



Minorities and Inclusion in the Case of Greece

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1 Introduction

Inquiries into the inclusion and accommodation of minorities and diverse cultures take center stage in contemporary political debates, particularly in Europe (Schinkel, 2019, p. 2). According to the political philosopher Robert Dahl in his classic study on democracy, modern democratic politics encounter two primary challenges in the twenty-first century. The first challenge emerges from the surge of movements and mobilizations advocating for the rights of various minorities—be they ethnic, linguistic, or sexual. The second challenge arises from migration movements that erode cultural homogeneity and bring diverse identities into visibility. Consequently, the nature and quality of democracy will greatly depend on how democratic countries respond and deal with the cultural diversity of their people (Dahl, 2015, pp. 183–185).

Our era is often characterized as an age of cultural diversity, yet the term “diversity” remains ubiquitous and the language of diversity and inclusion is embraced across different sites (Ahmed, 2012, p. 51). In recent decades, there has been a notable emphasis on the significance of accommodating and respecting various forms of cultural diversity. Simultaneously, there are

calls for “muscular liberalism,” advocating for the infusion of a shared liberal ethos among individuals to temper their diverse inclinations in response to the increasing diversity of our times (Caney, 2002, p. 81).

The multiple ways Western democracies respond to raising the cultural diversity of their citizens will crucially affect the quality of their democratic procedures. Given that migration movements show no signs of abating, and demands for minority recognition and rights are on the rise, the words of Robert Dahl (2015, p. 185) resonate: “the nature and quality of democracy will greatly depend on the arrangements that democratic countries develop for dealing with the cultural diversity of their people.” In other words, the inclusion of minorities and diverse demands for recognition and rights are not solely pertinent to those within these cultures. As asserted by Canadian political philosopher J. Tully (1995, p. 1), the key question is not whether one supports or opposes cultural diversity, but rather, what critical attitude or spirit should guide the rendering of justice to the demands for cultural recognition.

Greece has not been an exception to these ongoing processes. With historically strong homogenizing attitudes, the country has suppressed and concealed its cultural diversity from the public domain. Despite recent strides toward openness, significant challenges persist in fostering a more inclusive society. Greece stands out as

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a noteworthy case study, not only due to its historical Muslim population but also because it grapples with the complexities of a newly emerging multicultural reality, all while navigating a particularly strong sense of national identity (Clogg, 2002, pp. 9–14).

In this chapter, we employ qualitative political analysis to delineate the primary challenges of minority inclusion that Greece confronts today. Beginning with an overview of the ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other minorities present in Greece, we delve into an analysis of their historical treatment. Our focus then shifts to specific cases, examining the largest ethno-culturally diverse groups. These cases are considered paradigmatic examples that shed light on how minorities have been either included or, mostly, excluded.

2 Greece

2.1 Overview

Despite its relatively small size of just above 10 million, Greece is home to an estimated

800,000–950,000 individuals (or 7.4–8.5% of the total population) who are not Greek citizens, primarily consisting of migrants and refugees. Almost half of them came from Albania, with others from Bulgaria, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and other Balkan, M. Eastern, and sub-Saharan African countries (Kotzamanis & Kostaki, 2022). At the same time, Greece is home to numerous ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups, a legacy of the Ottoman era and the nation-building processes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many of these groups have become part of the Greek “imagined community,” even as they retain distinct cultural or—better—folklore characteristics. Conversely, the majority of those belonging to the officially recognized “Muslim minority” in Thrace maintain a predominantly Turkish identity. Calculating the exact size of native ethnic minorities is not possible, but estimations raise their numbers above half a million people. The largest historically diverse ethnic groups present in Greece include the Roma, Muslims (including ethnic Turkish, Roma, and Pomak), and Slavic-speaking populations (Ortakovski, 2000, pp. 178–191) (Table 1).

Table 1 Main minority communities in Greece_a

Category	Name	Description	Estimated population _b
Main Native ethnic minority communities	Roma	Ethnic, social, linguistic	150,000–250,000
	Turks	Ethnic, linguistic	50,000–80,000
	Pomaks	Ethnic, linguistic	10,000–30,000
	Arvanites	Linguistic	5000–20,000
	Slav-speaking Greeks	Linguistic, partially ethnic	50,000–100,000
	Vlachs/Aromanians	Linguistic	10,000–15,000
Religious	Roman Catholics (native)		10,000–15,000
	Jews		5000
	Muslim Minority (Turks, Pomaks, Roma)	Also, native ethnic	100,000
	Muslims of east Aegean		5000–15,000
Third Country Nationals	Migrants (seasonal, permanently living)		500,000–600,000
	Refugees (including applicants and international protection)		60,000
	Expats (European retired, Europeans working in Greece)		100,000–200,000
Sexuality-LGBT+			n/a

^aTable created by the author combining available data

^bThe population estimates are approximate and may vary. Categories indicated as n/a cannot be estimated in numbers

2.2 The Historical Treatment of Minorities in Greece

Since the establishment of the Greek nation-state in 1830, the Greek “nation” has been defined in strongly ethno-cultural terms. Common ancestry, culture, and language, along with the Greek Orthodox religion, have been the primary pillars shaping the development of the modern Greek national identity. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a unified national consciousness was successfully promoted and infused in Greek society through state policies in military conscription, education, and official culture (Kitromilides, 1989, pp. 155–158).

Given that the relationship between a homogenized Greek Orthodox national identity and a sovereign state was hegemonic, a radical discontent against (cultural) differences dominated both official discourses and institutional practices (Papataxiarchis, 2014, p. 30). In nationalist discourse, the “other” was perceived as someone potentially to be won over and converted, encouraging (or forcing) the embrace of the language and values of the nation. Consequently, cultural differences were tolerated only when not visible or when they were perceived as part of the Greek “imagined community,” treated as mere folklore. As a result, historical minorities were excluded from all domains of the Greek state and Greek society for much of the past century. They became “invisible,” an “unconfessed” reality discussed only among some state officials. The fact that, after 1951, no ethnic data was registered in any official census or other formal document highlights this invisibility (Christopoulos, 2008, p. 10).

If not neglected and marginalized, ethnic minorities in Greece were either homogenized, culturally assimilated into the Greek “imagined community” of only Orthodox, Greek-speaking populations, or treated as the “other” and faced exclusion, repression, or expulsion (Özkirimli & Sofos, 2008, p. 74; Tsitselikis, 2012, pp. 21–25). Particularly when minorities asserted their distinct identities or sought some form of minority protection, they were viewed as a failure of the Greek state to assert its sovereignty, thereby pos-

ing a threat to its territorial integrity. The fact that these minorities resided in areas bordering Turkey, Bulgaria, and other Balkan countries, in line with the historical emergence of post-Ottoman nationalisms in an antagonistic relation to each other, heightened these fears. Consequently, such an approach to minorities is not unique to Greece but extends to many countries in the region where ethnic and national minorities have been treated as security issues (Iliadis, 2012, p. 45).

Even today, despite the changes within the EU framework and a departure from traditional national politics, Greece remains among the very few European countries that still do not recognize the existence of ethnic minorities on its territory acknowledging only a religious “Muslim minority” (Kymlicka, 2007, pp. 118–119). According to the prevailing narrative in the country, even today “minorities do not exist” unless officially recognized. Any other discussion of “minorities” is met with hostility, viewed either as representing alien forces aiming to undermine Greek security and potentially Greek sovereignty or as an attempt to diminish the social status of the particular community, discrediting it as a “minority” rather than treating its members as equal citizens (Anagnostou, 2007, pp. 149–152). The former is primarily applicable to the ethnic Turkish majority of the Thracian Muslim Minority in the northeast of the country, as well as the Slavic-speaking populations in the northwest. The latter is the case of the Roma communities.

2.3 “Muslim Minority of Greek Thrace”

Throughout the twentieth century, the minority in Thrace has been the largest homogeneous and geographically concentrated ethno-religious minority within Greece. The way it has been approached is emblematic of how minorities have been historically treated in the country. The official term, “Muslim minority of Thrace,” encompasses nearly 100,000 Greek citizens residing in northeastern Greece in close proximity to the Bulgarian and Turkish land borders. A

few thousand indigenous Muslims also live in the islands of Kos and Rhodes and in other areas of Greece, although they are not categorized as part of the minority (Tsitselikis & Georgalidou, 2016). The Muslim Minority benefits from legal protection and minority community rights for education, religion, and community organization, primarily determined by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. This treaty established a religious minority, organizing communities with different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds under a religious characteristic reminiscent of the pre-ethnic organization of social and political domains based on religion, similar to the Ottoman millet system (Featherstone et al., 2011, pp. 28–33).

In practice, the minority was initially composed of three distinct indigenous ethno-linguistic groups: the Turks, the Pomaks, an indigenous population living in the mountainous area of Rhodope speaking an oral Slavic language, and the Roma. However, over the course of the twentieth century, Turkish identification gradually became the dominant political, social, and cultural force, and the Turkish language and culture were progressively adopted by the majority of the people. Consequently, demands for recognition, such as self-identification, freedom of association, culture, and the general freedom of individuals or the community to express their “Turkish identity” and establish relations with their “mother country,” Turkey, started to intensify. For brief periods, notably during the 1920s and the 1950s, the Greek state not only accepted but also encouraged these demands due to its efforts to protect similar demands raised by the Greek Orthodox community in Turkey. However, for most of the time, authoritarian policies of oppression and marginalization were implemented against the “Turkish” element within the minority. Until the 1990s, most minority members faced restrictions such as the inability to build or repair their houses, obtain a license to practice an occupation, install a telephone line, and numerous other limitations categorized as repressive measures of administrative nature (Iliadis, 2013, pp. 416–419).

Since the 1990s, several measures aimed at improving the conditions of the minority have

been implemented, promoting equality and liberty. However, numerous challenges persist. The minority’s freedom to manage its own affairs has been occasionally compromised, while Turkish identification is still viewed by many in Greece as a retreat to national security. Individuals who identify themselves as ethnic “Turks” continue to face strong suspicion and are often perceived as “ethnic others.” Moreover, minority associations using the terms “Turks/Turkish” are not officially recognized by Greek courts, despite the European Court of Human Rights ruling this as a violation by the Greek authorities (Dragonas, 2014, pp. 140–141). For the majority of Greeks, minority members are seen as a potential threat, akin to a Trojan horse, as an ethnically and religiously alien group resembling Turkey, perceived as Greece’s largest national enemy. There is a concern that, in the long term, the minority could question state sovereignty in the region (Katsikas, 2012, pp. 444–447). The historically dominant attitude toward those claiming to be Turks in Thrace was perhaps best articulated by Mikis Theodorakis, the renowned composer of “Zorba” and one of the most significant popular figures in twentieth-century Greece: “Many say that we need to respect people’s will about their origin. I tell them: Do you want to be a Turk? [Then] go to Turkey!” (Theodorakis, 2010). Similar attitudes persist, exerting negative implications on all minority demands related to a Turkish identity. Consequently, significant challenges remain.¹

¹More recently, the minority issue once again became a central political controversy in the spring of 2023, showing continuities with the past. In Rhodope, the region where the minority population comprises almost 50% of the total, it was the only Greek district where Syriza, the main opposition party, won the majority vote during the first round of the general election. The noteworthy aspect was that in the rest of the country, New Democracy not only secured the first position but also achieved a percentage that was double that of Syriza, making Syriza’s victory in Rhodope particularly striking. Following this outcome, the president of the ruling party, soon to be reelected as Prime Minister, stated that “in Rhodope, there was an open intervention by the Turkish consulate in favor of a specific candidate. This is a problem. [...] it is not acceptable that a foreign country openly intervenes in favor of specific candidates who are referring to the

2.4 The Roma

The Roma populations historically constitute the largest ethno-cultural community in the country and unquestionably the largest marginalized group. Their exact number remains debatable, ranging between 150 and 250 thousand people dispersed across the country in more than three hundred communities.

In Greece, the Roma are not categorized as an ethnic minority community but as a vulnerable social group. Consequently, their ethno-cultural exclusion remains unaddressed. The community itself has largely conformed to the dominant negative approach when it comes to minorities. As a result, its representatives remain hostile to the idea that they constitute a “minority,” interpreting any similar categorization as an effort to further diminish the status of their community and cancel any efforts to be treated as equal citizens. Regardless of their status and the recognition—or lack thereof—of their distinct ethno-cultural character, Roma in Greece remain highly marginalized not only due to their social vulnerability but also because of their distinct ethnic characteristics and the prevalence of antigypsyism (Iliadis, 2020, pp. 52–53).

Although many Roma have been living in the country since its establishment in the 1830s, and others arrived during the 1920s, the majority of Roma acquired nationality during the 1960s and 1970s. Yet, their nominal legal-political inclusion obscures the ethno-cultural exclusion that they still face, evident in their interactions with national and local institutions. Roma communities in Greece confront endemic poverty, residential segregation, educational exclusion, and systemic occupational discrimination, resulting in acute marginalization (Lydaki, 2013, p. 12).

Turkish consulate and not to the Greek constitutional order” (<https://newsbulletin247.com/politics/338184.html>, accessed 13.02.2024). Despite these accusations, the issue was largely forgotten after the second election round, even though the same minority members were reelected in the Greek Parliament. It was not brought up either when the president of Turkey officially visited Greece soon thereafter.

According to research findings, Greece ranks at the bottom within the enlarged EU concerning the access and participation of Roma in crucial aspects of life. The country occupies the last or one of the last positions regarding access to education, housing, employment, and health. The extent of exclusion faced by the Roma becomes especially apparent when compared to the corresponding indicators of the general population in the country. For instance, a survey conducted in 2021 by the Fundamental Rights Association (FRA) in ten European countries revealed that the percentage of Roma living under the threat of poverty in Greece is nearly universal, reaching 96%, in contrast to 18% of the general population. Similarly, 84% of Roma in Greece were found to be unable to access basic goods—a percentage that is the highest among the countries included in the relevant survey, with the average being 50% (FRA, 2022, pp. 26–27).

The impact of material deprivation is also evident in the housing conditions of the Roma population. In Europe, half of the Roma community resides in substandard housing, with Greece topping the list at 68%, second only to Romania (FRA, 2022, p. 52). Furthermore, Greece stands out with the highest percentage of Roma living in homes lacking the necessary number of rooms, reaching 94%, surpassing the European average of 82%. The pervasive poverty among the Roma is intricately linked to their access to employment, as Greece reports a dismal record of only 33% of Greek Roma being formally employed, ranking as the third worst among the surveyed countries. Finally, the prevalence of antigypsyism, a form of racism directed against the Roma, is alarming. Survey data reveals that nearly half of the respondents in the country experienced discrimination as Roma individuals while seeking employment in the past 12 months (FRA, 2022, p. 46).

While no European country can claim a good record on Roma inclusion, Greece is among those at the bottom. Relevant policies remain fragmented and scattered, lacking expertise, and often place the burden of inclusion on the shoulders of those who are to be included. A perception that the Roma do not want to integrate and

prefer to live marginalized is widespread among both the authorities and the public (Iliadis, 2020, p. 64). As a result, despite being citizens, Roma face significant barriers in their efforts to access fundamental rights and essential services, with many of these barriers remaining unaddressed.

2.5 Migrants and Refugees

The historically hegemonic relationship between national identity and a sovereign state has been shaken during the last decades as Greece entered the European Union, and because of mass migration. Since the 1990s, critical voices have brought attention to the suppression of cultural diversity, the denial of minority rights, and the repressive policies employed in various periods. Simultaneously, there has been strong criticism of the mechanisms that framed minorities and cultural diversity as a threat to national integrity. As a result, the conventional wisdom over minorities and diversity has started to “crumble” and the “gospel of official histories” as it has been called, has started to be questioned (Özkirimli & Sofos, 2008, p. 6).

Migration during the 1990s and 2000s served as a catalyst for Greece to begin revisiting the close connection of the state and a homogeneous national identity. Even before the rapid increase in refugee flows in 2015, termed a “refugee crisis,” third-country nationals, both regular and irregular, were estimated to comprise over 10 percent of the population (Triantafyllidou, 2014, p. 411). Despite the substantial numbers of people settling in the country, Greece has been seen itself as *transit*, and migrants were expected to continue their journey toward Western Europe. This view increased the tendency to ignore the existence of differences and hindered the development of integration or inclusion policies (Papataxiarchis, 2014, pp. 28–29).

It was not until 2005 that the first legislation related to migration was adopted, primarily addressing residence and work permits, aiming to establish equality before the law and deeming it sufficient for migrants’ integration into the host society. As recently as 2014, all working permits

for all migrants in the country had to be renewed on an annual basis, indicating a presumed “temporary status,” despite many individuals undergoing the same process for multiple years. Moreover, despite being a destination for migrants, Greece did not formulate an “integration strategy” until 2013–23 years after the first wave began and only in response to request from the European Commission. However, even this so-called “strategy” was a blend of general values, drawn from the European Commission’s integration framework, and fragmented, uncoordinated activities primarily geared toward assimilation, contradicting its own stated values. As articulated in a quote from the strategy, “structural integration will become possible only when migrants accept *Greekness* as the dominant cultural characteristic of the reception country” (Mavrommatis, 2017 p. 6; National Strategy, 2013, pp. 56–57, *emphasis added*).

Upon entering the country, migrants and refugees, particularly those from other Balkan countries, were confronted with a dichotomy: marginalization or assimilation. The options were even more limited for those arriving from sub-Saharan Africa, who were not given a choice at all. Migrant integration and naturalization policies, especially toward non-ethnic Greek migrants have been notably unfavorable. Greece initially positioned itself as a transit point, anticipating migrants to continue their journey to Western Europe, largely overlooking the existence of cultural differences. However, as the country gradually adjusted to the new realities, it had to develop policies aimed at fostering the accommodation of migrants (Christopoulos, 2017, p. 2).

The so-called “refugee crisis” of 2015–2016 was merely a moment in the long history of migration toward Greece and a continuous process of trying to deal—or rather *not* to deal—with new cultural differences. Despite millions of people arriving in the Greek islands, the majority eventually continued their journey to the rest of Europe. As a result, steps toward their inclusion remained limited and Greece witnessed minimal overall progress. As illustrated by the widely used Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), Greece has maintained stability in most indicators

over the last 15 years. In the most recent report (2020) the country is ranked as “equality on paper” and categorized as “halfway favourable,” with an average score of 46 on the 100-point scale. While achievements are observed in categories such as anti-discrimination and labor market mobility, the lowest score is in the category “political participation,” which is close to zero.

2.6 The Paradigmatic Debate on the Citizenship Code

The debate over Greek citizenship has reflected the significant impact of the prolonged presence of individuals with a migrant background and the need to incorporate them into democratic practices, prompting substantial changes in the legislation that outlines formal belonging—the citizenship code. However, the reform not only occurred belatedly but also faced significant setbacks.

In order for the country to adapt to the reality that emerged after prolonged exposure to the migration issue, it was deemed essential to enhance democratic participation, leading to the introduction of a new citizenship code in 2010 and again in 2015. However, this transformation was not without resistance, as it encountered strong opposition from those adhering to traditional notions of ethnic homogeneity. With over two decades of mass migration to Greece, pressure mounted to challenge traditional conceptions of citizenship associated with *jus sanguinis*. Amid the turmoil of the Greek crises concerning the economy and refugees, a rupture occurred in the link between the “citizen” and the “co-national,” challenging conventional notions of who should acquire citizenship and the manner in which it should be obtained (Mhurchú, 2010, p. 375).

The new citizenship code of 2010, which replaced that of 1955, marked a significant departure by introducing voting rights for migrants in local elections. Under the new framework, citizenship became a right for individuals meeting specific criteria, and official authorities became accountable and obliged to provide justifications

for potential rejections. This represented a notable shift from the previous paradigm where citizenship was an exclusive prerogative of the state, directly tied to the preservation of the “national community” and reflective of state sovereignty. Prior to this reform, applications for citizenship could remain unprocessed for extended periods, sometimes spanning decades, particularly if deemed in the “national interest” (Christopoulos, 2017, p. 3).

After a vigorous public debate on the eligibility for Greek citizenship and whether migrants should be granted the right to vote in local elections, key provisions of the citizenship code, including voting rights, were declared unconstitutional in 2012 by the Council of State of Greece. The judges’ rationale was evidently rooted in an endeavor to safeguard what they perceived as the Greek national community, aiming to prevent any perceived dilution of its character by preserving the historical connection between the two. To quote the court ruling:

[...] the legitimacy of state power is based on the will of the people, but it also lies and is exercised in the interest of the nation, an entity that exceeds in time the living Community of people [...]. The way of attributing the Greek nationality must be carried out under preconditions that do not negate the national character of the State [...] This is because the above-mentioned preconditions set by the legislator for granting Greek citizenship may lead to the annulment of the constitutionally guaranteed national character of the State. (Council of State 2013, articles 9 and 16, drawn from Christopoulos, 2017, p. 8)

This extract reveals an understanding of the nation as an autonomous, sovereign entity that could be jeopardized if citizenship becomes more inclusive. The Supreme Court’s stance suggests a perceived linkage between the national community and a sovereign state, emphasizing the need for this connection to endure. The Supreme Court’s decision impeded access to citizenship for thousands of migrants and their children before a revised version of the Code was eventually ratified in 2015, amid an unprecedented economic and political crisis and just months before the peak of arrivals on the Greek coast (Triantafyllidou, 2014, pp. 414–418).

The new version advocated for a more inclusive approach, leading to the restoration of access to citizenship. However, this revised version fell short of the 2010 original, as several provisions, including the right to vote, were not reinstated. Further revisions, particularly in 2020 with Law 4735, introduced additional barriers to the process, making it even more stringent, even for those born and raised in the country by migrant parents—the so-called “second generation.” Consequently, the already delicate transition from a national to a more inclusive form of belonging was further weakened.

Despite the challenges, approximately 200,000 individuals acquired Greek citizenship between 2011 and 2018 under the provisions of the new code, with the majority being migrant children born in Greece or having studied in the country. This shift is particularly significant when compared to the pre-2007 period, where fewer than 2,000 individuals per year obtained Greek citizenship, mainly those considered of the same soil or “homogeneous” (Ministry of Interior, 2019).

The naturalization of individuals with diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, distinct from those traditionally integrated into the Greek “imagined community,” and the growing numbers of people with migrant and refugee backgrounds living in the country have unsettled the notion of cultural homogeneity. This has opened up possibilities for inclusion, irrespective of legal provisions and political decisions. A notable example is the national pride surrounding basketball player Giannis Antetokounmpo, born in Greece to Nigerian parents without a declared nationality. Importantly, he acquired Greek citizenship only after turning 18 and joining the NBA. The enthusiasm generated by his achievements in the American basketball league and the involvement of him and his brothers with the Greek national basketball team suggest a significant shift in how the concept of “Greek” is symbolized.

2.7 LGBTI

In early 2024, Greece is immersed in a heated debate over the equal rights of gay couples to

marry. Since 2015, gay couples have been able to enter into a civil partnership agreement, which holds legal equivalence to a wedding. However, the prohibition on having an actual civic wedding has persisted, carrying symbolic significance and affecting their ability to adopt children.

Despite facing opposition from various quarters, including the official church, gay rights have made significant strides. Therefore, in early 2024, legal equality was extended to also include a civic ceremony for gay couples. This granted them equality in nearly all related domains, with the exception of obtaining children through a surrogate mother. Symbolically, it is expected to contribute to the social acceptance of gay couples.

Nevertheless, research indicates that there is still considerable progress required for LGBTI equality, despite legal advancements. In 2017 a law allowed individuals to change their gender identity on official documents without undergoing surgery—a positive step toward recognizing and respecting the rights of transgender individuals. However, members of the LGBTI community continue to face discrimination, intolerance, prejudice, harassment, and violence in their daily lives (FRA, 2020). This underscores the central point emphasized in this chapter. While Greece, as a long-standing member of the EU, has adopted legal standards ensuring equality under the law, achieving social inclusion and securing rights for these groups necessitates further steps and robust mechanisms which are lacking. Despite the existence of legal equality, there remains a significant gap in realizing broader social inclusion and rights access for members belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups.

3 Conclusion

Historically, minorities in Greece have been entangled in the dichotomy between assimilation and marginalization. Since the 1990s, there has been a gradual shift toward securing legal equal treatment and rights. To address emerging realities and challenges, new legislation and inclusion policies have been introduced, particularly

concerning the naturalization of migrants and their descendants and, more recently, the rights of sexual minorities. However, these initiatives appear to be cautious and delayed responses that align with existing social conditions rather than actively fostering inclusion. Consequently, the prioritization of inclusive measures has been notably lacking. Inclusion policies, often crafted in response to EU mandates, tend to reflect an assimilationist logic. Even when implemented, they are frequently perceived as equality above the law, resulting in limited provisions for securing equal access to legal rights and services, as well as increasing participation and equal treatment in everyday life. Furthermore, there is a notable absence of recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity. This highlights a deficient level of inclusion competence characterized by slow progress and numerous setbacks.

Hence, Greece falls short in ensuring comprehensive protection and enduring rights for culturally minority groups. This is particularly pronounced for longstanding ethnic communities like the Roma and the Muslim-Turks in Thrace, where progress toward their inclusion appears to be sluggish. The commitment to equal opportunities is weak and individuals from these groups encounter substantial obstacles in realizing their rights and accessing opportunities, despite being legally considered equal.

Transformations of recent years in the composition of the Greek population have given rise to new collective entities and new demands for recognition and protection of their ethno-cultural and ethnoreligious differences. These challenges question the traditional monocultural approach to the Greek people and disrupt established hegemonic collective identities. The way the country will respond to these processes will significantly affect the quality of its democracy.

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