



**PANHELLENIC FEDERATION OF CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS OF VLACHS  
FOUNDED IN 1985**

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**LETTER OF INFORMATION TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

***To: The Council of Europe  
The Honourable Secretary-General***

***Cc.: The Honourable President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
Committee of Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe  
Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe  
Committee on Culture, Science and Education of the Council of Europe***

Cc.: President of the Hellenic Republic  
Prime Minister of Greece  
Deputy Prime Minister of the Greek Government  
Speaker of the Greek Parliament  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece  
Minister for Culture of Greece

Cc.: Representatives & deputy representatives of the Greek Parliament to the Council of Europe:

***Dear Mister Secretary-General***

The Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of Vlachs – a national-level body with a membership of more than a hundred local Vlach Associations in Greece, fostering the links between Greeks of Vlach descent and representing their interests – feels the need to communicate with you, by means of this letter, and inform you of the following:

For some years now certain individuals, falsely describing themselves as representatives of 'Vlach Associations' have been communicating, from time to time, with the Council of Europe or other European institutions and agencies, purporting to represent a 'Vlach minority' – in other words, to claim and champion certain alleged 'minority rights'. We wish to make clear through this letter that in essence these individuals, whatever their motivation, represent only themselves and have no actual relationship with the Vlachs of Greece, who, in their entirety, are represented on the first tier by their local cultural associations, and on the national level by the Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of Vlachs (POPSV), as well as other bodies including scientific and academic societies, local government agencies, etc.

Furthermore, those who appear from time to time in various international forums and organizations deliberately conceal the fact that the overwhelming majority of Vlachs in the Balkans, also known as Armanoi (Aromanians), can trace their original descent to Greece, which has always been their homeland, although migration to neighbouring countries in the North has been common since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Since the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), which established the Balkan frontiers, the overwhelming majority of Vlachs and their ancestral homes have formed an integral part of Greece and its history. Those who now live in FYROM, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania, numerically far fewer than their Greek counterparts, are the result of past migrations from Greece driven by historical, economic and political events.

It is well known – and historically irrefutable – that the Vlachs of Greece have played a vital and irreplaceable role in the history and current reality of the country, making up an important element in the contemporary Greek nation/state. Their knowledge and use – in addition to Greek – of their own oral

language, Latin-based, with its various local dialect forms, has never stood in the way of their preservation of a Greek ethnic identity, despite attempts at exploitation made from time to time by various foreign states and agencies, for reasons of political expediency and to fabricate specious 'minority' issues.

In historical terms the bilingual Vlach Greeks of the broader region of Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia have made their own contribution to the economic, cultural, military and political life of the country (involvement in the national struggle for independence of 1821, the Macedonian Struggle, the Balkan Wars, the Resistance – and to all the peaceful movements to secure progress for their country). And of course, the reader will need no reminding of the generous financial contribution of Vlach-speaking benefactors, who have filled the capital of Greece with magnificent buildings and other contributions to public life, followed by many others who continue in the same spirit as their forefathers to found and run schools, churches, cultural and charitable foundations – in every corner of Greece.

The Greeks of Vlach descent form an active and dynamic group within Greek society and obviously enjoy the same rights and accept the same obligations as any other citizen of the country. As active members of the community they retain a keen interest in their own distinctive cultural heritage and identity, expressing and fostering that legacy with energy and imagination and exercising without impediment their right to their own cultural heritage.

For more than 200 years now the Vlachs of Greece have been establishing societies and associations both in their original communities and in the countries and cities where they have settled as a result of internal migration and emigration. Some of the older Vlach associations in Greece have now been active for over a century, and have a proud record of achievement in many fields. In the 1980's, long before comparable interest was shown in our Balkan neighbours, the Vlachs set about founding and developing an elected collective body to express and represent their interests on the national level – the Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of Vlachs. The Federation now numbers more than one hundred member associations and is still expanding rapidly across the country (with some 35 associations in Thessaly, around 50 in Central and Western Macedonia, about 15 in Epirus, 2 in Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, 3 in Central Greece and Attica), expressing the interests and representing the views of tens of thousands of organized members.

These associations freely promote the values of our cultural traditions, publishing and enriching the libraries of Greece with books on the history and folklore of the Vlach regions, their language, customs and traditions. They record and disseminate our musical traditions, and the multi-faceted cultural activities of the associations are evidenced in innumerable newspapers, books, CDs and DVDs, conferences and various other events organized each year. Vlach language learning seminars are held, open to young people and any others who wish to attend. The associations also organize annual conferences, symposia and reunions, attended by tens of thousands of delegates and visitors, as well as TV and radio broadcasts. University teachers and their students prepare studies in every aspect of their academic field – on the history, ethnology, language, town planning and architecture of Vlach settlements, etc. – always within a framework of absolute and self-evident academic freedom, as appropriate to the free citizens of a modern European nation and Member State of the EU.

None of this could have been achieved if the Vlachs were treated by Greek society in a spirit of repression and denial of freedom, as certain self-proclaimed 'protectors' of non-existent minorities would have us believe. On the contrary, our associations enjoy the unstinting and multi-faceted support and solidarity of the state in all their activities – on both the local and national levels.

All our activities and achievements, owing much to the support and respect of the Greek state, make us proud to express – responsibly, clearly and categorically – our Greek identity and the passions of the many individuals who are members of our associations. It is evident that we have authorized no one to speak or act on our behalf – certainly not any 'professional advocates of minority rights' or self-appointed 'champions' of non-existent minorities.

We are saddened and angered when certain individuals present themselves in international minority and other forums and claim to speak on our behalf, attempting to usurp our true identity, belittling and insulting our collective ethnic character. The main institutional bodies representing Greeks of Vlach descent (Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of Vlachs, Association of Vlach Scientists and Academics, Network of Vlach-Speaking Mayors and Communal Presidents, as well as other elected representatives of local

government) have in the past denounced such activities and categorically denied both claims of oppression of the Vlachs in Greece, and claims of the existence of a 'Vlach minority'.

***Dear Mister Secretary-General***

We are confident that your knowledge, good judgment and sensitivity will prevent you from accepting proposals and ratifying resolutions (whenever the subject is laid before you) which threaten to compromise the ethnic consciousness and collective identity of hundreds of thousands of Greek citizens. And confident, too, that you will respond decisively to those who express only their own views and interests, and certainly not those of the Vlach-speaking Greeks, or indeed the Vlachs of any country.

**In light of the above, we the Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of Vlachs wish to express our displeasure and our fundamental disagreement with the charter, the objectives and the aspirations of the self-styled 'Council of the Aromanians', which in no way expresses our views or interests, or indeed those of Vlach people anywhere.**

Confident that you will treat this matter with the appropriate seriousness, respecting our right to self-determination, we welcome any requests you may have for further clarification.

We should like to take this opportunity to invite you to Greece, so that we can introduce you to the beautiful settlements of our forefathers and acquaint you at first hand with the traditions and cultural achievements of our people. This will assist you to appreciate in the most direct manner the concerns we have expressed to you. We should also like to ask you to inform us in good time, and allow us the opportunity to visit you and express our concerns in person, whenever relevant issues are tabled for inquiry and discussion.

In confidence that this letter will assist you in your lofty calling, we remain

**Yours respectfully,**

**For the Administrative Board**

**The Chairman**

**The General Secretary**

**Konstantinos Adam**

**Mihalis Misios**

**Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of Vlachs**

**Airport Area**

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**Member Associations**

1. Association of People from Grammousta 'I Grammousta' Argos Orestiko
2. Association of Northern Epirot Vlachs of Kastoria Maniakoi, Kastoria
3. Association of People from Kleisoura, Ptolemaida 'O Agios Markos' Ptolemaida
4. Cultural and Community Improvement Association of Ieropigi, Kastoria
5. Association of Vlachs of Naousa
6. Epirot Association of Krya Vrysi 'O Pyrros'
7. Cultural Association of Krania, Grevena
8. Traditional Association of Vlachs of Kalyvia Skydra
9. Association of People from Perivoli in Imathia Palio Skylitsi Veroia
10. Vlach Folklore Association of Veroia
11. Cultural Association of People from Monastiri and Seli Katerini
12. Association of People from Kokinoplos in the Prefecture of Pieria 'O Olympos' . Katerini
13. Association of People from Perivoli in Thessaloniki 'I Pindos'
14. Association of People from Megalo Livadi, Paiko Thessaloniki
15. Association of People from Megalo Livadi 'I Pente Vryses' Axioupoli
16. Association of all People from Nymfaio 'O Agios Nikolaos' Thessaloniki
17. Vlach Cultural and Folklore Association of Evkarpia To Agio Pnevma' Thessaloniki
18. Association of People from Monastiri and Environs 'I Karteria' Thessaloniki
19. Association of Greek Vlachs of N. Epirus 'I Moschopoli' Thessaloniki
20. Cultural Centre of Thermi Vlach Association Thessaloniki
21. Association of People from Livadi in Thessaloniki 'O Georgakis Olympios'
22. Association of all People from Pisoderi, Thessaloniki
23. Association of People from Kokinoplos in Thessaloniki
24. Association of Vlachs of the Prefecture of Serres 'Georgakis Olympios'
25. Folklore Society for Vlachs and their Friends in the Prefecture of Serres
26. Association of Vlachs of Skra
27. Association of Vlachs of Prosotsani 'Oi Grammoustianoï'
28. Vlach Association of Ano Poroia, Serres
29. Association of Young People from Avdela Tyrnavos
30. Vlach Association of Neo Petritsi 'I Ramna', Serres
31. Vlach Cultural Association of Sidirokastro
32. Association of People from Avdela 'I Vasilitsa' Tyrnavos
33. Haliki Cultural Association, Farsala
34. Almyros Vlach Association, Almyros
35. Sesklo Cultural Association, Magnesia
36. Association of People from Perivoli in Magnesia, Velestino
37. Pan-Thessalian Association of People from Aetomilitsi 'To Denisko', Larisa
38. Community Improvement and Cultural Association of Perivoli Grevena
39. Association of People from Perivoli in the Prefecture of Larisa

40. Cultural Association of Arvanitovlachs and other People from Argyropouli in Larisa
41. Kalliroi Educational Association 'O Agios Nikolaos', Trikala
42. Educational Brotherhood of Tzourtzia, Athamania, Trikala
43. Cultural and Educational Association of Gardiki, Athamanoi, Trikala
44. Arvanitovlach Cultural Association of Trikala
45. Association of People from Perivoli in the Prefecture of Grevena Grevena
46. Stefano Trikala Community Improvement – Educational Association, Trikala
47. Cultural Association of People from Milia, Trikala
48. Association of People from Perivoli in Trikala
49. Cultural Association of Krania, Aspropotamos, Trikala
50. Palioseli Cultural Association, Ioannina
51. Kataphyto Philanthropic Fraternity Aspropotamos, Larisa
52. Cultural Association of Krania, Grevena 'I Touryia', Trikala
53. Association of Friends of Progress of People from Milia Ioannina 'Oi Meranoi'
54. Cultural Association of People from Matsouki, Thessaly 'I Agia Paraskevi', Trikala
55. Association of People from Metsovo in Ioannina
56. Association of People from Syrrako, Philippiada and Kampos Philippiada
57. Cultural Centre of Community of Syrrako, Ioannina
58. Association of People from Kefalovrysi in Ioannina
59. Association of People from Syrrako in Ioannina
60. Association of People from Syrrako in Preveza
61. Cultural Association 'To Vathypedo', Polydrosos, Arta
62. Society of Friends of the Monuments of Palaiomanina, Neohori
63. Municipality of Metsovo Cultural Centre, Metsovo
64. Cultural Association of Milea, Metsovo
65. Association of People from Aetomilitsi, Grammos 'I Aetomilitsa', Thessaloniki
66. Anilio Cultural Association, Metsovo
67. Association of People from Panayia, Living in Athens and Environs 'Adelfotis Panayias' Athens
68. Association of People from Syrrako in Athens
69. SOCIETY VLACHON OF GREECE P.O. BOX 308 30 THORNCLIFFE PRK DR TORONTO ONTAR, M4 H 1H8 CANADA
70. Ano Grammatiko Association of Vlachs and their Friends 'I Pindos', Edessa
71. Kalarrytes Patriotic Association Ioannina
72. Association of People from Samarina, Grevena 'I Kiourista', Grevena
73. Cultural Association of Vlach from Almopia 'O Tselingas', Aridaia
74. Association of People from Perivoli in the Prefecture of Grevena
75. Cultural Association of Kleinos, Aspropotamos 'O Kleinovos', Kalabaka
76. Association of People from Samarina in the Prefecture of Kastoria, Argos Orestiko
77. Anthousa Cultural Association, Pharsala
78. Milia Cultural Association, Trikala
79. Thracian Vlach Cultural Association Komotini
80. Kefalovryso Cultural-Folklore Association Kefalovryso, Ioannina
81. Association of People from Samarina in Larisa
82. Vlach Student Association, Thessaloniki
83. Association of People from Livadi in Katerini 'O Georgakis Olympios'
84. Association of Women from M. Livadi in Kilkis 'Oi Armanes', Thessaloniki
85. Vlach Cultural Educational Association of Archangelos
86. Polythea Cultural Association 'I Agia Faneromeni', Trikala
88. Association of Vlach Speakers of the Prefecture of Thesprotia, Igumenitsa

89. Association of People from Samarina in Ellassona and Environs 'O Smolikas'
90. Association of People from Kokkinoplos in Larisa 'O Mytikas'
91. Samarina Cultural Association of Parapotamos, Larisa
92. Association of Women from Kokkinoplos in Ellassona
93. Community Improvement Association of 'Fteri', Karitsa, Pieria, Katerini
94. Livadi Community Improvement Association, Livadi, Ellassona
95. Association of People from Samarina in Ambelona 'O Smolikas'
96. Gardiki-Athamanoi Charitable Association, Trikala
97. Karitsa Rural-Educational-Cultural-Tourist Association, Karitsa
98. Association of People from Livadi, Thessaloniki
99. Cultural Educational Association of People from Matsouki in Ioannina 'I Vyliza'
100. Cultural-Educational Association of People from Kalyvia-Kokkinoplos. 'O Olympos'
101. Kastania Cultural and Charitable Association 'O Stinos' Kastania, Kalabaka



