

## INFORMATION FOR MACEDONIANS TRAVELLING TO GREECE

### OVERVIEW

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC), Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) and the Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM) have jointly prepared the following information for ethnic Macedonians (travelling on any passport) wishing to enter Greece.

In past instances, Greek border authorities have denied some Macedonians entry into the country on discriminatory and highly dubious grounds. Therefore the purpose of this brochure is to provide Macedonians travelling on Australian, Canadian, US, Macedonian and other passports with information on the general requirements for entering Greece and what to do in the event that they are denied entry into the country.

This leaflet is **not** intended to discourage individuals from visiting Greece. On the contrary, we encourage people to visit their family and friends in Aegean Macedonia (Greece) and wish to facilitate greater trans-frontier contacts and cultural exchanges amongst Macedonians and others.

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this leaflet is accurate and up-to-date, it remains the responsibility of each individual to check the requirements for entering Greece as they relate to their personal situation.

### WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTERING GREECE?

Australian, Canadian, US, and all EU passport holders do not require visas to enter Greece for tourist purposes and may stay for up to 90 days in the country without a visa.

Macedonian citizens also do not require a visa to enter Greece for stays of up to 90 days, *however* there are special arrangements in place at the border i.e. the Greek police issue a special document to such passport holders.

### WHO HAS BEEN DENIED ENTRY INTO GREECE IN THE PAST?

Technically, each state has the right to grant or deny a person entry into their territory. Despite holding a valid visa or not being required to hold a visa for entry, there is no automatic right to entry. However, Greece is using this as an excuse to deny Macedonians entry based solely on their ethnicity. The overwhelming majority of visitors to Greece do not face problems entering the country. This is also true for most Macedonians, however there have been cases in the past where entry has been denied to some Macedonians travelling on foreign passports. Here are some examples and categories of people who have been affected:

#### \* Macedonians born in Greece

This is the most common category of people who are denied entry into Greece. Under normal circumstances such persons should be allowed to return to their country of birth, however there have been cases where Australian, Canadian and Macedonian citizens have been denied entry for a variety of reasons including:

- *Having their place of birth recorded in their foreign passport under the Macedonian or traditional name and not the Greek or current name of the place, eg: "Lerin" instead of "Florina". This is one of the most common reasons that Macedonians born in Greece are denied entry into the country.*

- *Being declared a "security threat" and/or being placed on the National Registrar of Undesired Persons (black list). Although they are not told of the reason for their inclusion in the registrar, it is usually related to their pro-Macedonian orientation or activism in the country where they now reside. This is uncommon and will not affect most people. However persons who have been prominent human rights activists in the past could fall into this category.*

#### \* Macedonians born elsewhere

- *In the past, Macedonians who were not born in Greece have been denied entry on the grounds of being a "security threat" and/or being placed on the National Registrar of Undesired Persons (black-list). Although they are not told of the reason for their inclusion in the registrar, it is usually related to their Macedonian activism in the country where they now reside. This especially might apply to prominent human rights activists in the past, especially descendant of Macedonians born in Aegean Macedonia (Greece).*

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE DENIED ENTRY INTO GREECE?

1. Ensure that the Greek border officials issue you a "Refusal of Entry at the Border" document. This is an official document stating the reason that you have been denied entry. The document is issued in English and Greek, and you will be required to sign it before it is given to you. It is very important that you obtain this document, as it is evidence that you were denied entry and contains details of how you can appeal the decision.

2. Immediately contact the AMHRC, MHRMI or GHM. We can assist you in lodging an official complaint with the relevant Greek authorities. Remember, you **DO** have a right to appeal the decision and we strongly recommend that you exercise this right. We have been successful in getting some of the entry bans removed and also getting various foreign governments to confront Greece about this discriminatory practice.

#### AMHRC

Tel: +61 3 9329 8960

Email: [info@macedonianhr.org.au](mailto:info@macedonianhr.org.au)

#### MHRMI

Tel: +1 416 850 7125,

Email: [info@mhrmi.org](mailto:info@mhrmi.org)

#### GHM

Tel: +30 210 347 2259

Email: [helsinki@otenet.gr](mailto:helsinki@otenet.gr)

3. Contact your country's embassy in Greece. It is important that you register an official complaint and ask the embassy staff to take action on your behalf and raise the matter with Greek authorities.

#### Australian Embassy in Athens

Tel: +30 210 870 4000

Email: [ae.athens@dfat.gov.au](mailto:ae.athens@dfat.gov.au)

#### Canadian Embassy in Athens

Tel: +30 210 727 3400

Email: [athns@international.gc.ca](mailto:athns@international.gc.ca)

#### US Embassy in Athens

Tel: +30 210 721 2951

E-mail: [AthensAmEmb@state.gov](mailto:AthensAmEmb@state.gov)

#### All other countries

Contact information can be found here:

<http://www.mfa.gr/en/foreign-missions-in-greece.html>