

GREECE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Greece is a constitutional republic and multiparty parliamentary democracy. On November 11, a new “unity” government composed of the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), the New Democracy (ND) party, and the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) party was sworn in, with Lucas Papademos as prime minister. Security forces reported to civilian authorities.

The most important human rights problem during the year concerned the government’s treatment of undocumented migrants, including unaccompanied minors, detained for long periods pending disposition of their cases in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions and sometimes allegedly subjected to physical abuse by security forces. There were also reports of harsh prison conditions as well as discrimination against Roma and exploitation of Romani children.

Other human rights problems cited during the year included alleged abuse of detainees by security forces, laws restricting freedom of speech, restrictions on religious freedom, deportation of unaccompanied immigrant minors, inadequate reception capacity or legal aid for asylum seekers and refugees, domestic violence, incidents of anti-Semitism, trafficking in persons, limits on the freedom of certain ethnic minority groups to self-identify, and discrimination against and social exclusion of ethnic minorities. There were also allegations of excessive use of force against protestors during violent demonstrations in which police officers were also injured.

The government took steps to prosecute and punish officials who committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the government.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law prohibits such practices and provides safeguards for criminal suspects and undocumented immigrants in detention. However, during the year several international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) alleged abuse by police personnel and the coast guard, particularly of undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers. In October Reporters without Borders claimed that police officers attacked journalists covering antiausterity protests and strikes in Athens.

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Manfred Nowak reported receiving numerous allegations of mistreatment by law enforcement officers, both upon arrest and during detention in police stations; criminal investigation departments; border guard stations, and migrant detention centers. The report of the Committee for Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) of its January 19-27 visit noted a deterioration in detention and prison conditions throughout the country and maintained the country had not implemented long-standing CPT recommendations.

In May the Hellenic National Police authority suspended three police officers from duty for their role in allegedly injuring a demonstrator during a violent protest in Athens, where demonstrators attacked the parliament building and police with Molotov cocktails, bricks, and stones. Demonstrations occurred throughout the year, many of them violent. Often demonstrators and police officers sustained injuries; yet charges generally were not filed. Some NGOs alleged that police used excessive force in efforts to control the violence; however, the police were not responsible for all of the injuries demonstrators sustained.

On December 13, a police officer was sentenced to a six-year suspended sentence for the aggravated torturing with electrical shocks of two young men in Aspropyrgos (Attica area) in August 2002. On December 19, the courts sentenced two police officers to suspended prison sentences of five years and five-and-a-half years respectively for beating Afghans during a police raid in an Athens apartment building in December 2004. The officers appealed the sentences.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Conditions in prisons and detention facilities did not meet international standards.

According to local and international organizations, including the deputy ombudsman for human rights, Doctors without Borders, the CPT, Amnesty International, the Agency for Fundamental Rights, and the UN special rapporteur, Greece continued to face a humanitarian crisis in the detention of illegal immigrants as well as in its prison system.

In March UN Special Rapporteur Nowak announced he had received numerous reports of mistreatment in police stations, border guard stations, and migrant detention centers. Many detainees claimed police officers and border guards had physically or verbally abused them. The allegations primarily concerned kicks, slaps, and punches. In the downtown Athens area of Omonia, detainees were allegedly blindfolded and handcuffed before being beaten. At the Soufli Border Guard Station, detainees mentioned kicks and slaps, adding that guards pushed them when they did not follow orders immediately or complained.

The UN special rapporteur also expressed his extreme concern about undocumented immigrants held in overcrowded and poor conditions, which amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment. He indicated that pregnant women, lone women with small children, and unaccompanied minors were particularly vulnerable. He underscored that unaccompanied minors often were not registered properly, were systematically detained, and frequently housed with adults. At the Feres Border Station in Thrace (northern Greece), the UN special rapporteur found 123 detainees in a facility designed for 28. He stated also that conditions at the long-term detention centers in Fylakio and Venna were inadequate to meet the most basic needs of detainees.

The UN special rapporteur found that many police stations had converted spaces into facilities for the detention of aliens awaiting deportation, but such facilities were not suitable for prolonged detentions of up to six months. Specifically, they often lacked an outside exercise area, had insufficient natural lighting and poor ventilation, and were frequently overcrowded, with detainees forced to share mattresses or sleep on the floor. At the Athens police stations of Omonia, Aghios Panteleimonas, and Acropolis, the special rapporteur found more than 40 foreigners held in irregular and apparently unofficial detention areas that reportedly were overcrowded with insufficient lighting, ventilation, and bedding. The detainees were forced to sleep on benches or on the floor for extended periods and had severely limited access to drinking water or toilets. As a result many

detainees reported respiratory, skin, and psychological problems. Access to medical care was very limited.

In January the CPT issued a public statement harshly criticizing detention conditions of undocumented migrants and the unacceptable state of the prison system. The CPT noted that the situation in police stations, border guard installations, and prisons had declined. The CPT also observed a steady deterioration in the living conditions and treatment of prisoners over the past decade.

The deputy ombudsman for human rights, the CPT, and the UN special rapporteur maintained that prisons were severely overcrowded, with some (Korydallos, Komotini) containing three times more prisoners than their maximum capacity. The total number was approximately 12,700, while prison capacity was about 9,100; there were 510 juveniles and 554 female prisoners.

Prisoners had access to visitors and could observe religious practices. They could submit complaints to the judicial authorities without censorship. The authorities investigated allegations of inhumane conditions.

A few sporadic prison protests and hunger strikes took place during the year.

In May the Ministry of Justice announced the adoption of a recommendation of the deputy ombudsman for human rights to desist from body cavity searches of female prisoners and ordered such searches to be conducted only by a medical doctor based on risk assessment. Treatment of female prisoners improved after the cessation of body cavity searches. During the year all four detention centers in Thrace had on staff a nurse, social worker, and interpreter to assist the detainees.

The government permitted monitoring of conditions at prisons and detention centers by independent nongovernmental observers including local and international humanitarian organizations such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the CPT, Doctors without Borders, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Greek Council of Refugees, Medical Intervention, and the deputy ombudsman for human rights. The ombudsman for human rights conducted frequent short-notice visits to prisons throughout the country.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention. However, police continued to conduct large-scale sweeps and temporarily detained large numbers of immigrants, sometimes in crowded and squalid conditions, while determining their residency status.

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

The police are responsible for law enforcement and the maintenance of order within the country; the coast guard is responsible for law enforcement in territorial waters. Both agencies are under the authority of the Ministry of Citizen Protection. The police and the army jointly shared law enforcement duties in certain border areas. Civilian authorities generally maintained effective control over the police and coast guard. The Hellenic Police Internal Affairs Unit investigated allegations of corruption and police impunity. The 2010 report of the Internal Police Affairs Unit noted a 101 percent increase in corruption cases (from 389 to 785) since 2009 in the police and the public sector in general. The increase included a 78 percent increase in cases involving police officers and a 246 percent increase in cases involving public employees.

Based on a law prohibiting the expression of racist ideas, human rights NGOs in March 2010 filed a protest letter with the Athens prosecutor regarding a coast guard unit (39 members) that chanted racist slogans during the Independence Day (March 25) parade in Athens that year. The prosecutor filed charges against unit members. In December two of the 39 defendants were convicted and each sentenced to a three and a half month suspended prison sentence; the others were all acquitted.

During the year police and coast guard personnel received training from government ministries, regional and international organizations, NGOs, and service academies. Subjects included antiracism, antitrafficking and victim identification, asylum-seeker recognition, witness protection and interviewing, and crowd control.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention

The law requires judicial warrants for arrests except during the commission of a crime and prohibits arbitrary arrest. In practice police did not always follow these provisions.

Police are required to bring detainees before an examining magistrate within 24 hours. During this period the magistrate must issue a detention warrant or order the detainee's release; these provisions were generally observed in practice. Pretrial detention may last up to 18 months, depending on the severity of the crime. A panel of judges may release detainees pending trial. Pretrial detainees made up approximately 40 percent of those incarcerated and contributed to prison overcrowding, according to figures provided by the Ministry of Justice.

Some defense lawyers and legal activists asserted that, while pretrial detention was supposedly reserved for exceptional cases, it had become the norm. They also maintained that the detention period was excessively long. Bail is available for defendants detained on felony charges and for lesser offenses unless a judicial officer deems the defendant a flight risk. The law provides detainees the right to contact a close relative or third party, consult with a lawyer, and have access to medical services, and authorities generally respected these rights. Only indigent defendants facing felony charges are provided legal representation by the bar association. While authorities generally informed detainees promptly of charges against them, foreign detainees occasionally did not have access to a court-appointed interpreter. According to UN Special Rapporteur Nowak's 2010 report, authorities gave foreign detainees information packets in multiple languages describing the asylum procedure and their rights as detainees, although not always promptly.

Individuals accused of misdemeanors could be tried under expedited procedures. While such defendants enjoyed the right to counsel, the short time period allegedly limited their ability to present an adequate defense. Defendants may request a delay to prepare a defense, but the court is not obliged to grant their requests. Expedited procedures were used in less than 10 percent of applicable cases.

Pretrial Detention: The pretrial detention rate was approximately 41 percent of cases. While legislation provides for separation of pretrial detainees and convicted prisoners, local and international NGOs alleged this distinction did not exist in practice due to lack of infrastructure and capacity. Litigation, particularly in civil cases, could take many years, as courts were overburdened with cases and understaffed.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The law provides for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected this provision in practice. However, observers reported the judiciary was

inefficient and sometimes subject to influence and corruption. The judiciary occasionally was more lenient toward those claiming political motives for acts of property destruction than those who did not. For example anarchists frequently received suspended sentences in lieu of prison time or fines. Authorities generally respected court orders, and there were no reported instances in which the outcome of trials appeared predetermined.

Trial Procedures

The law provides for the right to a fair trial, and an independent judiciary generally enforced this right. Defendants enjoy a presumption of innocence. Trials are public in most instances, and juries are used in most felony cases. The law permits denial of a jury trial in cases of violent terrorism. Defendants have the right to be present at trial and consult with an attorney in a timely manner. Indigent defendants facing felony charges are provided an attorney. Defendants may question prosecution witnesses and present witnesses and evidence on their own behalf. Defendants and their attorneys have access to government-held evidence relevant to their cases. They have the right to appeal.

Defendants who do not speak Greek have the right to a court-appointed interpreter. Some NGOs reported during the year that the quality and availability of interpreters for non-Greek speakers varied from trial to trial.

The government recognizes Shari'a (Islamic law) as the law regulating family and civic issues of the Muslim minority in Thrace. Muslims married by a government-appointed mufti are subject to Shari'a family law. Members of the Muslim minority also have the right to a civil marriage and to take their cases to civil court.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

Regional Human Rights Court Decisions

On three occasions during the year, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) found that the country had violated provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights with regard to the right to a fair trial within a reasonable period. The country paid the compensation ordered by the court.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

There is a generally independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters. The law provides citizens with the ability to sue the government for compensation for alleged violations of rights. Individuals may seek civil remedies for human rights violations and appeal decisions to the ECHR. Restitution is available. The government complied with domestic and ECHR decisions.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, or correspondence. However, NGOs such as the Greek Helsinki Monitor reported that authorities did not always respect these provisions in practice, as evidenced during alleged police raids of Romani settlements.

According to NGOs, the police and prosecutors conducting raids and searches of Romani and immigrant neighborhoods, frequently entered homes in search of criminal suspects, drugs, and weapons without authorization.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

Status of Freedom of Speech and Press

The constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, and the government generally respected these rights in practice

Freedom of Speech: Individuals could criticize the government publicly or privately without reprisal, and the government did not impede criticism. However, the law provides for prosecution of individuals who “intentionally incite others to actions that could provoke discrimination, hatred, or violence against persons or groups of persons on the basis of their race or ethnic origin or who express ideas insulting to persons or to groups of persons because of their race or ethnic origin.”

Freedom of Press: Independent media were active and expressed a wide variety of views. The law permits any prosecutor to order the seizure of publications that insult the president, offend any religion, contain obscenity, advocate the violent overthrow of the political system, or disclose military secrets. The government did not enforce this law during the year. According to the law, the National Radio and Television Council, an independent regulatory agency, supervises radio and

television broadcasts. The law requires that television stations broadcast at least 25 percent of their programming in Greek; the percentage for radio broadcasting varies. The law also requires national radio and television stations to broadcast 24 hours a day and sets requirements for minimum capitalization and numbers of employees. In recent years the representative on the freedom of media of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has called for the lowering of these requirements, arguing that their high level made it difficult for minority, community, and low-cost broadcasters to receive authorization, thereby endangering media pluralism.

Libel Laws/National Security: The law provides criminal penalties for defamation. Nonetheless, in most criminal defamation cases, defendants were released on bail pending trial and served no time in jail.

In December 2010 a civil court fined two Thracian Turkish-language newspapers, *Gundem* and *Millet*, under the defamation law for articles criticizing a Greek teacher in a Muslim minority school. The teacher sued the newspapers, and the court ordered them to pay 150,000 euros (\$195,000) and 120,000 euros (\$156,000), respectively. The newspapers appealed the decision, and the case was pending in the appeals court. The newspapers' editors alleged that the "unprecedentedly high" compensation ordered by the court could result in their bankruptcy.

The law provides for the government to exercise "immediate control" over radio and television stations in case of national emergency and establishes ownership limits on media frequencies. State-operated stations relayed the government's views but also reported objectively other parties' positions.

Internet Freedom

There were no government restrictions on access to the Internet or reports that the government monitored e-mail or Internet chat rooms. Individuals and groups could engage in the peaceful expression of views via the Internet, including by e-mail.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

There were no government restrictions on academic freedom or cultural events. There were no reports of interference with cultural events of various ethnic groups.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Freedom of Assembly

The constitution and law provide for freedom of assembly, and the government generally respected this right in practice.

Freedom of Association

Although the law provides for freedom of association, the government continued to place legal restrictions on the names of associations of nationals who self-identify as ethnic Macedonians or associations that included the term “Turkish” (see section 6, National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities).

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State’s *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/j/drl/irf/rpt.

d. Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons

The constitution and law provide for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation for all citizens, and the government generally respected these rights in practice. The government cooperated with the UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers.

Foreign Travel: NGOs and international organizations noted that immigrants with temporary residence permits faced prolonged delays in renewing their permits, sometimes resulting in the denial of their right to return to the country, and consequently creating practical limits to their foreign travel. Many of the country’s estimated one million immigrants were in a semi legal status, holding expired residency permits while undergoing the renewal process. During the year NGOs reported multiple instances of immigrants subjected to summary deportation without legal due process. The law provides for legalization of undocumented immigrants who can prove by a visa stamp or possession of a tax roll number that they entered the country before 2005. Nevertheless, the ombudsman noted that this system of legalization remained disorganized, and there was no database of residence permit holders.

Citizenship: The law permits the government to deprive a person of citizenship for committing acts contrary to the country's interests for the benefit of a foreign state. Historically, the number of such cases was low, and there were no reports of new cases during the year.

Protection of Refugees

Access to Asylum: The country's laws provide for the granting of asylum and humanitarian protection. While the government has established a system for refugee protection, it was widely regarded as inadequate, given the large numbers of illegal immigrants entering the country. According to government figures, 98,368 persons were detected arriving in Greece illegally during the year, posing special problems for the country and the capacity of its asylum system. The UNHCR, Amnesty International, the UN special rapporteur on torture, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the deputy ombudsman for human rights, Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Doctors without Borders all expressed concern about the country's asylum policy and practices. Specific problems included unacceptable living conditions; lack of permanent reception centers and the use of ad hoc facilities (primarily on islands where boatloads of refugees arrive); underdeveloped refugee welfare systems; insufficient counseling to assist in the integration of refugees and asylum seekers; a lack of appropriate facilities for unaccompanied minors; and deficient interpretation and legal counseling for asylum seekers, especially at entry points.

The Hellenic National Police's Asylum Office reported that from January to November asylum seekers filed 8,525 first-time applications. During the same period the government reviewed 10,850 applications and appeals and accorded refugee status to 85 applicants (1.9 percent) and special humanitarian status to 69 (1.3 percent).

According to new asylum legislation passed in January, asylum decisions must be issued within three months in an accelerated process and within six months for regular applications. The UNHCR noted that the enactment of this law led to progress during the year, and more than 30 percent of applications were approved at the appeals level. However, problems related to access and registration of claims and detention conditions of irregular entrants persisted.

In his May report the deputy ombudsman for human rights asserted that individuals who should be protected did not have access to the asylum process, while

economic migrants used and exploited the asylum system to secure their presence in the country.

Nonrefoulement: In practice the government provided only limited protection against the expulsion or return of refugees to countries where their lives or freedom would be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Many NGOs and international organizations reported that authorities summarily deported illegal immigrants, including asylum seekers, across Greek-Turkish land and maritime borders.

Refugee Abuse: Local and international NGOs found conditions for illegal immigrants and asylum seekers detained by authorities to be generally unsatisfactory, specifically criticizing detention procedures and facilities for refugees and asylum seekers as inadequate. Conditions for undocumented immigrants and asylum-seeking children were particularly difficult. During the year the UNHCR and local and international NGOs, including Amnesty International and Doctors without Borders, on several occasions found unaccompanied minors incarcerated along with adults in detention centers in degrading, inhumane, and unsanitary conditions. The UNHCR reported that an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 unaccompanied minors arrived in the country each year. Unaccompanied immigrant children lacked safe accommodations or legal guardians and were vulnerable to homelessness and labor exploitation.

In 2009 the ECRI noted with concern that the law allows for the deportation of unaccompanied minors, and that unaccompanied minors were served deportation orders with no specific date of deportation and no interim housing pending departure. The deputy ombudsman for children's rights informed the ECRI that social workers were responsible for the guardianship of unaccompanied minors, but in practice they did not fulfill their responsibility due to a lack of funds and guidelines. In September after visiting detention centers in the Evros region, HRW alleged the country's authorities were holding migrants, including members of vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children, for weeks or months in conditions that amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment. HRW also found men and women colocated in overcrowded cells and unaccompanied minors housed in packed cells with adult men. Beds were scarce, toilet and washing facilities almost nonexistent, medical help rare, and beatings common for protesters. HRW further noted that, in some border centers, sewage was running on the floors; the smell was almost unbearable, prompting guards to wear surgical masks when entering the passageway between the large, barred cells. The report

also included detainees' accounts of protests, riots, and beatings at the detention center in Fylakio, Evros.

On January 21, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that M. S. S., an Afghan translator who first arrived in Greece in 2008 and later applied for asylum in Belgium, should not have been deported from Belgium to Greece, where he faced degrading and inhuman treatment. In January 2010 UNHCR Antonio Gutierrez advised European states which apply the Dublin II regulation on asylum not to return asylum seekers to Greece as provided under the regulation pending the implementation of asylum reforms.

Section 3. Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The constitution and law provide citizens the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right in practice through periodic, free, and fair elections based on universal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: The country's parliamentary elections in 2009 were considered free and fair.

Participation of Women and Minorities: There were 51 women in the 300-seat parliament and two women in the 18-member cabinet. A quota system requires that 30 percent of all parties' candidates for local government be women. At the three highest courts, 14 of 61 Council of State justices, 28 of 59 Supreme Administrative Court justices, and three of 62 Supreme Court justices were women.

There were two members of the Muslim minority of Thrace in the parliament; there were no minority members in the cabinet.

Approximately one-third of the Romani population was not registered to vote.

Section 4. Official Corruption and Government Transparency

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption. While the previous government (October 2009 to November 2011) took some concrete actions, the media, international organizations, and NGOs continued to voice concerns about

corruption. In September 2010 the public prosecutor's office set up a new unit to facilitate prosecution of economic/financial crimes in the public sector. Authorities designed the unit to work closely with the financial and economic crime unit of the Ministry of Finance and the internal affairs division of the State Police, which was responsible for corruption cases across the public sector.

Reports of police corruption continued. During the year the police bureau of internal affairs took multiple disciplinary measures, including dismissal and suspension, against officers involved in corruption. Police misdeeds primarily involved forging documents, taking bribes, illegal actions involving arms and explosives, illegally releasing persons from custody, procuring, and violations related to alien registration.

There are income disclosure laws for high-ranking public officials and members of parliament. Such information was generally provided and made public.

The law provides for the right of access to government-held information. However, NGOs and media observers noted that access to information was sometimes difficult in practice because of bureaucratic delays.

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A variety of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were often cooperative and responsive to their views.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The law provides for an independent ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman provided an effective means for citizens to report human rights problems. The office received adequate resources to perform its various functions, which included mediating between private individuals and public administrators and defending and promoting children's rights.

There were five deputy ombudsmen who dealt, respectively, with human rights, children's rights, citizen-state relations, health and social welfare, and quality of life problems. The deputy ombudsman for human rights received complaints during the year regarding the government's handling of residence and work provisions for immigrants; overcrowding in prisons and detention centers for

illegal aliens; social exclusion of vulnerable groups such as Roma and migrants; confiscation of Romani properties because of unpaid housing loans; problems in the asylum and visa processes; arbitrary and unjustified administrative decisions related to professional rights and registration in professional associations; unjustified procedural difficulties in acquiring citizenship; discrimination against aliens; police brutality; and an increase in crime and homelessness in the center of Athens.

The government-funded National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) is an autonomous human rights body that advises the government on the protection of human rights. It is composed of representatives of the government, labor unions, political parties, civil society organizations, independent authorities, and academics. During the year it produced public reports (available on the Internet at <http://www.nchr.gr/>) on the situation in detention centers, violence during demonstrations, and the implementation of ECHR rulings.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. However, the government did not protect these rights consistently in practice.

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: Rape, including spousal rape, is a crime. Conviction rates for rape were low for first-time offenders, but sentences were robust for repeat offenders. According to police statistics 215 rape or attempted rape cases were reported in 2010. Medical, psychological, social, and legal support was usually available to rape victims from the government and NGOs.

Domestic violence, including spousal abuse, continued to be a problem. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), an independent government agency, reported that domestic violence was common and developed policies to combat it. The law provides for prosecution of all domestic violence crimes, without the need for a victim to press charges. Penalties range from two to 10 years' imprisonment, depending on the gravity of the crime. The GSGE estimated that only 6 to 10 percent of domestic violence victims contacted the police, and only a small fraction of those complaints went to trial. The GSGE received 2,957 calls from victims of domestic violence since the establishment of the women's abuse hotline in March.

The GSGE, in cooperation with the Ministry of Citizen Protection, trained police on working with domestic violence victims. Despite training efforts the GSGE reported police tended to discourage women from pursuing domestic violence charges, encouraging them instead to undertake reconciliation. NGOs reported that courts were lenient to male offenders in domestic violence cases. Police stations generally had a manual on how police should treat victims of domestic violence.

The GSGE provided counseling and assistance to domestic violence victims. Two GSGE shelters for battered women and their children, in Athens and Piraeus, offered services including legal and psychological help. The GSGE operated a 24-hour emergency telephone hotline for abused women, and the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity operated a hotline providing referrals and psychological counseling for victims of domestic violence. The municipality of Athens, the Greek Orthodox Church, and a variety of NGOs also operated shelters and walk-in centers and provided counseling and assistance to such victims.

Government statistics on the extent of rape, domestic violence, and spousal abuse were either unavailable or outdated. Data on prosecutions, convictions, and prison sentences for rape and domestic violence crimes were unavailable.

Sexual Harassment: The law prohibits sexual harassment and provides penalties ranging from two months to five years in prison. The ombudsman for human rights reported a “very low” number of complaints of sexual harassment in 2010, with only 13 cases submitted, all by women. The ombudsman complained that addressing sexual harassment cases was difficult, since there was often a lack of evidence and testimonies to support allegations.

The Center for Research on Gender Equality Issues reported that the vast majority of women who experienced sexual harassment in the workplace did not file charges; some quit their jobs. The center estimated that 30 to 50 percent of working women and 10 percent of working men experienced sexual harassment at their workplaces each year.

Reproductive Rights: The government generally respected the reproductive rights of couples and individuals. Contraception was widely available in stores and hospitals, and the government respected the rights of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing, and timing of their children. Public hospitals provided services free of charge; consequently, any health issues

typically surfaced only after a woman returned to her community, which might have substandard facilities. Both public and private hospitals provided modern skilled attendance during childbirth. Women and men had equal access to diagnostic services and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases.

Discrimination: Muslim women in Thrace may choose to be subject to Shari'a law as interpreted by official muftis; separately, according to the UN independent expert on minority issues, women's rights under family law, property law, and in the judicial system are inferior to those of men. The government recognizes Shari'a as the law regulating the family and civic issues of the Muslim minority in Thrace, with local trial courts routinely ratifying the muftis' decisions. The UN independent expert on minority issues in 2009 highlighted that the application of Shari'a in some instances subjected Muslim women to norms incompatible with the constitution, legislation, and international standards. She further noted the situation of women in Romani and Muslim communities was of particular concern. According to the UN report, Muslim women experienced severe inequalities in access to education and consequently suffered disproportionately high levels of illiteracy and unemployment.

The NCHR advised the government to limit the powers of the muftis to religious duties and to stop recognizing Shari'a because it could restrict the civil rights of citizens. Muslim female activists claimed that, since the overwhelming majority of Muslim women in Thrace were married under Shari'a, they were obliged to acquire a mufti's consent to obtain a divorce. These decisions were based on interpretations of Shari'a that do not exist in written form and therefore could not be appealed. Members of the Muslim minority in Thrace can also use the services of the country's civil courts.

Apart from the Muslim minority in Thrace, women have rights equal to those of men, and the constitution stipulates gender equality.

The law provides for equal pay for equal work; however, according to Social Security Institute statistics, there was a 28 percent gap between the salaries of men and women in the country in favor of men. Although relatively few women occupied senior private-sector positions, women continued to enter traditionally male-dominated professions, such as law and medicine, in ever larger numbers. Women were underrepresented in labor-union leadership.

Children

Birth Registration: Citizenship is derived from one's parents at birth. A single parent can confer citizenship to a child, and the country allows for dual citizenship.

A new citizenship law passed in March 2010 grants citizenship rights to alien children born in Greece whose parents have lived legally and permanently in the country for five years. Alien children born abroad to parents who have lived legally and permanently in the country for five years become citizens upon successful completion of elementary education (six years). Foreigners arriving in the country after the new law took effect must fulfill a seven-year legal residency requirement before they can apply for citizenship, which, together with procedural delays, could stretch the wait to a decade. The fee for citizenship applications was recently reduced to 700 euros (\$910) from 1,500 euros (\$1,950).

The law gives immigrant children born in Greece the right to apply for long-term residence permits. NGOs estimated that, of the 200,000 foreign children living in the country, only 30,000 could meet the requirements of the law, which include a fee of 900 euros (\$1,170), a certificate of completion of the mandatory nine years of education in country, and two parents with legal residence permits.

Education: Romani children continued to face discrimination in education (see section 6: National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities), with the lack of transportation to some schools preventing their attendance.

Child Abuse: Violence against children, particularly street and Romani children and undocumented immigrants, remained a problem. The law prohibits corporal punishment and mistreatment of children, but government enforcement was generally ineffective. Welfare laws provide for treatment and prevention programs for abused and neglected children as well as alternative family care or institutional placement for those in need of it. However, government-run institutions were understaffed, and NGOs complained of insufficient places for all children who needed alternative placement. The deputy ombudsman for children's rights reported that the system of child welfare and protection was deficient overall and did not cover increasing needs. In particular social services were not appropriately staffed to handle serious family problems, and welfare allowances and support for single parent families were insufficient. In addition the deputy ombudsman noted that prosecutors responsible for minors, who legally should take measures to protect children in difficult situations, were overloaded with other duties. Understaffed child protection institutions lacked certification and sufficient qualified staff to provide care to abused, refugee, or drug-abusing children.

According to UNICEF and local NGOs, the majority of street children (often indigenous or Albanian Roma) were exploited by family members, who forced them to work in the streets begging or selling small items. Government efforts to prevent this form of child exploitation were inadequate. While national statistics were unavailable, in 2009 the NGO ARSIS reported finding 638 street children in Athens and Thessaloniki. In 2009 and 2010, according to ARSIS, there was a significant rise in the total number of street children, especially Romani children from Bulgaria and Romania. However, the number of street children from Albania declined.

The deputy ombudsman for children's rights cited serious, persistent problems in the Center for Care of Children of Lechaina (Peloponnese) where, due to a lack of staff, children were sedated, tied to their beds, or even confined in wooden cages to limit their mobility.

Child Marriage: The legal age for marriage is 18. However, child marriage was common within the Romani community, and there were a limited numbers of marriages of persons under 18 among the Muslim minority in Thrace and Athens, performed with the permission of the prosecutor. NGOs reported that Romani women typically marry and have children at a very early age, reportedly as young as 13. A tradition in the Romani community, child marriages also stemmed from a lack of education and work opportunities.

The state-appointed muftis, who may apply Shari'a in family matters, noted that the marriage of children under age of 15 is not allowed and, in order to protect children, marriages involving minors between the ages of 16 and 18 required a prosecutor's decision.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: The law criminalizes sex with children under the age of 15. If the victim is under ten years of age, the sentence carries at least ten years imprisonment; if the victim is between 10 and 13, up to ten years; and if the victim is 13 and over, the length of imprisonment is not specified and is determined by the court. The law prohibits the possession and circulation of child pornography, treating it as a felony punishable by five to 10 years' imprisonment.

International Child Abductions: The country is a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. For information see the Department of State's *Report on Compliance* at http://travel.state.gov/abduction/resources/congressreport/congressreport_4308.htm

as well as country-specific information at http://travel.state.gov/abduction/country/country_3781.html.

Anti-Semitism

Local leaders estimated the Jewish community numbered 5,000. Isolated expressions of anti-Semitism occurred, particularly in the extremist press and some blogs.

In November in response to the forming of the new coalition government that included the LAOS party, some of whose members had previously made anti-Semitic remarks, the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece issued an announcement. The announcement emphasized the belief that, while the new government included representatives of a political party whose members had expressed anti-Jewish propaganda, the government would “continue the same policy against racism and anti-Semitism that all previous democratic governments in Greece have maintained... and not allow any violation of the Constitution that provides for the equality of all citizens regardless of race or religion.”

LAOS Party leader Georgios Karatzaferis had made numerous anti-Semitic statements in the past, insinuating that Jews planned the September 11 attacks and denying the existence of the Holocaust. Four members of LAOS held various ministerial positions in the interim Greek government. Minister of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks Maroudis Voridis in 1994 formed an anti-Semitic and nationalist party called “Hellenic Front,” which in 2005 merged with LAOS. Deputy Minister for Regional Development, Competitiveness, and Shipping Adonis Georgiadis also claimed in 2009 that “all major banks belong to the Jews.” Additionally, on his television show Georgiadis publicized Kostas Plevris’ anti-Semitic book *The Jews--the Whole Truth* and was a witness for Plevris in the latter’s lawsuit against members of the Greek Jewish community and NGOs, whom he sued for publicly criticizing judges who had earlier acquitted him of inciting hatred and racial violence with his book. The trial in question of the Greek Helsinki Monitor and Jewish community representatives was postponed.

In April vandals committed an arson attack on a synagogue in Corfu. In May unknown perpetrators desecrated a synagogue in Volos (Central Greece). Unknown perpetrators in June twice desecrated the Holocaust Monument in Thessaloniki with swastikas. In September unknown perpetrators drew anti-Semitic graffiti on a street art composition in Nea Ionia (suburb of Athens).

In December 2010, during an interview on the country's largest television station, Metropolitan of Piraeus Seraphim blamed world Jewry for the country's financial problems and claimed that the Jews themselves orchestrated the Holocaust. The Jewish community, the country's government, and some of Metropolitan Seraphim's coreligionists condemned his comments. Subsequently, in a statement released in January, Metropolitan Seraphim reiterated his belief that the Jews controlled the banking system but stated that Hitler was a "horrible criminal against humanity." His statement also equated Zionism with "Satanism." The government and other church officials immediately condemned the statements.

The government condemned all incidents of vandalism and desecration and provided funds for the restoration of the Chania synagogue damaged in arson attacks in December 2009-January 2010. The police routinely investigated all such instances of vandalism and desecration.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with all known disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, or the provision of other government services. In practice NGOs and organizations for disability rights reported that government enforcement of these provisions was uneven. The law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities and special ramps for the sidewalks and means of public transportation; however, authorities enforced this law poorly. Activists for the rights of persons with disabilities reported that, although special ramps for sidewalks were being constructed throughout the country, sidewalks and special ramps were overwhelmingly occupied by parked vehicles, thus hindering accessibility for persons with disabilities. The general lack of accessibility forced such persons to remain at home and led to serious social exclusion. Research by the Polytechnic School of Athens during the year revealed that 69 percent of the country's ports were not accessible to passengers with disabilities. The law allows service animals to accompany blind persons in all mass transit, but blind activists claimed they faced serious problems when attempting to use city transportation with their dogs.

Only 5 percent of public buildings were fully accessible to persons with disabilities, with the majority of these in Athens; even buildings with special ramps did not, for the most part, have accessible elevators or lavatories. The deputy ombudsman for social welfare handled complaints related to persons with disabilities, especially those related to employment, social security, and transportation.

In 2009 the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity estimated there were 180,000 children with disabilities with special educational needs. The Teachers' Association estimated in 2009 that only 18,500 of these children attended primary school and that of these only 10 percent would attend secondary school, due to a lack of either local special education schools or accessibility. According to NGOs working on this issue, the situation worsened over the year.

The Confederation of the Disabled reiterated during the year that education was not available for persons with serious disabilities, and many such persons were forced either to leave school due to lack of accessibility or to accept a low-quality education at the special education schools. The confederation stated that only two of the 10 universities in Athens were accessible to persons with disabilities and that 80 percent of children in special schools for children with disabilities were housed in buildings unsuitable to their needs.

The Confederation of the Disabled estimated the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities to be 84 percent in 2010 and called unemployment the greatest social problem they faced.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

According to NGOs, Roma continued to face widespread governmental and societal discrimination, including alleged police abuse or mistreatment while in police custody; regular raids and searches of their neighborhoods for criminal suspects, drugs, and weapons; limited access to education; and segregated schooling. Their dwellings lacked running water, electricity, or waste removal and were at times demolished by municipal authorities. NGOs and representatives of the Romani community reported that government efforts to address these problems were inconsistent, especially at the municipal level.

The law prohibits the encampment of "wandering nomads" without a permit and forces Roma to establish settlements outside inhabited areas and far from permanent housing. There were approximately 70 Romani camps in the country.

Local and international NGOs charged that the enforced separation of Romani settlements from other inhabited areas contravened the country's commitments under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In addition Roma were reportedly threatened with forced evictions.

In his report on human rights the deputy ombudsman for human rights noted that, in addition to the grave housing problem, Roma faced very serious social exclusion and Romani women and children were particularly vulnerable. Very few indigenous Romani children attended school; alien Romani children tended not to go to school at all; and government projects to attract Romani children to education had very limited success. According to statistics from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights for 2009, only 4 percent of Roma reported having attended school for at least 10 years, and 63 percent were living in segregated conditions, effectively cut off from mainstream society and municipal services.

In February the prosecutor ordered lower courts to take action to combat exclusion of Romani children from education. The lower courts ignored the order. In September the Greek Helsinki Monitor stated that segregation of Romani children in schools was a persistent phenomenon and noted the existence of Roma-only schools throughout the country as well as the refusal of school authorities in a number of areas to allow Romani children access to schools.

Romani children also continued to face social exclusion and lack of access to social services, in part because they accompanied their parents who primarily worked as wandering merchants or engaged in selling scrap materials. According to the deputy ombudsman for human rights, Roma lived in "extremely dangerous and unacceptable shacks" in many areas, and government housing projects for indigenous Roma have been largely unsuccessful.

The life expectancy for Roma was estimated at 55 years (compared to 79 for the rest of the population). Although some progress in vaccinations was made, approximately 90 percent of Romani children were still not vaccinated, and the rate of hepatitis B among Roma was three times higher than among the rest of the population. The incarceration rate for Roma was seven times higher than that of the general population.

Media and NGOs reported multiple attacks on immigrants by far-right extremist groups. NGOs and labor unions expressed deep concern over the rise in racist violence by far-right groups.

Immigrants, who made up approximately 10 percent of the total population of the country, also reportedly faced widespread societal discrimination and accused the police of physical, verbal, and other mistreatment. They reported the confiscation and destruction of personal documents, particularly during police sweeps to apprehend undocumented immigrants.

Migrant groups and NGO activists alleged that violent attacks directed at immigrants took place throughout the year. Perpetrators allegedly launched multiple arson attacks during the year on makeshift mosques in downtown Athens. In one such attack in March, five persons were injured.

Vigilantes, allegedly including members of the far-right group Golden Dawn, launched several attacks against illegal immigrants throughout the year, such as in September against the secretary of the Sudanese community, and in March and September against Pakistanis, Afghans, and other migrants.

The UNHCR sent a letter to the prime minister in September noting its concern over the series of criminal attacks “with the sole criterion being the color of the skin or the country of origin” of the victim.

A number of citizens identified themselves as Turks, Pomaks (Slavic-speaking Muslims), Vlachs (a Balkan minority group speaking a dialect of Romanian), Roma, Arvanites (Orthodox Christians who speak a dialect of Albanian), or Macedonians. Some members of these groups sought to be identified officially as “minorities” or “linguistic minorities.” The government considers the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne as providing the exclusive definition of minorities in the country and defining their group rights. Accordingly, the government recognizes only a “Muslim minority.” An officially recognized Muslim minority of approximately 150,000 members resided in Thrace and was composed primarily of ethnic Turkish, Pomak, and Romani communities. Some members of the Pomak community claimed members of the Turkish-speaking community pressured them to deny the existence of a Pomak identity separate from a Turkish identity.

Although the government neither confers official status on any indigenous ethnic group, nor recognizes “ethnic minority” or “linguistic minority” as legal terms, it affirms an individual’s right of self-identification. However, many individuals who defined themselves as members of “a minority” found it difficult to express their identity freely and maintain their culture. Use of the terms *Tourkos* and *Tourkikos* (“Turk” and “Turkish”) is prohibited in titles of organizations, although

individuals legally may call themselves *Tourkos*. Associations with either term in their name were denied official recognition.

The government did not recognize the existence of a Slavic dialect, called “Macedonian” by its speakers, in the northwestern area of the country. Nevertheless, a small number of its speakers insisted on identifying themselves as “Macedonian,” a designation that generated strong opposition from other citizens. These individuals claimed that the government pursued a policy designed to discourage the use of their language. Government officials and the courts denied requests by Slavic groups to identify themselves using the term “Macedonian,” stating that approximately 2.2 million ethnically (and linguistically) Greek citizens also use the term “Macedonian” to identify themselves.

The UN independent expert on minority issues, in a 2009 report, urged the government to withdraw from the dispute over whether there was a “Macedonian” or a “Turkish” ethnic minority in the country. She advised focusing instead on protecting the rights to self-identification, freedom of expression, and freedom of association of those communities and on complying fully with the rulings of the ECHR that associations should be allowed to use the words “Macedonian” and “Turkish” in their names and to express their ethnic identities freely. The independent expert found that those identifying themselves as ethnic Macedonians continued to report discrimination and harassment. Representatives of the minority claimed they were denied the right to freedom of association, citing unsuccessful efforts since 1990 to register the organization “Home of Macedonian Culture” in Florina.

Societal Abuses, Discrimination, and Acts of Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While the legal age of consent for sexual intercourse is 15, it is 17 for sex between men. The law does not specify an age of consent for sex between women. The NGO Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece (OLKE) stated that the higher age of consent for gay men and the lack of any legal framework for lesbian sex constituted discrimination. OLKE also criticized the country’s laws against hate speech for not including sexual orientation or gender identity.

The police provided adequate security, and the mayor of Athens sponsored the annual Gay Pride parade in central Athens in June; there were no reports of impediments to the march.

NGOs reported that societal discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was widespread but focused on gay relationships. Transgender persons were exempt from military service on disability grounds.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

Observers indicated that individuals with HIV/AIDS suffered from high social exclusion rates and a loss of employment if they revealed their status.

There were no reports of dismissal from work due to HIV/AIDS during the year. Persons with HIV/AIDS were exempt from military service on medical grounds.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law grants all workers, with the exception of members of the military services, the right to form and join independent unions; allows unions to conduct their activities without interference; and permits workers in the private sector, the government, and parastatal corporations to strike. The law also provides for the right to bargain collectively. Workers and unions exercised these rights freely in practice. No antiunion discrimination was reported during the year. Agricultural employees, most of whom were foreigners, were not unionized.

Police have the right to organize and demonstrate but not to strike. There are some legal restrictions on strikes, including a mandatory notice period of four days for public utility workers (including those in the transportation sector), and 24 hours for workers in the private sector. The law mandates minimum staff levels (as determined by management) during strikes affecting public services. Courts may declare a strike illegal, but they seldom enforced such decisions. Unions complained that this judicial power deterred some of their members from participating in strikes. Courts declared some strikes (of transportation workers, air traffic controllers, garbage collectors, dock workers, and others) illegal during the year for such reasons as the union's failure to give adequate advance notice of the strike or introduction of new demands during the course of the strike, but no workers were prosecuted for striking. During the year numerous strikes involving private and public sector employees, public utility employees, truck drivers, and garbage collectors took place. There were no apparent government impediments to the right to strike.

All workers in the country are covered by collective bargaining agreements except for security and armed forces personnel, whose salaries are determined by the state. Reforms of the labor laws during the year allowed company-level agreements to take precedence over sectoral-level collective agreements in the private sector. Civil servants negotiate and conclude collective agreements with the government on all issues except for salaries, for which the government has a constitutionally provided prerogative. The legislation imposes a salary cap for employees of public enterprises as well as a 10 percent salary cut for salaries above a certain limit. The unions protested the reforms and alleged to the International Labor Organization (ILO) that implementation of the legislation would violate ILO conventions protecting the right to collective bargaining which the country ratified.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits all forced or compulsory labor, including by children; however, women, children, and men were trafficked for labor exploitation in agricultural and construction sectors. The National Coordination Mechanism to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and the Hellenic Police's antitrafficking unit, among other government entities, worked to prevent and eliminate labor trafficking. In April the antitrafficking police removed 35 Romanians who worked in forced labor conditions harvesting strawberries in the Peloponnese. During the same month the antitrafficking police also dismantled a Bulgarian ring bringing minors and persons with disabilities into the country and forcing them to beg.

Also see the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

Although the law protects children from exploitation in the workplace and prohibits forced or compulsory labor, the government did not adequately protect children, primarily Roma, who were trafficked for begging, pickpocketing, or selling merchandise on the street.

The minimum age for employment in the industrial sector is 15, with higher limits for some activities. The minimum age is 12 in family businesses, theaters, and the cinema. The Labor Inspectorate enforced these limits by occasional spot checks, and they were generally observed. Younger family members often assisted families in agriculture, food service, and merchandising on at least a part-time basis.

Child labor was a problem. A number of children begged or sold small items in the streets. The government and NGOs reported that the majority of beggars were either indigenous Roma or Albanian Roma. Drawing upon recent Ministry of Education data, local children's advocates estimated that a large number of the 150,000 children under the age of 18 who dropped out of school each year ended up in the labor market, often in poorly paid and arduous positions. Jobs for dropouts included washing cars, pumping gas, construction, and low-level service sector employment.

For some years there were reports that unaccompanied immigrant children, working mainly in the agriculture, construction, and garment manufacturing sectors, were particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation, and the situation remained largely unchanged during the year.

Children from Albania were reportedly trafficked and forced to beg, with some parents forcing their children to beg for money or using them to elicit sympathy while the parents themselves begged.

The Labor Inspectorate is responsible for enforcing child labor legislation; however, trade unions alleged that enforcement was inadequate due to inspectorate understaffing.

d. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The gross national minimum wage in the private sector was 34 euros (\$44) per day and 751 euros (\$976) per month. Public sector salaries, including the minimum wage, were determined by the government without negotiations with civil servant unions. The minimum gross salary for the public sector was 780 euros (\$1,014) per month. The National Statistical Authority estimated in 2008 (the latest statistics available) that the poverty income level for an individual was 6,480 euros (\$8,424) per year. Wages were officially the same for local and foreign workers, but there were numerous reports of exploitation of documented, and even more reports of exploitation of undocumented, foreign workers by employers who paid low wages and made no social security contributions. Workers in the shadow economy, estimated to comprise approximately 25-35 percent of gross domestic product, usually received less than the minimum wage and had no social security coverage. The Labor Inspectorate estimated in September that more than 35 percent of migrants received salaries below the minimum and did not have social

security coverage. The law allows employers to pay workers under the age of 25 wages amounting to 84 percent of the national minimum wage.

The maximum legal workweek is 40 hours. The law provides for at least one 24-hour rest period per week, mandates paid vacation of one month per year, and sets limits on the amount of overtime. Premium pay and authorization by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security are required by law for overtime work. The Labor Inspectorate is responsible for enforcement of labor legislation; however, trade unions alleged that enforcement was inadequate, especially in the construction and public works sectors and in medium and small enterprises, due to insufficient inspectorate staffing. The actual number of labor inspectors was unavailable.

The law provides for minimum standards of occupational health and safety. The General Confederation of Greek Workers characterized health and safety laws as satisfactory but stated that enforcement by the Labor Inspectorate was inadequate. Workers have the right to lodge a confidential complaint with the Labor Inspectorate regarding hazardous conditions or situations they believe endanger their health. Inspectors can close machinery or a process for up to five days if they find safety or health hazards that they believe present an imminent danger to workers.

The labor inspectorate reported 2,184 labor accidents in 2010, of which 19 were fatal.