

**Greece**

# *Ethnicity in Greece*

## *Group selection*

Politics in Greece are based on the image of a unified nation of Greeks. Consequently, the existence of ethnic minorities in Greece is denied by the government. According to the US Department of State, “the government continued to place legal restrictions on the names of associations involving certain ethnic minorities” in 2009<sup>(2153)</sup>. Freedom House reports continuous concerns regarding the discrimination towards not only minority groups but also immigrants<sup>(2154)</sup>.

<sup>2153</sup> [US Department of State, 2010]

<sup>2154</sup> [Freedom House, 2020]

Even though the government recognizes the right of the individuals to self-identification, it is difficult for those individuals who define themselves as members of a minority group to express their identity and culture freely<sup>(2155)</sup>. For example, state authorities in Greece have rejected some attempt by various ethnic groups to either get official recognition or register associations which refer to their ethnic identity, thus paralyzing activities regarding the organization and/or advocacy for their political interest.<sup>(2156)</sup> Due to the hostile state policy, there is no official data on ethnic minorities in Greece. Nevertheless, we identify the following ethnic groups as politically relevant in addition to **Greeks, Macedonians, Muslims, and Roma**.

<sup>2155</sup> [U.S. Department of State, 2019]

<sup>2156</sup> [Freedom House, 2020]

## *Power relations*

### *1946-2021*

Greeks hold a monopoly on power during the entire period. Based on the repressive state policy of denial towards ethnic minorities, all minorities could be considered as discriminated. No ethnic minorities are represented in the cabinet of Greece<sup>(2157; 2158)</sup>.

<sup>2157</sup> [Tovima, 2015]

<sup>2158</sup> [US Department of State, 2016]

In contrast to the other groups, the Turk/Pomak minorities enjoy some degree of political rights due to the status as a combined Muslim minority. The existence of the Muslim minority in Greece was recognized by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). Under the treaty, “the Turkish minority of Thrace was granted a wide array of rights to ensure protection of their religion, language, culture, and equality before the law”<sup>(2159)</sup>. Muslims are not represented politically with their own party, but there are some Muslim parliamentarians - though without claiming their Muslim identity in the political space. For example, as of 2020, four members of this community won seats during the parliamentary elections of 2019. This implies that

<sup>2159</sup> [Greek Helsinki Monitor, 2014]

Muslims are powerless in Greece.

Macedonians are discriminated. According to the Greek Helsinki Monitor, the Macedonian minority faced severe discrimination after WWII, and parts of them lost their citizenship <sup>(2160)</sup>. Forced assimilation tactics were used: “The authorities pressured many villages to stage public swearing-in ceremonies in which they pledged never to use again the Macedonian language”. Although the situation has improved, “there is [still] no education in Macedonian, not even any teaching of the Macedonian language in the public schools of villages and towns with large, if not exclusive, Macedonian population”<sup>(2161)</sup>. In 1998, the government refused to allow the registration of the group “Home of Macedonian Culture” as an association in accordance with the provisions of the civil code. The ECHR ruled against the government’s denial of the organization’s registration, but in June 2009 the Supreme Court upheld the court decision to deny the group legal registration <sup>(2162)</sup>. This state of affairs continued through 2013 <sup>(2163)</sup>. On the other hand, there are legal restrictions on any organization using the term Macedonian in its name in order to self-identify <sup>(2164)</sup>. Since the existence of the Macedonians as an ethnic group is not recognized by the Greek state, they are coded as “discriminated”.

The discrimination of the Roma in Greece is more pronounced than in some of the neighboring countries. Parts of the Roma population in Greece “are stateless, having never been provided with the most fundamental recognition of participation in society - citizenship” <sup>(2165)</sup>, p. 4). Roma are denied the right to establish their camps close to urban areas <sup>(2166)</sup>, 4-5). As the US Department of State notices, “the law prohibits the encampment of wandering nomads’ without a permit and forces Roma to establish settlements outside inhabited areas and far from permanent housing” <sup>(2167)</sup>. In 2013, “[a]pproximately one-third of the Romani population was not registered to vote” <sup>(2168)</sup>. This pattern persisted in the 2015 election, where an unknown number was not registered <sup>(2169)</sup>. Thus, the Roma are coded as “discriminated”.

<sup>2160</sup> [Greek Helsinki Monitor, 2014]

<sup>2161</sup> [Greek Helsinki Monitor, 2014]

<sup>2162</sup> [Greek Helsinki Monitor, 2014]

<sup>2163</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>2164</sup> [US Department of State, 2016]

<sup>2165</sup> [European Roma Rights Center, 2003]

<sup>2166</sup> [European Roma Rights Center, 2003]

<sup>2167</sup> [US Department of State, 2010]

<sup>2168</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>2169</sup> [US Department of State, 2016]

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*Political status of ethnic groups in Greece*

*From 1946 until 2021*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Greeks	0.96	MONOPOLY
Roma	0.017	DISCRIMINATED
Macedonians	0.013	DISCRIMINATED
Muslims	0.01	POWERLESS



Figure 409: Political status of ethnic groups in Greece during 1946-2021.

# Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Greece

From 1946 until 2021

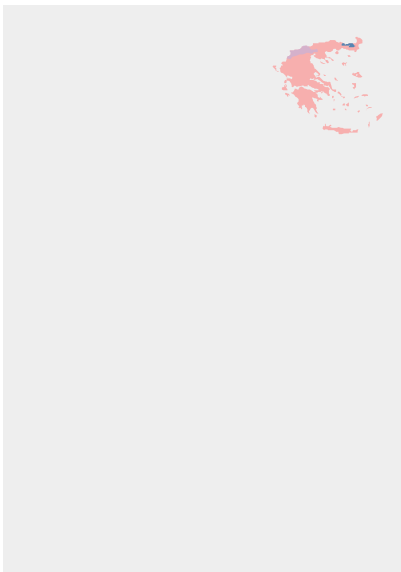


Figure 410: Map of ethnic groups in Greece during 1946-2021.

Group name		Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
<div></div>	Greeks	129 913	Statewide
<div></div>	Macedonians	8 366	Regionally based
<div></div>	Muslims	1 551	Regionally based
<div></div>	Roma	0	Dispersed

Table 147: List of ethnic groups in Greece during 1946-2021.

## *Conflicts in Greece*

*Starting on 1946-03-30*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Greece	DSE	Macedonians	1946-03-30	No	Yes	Yes
Government of Greece	DSE	Greeks	1946-03-30	No	Yes, from EGIP	Split