

## **PETITION on FYROM's PERMANENT NAME**

The decision of the US Administration to recognize the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) as “The Republic of Macedonia” falsifies the history of Hellenism and does not contribute to the enduring stability and prosperity of the highly sensitive Balkan area. We condemn this decision and petition reconsideration of the political actions of the U.S. Administration. We further request the return to its long-standing policy to recognize and refer to the FYROM as such.

Evidence that Ancient Macedonia was Greek abound. All monuments, pottery and inscriptions found are Greek. People and places had Greek names: e.g. Alexander (protector of men), Philip (friendly to horse), Ptolemy (warlike), Macedonians (highlanders), Thessaloniki (name of the sister of Alexander the Great). Macedonians took part in the Olympic games, celebrated the same festivals, and worshiped the same Gods as the rest of the Greeks. On the other hand, Slavs descended in the region during the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. After World War I the region of FYROM was named “Southern Serbia” and later “Vardarska Banovina” (Province of Vardar). Only after World War II, did the Yugoslav Communist Party assign the name of “People's Republic of Macedonia” to the Province of Vardar. In 1963 the region of FYROM was renamed “Socialist Republic of Macedonia”. However Ancient Macedonians were Greeks whereas FYROM's people are mostly Slavs and Albanians.

History and the cultural heritage constitute fundamental elements of peoples' identity and should be safeguarded and respected. FYROM exists in a geographic area called Macedonia spreading over the borders of three neighboring countries: Bulgaria, FYROM and Greece. Therefore naming FYROM solely as “Republic of Macedonia” is a de facto irredentist strategy leading to the destabilization of the region, and potentially changing borders and historical status quo in the future.

The unilateral decision by the U.S. Government to recognize FYROM as “The Republic of Macedonia” ignores several past U.N. Resolutions on FYROM's name. It has weakened the position of Greece vis-a-vis the FYROM in ongoing bilateral negotiations to determine a mutually acceptable permanent name, and thus encouraging efforts to bypass talks on this issue. The weak stability and prosperity of the FYROM will be greatly enhanced by the future FYROM accession to the EU and NATO, which requires unanimous agreement of existing members. The Greek government will not provide such an agreement in the absence of a solution to the name issue.

We urge the U.S. Administration to materialize the Resolution (H. CON. RES. 530) introduced in the House of Representatives. This resolution requests the Secretary of State to return to the long-standing policy of the U.S. Government to recognize and refer to the FYROM as such. It also urges the FYROM and Greece to continue negotiations to determine a mutually acceptable permanent name. We believe that the citizens of the two countries can co-exist peacefully and promote stability and prosperity in the Balkan region.