

## **Facts about the Muslim Minority in Thrace from the "Pan-hellenic Association of Pomaks"**

Representing the Pomak population in Greece, our "Pan-hellenic Association of Pomaks" wishes to present our action for the promotion of our special identity and needs, as a distinct component of the Muslim Minority in Greece.

Pomaks in Greece reside in the most northern parts of Thrace Region. They are proud of their identity which they achieved to maintain through the centuries, despite attempts of assimilation by the majoritarian Muslim component of turkic origin, with which we share the same religion.

The Pomaks have founded cultural associations in Thrace for the preservation of their own tradition, customs and our language, which is a unique combination of ancient Greek and Arabic and Slavic.

The "Pan-hellenic Association of Pomaks" engages with the Greek authorities for the promotion of our claims for the growth of the region of Thrace in order to achieve better opportunities for Pomaks in the economy, including the labour market. It is an active member of European Organizations for minority rights where we advocate our clear distinction from the other components of the Muslim Minority of Greece.

Our independent newspaper "Zagalisa" is the voice of Greek Pomaks. We are proud to be Pomaks who, as Greek citizens, enjoy religious freedom, educational rights and advantageous regulations for our entry to Greek Universities and employment in the public sector. We also enjoy all liberties guaranteed to Greek citizens by the Greek Constitution.

We do not like to be called Turcs just because we are Muslims and we appreciate the policy of the official authorities to respect our identity as well as our rights as a minority deriving from the Treaty of Lausanne.

At the same time, as residents of a multicultural region, we are trying to make use of policies aiming at social inclusion, peaceful coexistence within the Muslim minority and living in harmony with the Christian population.