve*, a consulting body to the Council of Ministers, created on 11 November, 2004 by VKM 127 (*Vendimi i Këshillit të Ministrave* "Decision of the Council of Ministers").

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION in minority languages is based on Article 20.2 of the Albanian Constitution and several legal acts.[22] Yet in practice, organizing classes for minorities is very complicated.[23] There are currently 60 elementary schools offering education in the Greek language on various levels in the districts of Gjirokastra, Saranda, and Përmet (Hada 2015, 66). Eight schools offer education in Macedonian, all in the municipality of Pustec (op. cit., 75). To the best of our knowledge, there are no state-financed schools offering education in Serbian and/or Montenegrin, Bosnian, Aromanian, or Romani. There are three private Albanian–Greek schools: *Arsákeio* in Tirana, *Ómiros* in Korça, and *Ómiros* in Himara.[24] Yet in several places, extracurricular courses in the minority languages have emerged as public initiatives with no state support. For instance, Macedonian is taught in Korça by members of the Macedonian Alliance for European Integration (Alb. *Aleanca e Maqedonasve për Integrim Europian*); Serbian is taught in Rreth Libofsha by a local society, *Jedinstvo*; Bosnian is taught in Borakaj by a local teacher of Albanian with the support of a local Bosniak initiative; and Aromanian is taught in Korça with the support of the Romanian Cultural Center (Maxim Makartsev's field data, 2012–2016). Romani is taught in the *Naim Frashëri* School in Korça (Korça: HALS field data 2015). Information regarding these initiatives is scarce, since the activities are usually not officially registered anywhere and depend solely on volunteers.

Albania's minorities were REPRESENTED POLITICALLY in the latest municipal elections (June, 2015) by the following parties: *Aleanca e Maqedonasve për Integrim Europian* (a Macedonian party, winning a total of 7 mandates); *Minoriteti Etnik Grek për të Ardhmen* (a Greek party, 8

[22] See especially Art. 18.2, no. 10 221 (4 February, 2010) and VKM 396 (22 August, 1994), amended by VKM 502 (5 August, 1996).

[23] See the Instructions of the Ministry of Education and Science: Udhëzimi no. 14 (3 September, 1994). See also laws no. 69 (21 June, 2012), no. 8872 (29 March, 2002), no. 9741 (21 May, 2007), replaced by law no. 9832 (12 November, 2007 and VKM 396 (22 August, 1994). See also "National Strategy for Education 2004–2015," VKM 538 (12 August, 2004).

[24] The schools were established by ministerial decisions VKM 404 (1 July, 1998), VKM 868 (30 September, 2004), and VKM 266 (5 May, 2006), respectively. We cannot be certain whether these schools are included in Hada's statistics.

mandates); *Partia Bashkimi për të Drejtat e Njeriut*[25] (PBDNJ; a Greek party, 16 mandates); and *Aleanca për Barazi e Drejtësi Europiane* (an Aromanian party, 2 mandates).[26] Yet the only representative of any minority party in the parliament after the latest elections of 2013 was PBDNJ, which has one MP.

Exceptionally, during the 2015 elections, the Central Electoral Commission of Albania issued voting instructions in some of the minority languages (800 copies were made in Greek, and 400 in Macedonian, Aromanian, and Romani each; see SEZ 2015, 11). In addition, posters explaining the election process were available in minority languages (1,400 copies in Greek for the Vlora and Gjirokastra districts, 50 in Macedonian for the Korça district, 50 in Aromanian for the Fier district and 50 in Romani for the Tirana district; ibid.). Nevertheless, the Commission of Europe's report on the elections did not regard these means as sufficient for insuring inclusion of the minorities.[27]

NATIONALISM as a political ideology is not widespread in Albania, and political movements based on a nationalist agenda (like *Aleanca Kuq e Zi*) do not receive much support. Recently, there have been several cases of hate crimes against minorities.[28] A serious incident took place in February of 2011 in the form of an arson attack on Romani dwellings inhabited by some 40 families in central Tirana (Advisory 2012, 2). Widespread anti-minority violence also broke out during the electoral campaign in 2013. The attacks included an arson attempt on the office of the Serbian initiative *Jedinstvo* in Fier[29] and an attack on the municipality of Pustec, during which the members of *Kuq e Zi* rode through the streets bearing slogans "This is Albania" and "Get out" and vandalized signs in the town, at the hospital, and at the school

[25] This party is the political successor to *Bashkimi Demokratik i Minoritetit Grek* or *Omonia*, which currently functions as a cultural organization.

[26] Another party with a strong regional identity is *Partia Drejtësi, Integrim dhe Unitet,* which mainly represents the Çams, a group of Muslim Albanians in Southern Albania and South-Western Greece, distinct from the majority population.

[27] "Despite endeavors to provide a legal framework conducive to the inclusion of national and other minorities, their participation in the electoral process has not been fully achieved, mainly because of linguistic problems, illiteracy and non-accessibility of polling stations" (COE 2015).

[28] The official representatives of some minorities (Aromanian, Greek, Macedonian) have expressed to us in private conversations the view that hate crimes targeting the members of their minorites are not an issue. However, discrimination against Roms and Egyptians is still a concern, noted both by representatives of these minorities and by official EU documents (see further).

[29] Ekrem Dulević, pc.

with inscriptions in Macedonian.[30] Yet it is important to note that *Kuq e Zi* received only 0.59 percent of the total vote in the parliamentary elections of 2013. There have also been reports of discrimination against Roms and Egyptians in everyday life,[31] although in 2012 Albania was said to have shown significant progress in this regard (Advisory 2012).

3 Greece

The Greek state does not collect information on the ethnicity or mother tongues of its population, and therefore there are only estimates of the actual number of the various minorities in Greece. The estimates vary, depending on whether they are based on language or ethnicity, and all numbers must be regarded with caution. The last census to record information on the population's mother tongue was conducted in 1951. At that time, according to the census, there were 7,297,878 Greek speakers (95.6 % of the total population), 179,895 Turkish speakers (2.4 %), 41,017 Slavic speakers (0.5 %), 39,885 Vlach speakers (0.5 %), and 22,736 Albanian speakers (0.3 %) (Clogg 2002, xi).

A report by the Greek Helsinki Monitor in the year 1999 (HM 1999) states the following about minorities in Greece:

Local authorities have acknowledged the presence of some 100,000 "Slavophones," while researchers have given twice as high an estimate (200,000). However, those with a Macedonian national identity can be estimated between 10,000–30,000. [...] The Greek state has acknowledged the presence of some 300,000 Roms (independent estimates put them at 350,000), while researchers estimate the number of those who grew up in Arvanite or Vlach families up to as many as 200,000[32] for each group. [Edited for grammatical errors.]

According to the official estimate, in 1991 there were 98,000 Muslims in Thrace. Fifty percent of them were "of Turkish origin," thirty-five percent were "Pomaks," and fifteen percent were "Roms" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1999). The total number of the Romani population depends on estimates ranging from 180,000 to 365,000 people. Bakker and Rooker (2001, 21) estimate that there are 160,000 speakers of the Romani language in

[30] Nikola Gjurgjaj, pc.
[31] Arben Kostrui, pc.
[32] Note, however, that Winnifrith (2002, 113) estimates that there are 20,000 Vlachs in Greece.

Greece. According to the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR 2016), there are 20,000–35,000 Armenians in Greece.[33]

3.1 Minorities in Greece

MACEDONIANS (Gr. *Slavomakedónes*[34]), one of the two large Slavic groups in Greece, live mostly in the northern part of the country. The main towns for the Slavic-speaking population with Macedonian identity are Kastoria (Mac. *Kostur*), Florina (*Lerin*), Nestorion (*Nestram*), and Edessa (*Voden*). Although these towns appear to be completely monolingual in Greek, even occasional encounters with the locals show that many speak Slavic. The issue of identity is complicated, since many people have only a limited command of Macedonian, yet they take part in Macedonian cultural and political activities in the region. At the same time, there are people for whom the Slavic dialects are their first languages, yet hold to a Greek identity, avoiding any association with the *Skopianoí*, "people of Skopje," a term often used in Greece for Macedonians.[35] There are also members of other groups (Greeks, Greeks with Pontic roots, Aromanians, and so on) who have learned Macedonian as children, having heard the language on their neighborhood streets. The name for the Republic of Macedonia in everyday communication in the Macedonian dialects of Northern Greece is *Republikata*, "The Republic" (Florina, Kastoria: HALS field data 2015). This use is connected to the issue of names (taken up below in this section).

Many settlements in the Florina region are connected through means of trade to the Macedonian town of Bitola across the border. There are some Macedonian cultural associations in Greece, but these have difficulty being officially recognized by the Greek authorities (see below). There is also an underground Macedonian church in Greece (YLE, 27 October 2014). The Macedonian political party Rainbow publishes a Macedonian-language monthly newspaper, *New Dawn* (Mac. *Nova Zora*). For more data and a bibliography on the various Slavic groups in Greece, see Christian Voß (2013).

[33] Nevertheless, the Armenians are not discussed further here, since the overwhelming majority arrived in Greece only after the Armenian genocide between 1915–1923.

[34] The term is also found in the literature in English. Many Macedonians consider it offensive; cf. a narrative recorded in Florina: "I could easily be offended when they would say to me, 'You are Slavomacedonian.' But later I realized that it would mean 'Glorious Macedonians,' *doxasménoi Makedónoi*, and I accepted it. Now I always explain to them what they really mean when they say 'Slavomacedonian'" (Florina: HALS field data 2015, male, born 1946). Several similar accounts were recorded during the field work.

[35] Some Macedonians consider the term derogatory.

POMAKS (Gr. *Pomákoi*; Bulg. *pomaci* and *bălgari-mohamedani*; Tr. *Pomaklar*, and various autonyms depending on the dialect and identity, among them *pomaci*, *ahrjane*) is a label used to denote the Slavic-speaking Muslim population of Western Thrace[36] (mainly in the vicinity of Xanthi [Tr. İskeçe, Slav. Skeča], Komotini [Tr. Gümülcine, Bg. Gjumjurdžina], Didymoteicho [Tr. Dimetoka, Slav. Dimotika]). Education is available in Greek and in Turkish. Knowledge of Turkish opens up many job opportunities and also means inclusion in the Western Thracian community, which is why many Pomaks embrace the Turkish language and Turkish identity. There is also a community in Turkey made up of descendants of Pomaks who have migrated there, some of whom still retain connections with relatives in Western Thrace. There have been attempts in Greece to codify the Pomak language using the Greek alphabet and to teach Pomak in the schools of the region, but these attempts have been unsuccessful. A Pomak newspaper, *Zagálisa* (published since 1997, with issues up to 2012 accessible online), is mainly in Greek, with occasional articles in a Pomak linguistic variety and Turkish. There is also a television channel (*Kanáli 6 – Anatolikí Makedonía – Thráki*) that broadcasts a news program in Pomak three times a day. For more literature on the Pomaks, see Adamou (2010, 2012), Kanevska-Nikolova (2014), Mitrinov (2014), Steinke and Voß (2007), and Voß (2013).

The TURKISH (Gr. *Toúrkoi*; autonym *Türkler*) minority is concentrated in Western Thrace, where the people enjoy minority rights as Muslims, guaranteed by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 (Papademetriou 2012, 2). There is also a small Turkish minority on the Dodecanese Islands. The recognition of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace has the benefit of allowing the Turkish language in education (Papademetriou 2012, 34–45). There are several Turkish cultural associations, but they have difficulty being officially recognized if their names contain the ethnonym "Turkish." For example, since the year 1983, the Xanthi Turkish Union, one of the most important of these associations, has not had official status, despite several attempts to obtain it (OSCE 2012). There are four newspapers, three monthly magazines, and four radio stations in the Turkish language (WTMUGA 2013, 1). There is also education in Turkish in schools. According to the U.S. "Country Report on Human Rights Practices" of 2001 (CRHRP 2001), 8,000 children were receiving education in Turkish, of whom 700 pupils attended Turkish-

[36] The official opinion of the Bulgarian dialectologists is that the Slavic varieties spoken by Muslims in the region are Bulgarian dialects (see Kanevska-Nikolova 2014 and Mitrinov 2014, including bibliography).

language secondary schools, while 1,300 Muslim pupils attended Greek-language secondary schools. For further information on the Turks in Greece, see Cin 2009 and Kaurinkoski 2012.

The AROMANIANS (Gr. *Vláchoi, Armánoi, vlachófonoi* (or *latinófonoi*) *Éllines*) reside in several regions of Greece. The largest concentration is found in the area around the Pindus Mountains (Vlachochoria or the country of Vlachs), with the main center being Metsovo (Arom. Aminciu). Other areas with Aromanian villages are the lowlands along the Axios (Mac. Vardar) and Aliakmon Rivers. One group of villages is found in Thessaly near the Pineios river, and another a group of villages in the Serres area. The coastal area in the vicinity of Igoumenitsa hosts 6 villages along the Acheloos River in the Aetolia-Acarnania region (Kahl 2009). As mentioned, many Aromanians in Greece identify themselves primarily as Greeks and only secondarily as Aromanians (Winnifrith 2002, 113).

The MEGLENO-ROMANIANS (Gr. *Vláchoi, Moglenítes*, *vlachófonoi* (or *latinófonoi*) *Éllines;* autonym *Vlaš*) populate Moglena, the historical region on the border between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia. Both the Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians are Orthodox Christians (the Muslim Megleno-Romanians were sent to Turkey during the population exchange in the 1920s; Friedman 2001, 28). There are no political organizations representing the Aromanians or Megleno-Romanians, but there are several cultural associations, such as the Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of the Vlachs (Gr. *Panellínia Omospondía Politistikón Syllógon Vláchon*). Basic education is not available in the Aromanian or Megleno-Romanian languages, although some private initiatives for teaching the language have emerged. For more information on Aromanians in Greece and for bibliography, see Andrei Dumitrescu's article in this volume (see also Kahl 2009 and on Megleno-Romanians Kahl 2014).

The ALBANIANS of Greece (Gr. *Alvanoí*) consist of three groups that arrived in several waves of immigration. The most recent of these groups emigrated only after the collapse of socialism in Albania. The other two groups are the Arvanites (Gr. *Arvanítes*; autonym *arbëreshë, arbërorë*) and the Cham Albanians (Gr. *Tsamídes*; Alb. *çamë*). The Arvanites speak Albanian Tosk dialects, with further subvarieties that differ significantly from each other (in Greek, all varieties are covered by the term *Arvanítika*). Arvanitika can be heard occasionally on the radio in the singing of folk songs (GHM 1995). In several Albanian villages in Epirus (e.g., Plikati in the Ioannina district), the people of Albanian origin are sometimes called

Arvanites, although there is an essential difference between them and the Arvanites of central and southern Greece. The Arvanitika-speaking villages form language island(s), as they are not connected geographically to the main Albanian-speaking area, whereas the villages in Epirus border Albanian-speaking territory and thus share more linguistic traits of the type that emerged later in the more extensive Tosk-inhabited territory.

The other Albanian minority group, the Cham Albanians, live in a part of Epirus that is adjacent to southern Albania, called in Albanian Çamëria. Epirus became part of Greece only after the First Balkan War during the years 1912–1913. Because of their real or suspected allegiance to the occupying Axis powers, many Cham Albanians fled or were expelled to Albania toward the end of World War II, with atrocities committed against civilians allegedly by both parties. Although the Cham Albanians constitute a distinctive regional ethnoliguistic minority, no trustworthy statistics can be found on their number and or on the other Albanian groups in Greece. Nor are there public schools in Greece that offer education in Albanian (Xhaferi, Xhaferi, & Rredhi 2014, 68). For further details on the Albanians in Greece, see Elsie and Destani (2012).

The ARMENIANS (Gr. *Arménoi*; autonym *hajér*) form a small minority in Greece. Armenians migrated to Greece over the course of many centuries (Hassiotis 2002, 94–95), including in the wake of their persecution in Ottoman Turkey in 1915, a migration which culminated in the Armenian Genocide. There are several Armenian schools in various cities and towns in Greece, maintained by such organizations as the philanthropic Armenian Blue Cross (Gr. *Armenikós Kyanoús Stavrós*; Armenian Blue Cross 2016). There are twelve Armenian churches in Greece (Badalyan 2010), and the Armenian community publishes its own newspaper, *Azat Or*. For more information on the Armenians in Greece, see Schwalgin (2004).

The ROMS (Gr. *Romá*) live in almost all parts of Greece. A notable Romani community, consisting of emigrants from Turkey, is found in Agia Varvara, a suburb of Athens (Matras 2004, 60). Ninety-five percent of Roms in Greece are believed to speak the Romani language (Liégeois 2007, 50), but according to Ziomas, Bouzas, and Spyropoulou (2011, 2), Romani organizations tend to view the Roms as a social group rather than an ethnic minority. A Romani-Greek dictionary has been published with private funding (Bakker & Rooker 2001, 21).

3.2 Minority rights and challenges in Greece

The only minority officially and fully recognized in Greece is the Muslim minority of Western Thrace, their rights guaranteed by the Peace Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which provides the group with linguistic and religious rights. Elementary and secondary education is available partly in the Turkish language, and there is a 0.5 percent quota in universities for members of the Muslim minority (Papademetriou 2012, 34–45; OSCE 2008, 4).

Greek LEGISLATION on minorities (including linguistic minorities) and its implementation are objects of constant criticism from human rights monitors. Although Article 5 of the Greek Constitution (2008) states, "All persons living within the Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life, honour and liberty irrespective of nationality, race, or language, and of religious or political beliefs," the terms *Éllinas* ("Greek") and *politís* ("citizen") are used synonymously in the text, thereby equating citizenship with Greek ethnicity. Greece has ratified several international agreements meant to provide rights to ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities.[37] Many court cases involving the rights of the ethnic minorities have been brought to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).[38] In its annual report on hate crimes in Greece, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR 2014) mentioned several cases of hate crimes toward the Turks of Thrace, often motivated by a bias against Muslims. According to the report, in recent years there have been no cases of hate crimes against Macedonians in Greece (see below, however, for an incident regarding the promotion of a Greek-Macedonian dictionary in Athens in 2009). There also continue to be reports of racist attacks and hate speech against Roms (Covenant 2015).

There are no governmental organizations protecting the minorities, but there are NGOs that deal with minority issues, such as the Greek Helsinki Monitor and the Minority Rights Group–Greece. The UN Human Rights Committee in its annual report on human rights in Greece expresses its concern that there are insufficient guarantees for the equal and effective

[37] However, the European Charter for Regional and Minority languages has still not been signed by Greece.

[38] Consider, for instance, Sidiropoulos and Others vs. Greece in 1998 on the name of the non-profit association "Home of Macedonian Civilization." Initially, Greece refused to register the association officially, but the ECHR decided in favor of the applicants (ECHR 26695/95, 10 July, 1998). Yet the registration was still denied by a court in Florina, sparking a further international court case against the Greek state. ECHR concluded that there had been a violation of the complainant's right to register an association (ECHR 1295/10, 9 July 2015).

enjoyment of one's culture, profession and practice of one's religion and use of one's language by all persons, including those claiming to belong to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. The Committee also expresses concern about the lack of statistical data demonstrating the ethnic and cultural composition of the State party and the use of mother tongues and languages that are commonly spoken (Covenant 2015).

In POLITICS, the situation of minorities is not readily discernible. Some members of the Greek Parliament from Western Thrace have a Muslim background. The Macedonian party, Rainbow, is part of the European Free Alliance. The so-called Friendship, Equality, and Peace Party (Tr. *Dostluk Eşitlik Barış Partisi*; Gr. *Kómma Isótitas, Irínis kai Filías*) represents the interests of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace. Neither of these parties has representatives in the Greek parliament.

The existence of a Macedonian minority is categorically denied by the Greek state. Nor does the state recognize the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name, thereby underlining the existence of a separate regional Greek identity in relation to the geographical area of Macedonia. Greek officials feel that is necessary to repeat from time to time their stance on the non-existence of a Macedonian minority within Greece's borders:

> [W]e totally disagree with the remarks made in the report and its recommendations that Greece promotes a singular national identity and citizens who wish to freely express their ethnic identities face government blockages and in some instances, intimidation from other individuals or groups. These remarks are based on information emanating from a handful of Slav-oriented individuals living in Greece who in the past few years, particularly after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, have embarked on an unprecedented political propaganda to discredit Greece for denying to recognize a "Macedonian" national (or linguistic) minority in the region of Greek Macedonia. Their real intention is to promote the existence of a "Macedonian" identity in Greece, to foster irredentism stemming from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which through the exclusive use of the "Macedonian" name as a state appellation, tries to appropriate for itself everything and anything derived from or pertaining to the entire geographic region of Macedonia, including Greek Macedonia. (Comments 2009, 3).

These attitudes have led to antipathy to the Rainbow party. Its representatives report hostility toward them because of the party's desire to have the Macedonian minority recognized. Tensions between the Greek state and the Macedonian minority in Greece have increased since the break-up of Yugoslavia and the creation of the Republic of Macedonia. (HALS field data 2015.)

The discrimination against Roms has led to much criticism, mainly having to do with issues of education and housing (Papademetriou 2012, 68). Furthermore, many Roms in Greece do not have citizenship or are not registered in local municipalities (Ziomas, Bouzas, & Spyropoulou 2011, 2; see also the recent report in Covenant 2015, 3).

Another worrying development regarding the minorities in Greece is the rise of the political far-right in the country. The political party Golden Dawn (Gr. *Chrisí Avgí*), which received 18 seats out of 300 in the Greek parliament after the elections in September 2015, has been connected to several violent, xenophobic attacks. In addition, there have been several minor xenophobic and anti-minority incidents, such as the disruption of the unveiling of a Greek-Macedonian dictionary in 2009 in Athens (*Skai News*, 3 June 2009). Golden Dawn MEPs also disrupted a conference in the European Parliament in March, 2016 addressing the issues of freedom of association in Greece and the Turkish minority in Western Thrace (FUEN, 7 March, 2016).

4 Macedonia

The population of the Republic of Macedonia is around two million. According to the most recent official census, conducted in 2002, 65.1 percent of the population identified themselves as Macedonians, 25.1 percent as Albanians, and 3.8 percent as Turks. (Census 2002.) In addition, 2.6 percent declared themselves Roms, 0.5 percent as Aromanians, 1.7 percent as Serbs, and 0.8 percent as Bosniaks (Census 2002, 34). The languages spoken in Macedonia include Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Romani, Aromanian, Serbian, and Bosnian. The official language of the country is Macedonian, but other languages (Albanian, Turkish, Aromanian, Romani, Bosnian, and Serbian) have been given limited official status (Bliznakovski 2014).

The foundations for the current minority policies in the Republic of Macedonia were laid following the insurgency in 2001, an armed conflict in the northwestern parts of the country between government forces and ethnic Albanian rebels. After significant pressure from the international community, the conflict ended with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement by the main Macedonian and Albanian political parties. Among other things, the Ohrid Framework Agreement envisioned mechanisms that would ensure the full participation of the national minorities on issues concerning their cultural, educational, and language rights and make provisions for their education and the official use of their languages. One of the most important changes in regard to minorities after 2001 was a new preamble to the Constitution. The

minority nations explicitly mentioned in the preamble are Albanian, Turkish, Aromanian, Serbian, Romani, and Bosniak. (Brunnbauer 2002).

Another constitutional amendment stemming from the Ohrid Framework Agreement elevated Albanian to an official language of the Macedonian state. Along with the Macedonian language, any other tongue spoken by more than 20 percent of the country's population was considered official (op. cit., 5). However, the use of a co-official language was still limited to 1) citizens' personal documents, 2) communications with state authorities in communities where the speakers of the language comprise more than 20 percent of the population, 3) certain state organs defined in other parts of the legislation, and 4) municipalities where the speakers of the language comprise more than 20 percent of the population (Petruševska 2014b, 66). On road signs and in other public contexts, a co-official language could never be used exclusively, but only in addition to Macedonian and had to be written in the Macedonian Cyrillic alphabet (see, e.g., Gruevska Madžoska 2012, 229–230). Municipalities were given the authority to decide the official status of other languages spoken in their communities not surpassing the 20 percent threshold. These changes to the legislation resulted in Albanian becoming an official language together with Macedonian in 27 municipalities; along with Macedonian, Turkish became official in 8 municipalities, Serbian in 3, Romani in 2, Bosnian in 1, and Aromanian in 1 (Bliznakovski 2014, 25).

4.1 Minorities in Macedonia

ALBANIANS (Mac. *Albanci*) are the largest minority in Macedonia. According to the census of 2002, 509,083 individuals stated that they spoke Albanian as a mother tongue, a number constituting 25 percent of the country's total population. This number is a point of disagreement between the Macedonian and Albanian political parties, whose figures range from less than 20 percent (Macedonian estimates) to more than 30 percent (Albanian estimates) of the total population. The Albanian community is mostly concentrated in the western and northwestern regions of the country, mainly in the municipalities bordering Albania and Kosovo. In seven of the municipalities (Želino and Saraj within the City of Skopje, Vrapčište, Tearce, Aračinovo, Bogovinje, and Lipkovo), Albanians make up over 75 percent of the population; in another eight cities (the Čair district within the City of Skopje, plus Kičevo, Struga, Debar, Brvenica, Gostivar, Studeničani, and Tetovo), Albanians account for between 50 and 75 percent of the people. In eight further municipalities (Šuto Orizari and Butel within the City of Skopje, Dolneni, Kumanovo, Zelenikovo,

Sopište, Čaška, and Jegunovce), the proportion of the Albanian population is between 25 and 50 percent, and in five other municipalities (Kruševo, Petrovec, Čučer Sandevo, Gazi Baba, Mavrovo and Rostuše) it is between 15 and 25 percent. (Adresar 2010.) Most of the Albanians in Macedonia practice Islam. There is also a small community of Catholic Albanians.[39]

Most of the native dialects of the Macedonian Albanians belong to the Gheg dialectal zone. Several villages in the southwest of the country belong, however, to the Tosk dialectal zone. In Albanian schools (mainly Tosk-based) standard Albanian is taught; in official communication standard Albanian is used, with a significant number of dialectal features, sometimes under influence from the Prishtina Gheg koine. Albanian is a co-official language of the country along with Macedonian, albeit not on equal footing. As described in more detail above, the official status of Albanian is limited, both in terms of the territory and of the institutions in which it is considered official. State education in the Albanian language is provided at all levels, from primary to tertiary education. Macedonian national television broadcasts programs in Albanian. In addition, numerous nationwide and regional private television stations and newspapers address the Albanian-speaking public.[40] Albanian political parties have regularly participated in all governments of the country since its independence. However, the possible escalation of ethnic tensions is a regular topic in public discourse, and whenever a related issue becomes acute, it sparks public action under nationalist mottos.[41]

The opening of institutions of higher education with Albanian as the language of instruction (the private trilingual University of South East Europe in 2000 and the State University of Tetovo in 2004) was a significant development for the Albanian minority. Previously, Albanians in Macedonia who wished to obtain a university degree in their own language, had largely pursued studies in Prishtina, Kosovo, and less often, in Albania (Ortakovski

[39] There used to be a group of Orthodox Albanians in the Debar Reka region, but it seems to have disappeared. Several people have publicly claimed to be descendants of this group and have Orthodox Albanian identity.

[40] One of the television stations, *Alsat-M*, is a special case; it is to a large extent bilingual. If the program is in Albanian, it has Macedonian subtitles, and vice versa; the channel also organizes talk shows with both Albanian and Macedonian participants with simultaneous translation in the studio and subtitles during the broadcast.

[41] A recent example is the struggle over emblems: a monument with a two-headed eagle, the national symbol of the Albanians, was erected in Topansko pole, a neighborhood in the municipality of Çair, Skopje, in February, 2016. In reaction, an attempt was made to erect a huge Orthodox cross nearby as a symbol of Macedonian identity. Both actions led to violent clashes among the local populations (see, e.g., B92 4 March 2016).

2001; Deskoska-Treneska & Spasov 2012; Bliznakovski 2013). As a result of the new institutions, the number of Albanian university students in Macedonia increased; although in 1992–1993 Albanians represented only 3.4 percent of the total student population, by 2004–2005, had reached 15.5 percent (Atanasovski 2008, 258).

The Albanian community of Macedonia has strong ties with Prishtina, which in Yugoslav times was a center for higher education for several generations of Macedonian Albanians. Literature in the Albanian language was largely published in Prishtina, from where it spread to the other Albanian-speaking areas (parts of Montenegro, Preševo, Macedonia, and other, smaller regions) of Socialist Yugoslavia. Although the circulation of literature is more difficult today with the emergence of the new borders, many Kosovo radio and television channels as well as newspapers are available in Macedonia. The audience for Albanian media that originate in the Republic of Albania is much smaller, and newspapers from Albania are usually available only through the Internet, but not in print. Yet contemporary Albanian popular music from all countries is available everywhere in the region, encouraging some scholars to speak about an "Albanosphere" as an analogy to the "Yugosphere" (see below; on "Yugosphere," see Božović & Pierżyńska in this volume).[42] More on the current status of the Albanian language in the Republic of Macedonia as well as on the Albanian minority can be found in Iseni (2013, with bibliography) and Markov (2015).

ROMS and EGYPTIANS have been able to identify themselves as such for a relatively short time. Until recently, Roms (Mac. *Romi*) and Egyptians (Mac. *Ǵupci*) were both called Gypsies (Mac. *Cigani*), and Egyptians in particular chose various apellations in the censuses (Toskari, Yugoslavs, Muslims, etc.; see Marushiakova & Popov 2001 for further details). In the census of 2002, 53,879 individuals or 2.66 percent of the total population of the country claimed Romani nationality (Census 2002). Despite their recognition as a minority since Socialist times, many people are unwilling to identify themselves as Roms because of the continuing stigma, encapsulated in the pejorative term *Cigan* ("Gypsy") by which they were and are still widely known. Most of the Roms in Macedonia are Muslim (Trix 2013, 202).

There are three main Romani dialects in Macedonia: Arli, Džambaz, and Burgudži. The most widespread is Arli, which is spoken mainly in Skopje, Štip, Kocani, and Kumanovo. An estimated 80 percent of Macedonian Roms speak Romani as their mother tongue with the remainder speaking

[42] Armanda Hysa, pc.

Macedonian, Albanian, or Turkish as their mother tongue (Friedman 1999). However, there is great dialectal diversity of Romani in Macedonia, and communities that speak different dialects sometimes exist side-by-side in the same neighborhoods. The majority of Egyptians in Macedonia speak Albanian as their mother tongue (yet some of them speak only Macedonian, e.g., the Egyptians of Kičevo; see Marushiakova & Popov 2001, 471).

There are numerous associations and parties representing the Romani minority in Macedonia, among them the Union of the Roms in Macedonia (with one representative in the current parliament), the Party for Unity of the Roms, the Party for Complete Emancipation of the Roms of Macedonia (PSERM), the Alliance of the Roms in Macedonia, and the Cultural Association of the Roms (the mayor of Šuto Orizari comes from this party). Egyptians have several associations: the Union of Balkan Egyptians in Macedonia, the Association for the Defence of the Cultural Identity of the Egyptians "Izida 41/21," and the Coalition of Egyptians.

The Romani language was introduced as a subject in primary schools in the 1993–1994 academic year, and the first primer was published in 1996. Today, Romani is a co-official language with Macedonian in the municipalities of Šuto Orizari, and Kumanovo. In addition to the state-sponsored Macedonian Radio and Macedonian Television, two private television stations broadcast in Romani: BTR Nacional (since 1993) and TV Šutel (since 1994). A first attempt at a Romani-language newspaper took place in 1993 (the bilingual Macedonian and Romani *Romani Sumnal*). Since 1997, the municipality of Šuto Orizari has published its own newspaper in Romani. The periodicals *Romana* (for women), *Čivili* (for children), and *Vilo* (for teenagers) were discontinued in 2008 (see Trix 2013, 203). For further information on the Roms and Egyptians of Macedonia, see Friedman (1999), Marushiakova and Popov (2001) and Trix (2013).

TURKS (Mac. *Turci*) made up 3.9 percent of the population in Macedonia according to the most recent census (Census 2002). Their standard language is Turkish, and traditionally, they are Muslim. They are mostly urbanized, with significant groups of Turks found in Gostivar, Skopje, Struga, and Resen. "Turkish" is not always an ethnic or a linguistic label, but is sometimes used by Macedonian Muslims as well (Ohrid: HALS field data 2015).[43]

[43] The Macedonian Muslims are not included as a separate ethnic minority in this analysis; the Macedonian state regards them as Macedonians of Muslim faith. The situation is, however, far from simple. There have been serious attempts among some members of the community to gain recognition as a nationality under the name Torbeši, separate from the majority Macedonians (see, e.g., Ajradinoski 2011 and the Introduction to this volume).

Turkish is an official language in eight municipalities in Macedonia: Centar Župa, Plasnica, Mavrovo, Rostuše, Vrapčište, Dolneni, Gostivar, Studeničani, and Čair (Bliznakovski 2014, 25). On the dialectal level, so-called Western Rumelian Turkish differs clearly from the Yuruk dialects spoken in about 65 villages in Southeastern Macedonia (Friedman 2002).

There is a Turkish language newspaper, *Yeni Balkan*, although it is distributed only in Skopje (Trix 2013, 198). There is also a Turkish theater, successor to the Minority Theater, established as early as in 1949 (op. cit., 199). There are also several parties, among them *Türk Demokratik Partisi* the "Democratic Party of Turks" (aligned with the major VMRO-DPMNE party, it has one representative in the current parliament), *Türk Hareket Partisi*, the "Party of Movement of Turks in Macedonia," (one representative in the current parliament), and *Türk Milli Birlik Hareketi* the "Movement for Turkish National Union." Only one mosque in Skopje has sermons in Turkish, although in Gostivar there are several (op. cit., 197). There are also primary and secondary schools with education in Turkish. An important educational institution is the Tefeyyüz School in Skopje, along with the Yahya Kemal network of colleges and primary schools.

The strengthening of Turkey as an important regional power has led to growing economic ties with Macedonia: regularly operated direct flights to Istanbul connect Skopje to the most important cities in the world, and a surge in Turkish banking has poured into the country. The increasingly prominent role of Turkey in the Balkans can also have implications for personal ethnic identity: several interviewees in Struga during the HALS field trip in June 2015 reported a tendency of ethnic Turks (as well as Macedonian Muslims and Albanians) to prefer Turkish banks for the simple reason that they are Turkish (Struga: HALS field data 2015). For further information on the Turks of Macedonia, see Trix (2013).

AROMANIANS and MEGLENO-ROMANIANS are Balkan Romance-speaking groups in Macedonia. The data from the 2002 census do not differentiate between these two groups, but use the label *Vlasi* (Vlachs) for both: a total of 9,695 or 0.47 percent of the population (of which 6,884 declared Vlach as their mother tongue). Yet the linguistic varieties of these two groups clearly differ, as do the autonyms (*armãn* or *rãmãn* for Aromanians, *vla* for Megleno-Romanians) and the regions the people inhabit (Aromanians are mostly found in urban centers, such as Štip, Skopje, Kruševo, and Struga, whereas the Megleno-Romanians inhabit villages around Gevgelija). The question remains: to what extent do the Megleno-Romanians possess an ethnic identity

separate from the Aromanians? To our knowledge, there are no dedicated media outlets for the Megleno-Romanians. Nor is Megleno-Romanian taught in schools.

There are, however, Aromanian classes in public schools. In Kruševo at the beginning of August, a seminar in the Aromanian language and culture takes place annually. Courses in the Aromanian language are available at the Evrobalkan University in Skopje. Aromanian is even an official language in one Macedonian municipality (Kruševo). The Aromanian parties are the Democratic Union of Vlachs from Macedonia and the Party of Vlachs from Macedonia (with one representative in the parliament). In addition to the broadcasts in Aromanian (Mac. *vlaški*) on Macedonian national radio and television (MRT 2, MRA 3), a program in Aromanian is aired on Super Radio in the Ohrid region.

It is worth pointing out that, although the number of Aromanians in Macedonia is smaller than in the neighboring countries, in Macedonia they occupy "a unique position to engage in identity-preserving language planning" and are officially recognized on the state level (Friedman 2001, 44). Frances Trix (2013, 209) observes that Aromanians have the lowest unemployment rate of any ethnic group in the Republic of Macedonia. For further information on the Aromanians in Macedonia, see Friedman (2001), Trix (2013), and Šatava (2013).

SERBS (Mac. *Srbi*) and BOSNIAKS (Mac. *Bošnjaci*) are both Slavic-speaking groups in Macedonia. The groups are scattered throughout the country, most of them living in urban centers. According to the 2002 census, there are 35,939 Serbs (of whom 24,773 declared Serbian as their mother tongue) and 17,018 Bosniaks (8,560 declared they spoke *bošnjački* "Bosniak"). Three municipalities, Čučer-Sadevo, Staro Nagoričane, and Kumanovo, have Serbian as one of their official languages. One municipality, Dolneni, uses Bosnian (Bliznakovski 2014, 25).

The relationships among the Serbian, Bosnian, and Macedonian languages reflect Macedonia's recent Yugoslav past, when the single name, Serbo-Croatian, was used. After 1991, this pluricentric language was separated into standard Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian (for further information, see Božović & Pierzynska in this volume). Serbo-Croatian had been the lingua franca for the whole territory of Yugoslavia; it heavily influenced standard Macedonian, especially the colloquial varieties in Skopje and Ohrid. The autonyms for the Bosnian language and the Bosniak ethnic

group (*bošnjački* vs. *bosanski*, *Bošnjaci* vs. *Bosanci*, etc.) reflect the ongoing debate in Bosnia over the name of their language and ethnicity.[44]

Bosniaks are traditionally Muslim, and Serbs are traditionally Orthodox. The Serbian Orthodox Christians in Macedonia are part of a political struggle between the Macedonian Orthodox Church (Ohrid Archbishopric) and the Serbian Orthodox Church, which does not recognize the autocephalic status (independence) of the former. The Serbian position is supported by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which considers canonical only the churches under the Autonomous Ohrid Archbishopric (not to be confused with the Ohrid Archbishopric) belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church. There are several Serbian and Bosniak parties: the Serbian Progressive Party in Macedonia and the Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia (with one representative in the current parliament), the Democratic League of Bosniaks in the Republic of Macedonia, and the Party of Democratic Action of Macedonia (a Bosniak party, with one representative in the current parliament).[45]

Macedonia can be still considered part of the "Yugosphere" (Judah 2009): Serbian and Croatian (and to a lesser extent, Bosnian) printed media are readily accessible in the country; the audience for radio and television from Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia continues to be large, as it does for the music and film industries of these countries (for further details, see Božović & Pierzynska in this volume). Yet there are also local programs in Serbian and Bosnian on Macedonian national television (MRT 2) and Macedonian national radio (MRA 3). Education in Serbian is offered in three elementary schools in Macedonia: in Kučevište, Tabanovce, and Staro Nagoričani. However, there are no secondary public schools with education in Serbian, a situation that has persisted since the mid-1980s (Obrazovanje 2016).[46] There is no education in Bosnian in public schools in Macedonia.[47] For further information on Serbs and Bosniaks in Macedonia, see Trix (2013).

[44] The name "Bosniaks" is also sometimes used as an ethnic label by Macedonian Muslims (together with *Muslimani*, *Torbeši*, and *Turci*).

[45] See also the list of Serbian cultural organizations and initiatives in Macedonia on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia (http://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/ ; see Klubovi 2016). There are also Bosnian initiatives and organizations: *Edu Nisa*, Bosnian Cultural Unity, the Organization of Citizens *Mekteb*," the Organisation for Culture, Education and Sustainable Development *Divan*, the Association of Bosniaks *Šadrvan*, and the Association of Citizens "The Voice of Orizari."

[46] The data concern the years 2014 and 2015.

[47] On 24 April 2010, the Ministry of Science and Education of Macedonia initiated an experiment in teaching in Bosnian (*bosanski*). On 30 November 2015, MP Avdija Pepiќ

4.2 Minority rights and challenges in Macedonia

The Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001 and the resulting constitutional and legal provisions successfully managed to move the Macedonian-Albanian conflict from the battlefield back to the arena of political debate. Yet certain provisions in the Agreement could be used (or misused) to accomplish either of two conflicting goals: the integration of society vs. social disintegration along ethnic lines (Atanasovski 2008, 252). The Macedonians fear that the Agreement may be misused for further division of society along ethnic lines, potentially leading to dissolution of Macedonian cultural identity. The Albanians, on the other hand, perceive the Agreement as a realization of their legitimate right to participate fully in the political, economic, and cultural life of the country on an equal footing with their Macedonian fellow citizens (Petruševska 2014a, 116–201). In practice, the Agreement has largely failed to contribute to building interethnic trust or to prevent the further ethnic fragmentation of all aspects of society (Mladenovski 2011). Furthermore, interethnic relations still remain a powerful means in the hands of Macedonian and Albanian politicians to mobilize voters (Mladenovski 2011, 26), as has been the case in almost all elections since 2001.

The changes in the Macedonian constitution and the laws regarding the official use of languages, particularly in the domain of education, has had a positive impact on access to education in the mother tongue for all national minorities in the country. The significant increase in the numbers of students enrolled in schools with instruction in Albanian is the result of several factors. One is no doubt the language policies in education, formulated in the Ohrid Framework Agreement, and the subsequent changes in the constitution and laws on education. Another factor is the trend in growth of the Albanian minority, whose population is increasing at a much faster pace than that of the Macedonian majority (Atanasovski 2008, 26). This is particularly observable if one compares the relative number of students enrolled in Albanian-language primary education over the last several decades (Ortakovski 1998, 361).

However, the Turkish minority continues to have limited opportunities in employment in the public sector. The number of Turks fell significantly in

quoted this decision and reported that such teaching was already going on in various schools such as *Rajko Žinzifov* in Gorno Orizari, the Veles municipality; *Dituria* in Ljubin, the Saraj municipality; *Alija Avdoviḱ* in Batinci, the Studeničani municipality). In several schools, a non-compulsory course in the language and culture of Bosniaks is taught. According to the response from Spiro Ristovski, the Vice Minister of Education, it is possible that teaching in Bosnian may start in September 2016, since the preparation of teaching materials was in its final stage (77-ta Sednica 2015, 33-35).

1953 with the large emigration of Yugoslav Turks to Turkey, and continues to decrease. The Turkish language has, to a large extent, lost its previously high social status, although it is still used occasionally as the lingua franca at bazaars in Western Macedonia. The Ohrid Framework Agreement, instead of fostering Turkish as a minority language, undermined its position: Turks are a highly dispersed group of people, and most of them live in cities; hence, it is rare that they can achieve 20 percent of the population required by law to attain official minority language status. (Trix 2013, 196.)

Still today, a significant proportion of the Roms face the problem of not having the identification documents required to apply for Macedonian citizenship, necessary since the breakup of Yugoslavia. In addition, the fees required for the application process have been out of reach of many. The lack of identification documents creates various problems: it can make such things as registering in schools, obtaining healthcare, and voting very difficult or even impossible (for further information, see Trix 2013, 204). The data from the census of 2002 show that the level of poverty among Roms is three times more prevalent than the population average: 88.2 percent of Roms live below the poverty line (Education 2007, 15).

5 Conclusions

The situation of the minorities in the three neighboring countries dealt with here is unique to each group, despite the fact that the populations in these countries consist of almost the same cultural, religious, and linguistic groups. In Albania, only some Greeks and some Macedonians enjoy the right to education in their respective languages. The introduction of other minority languages in the public schools faces many bureaucratic hurdles and at present seems virtually impossible. The media in the minority languages do not receive sufficient state support. Furthermore, Albania's legislation on censuses continues to discriminate against those who declare an identity that does not correspond to pre-existing definitions, with the result that the statistics are unreliable. In addition, certain political parties and movements, despite their low public support during elections, have organized campaigns of harassment of the minorities.

Greece is probably the place where the minority policies are most oppressive, the country's goals being assimilation of ethnic and linguistic minorities. Despite the limited recognition of the Muslim minority in Thrace as well as of the Jewish, Armenian, and Aromanian communities, the existence of most of the minorities has not been acknowledged on most levels

of Greek society. In some cases, as with the Macedonian minority, the existence of some ethnic minorities is even completely denied. The minority languages are not used in public life; for instance, there are no street signs in any of the minority languages. Almost no measures of positive discrimination are implemented, which serves to speed up the assimilation process. The Greek state continues to ignore practically all calls by human rights organizations and the international community to change its minority policies.

Macedonia represents an attempt to create a state that acknowledges its linguistic and ethnic minorities. With some reservations – mainly owing to the current political turmoil in the country – Macedonia can be considered the most minority-friendly country in the Central Balkan region. Although education in minority languages flourishes and the state supports its minorities, for instance, through the media, the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement has created discontent among the majority Macedonians, and has the potential to provoke ethnic tensions further.

The various trends described above are intermingled with the continuing economic and social problems in the region, which are not in any way connected with the minorities themselves, but which do have a negative impact on them. The dissatisfaction of the majority may lead to increased hostility toward the minorities, which, in turn, may further create fear and lack of trust in the societies. In addition, the direct consequences of the economic crisis, unemployment, and political instability often hit the minorities harder, given their already under-privileged status. An enormous challenge, shared by all these countries, is the integration of Romani and Egyptian communities into the respective societies.

However, in several sectors there are also positive developments in minority rights. Greece, for example, has made some progress in increasing public tolerance of minorities, and its northern regions have become more open to the neighboring countries, mainly through the increase in trans-border economic interactions. While progress is slow, all of the countries discussed here are in the process of implementing at least some of legislative changes affecting minority rights, encouraged by the international community. In addition, trans-border cooperation and the exchange of ideas between the minorities are improving. Whether these positive developments will help to overcome the negative trends remains to be seen, but improvements in the conditions of the minorities will help to boost such things as trans-border interactions and trade, potentially leading to an overall ameliorated economic and political climate in the region.

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Maxim Makartsev & Max Wahlström (eds.)

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