



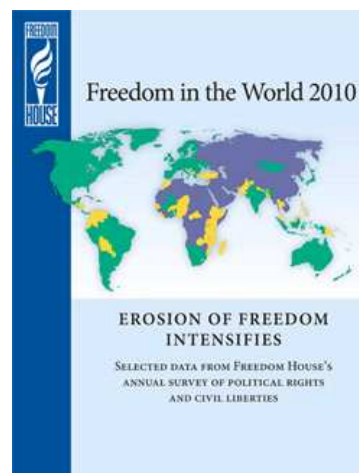
PRESS RELEASE

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Freedom House: Macedonia "Partly Free" country regarding political rights and civil liberties

The OHRID Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs, continued to track down the international indexes published by renowned institutions and organizations world wide. Namely in its last report the international organization Freedom House placed Macedonia in the group of "Partly Free" countries according to the level of democracy. Trend of improvement regarding the state of political rights and civil liberties has been noted in 2009, largely due to the correct implementation of presidential and local elections, which were assessed as fair and democratic, reads the latest report of international organization for human rights' protection "Freedom House".

As in 2008, Macedonia received rating 3 in two categories (political rights and civil liberties) on a scale from 1 to 7, one being the best. Free countries are considered those having rating 1-2.5, Partly Free (3-5) and Not Free (5.5-7). "Freedom House" notes improvements of situation in Western Balkan states. Montenegro and Kosovo progressed the most, with the former going into the group of Free countries (2.5), while the latter in the Partly Free group (4.5). Pertaining to regional countries, Greece received rating 1 for political rights and 2 for civil liberties, the same as Croatia, Bulgaria and Serbia obtained average ratings 2, Albania-3, Bosnia&Herzegovina-4. According to the survey's findings, 2009 marked the fourth consecutive year in which global freedom suffered a decline - the longest consecutive period of setbacks for freedom in the nearly 40-year history of the report. The number of countries designated by Freedom in the World as Free in 2009 stands at 89, representing 46 percent of the world's 194 countries and 46 percent of the world population. The number of Partly Free countries declined to 58, or 30 percent of all countries assessed by the survey, comprising 20 percent of the world's total population. The number of countries deemed to be Not Free increased to 47, or 24 percent of the total number of countries. Over 2.3 billion people live in societies where fundamental political rights and civil liberties are not respected. China accounts for half of this number. Political rights and civil liberties are best observed in Western countries, while Burma, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Tibet, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Eritrea received the survey's lowest possible rating for both political rights and civil liberties.



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