



**ENHANCING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

## **The European Intercultural Workplace**

### **GREECE**



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Education and Culture

**Leonardo da Vinci**

**HELLENIC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**



# **Detailed Analysis of the Intercultural Situation in Greece and Case Studies at the Workplace.**

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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**EEC:** European Economic Community  
**GDP:** Gross Domestic Product  
**GMEO:** Greek Manpower Employment Organization  
**FIDH:** International Federation of Human Rights  
**IOM:** The International Organisation for Migration  
**GSEE:** National Confederation of Trade Unions  
**KEPEA:** Information Centre for Workers and the Unemployed  
**INE:** Institute of Labour ()  
**EMMEDIA:** National Kapodistrian University of Athens: Laboratory for the Study of Migration and Diaspora  
**EKKE:** National Centre for Social Research  
**MMO:** Mediterranean Migration Observatory  
**UEHR:** Urban Environment and Human Resources  
**KMS:** CENTRE FOR ASIA MINOR STUDIES  
**INE/GSEE:** INSTITUTE OF LABOUR OF THE GREEK CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS  
**KEMO:** MINORITY GROUPS RESEARCH CENTRE  
**DYMP:** NETWORK FOR THE SUPPORT OF IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES  
**MRG:** Minority Rights Group  
**IKA:** Greek Social Insurance Foundation  
**OGA:** Organisation of agricultural assurance  
**TEVE:** Greek Professional Workers and Craftsmen's Fund  
**I.D.E.K.E.:** Institute for Lifelong Education  
**EPA:** National Observatory of Employment  
**GCR:** Greek Council for Refugees  
**COMPASS:** Centre for Promotion of Integration

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Acculturation** – The modification of the culture of a group or of a single individual as a result of contact with a different culture. (<http://www.answers.com>)

**Asylum Seeker** – often an individual who leaves their own country for their safety, often for political reasons or because of war, and who travels to another country hoping that the government will protect them and allow them to live there: (<http://www.freesearch.co.uk/dictionary/asylum-seeker>). An asylum seeker applies to a State to be recognized as a Convention Refugee under the terms of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Most European countries are signatories of the Geneva Convention. Asylum seekers have the right to remain in such countries while their applications for Refugee Status are being processed, and to continue to live there afterwards, if granted Refugee Status.

**Beneficiary** – a person, institution or other grouping of people that benefits from the actions described in a case. (<http://www.beep-eu.org/>)

**Bilingual** – a person who is competent in two languages

**Case (study)** – the description of and application of methods to a specific situation. A case study must involve one or more objectives and a description of the activities (methods and processes) carried out in pursuit of these objectives. (<http://www.beep-eu.org/>)

**Client** – the party for which services are rendered (e.g. by a research team). (<http://www.answers.com>). In traditional [commerce](#) and in the [marketing](#) and provision of [services](#), a client or customer consumes or benefits from a [product](#) or service. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>) Within the remit of the EIW project this can also apply to less traditional examples of a client such as school pupils, for example.

**Convention Refugee** – see Refugee below

**Cross-cultural** – the term cross-cultural is generally used to describe comparative data and studies of a limited number of cultures. For example, when examining attitudes towards work in the US and in Japan, then that is a cross-cultural study. It is sometimes used interchangeably with the “Intercultural” (see Intercultural).

**Cultural diversity** – variety and richness of communities with distinct systems of norms, beliefs, practices, and values. ([http://www.cadi.ph/glossary\\_of\\_terms.htm](http://www.cadi.ph/glossary_of_terms.htm)) See Ethnic diversity

**Discrimination** – involves formally or informally classifying people into different groups and according the members of each group distinct, and typically unequal, treatments, rights and obligations without a rational justification for the different treatment. If there is rational justification for the

different treatment, then the discrimination is not invidious. The criteria delineating the groups, such as gender, race, or class, determine the kind of discrimination. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>)

**Education sector** – The education sector includes primary, secondary and third-level educational institutions such as colleges and universities which are organized on a regional / national basis or independently such as tuition companies.

**Equal opportunities** – two key elements of the general principle of equal opportunities are the ban on discrimination on grounds of nationality (Article 12 of the EC Treaty, formerly Article 6) and equal pay for men and women (Article 141 of the EC Treaty, formerly Article 119). It is intended to apply to all fields, particularly economic, social, cultural and family life.

The Treaty of Amsterdam added a new Article 13 to the Treaty, reinforcing the principle of non-discrimination, which is closely linked to equal opportunities. Under this new Article, the Council has the power to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Adopted in December 2000, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union includes a chapter entitled "Equality" which sets out the principles of non-discrimination, equality between men and women, and cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. It also covers the rights of the child, the elderly and persons with disabilities. On the subject of non-discrimination, the Charter states that: "Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited." (EU glossary of terms)

**Ethnic background** – origin in an ethnic group (see below)

**Ethnic diversity** – diversity of people with different national backgrounds

**Ethnic group** – a group of people who identify with one another, or are so identified by others as a group who believe themselves to have a common historical origin. The distinguishing features of the group may take any of a number of forms -- racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious -- and may be more or less porous. Because of these features, members of an ethnic group are often presumed to be culturally or biologically similar, although this is not in fact necessarily the case. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>)

**Foreigner** – a person born in or coming from a foreign country (OED)

**Good practice** – the use of a method, tool, technology etc. which is generally regarded as 'practices which are good (e.g. for learning)', i.e. practices which either achieve their own objectives and/or have a beneficial impact on their environment, or (and more important) provide useful learning experiences which are likely to stimulate creativity, ingenuity and self reflexivity on the part of the user. Contrast with best practice that has been shown to be the 'best' in

a given situation as a result of benchmarking and other analyses. (<http://www.beep-eu.org/>).

**Immigrant** – a person who comes as a permanent or long-term resident to a country and intends to reside permanently, and not as a casual visitor or traveler. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>)

**Intercultural** – the term intercultural is sometimes used synonymously to “cross-cultural” (see above) to describe comparative data and studies of a large number of cultures, or studies that try to identify dimensions that are not culture specific. For example Hofstede's work is crosscultural, as it describes cultural dimensions applicable for all cultures. Intercultural is also used to describe interactional data arising in a situation where members of different cultural backgrounds.

**Intercultural communication** – communication between persons who have different cultural backgrounds.

**Intercultural communication education** – includes learning about different cultures, both culture general and culture specific information. The focus is not so much on habits and religious customs, but rather on cultural similarities and differences in communication patterns, including body language; as well as in attitudes, values and norms in areas such as relation to authority and showing respect and politeness; time orientation; gender roles; collectivism and individualism.

**Intercultural company** – an enterprise that employs people from different nationalities, cultures and/or racial backgrounds.

**Intercultural workplace** – a working environment in which people of different nationalities, cultures and racial backgrounds are employed. Also a work environment that deals with clients/customers from different cultures.

**International worker** – a term used by some organisations to refer to workers from minority ethnic communities, who have come from overseas to work in the country. This term is by some considered more interculturally sensitive than other terms such as terms ‘non-national’ or ‘foreign national’.

**Institutional racism** – the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. (Lawrence Inquiry committee investigation of London Metropolitan Police)

**Life-long learning** – continuous acquirement of knowledge, skills and competencies (in an environment of constant change).

**Migrant Worker** – an economic migrant is a person who voluntarily leaves his or her country of origin (often for economic reasons). (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>)

**Minority** – a group within a country that differs in culture, ethnicity, race, religion or national origin from the larger part of the population.

**Mother tongue** – usually the first language(s) acquired as a child or sometimes the language of the mother of the child

**Multinational** – a business organization which operates in many countries

**Multiculturalism** – Multiculturalism or cultural pluralism is a policy, ideal, or reality that emphasizes the unique characteristics of different cultures in the world, especially as they relate to one another in [immigrant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/immigrant) receiving nations. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>)

**Non-national** – a person who is not a citizen of the country they are residing in on a short or long-term basis. This term is commonly considered inappropriate nowadays, being both inaccurate and interculturally insensitive in implying a person has ‘no nationality’ – they are just nationals of a different country. The terms ‘foreign national’ or ‘international worker’ are considered preferable.

**On-job training** – the process of being taught a specific skill in the workplace

**Participant observation** – a research method where the researcher is both an observer of and a participant in a given communicative event such as a transaction in a retail shop. The observations can be made more or less systematically depending on the purpose of the study at hand.

**Prejudice** – false and negative belief about something (often people or groups of people)

**Private sector** - the part of the economy not under direct state control (OED)

**Public sector** – The Public Sector is the part of the economy concerned with providing basic government services. In most countries the public sector includes such services as the police, military, public roads, public transit, primary education and healthcare for the poor. The public sector might provide services that non-payers cannot be excluded from (such as street lighting), services which benefit all of society rather than just the individual who uses the service (such as public education), and services that encourage equal opportunity.

The Public Sector is made up of national government, local governments, government-owned or controlled corporations and government monetary institutions.

Local, state, and federal government agencies and services, such as schools and libraries.

**Racism** – any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal

footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.  
[http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_icerd.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm)

**Refugee** – The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a person who is outside the country of his/her nationality and unable or unwilling to return to it, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion." (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org))

A person who, "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it". (Article 1 of the Geneva Convention, 1951)

**Social capital** – possession of socially or socio-economically relevant immaterial resources (e.g. social networks, social skills with regard to creating social contacts, education or training in organizing and managing social/socio-economical groupings etc)

**SME (Small to Medium Size Enterprise)** – enterprises with less than 250 employees and a turnover of less than 40 million Euro. Divided into micro enterprises (less than 10 employees), small size (11-50 employees) and medium (51-250). (<http://www.beep-eu.org/>)

**Social inclusion** – inclusion in a social group – a policy of social inclusion could mean commitment to an ethos of fairness and equality within a given society. [www.inspire.edin.org/pages/glossary.htm](http://www.inspire.edin.org/pages/glossary.htm)

**Social justice** – right of all individuals and groups of individuals to equity, fairness and equality. ([http://www.cadi.ph/glossary\\_of\\_terms.htm](http://www.cadi.ph/glossary_of_terms.htm))

**Social partner** – a term used by the European Commission for employer and employee organizations who engage with the Commission in a dialogue with a view to developing a common approach to EU economic and social policies. It encompasses Trade Unions, Trade Associations, Chamber of Commerce, and (peripherally) Professional Associations. (<http://www.beep-eu.org/>)

**Sojourner** – a temporary resident; a person who stays for a short period of time in one place

**Study** – an analytical piece of work that may include surveys or analysis of a group of case studies. It is a more general concept than case study which is a study of a particular situation. (<http://www.beep-eu.org/>)

**Workplace education** – education in the workplace – e.g. systematic instruction to furnish or acquire further knowledge about the working environment and ways in which to apply good practice.

## INTRODUCTION

European workplaces are undergoing major transformation. Dramatic political and economic changes in Europe in the past decades have vastly increased the cultural diversity of those living, working and being educated within its borders. As in other EU countries, Greece's recent economic improvement has increased its attractiveness as a destination to come to study, work and live. Moreover due to the geopolitical position, Greece attracts a number of refugees, of political and economical immigrants. The integration of Greece in the European Union changes the profile of the Greek market and more generally the social tissue – formation of the country. The introduction in the European Community results in the supply of raw materials, workforce and naturally new markets from many countries, which seek new investments. Since 1990, Greece has been the recipient of big waves of economic immigrants from the Balkan countries, which is not ready, institutionally and practically, to accept. Recent historical developments and the wars in the Near East, created a wave of refugees, that arrived in the country, initially looking for survival and later in order to be integrated as citizens of an European country. All these developments have as result many transformations and adjustments in the culture, the education and the way of life of modern Greek-European citizen.

All the above, in combination with the free circulation of the workforce within the European Union, has led to the creation of cross-cultural, multi-ethnic countries. Many everyday situations now necessitate intercultural interactions, whether in the workplace, public services or educational institutions, which affect even those with little interest in foreign cultures or in mixing with others culturally different from them. In this new context, people at all levels of the workforce – managers, employees, customers – from host and migrant communities, find themselves facing new roles with new challenges for which they have not traditionally been prepared or trained to deal with. Such interactions require a new mindset and a repertoire of skills beyond what was adequate for interaction within one's own cultural group. Organizations often

need to re-examine existing policies and procedures, and re-establish them in order to better meet the needs of and benefit from the opportunities offered by a new culturally diverse workforce.

While the common European policy promotes equal opportunities, respect of human dignity and of diversity, the current multicultural work environments must deal with issues like prejudices, racism and social exclusion, that urgently require interventions and drastic actions.

So, how well are workplaces in Europe responding to this new reality? How similar are the challenges and opportunities presented in different sectors and states? What pitfalls to be avoided and examples of good practice can be shared between EU countries? What intercultural training and guidance needs to be launched and developed and how can these best be addressed? These are some of the key questions that inspired the development of the *European Intercultural Workplace (EIW)* Project (2004-7). Originally conceptualised in DCU, Ireland, *EIW* was developed and expanded through a network of 10 European partners, and its implementation was made possible by funding granted by the EU Leonardo da Vinci Programme. A core outcome of the project is the establishment of an overview of work practice across Europe based on national situational analyses and workplace case studies. The identification of intercultural training needs and good practice responses will inform the production of effective intercultural training materials to a common European standard.

The *European Intercultural Workplace (EIW)* partnership draws together 10 institutions from northern and southern Europe, established EU members and more recent Member States, countries with a long experience of integrating foreigners into the workforce and others for whom this is a new situation. This complexity allows us to have a wide-ranging, experienced and fresh perspective on the issues involved.

The current publication is divided into two parts: (1) A National Situational Analysis and (2) Case Studies. The Situation Analysis examines the current

intercultural workplace in Greece, investigating issues such as the history of immigration, areas where immigrants are most likely to be employed, the status of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as government, business and civic responses to these changes. The Case Studies are designed to assess the situation and conditions on the ground. In Greece we have examined the areas of secondary education, construction, non governmental and governmental organizations for refugees and immigrants, while we endeavoured to consider workplace issues from the perspective of Management, Employees and Customers.

The primary aim of this report is to identify examples of good practice and make recommendations that will assist policy makers and practitioners in their attempts to create a harmonious intercultural workplace and foster a culture of cross-learning. It also aims to provide information for workers intending to move to Greece and Greek employers in need of foreign labour of the policies and steps that need to be taken for an easier and more effective process of integration into the workplace.

This report is by no means exhaustive; in the inevitable selection process we faced constraints that will have left a lot of relevant material unearthed. The EIW Project partners would like to hear feedback from you, the reader and final user, on the information presented. Please visit the European Intercultural Workplace website for further discussions and consultations ([www.eiworkplace.net](http://www.eiworkplace.net)).

## **PART 1: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

### **1. General Background – The Greek National Context**

#### **1.1 The context of Cultural Diversity in Greece**

##### **1.1.1 Historical Developments leading to the current situation**

Over the last 15 years from a country of emigrants Greece has become a receiver of immigrants due to the gradual improvement of the economic conditions in the country as well as other social, economic, geographic and political factors which justify its attractiveness. The new situation set a challenge in the Greek society provoking different reactions and requiring elaboration of a new governmental policy both in the field of policy-making and policy implementation regarding immigrants.

##### **1.1.2 Emigration from Greece**

History: after the establishment of the Modern Greek state in the early 1830s two important waves of mass emigration took place. The first one was in the late 19th to the early 20th century, and another following World War II.

The first emigration wave was provoked by the economic crisis at the end of 19th century and in fact was encouraged by the Greek authorities, as they considered it as a way of improving the economic situation. In the period 1890-1914, almost one sixth of the population of Greece emigrated, mostly to the United States and Egypt. The lasting effect on Greece's national consciousness was the expansion of the notion of "Hellenism" and "Hellenic Diaspora" to the "New World."

After the World War II, mainly in the period from 1950 to 1974 more than one million Greeks emigrated to Western Europe, the US, Canada, and Australia where sizeable Greek communities have developed. Emigration was provoked by economic and political reasons, both connected with the

consequences of the 1946-1949 civil war and the 1967-1974 period of military junta rule that followed. Official statistics show that in the period 1955-1973 Germany absorbed 603,300 Greek migrants, Australia 170,700, the US 124,000, and Canada 80,200.

### **1.1.3 Immigration to Greece**

History: The oil crises of 1973 and 1980 caused economic imbalance and uncertainty and a sharp fall in the demand for labour in the Western European countries, which in turn introduced restrictive immigration policies that caused return migration to Greece. The restrictive immigration policies were also result of the integration difficulties in the receiving countries The restoration of democracy in Greece in 1974, and the new economic prospects developed following the accession of the country in 1981 into the European Economic Community (EEC) also favoured return migration in Greece. Between 1974 and 1985, almost half of the emigrants of the post-war period had returned to Greece.

At the end of 1970s the immigration in Greece started to overcome in numbers the emigration. At the beginning of the 1980s a small number of Asian (Asian part of Turkey and Iran), African (Ethiopia) and Polish immigrants and refugees arrived and found work in construction, agriculture, and domestic services, mostly as unskilled workers. In 1986, legal and unauthorized immigrants totalled approximately 90,000. One third of them were from European Union countries. In the 1980s was also registered a wave of return migrants of Greek origin from countries of the former Soviet Union although the peak of this wave was after the collapse of the socialist economies. The total number of return migrants of this type having settled in Greece in the time between 1985 and 2003 is estimated to be around 150 000.

Immigration to Greece became massive after the collapse of the regimes in the Central and Eastern European countries at the end of 1980s. In the period from 1990 to 2001 immigrants arrived in two waves. The first was that of the

early 1990s, characterised with the massive entrance of Albanian immigrants. The second wave arrived after 1995, and involved more immigrants from other Balkan states, the former Soviet Union (including people of Greek origin who formerly lived in the Soviet Union), Pakistan, and India.

The transformation of Greece into a country that receives immigrants was due on one side to its geographic position, as the eastern "gate" of the EU and, on the other side, to its rapid economic development after its accession into the EU in 1981 that led to the fast improvement of the living standards.

The massive inflow of illegal immigrants in the 1990's found the country entirely unprepared for dealing with the issues and problems occurring from and related to illegal immigration. The initial response of the country was to deport thousands of illegal immigrants, particularly Albanians, who kept re-entering the country from various routes. It was estimated that around 1.2 million immigrants were deported in the period 1990-1997. At the same time improved economic and social conditions in the country facilitated the attainment from more young Greek people to attain higher level of education that ultimately led them to reject low-status and low-income jobs. Meanwhile, both the large size of the informal, family-based economy, and the seasonal nature of industries like tourism, agriculture, and construction, have created demand for a flexible labour market, independent of trade union practices and legislation(Kasimis, C. and Kassimi, C. (2004).

### **Statistical data regarding immigration to Greece**

The data currently available on immigration in Greece in many cases are inadequate and often unsatisfactorily recorded. It is partly due to the fact that in some periods the great number of immigrants entered the country and worked illegally. The only officially recognized data are provided by the Greek National Statistical Service and are taken from the 1991 and 2001 Census in Greece, in which immigrants are registered as a "foreign population in Greece". It has to be taken into consideration that the last census of the

population from 2001 was carried out before the regularization implemented with the Act 2910/2001 (the process is explained in 1.2) and it does not cover illegal immigrants in the country. However despite these shortcomings, the 2001 census data on immigrants provide the most comprehensive and updated picture of the immigrant population in Greece.

### **Number of foreigners living in the country (last 10 years)**

According to the data from the 1991 Census in a total population of 10.259.900 were registered 167.276 foreigners. In comparison in 2001 census the total number of foreigners was 797.191 (47.000 of which were EU citizens) or about 7 % of the total population. This means that for one decade the number of immigrants was multiplied almost five times. In addition the total population growth in Greece between 1991 and 2001 was 679.871, while the increase of the immigrant population was 629.817, a finding that exhibits that population growth can almost be entirely attributed to the immigration in the past decade.

It is estimated that the real number of immigrants is higher; many analysts believe that migrants make up as much as 10 % of the population and their real number is approximately 1 million. According to a survey conducted by the Social Security Organization of Greece, it is estimated that by 2015, 25% of the insured employees will be migrants. The same survey also refers to the employment of foreigners in the country and the participation percentage of economic migrants to the country's workforce, which is estimated to exceed 10% of total employment. An article in the newspaper "Aggelioforos" published in 2003, mentions that in the Social Security Organization of Greece the migrants insured represent 12.98% of the total number, 15.12% for men and 9.77% for women.

The largest percent of the immigrant population (79.8%) is in the 15- 64 age bracket and they are economically active. Only 3.5% of the immigrants are over 65 years old and 16.7% belong to the 0-16 age group. 56 % of the

immigrants are married and 77% of them have come to Greece with their families. Albanians are the youngest group of immigrant population and they are mainly married couples. In contrast, immigrants from the United States, Canada, and Australia have the highest percentages of people in the over-65 age bracket, because they are mainly pensioner returnees of Greek origin.

According to the data provided by the National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG) after the 2001 Census males and females make up 54.5% and 45.5% of the total, respectively. However, gender composition varies widely among the various nationalities. Albanians and Romanians show the most balanced picture, because the percentages of males fluctuate just above the average with 59% and 57%, respectively. Other nationalities show asymmetries, where either males or females outnumber the other gender. For example, females make up almost two thirds of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Bulgaria, as well as approximately four-fifths of the Filipinos (72%). On the other end, immigrants from Pakistan and India are almost exclusively male with 4% and 7% respectively.

### **The composition of immigrant workers in Greece (10 main)**

Following the 2001 Census the 10 most represented nationalities are as follows:

**Table1.1: Nationalities of Immigrant Workers in Greece (10 main- National Statistical Service of Greece, 2001)**

<b>Country of nationality</b>	<b>Number of immigrants</b>	<b>% of the total number of immigrants in Greece</b>
Albania	443,550	55.60%
Bulgaria	37,230	4.70%
Georgia	23,159	2.90%
Romania	23,066	2.90%
USA	22,507	2.80%
Cyprus	19,084	2.40%
Russian Feder.	18,219	2.30%
UK	15,308	1.90%

Germany	15,303	1.90%
Ukraine	14,149	1.80%

In a more geographically and culturally generalized aspect, according to the 2001 Census, the largest group of immigrants draws its origins from the Balkan countries of Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania. People from these countries make up almost two-thirds of the total "foreign population." Migrants from the former Soviet Union (Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, etc.) comprise 10% of the total. The number of immigrants coming from EU countries is approximately 6%. A heterogeneous group of people from places such as the United States, Canada, and Australia (mostly first or second-generation Greek emigrants returning home), also account for around 6%. Finally, a residual group from a wide variety of countries makes up 13%. None of the individual countries included in this last group exceeds two percent of the total "foreign population."

According to the data provided by the Social Security Organization of Greece (IKA) in 2003 Albanian immigrants represent 50.5% of the insured foreigners. For the male foreigners, Albanians are 61.19% and those from Russia and Pakistan follow with 6.98% and 5.85% respectively. For the female, those from Albania reach the percentage of 36.99%, 22.26% from Russia and 13.84% from Bulgaria.

Statistics regarding the educational level of immigrants in Greece, calculated on the basis of a total number of 762.191 (according to the data from 2001 Census) are as follows:

**Table 1.2: Educational Level of Immigrant Workers in Greece (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2001)**

Educational level	Percent of the total of immigrants
Secondary level	26.28%
Primary school	21.9%
High school	16.81%
Illiterate	9.21%

Still in primary school	7.44%
Higher education or above	7.78%

Nearly one-half of the migrants have secondary education (including technical-skill schools) and one-third have either completed or acquired primary school education. Almost one-tenth have higher education. A qualitative analysis of the educational levels of the various nationalities shows that, comparatively speaking, Albanians have the lowest level of education and former Soviet citizens the highest. In terms of higher education, females have the largest share of the total, while males appear to predominate in all other educational categories.

### **Number of foreigners legally employed/work-permits (last 10 years)**

According to the statistics the main reason and the driving factor for immigration to Greece possibilities and prospects of finding a job. Bulgarians and Romanians are the nationalities that most often cite employment as the most important reason for immigrating to Greece. Family reunification and repatriation are other main reasons that immigrants give for their arrival. Albanians show the highest level of participation in family reunification and immigrants from United States, Canada, and Australia in repatriation— a confirmation of the Greek origin of these immigrants. (See the table below).

**Table1.3: Reasons for Immigration to Greece (National Statistical Service of Greece)**

Reason for immigration	% of all immigrants
Work	54.21%
Repatriation	6.70%
Family reunion	13.11%
Studies	2.72%
Asylum seekers	1.30%
Refugees	0.30%
Other reasons	21.05%

As the majority of immigrants come to Greece in order to find a job it is only logical that their concentrations are located in the economically most developed regions - Attika and tourist areas, such as islands. The principal exception is the border region with Albania, where some areas have large numbers of Albanians: the exact nature of their employment remains unknown from official data. According to the data from the first phase of legalization (1998) 44.3 % of the immigrants live in Attika, 15 % in Central Macedonia, 6.7 % in Peloponese, 6.5 % in Central Greece, 6.1 % in Thessaly, 5.7 % in Crete and 5 % in Western Greece.

Statistical data show that mainly non-EU citizens come to Greece in order to find employment and in particular from the total number of 413.000 Albanians constitute the vast majority of 240.000 persons (58%), followed by Bulgarians accounting for 28.000 and Romanians at 17.000. Other nationalities that are represented in the labor market but in significantly lower numbers are coming from Pakistan, Ukraine, Poland, and India. The statistics provided by the General Confederation of Workers in Greece (GSEE) show that 78% of immigrants are active in the workforce in contrast to 62 % of Greeks in the workforce. According to the data gathered by the Mediterranean Migration Observatory 80 % of the residence permits are issued to immigrant wage workers.

The main countries of origin for asylum seekers are Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. Since 1997 Iraq has been leading as a country of origin for asylum seekers with 87.02 %, 73.35 %, 59.29 %, 43.27 %, 35.86 % and 45.32 % of total applications from this country for the years 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 respectively. Asylum seekers acquiring the status of refugee can get a residence permit for up to five years, renewable for as long as the situation in their home countries remains dangerous and unstable.

### Sector in which foreign workers are employed (10 main)

According to the official statistics the economic activities the immigrants are engaged in are as follows:

**Table 1.4: Economic Activities of Immigrants in Greece**

Economic activity	% of the total of immigrants involved
Agriculture and fishery	17.50%
Mines/ stone-pits	0.16%
Manufacturing	12.46%
Gas/ electric/ water companies	0.14%
Construction	24.50%
Commerce, hotels, restaurants	15.70%
Communications/ transportation	2.73%
Financial services	0.38%
Other services	20.50%
No specific sector	5.80%

Immigrants are mainly employed in construction (24.50%), "other services," meaning mostly domestic work (20.50%), agriculture (17.50%), and "commerce, hotels, and restaurants" (15.70%).

Because of the size of their presence in the total immigrant population, Albanians dominate in all sectors. Within the Albanian nationality, however, construction absorbs the highest percentage (32%), followed by agriculture (21%) and then "other services" (15%). In contrast, Bulgarians are mostly occupied in agriculture (33%) and "other services" (29%). "Other services" - a sector identified with domestic services where female migrant labour predominates - mostly employs immigrants from the former Soviet Union (37%) and Bulgaria. At the same time, employment in domestic services allows larger numbers of Greek women to join the labour market. In the construction sector, immigrants currently provide a quarter of the wage labour, and in agriculture, a fifth of the total labour expended (almost 90 percent of the non-family wage labour). Immigrants play an important structural role in both sectors.

Referring to the employment position that immigrants occupy in their profession, the percentages are as follows:

**Table 1.5: Employment Position of Immigrants in Greece**

<b>Employment position occupied by immigrants</b>	<b>% of the total of immigrants involved</b>
Managers/ executives of the private and public sector	2.35%
Scientists, artists or similar	3.23%
Technologists or technical assistants	1.85%
Office employees or similar	2.17%
Service providing sectors, salespersons in shops or outdoor markets	10.44%
Skilled farmers etc	6.88%
Technicians, drivers, unskilled workers and small tradesmen	68.30%
Other professions	4.74%

Immigrants are almost exclusively (90%) engaged in wage work and, to a much lesser extent, are self-employed (6.5%). Most of the jobs are non-skilled, manual work well below the immigrants' level of education and qualifications.

### **Numbers/types of foreign companies operating**

The Greek government policy in general encourages private foreign investment in the country. Greece restricts foreign and domestic private investment in public utilities but has opened its telecommunications market and is in the process of liberalizing its energy sector. Restrictions for the foreign investment exist on land purchases in border regions and on certain islands (on national security grounds). Also the foreign non-EU investors receive less advantageous treatment than domestic or EU investors in the banking, mining, broadcasting, maritime, and air transport sectors (these sectors were opened to EU citizens due to EU single market rules). Foreign and domestic private entities have the right to establish also their own business enterprises. They may engage in all forms of remunerative activity, including the right to establish, acquire, and dispose of interests in

businesses. Private enterprises enjoy the same treatment as public enterprises with respect to access to markets and other business operations, such as licenses and supplies.

Statistics on foreign direct investment are not collected systemically. Although there is no official estimate of total foreign investment in Greece, the total stock of foreign investment is estimated at around \$8 billion, or approximately 4.6% of GDP (in 2003). According to the data provided by the U.S. Embassy in Greece the total stock of U.S. investment is estimated to be about \$2.3 billion, about one-third of the total stock of foreign investment. U.S. firms employ about 8,000 people.

Other main investors in Greece are the United Kingdom (Vodafone, Dixons Overseas Limited, British American Tobacco, Knorr), France (Carrefour, Lafarge – Heracles General Cement, Alcatel - Nexans Hellas, L'Oreal, Air Liquide, Pernod Ricard – EPOM), Italy (Telestet - TIM Hellas, Fulgorcavi Halia - Fulgor Greek Electric Cables, Italcementi - Halyps Building Materials, Barilla-Misko), Netherlands (Shell, Amstel-Heineken - Athenian Brewery, Unilever - Elais Oleaginous Products and Unilever Hellas, Friesland), Germany (Siemens Tele Industrie A.G, Praktiker, Bayer, Beiersdorf, Triumph International).

## **Conclusions**

In the last 15 years Greece has become a popular immigration destination due to the improved economic, social and political conditions in the country. The percentage of immigrant population which according to the statistical data represents from 7 % to 10 % of the population as well as the existence of foreign investment in Greece are the driving factors of the current status. The majority of the immigrants are in economically active age and they become a part of the Greek labour market constituting an important component of our country's manpower.

Generally the immigrants in Greece can be distinguished in three groups<sup>1</sup>:

A: Legal immigrants (including EU citizens, non-EU citizens who have migrated legally and documented, and ethnic Greeks): EU legislation ensuring free movement in the EU territory covers EU citizens. Other national laws and bilateral agreements provide regulation regarding the situation of non-EU citizens who have come to Greece through the normal and legal procedures (for ex. Egyptians and Filipinos in the 1980s). In the same group of legal migrants, ethnic Greeks are also included. They have come to Greece from Turkey, Egypt, Sudan, former USSR, among other countries, as refugees or due to other political reasons. This group consists also of people, non-EU citizens, who have valid permits issued for a limited period of time. In the cases when the permits have expired and are not renovated, their owners pass in the group of illegal immigrants.

B: Illegal immigration: The second group consists of immigrants who have come to Greece either illegally without proper documentation, or legally, but the term of their documents expired and was not renewed. The latter may be students who quit or finish their studies but remain in Greece. There are also the cases of those who come to Greece as tourists, but do not return to their countries and stay in Greece as illegal immigrants. However, most of the illegal immigrants are people who cross the borders secretly and undocumented. Economic and political reasons for coming to Greece are the most commonly indicated among the immigrants in this group.

C: Refugees and asylum-seekers: Greece, just like many other European countries, has been very sensitive towards refugees. This group covers people who leave their countries because of racial, religious, national, social or political reasons, and who, therefore, are not able or do not want to return back. The line that separates the refugees from totalitarian regimes for political reasons from those who migrate for economical ones is very difficult

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<sup>1</sup> Skrinis, Stavros, "Overview about Immigration-, Integration-, and Refugee- Protection-Politics in all Member States of the European Union, Greece", MigPol-Project

to discern. This creates a problem to the reception countries that would like to be able to easily define easier who is indeed a refugee and who is an immigrant.

Demographically speaking, most of the refugees and asylum-seekers in Greece are male (only one out of four is a female). They are between 20 and 50 years of age, except the cases of family immigration, where younger and older persons are included. The refugees and asylum-seekers come from different parts of the world, although most of them are eastern Europeans or Asians.

## **Government response**

### **1.2.1 Existing legislation, immigration policies, equality legislation, work permit scheme**

Generally the Greek governmental policy regarding immigrants is developed in three directions—border control, combat of illegal immigration and integration of legal immigrants:

Over the last years the Greek authorities put continuous efforts on tightening up border controls, in order to prevent illegal immigration. However the geographical position of Greece makes these attempts too complicated often ineffective.

In order to reduce the number of illegal immigrants the Greek authorities carried out two regularization programmes in 1997 and 2001 that gave to illegal immigrants the possibility to legalise their status in the country. The Greek authorities also adopted provisions in the relevant laws with the objective to facilitate the integration of immigrants in the society.

In Greece two regularization programmes took place which aim was to handle and manage with illegal immigration. The first one was introduced in 1997 with Presidential Decrees 358/1997 and 359/1997 aimed at the implementation of Act 1975/1991 on the entry-exit, residence, employment,

expulsion of foreigners and procedure for the recognition of the status of refugee for foreigners. The Presidential decrees gave unregistered immigrants the opportunity to acquire a temporary residence permit ("white card") if they have lived in Greece for at least one year and submit documents testifying to their good health, a clean court and police record, and proof of having paid national social insurance contributions for a total of 40 working days in 1998. After having acquired the "white card" immigrants were given a period of time during which they had to submit the complementary documents necessary to acquire a work and residence permit ("green card"). A total of 150 days of social insurance contributions were required for the acquisition of the "green card". No registration fees were charged at this stage. By the end of the regularization, 371,641 immigrants had registered for the white card, but only 212,860 received a green card. It is estimated that less than half of the migrants living in the country were registered during this first regularization program and they obtained the status of legal immigrants.

The second regularization programme was introduced in 2001 when a new law on immigration was approved (Law 2910/2001 on the admission and residence of foreigners in Greece and the acquisition of Greek nationality through naturalization). It gave immigrants a second opportunity to legalize their status, provided they could show proof of residence for at least a year before the implementation of the law. Immigrants were given a six-month period to submit all the necessary documents to acquire the work permit, which was the precondition for obtaining a residence permit. The second regularization programme was far more restrictive than the first one in terms of eligibility. It is estimated that 351,110 migrants applied, many of whom were applicants for the second time.

In general the Greek regularization pattern reveals a reluctance to grant permanent residence and work permits.

When the official application deadline for this second regularization program expired in August 2001, it was reported that 351,110 migrants had submitted their documents for the acquisition of a work permit — a precondition for the

provision of a residence permit. However, bureaucracy and the lack of the necessary infrastructure created problems posed obstacles and delays in the processing of the applications. This forced the government to give temporary residence to all applicants until the end of June 2003, after then extended to the end of October 2003. By then, the government expected to have all the applications processed.

The dissatisfactory results of the second regularization programme were a result of, on the one hand, the weakness of public administration in supporting the implementation of the act and, on the other, the act's "philosophy" of continuous checks and controls that make it difficult to implement. These weaknesses have been identified and raised by many organizations and institutions directly or indirectly involved with the issue. The Greek ombudsman, in a report to the minister of interior, warned as early as 2001 of the implementation problems and asked for amendments that would make it work for the benefit of both immigrants and the Greek public administration.

According to the Law 2910/2001 foreigners are allowed to enter the Greek territory in order to be employed in case they have already found a job with a specific employer for a particular type of job and based on it they have received a work permit from the local prefect. In addition, work places are publicized by the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (GMEO). At the last three months of each year the GMEO makes out a list of the workforce needs in the entire country and the positions available by expertise that can be covered by foreigners. This list is completed based on the needs of the local economy, the supply of work for the local citizens and foreigners and the demand for work. The maximum number of work permits that will be given each year to foreigners according to their nationality, type of employment and duration of the work permit depends on this list. This list is sent to the Greek consulates abroad and to the Job Seeking offices.

The Job offices are then making a list of the jobs available in Greece which is then publicized in the local press and media, in order for those who are

interested to apply for the jobs. The names are listed and sent to GMEO and to the job offices of local prefectures.

The employers interested to employ personnel make an application to the local prefectures in order to find the personnel that they need. If they cannot find the employees that they need from the local citizens or from foreigners that are already in Greece, they are then given by GMEO the lists to choose from those that applied for a job in Greece from abroad. The employees have to provide evidences to the authorities that they are able to pay the wages (the document that has to be provided is an issue of a bank guarantee statement for at least three months wages). The authorities can then issue a work permit for maximum one year that can be renewed annually, only if the employee has a work agreement with an employer. The government decided to extend the residence permit to two years starting from January 2004 (Act 3202/2003).

Currently the Greek government allows the immigrants to get insured for the job they provide and be given legal permits to those working. In addition the government is willing to put an end to the current problems that immigrants are facing within the procedure of issuing a work and stay permit. There is a new legislation that is examined by the Greek authorities, according to the Minister of the Interior, which is in the phase of its process, and will include a common procedure for the issue of work and stay permits.

### **1.2.2 New bodies/initiatives**

In 2001, the government issued a three-year programme: the Action Plan for the Social Integration of Immigrants (for the period 2002-2005). The plan includes measures for the labour market integration and training of immigrants, improved access to the health system, emergency centres for immigrant support, and measures for the improvement of cultural dialogue among the various ethnic communities aimed at combating xenophobia and racism within Greek society. However, many of the provisions of this

programme remain on paper. The reason for this is usually related to the pressure on the state budget on completing the preparations for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games and the politically sensitive period before the national elections of 7 March 2004. It is expected that in the post-Olympic Games economy, more attention will be attributed to the integration of the immigrant population at governmental level. The authority in Greece holding the primary responsibility for the immigration policy is the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry of Public Order, the Ministry of Employment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs possess supplementary competences in this field.

The Greek National Action Plan for Employment introduced in 2003 is an action plan for the period 2003-2006 and is aiming at full employment, quality and productivity in work, social coherence and integration of disadvantaged groups like migrants, disabled, older aged people, women returning to work after maternity etc. One of the particular objectives previewed is the integration of illegal migrants to the insurance systems of the country in order to improve of their working conditions. Another important objective according to the Plan is to combat discrimination within the employment environment by promotion of employment of the following sensitive groups: women, older working individuals, individuals with disabilities and migrants. This last group, especially from neighbouring countries, has been of great importance in the past decade as far as the economic growth is concerned. Their involvement and the type of their employment can be closely connected with the prospects of growth of the economy sector, and in this way they will not be considered only as cheap working hands.

Another initiative that is worth mentioning is the Intercultural Centre inaugurated in the city of Athens, where the immigrants have the possibility to learn Greek as well as to participate in educational and cultural activities. In the same building the first Foreigners Service Centre was opened with the objective to provide services for 80.000 applications for work and stay permits every year.

The Greek Ombudsman's Office and the National Human Rights Commission have both been very proactive in defending the rights of immigrants. In accordance with their mandate, they have often submitted proposals to the government for the improvement of the situation of migrants in Greece. Both of them have prepared comments on the draft immigration law and they regularly submit remarks to the competent authorities concerning the implementation of the law. The Office of the Ombudsman, which is competent to examine individual complaints, has had the possibility to monitor the implementation of the law and communicate observations to the Government.

## **Civic response**

### **1.3.1 Voluntary agencies, initiatives, campaigns, antiracist/ intercultural training**

Since the public debate on immigration issues is fairly recent, NGOs have only recently started working on immigration issues lately. There are two types of activities carried out by NGOs working in the field of immigration. NGOs participate in the public debate on immigration, by publishing books, organising conferences or monitoring the living conditions of immigrants in Greece. Some NGOs, such as the Hellenic League for Human Rights, have expressed their opinion and positions during the elaboration of the Immigration Law.

Other NGOs do practical work with immigrants and try to defend their rights, to support them and to facilitate their integration in the Greek society. Some of them have immigrant as their only target group, as is the case with the Network for the Social Support of Immigrants and Refugees. Other NGOs have a more general mandate and deal with immigrants in the course of their activities, e.g. Doctors of the World and Doctors without Borders. A number of NGOs are also involved in projects that are funded by the EU and concern the integration and full participation of immigrants through the recognition and exploitation of their rights.

*The International Organisation for Migration (IOM)* has an office that deals with immigration issues in Greece. The Office is in permanent contact with the state authorities, and is in charge of the implementation of many projects concerning the integration of immigrants, such as the organisation of Greek language courses, or the EU EQUAL programme against racism and xenophobia.

There are also several communities of immigrants in Greece. Some of them have created their own cultural centres and schools. However, they operate more as meeting places and ways of mutual support among immigrants than as lobbying actors towards the government. Therefore, they do not take part in the political discourse concerning immigration policy.

Co-operation between the state authorities and civil society in Greece is neither tradition nor practice. On the one hand, the government is not used to working with nongovernmental actors, especially regarding the drafting of policies; on the other hand, civil society is relatively young and has not yet explored the mechanisms of influence of the State that operate in other developed countries. It should also be noted that NGOs mostly rely on volunteers and have only recently had the possibility to hire professional staff. As a result, NGOs have hardly ever participated in drafting committees on legislation, even though they have shown expertise and involvement in certain fields of activity.

However, the experience was different in the case of the new Immigration Law. NGOs did not participate in the elaboration of the first draft, and neither did the other nongovernmental actors, including IOM; however, the draft was significantly changed after its elaboration and policy-makers took into consideration some of the comments made by non-governmental actors and national institutions. This does not mean, of course, that the final text meets all the expectations of non-governmental actors. Nevertheless, there is no official platform of discussion between the government and civil society actors interested in immigration. Conferences have been organised, where governmental officials and non-governmental actors have exchanged views.

Communities of immigrants have also been invited to meet ministers; however, this has been perceived by the society more as a gesture of goodwill than as the beginning of a substantial exchange of ideas.

## **1.4 Business community response**

### **1.4.1 Policies, initiatives, studies and training**

As the phenomenon of immigration is relatively new in Greece, the business community is not very involved in the public debate concerning immigration. Their approach towards immigration differs depending on the focus of their activities, and on their level of involvement in the implementation of immigration policies, as well as on their cooperation with the competent state authorities and their resources. Employers are in favour of immigration, as it provides them with a larger market of potential employees. Workers organisations, on the other hand, object to competition with immigrants who are prepared to accept lower wages; however, they do not oppose immigration very strongly.

Although the **National Confederation of Trade Unions (GSEE)** was not involved in the debate concerning the adoption of the immigration law, it stated its position that all workers, including migrant workers, should have equal rights, protected by International Conventions, the Greek Constitution and Greek labour law. GSEE and its Centres and Institutes also organise conferences where they express their position on immigration issues and exchange ideas with other actors.

The **Information Centre for Workers and the Unemployed (KEPEA)**, created by GSEE, informs migrant workers about their rights and assists them (as well as other workers) when they encounter problems. The Centre, through the information received by individuals, is in a position to have a clear idea about the problems of migrant workers and has been in contact with the

Greek authorities in order to deal with these problems and to provide effective solutions.

The **National Confederation of Trade Unions (GSEE)** also created the Institute of Labour (INE), which is a research institute created and one of the priorities in its work are immigration issues. The Institute of Labour carries out research on subjects related to immigration.

Regarding the trade unions efforts have been made, to a certain extent, to encourage immigrant workers' membership. Trade unions of specific professions, e.g. the builders' union, have formally been pro-immigrant as a means to secure their native member's rights and to avoid illegitimate competition from immigrants accepting work for lower pay and without welfare benefits. However, on the whole, trade unions have not been at the forefront of pro-immigrant civic or political activism.

### **1.5 Academic community response**

The extensive literature that exists on migration in Greece – in English or Greek language publications – concentrates on describing the evolution of the phenomenon in the past two decades. Many studies present and critically assess Greek immigration policies, and approach the subject against the backdrop of European migration issues or of developments in the Balkan context. A variety of methods and data have been utilised to analyse the experience of immigrants and special focus has been placed on immigrants' living and working conditions. These have often concentrated on specific immigrant groups – mainly the Albanians but also Bulgarians, Filipino, Poles and Egyptians. When discussing immigrant employment or access to health or education services, studies note that immigrants are discriminated against and face important difficulties. Few studies however put immigrant trajectories in perspective noting how immigrants improve their economic and social situation. In any case, hardly any study is concerned with how immigrants react to marginalisation and exclusion. There is equally very little information

on how immigrants voice their claims in the public sphere, whether they set up their own associations or become involved in mainstream organisations (such as trade unions or political parties). Though many studies note and analyse immigrant employment patterns, none are concerned with immigrant involvement in trade unions. There are no studies on developing ethnic media (e.g. newspapers or radio channels) even if some reports on ethnic press can be found occasionally in mainstream newspapers and magazines.

The organisation 'Migrants in Greece' works as an Online observatory (<http://www.migrantsingreece.org>), focusing on migrant and refugee issues. The observatory provides a wide selection of practical information and background documentation. It aims to be of interest not only to migrant communities and refugee groups, but also to anyone with an interest in immigration to Greece (NGOs, journalists, researchers, lawyers, students, local administrators, government employees etc). In order to make the website's content accessible to as many people as possible, it has both a Greek and an English-language version. In addition, material is also available in Albanian, Russian and Turkish.

The Equal Project Forum for Social Cohesion aims at combating racism and xenophobia while at the same time laying the ground for the balanced growth of a multicultural society in Greece. The project's top priorities are:

- (a) the integration of migrants and refugees into Greek society and the labour market;
- (b) the sensitization to migrants' problems of Greek employers, opinion-makers and the public at large to migrants' problems;
- (c) the rejection of racist stereotypes.

In the National Kapodistrian University of Athens a Laboratory for the Study of Migration and Diaspora (EMMEDIA) was established in 2000 to study migration challenges within Greece and at the global level. Its activities include the organization of research seminars, conferences and workshops on migration-related issues; follows EU and Greek migration policy; publications.

In the centre is participating a core group of University professors, other academic staff and many undergraduate and PhD researchers on migration. EMMEDIA collaborates with other departments of the University of Athens, with the Greek Open University, with the Department of Geography of Aegean University, with the Hellenic National Centre for Social Research (EKKE), the Greek Red Cross, and other migration institutes in Europe and Australia (<http://emmedia.pspa.uoa.gr>).

In the Athens Panteion University – Department of Social and Political Studies in 1989 was set up a Research Centre– Centre for Social Morphology and Social Policy (<http://www.panteion.gr/gr/new/>).

### **Aims**

Deliver and conduct of scientific researches, self-initiated, entrusted or in collaboration with other institutions, on issues of social morphology, demography, social and cultural anthropology, social geography, applied sociology and social policy.

Production of all kinds of educational, supervisory and auxiliary material for the support and promotion of effective teaching, research and briefing on issues of scientific competence of KEKMOKOP and the scientific personnel.

This centre is involved in research and publishes on applied social policy, social anthropology, social geography, demography, etc. The Centre in cooperation with academic staff from the Department of Sociology of Panteion University has since developed several research projects on migration, including qualitative and quantitative research on Albanian migration to Greece, on migrant employment, on aspects of migration policy implementation in Greece, on gender and migration including trafficking of women and the sex industry.

The Mediterranean Migration Observatory (MMO) (<http://www.mmo.gr/profile.htm>) was created in 1998. In 1999 it was established as a research unit of the Research Institute of Urban Environment and Human Resources (UEHR - <http://www.uehr.panteion.gr/>) of the Panteion

University of Athens. The aims of the Observatory include co-ordinated observation of migration flows in the Mediterranean and South-East European regions; conducting of comparative analysis of the social, economic and political aspects related to migration phenomena; promotion of theoretical analysis of empirical data and formulation of policy suggestions. The observatory maintains a documentation centre on migration, consisting of printed material and electronic databases.

In the Department of Economics, University of Patras, was carried out a major research project on the impact of immigration on Greek agriculture funded by the Greek Ministry of Agriculture. This project has compared the employment and general social integration (or exclusion) of immigrants in three rural areas (in Epirus, Northern Greece, in Korinthia, in the northern Peloponnese and in Crete).

## **1.6 Media Response**

### **1.6.1 Newspaper reports highlighting intercultural work place issues**

A study prepared for the Council of Europe in 1990s<sup>2</sup> concludes that media coverage related to immigration in Greece mainly focuses on the following topics:

- Immigrants increase unemployment among natives;
- Immigrants are responsible for an increase in criminality (these mostly involve property-related offences, but also drug trafficking and rape).
- The main 'solutions' to the 'immigration problem' include stricter laws and harsher enforcement especially concerning border control; And,
- Ethnic origin and/or nationality trends to be highlighted –particularly in the case of Albanians.

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<sup>2</sup> As cited in the report, prepared by Ruby Gropas and Anna Triandafyllidou, Active Civic Participation of Immigrants in Greece, Country Report prepared for the European research project POLITIS, Oldenburg 2005, available at [www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe](http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe)

A decade later, in a report prepared for the Council of Europe in 2003 (ECRI, 2003) the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance notes that some media in Greece express certain prejudices and negative stereotypes towards members of minority groups and immigrants. It is highlighted that the freedom of expression does not extend so far as to authorise the publication of racist statements. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance recommends to Greek authorities to alert media professionals to the dangers of racism and intolerance and in cases where racist articles have been published, to take every step to prosecute and punish the culprits. A study on the related topic carried out in 2005 (Gropas, Triandafyllidou 2005) also concludes that media coverage has slightly changed in the period since 1990s although nowadays the media reports on immigrant issues are more balanced.

The Code of Ethics of Greek journalists adopted in 1988 and ratified by a Presidential Decree (77/2003) in March 2003 states that respect for national and popular values and the defence of people's interests should inspire the journalist in the practice of their function. It also states that the primary task of the journalist is the defence of people's liberties and of democracy, as well as the advancement of social and state institutions. The general codes of practice issued by the Association of Athens Daily Newspaper Journalists (1998) states that it is the duty of the journalist to 'confer the information or news without being influenced by her/his personal political, social, religious, racial or cultural views or beliefs'. Another article of the same code stipulates that the journalist has the right, and also the duty, to 'deal with citizens equally, without discriminating on the basis of ethnic origin, gender, race, religion, political beliefs, economic situation or social status'. In 2003 the Ministry of the Press and Media issued circular no. 21979 aiming at increasing the awareness of professionals working in the media against racism and xenophobia, a circular that has been widely been accepted and respected by them.

In general the reporting on minority and immigration issues in Greek media can be divided into two main categories according to respective attitude of the

media towards minority issues (Triandafyllidou, 2002). A large part of the daily press and private TV stations as well as right wing press and private TV channels in particular show little sensitivity towards cultural differences of immigrants and adopt a nationalist and xenophobic standpoint, promoting a view of Greece as culturally and ethnically homogeneous. Only few media, including state TV channels, central and left-wing newspapers, adopt a more careful and sensitive approach when reporting on immigration matters, and are characterised by a relative openness to cultural and ethnic diversity.

The racist behaviour appearing within the Greek society towards immigrants is many times reinforced by the media and the police, which contribute to the development of the idea that immigrants are the main suspects for the growth of criminality in Greece (Lianos, T, 2004). 'Political correctness' or minority sensitivity is far from being common practice, especially in the language used by tabloids and newspapers adopting extreme nationalist views. The journalists justify their position with the aim to point to the danger or damage inflicted to the country and its people by foreigners (Triandafyllidou, 2002). Some authors argues (Pavlou, 2001, Triandafyllidou, 2002) that in many case the news bulletins does not present the reality in the reports related to immigration, exaggerating its role as a criminalization factor. According to the same authors diversity is represented as 'a deleterious thing', 'hybridisation', a loss of 'purity' or both cultural and political autonomy, while homogeneity and nationalism are praised as 'a desirable thing'. Overall, the media rarely define concepts such as 'racism', 'anti-racism', or 'cultural diversity' and almost never touch the subject on minority and immigrant rights. It is worth noting that the more moderate media adopt a more open and sensitive stance and try to present and retain an objective stand as to avoid escalation of racist and xenophobic reactions. They provide more balanced and impartial reports presenting the arguments of the different parties involved in minority or immigrant matters. These media also show reports presenting in particular the positive impact of the immigrants on the national economy and provide possibilities for intellectuals and public figures to express their views on immigration and minority issues. However the media reports rarely focus on

the minority and immigrants rights as collective political rights, guaranteed in the International agreements on human rights, ratified by the Greek state.

It is commonplace to report events or news concerning minorities from the perspective of dominant political actors, such as the government, state authorities, or the police. (Citizens' Movement Against Racism, 1998: 64-5, Gropas, Triandafyllidou 2005). The minority viewpoint, when reported, is presented as 'inferior' and serves only to justify the dominant views. More rarely, a sympathetic though paternalistic attitude towards minority claims is adopted. Although there are a few studies analysing directly and in detail the language used in news or commentaries on migration, still there are no studies or reports as yet that examine the ways in which news-making practices and routines affect the content and form of minority and ethnic issue reporting (Gropas, Triandafyllidou 2005).

A critical discourse analysis of the press in Thessaloniki (Markavis et al. 2001 as cited in Gropas, Triandafyllidou, 2005) concludes that the press tend to approach migration along three main themes:

- Migration and criminality;
- Social racism and xenophobia;
- 'Good' and 'bad' immigrants: the range of identification frequently depending on the country/ ethnic group of origin of the immigrant (for instance within Albanians on the negative end of the spectrum, and Pontiac Greeks on the positive – due to a common Hellenic identity).

Gropas and Triandafiliou (Gropas, Triandafyllidou, 2005) points out that the most popular references to immigrants in the Greek media can be grouped under the following general themes:

- Illegal immigration to Greece.
- Traffic of women.
- Immigrant children in public schools.

The Greek media often show stories of immigrants, refugees and asylum-seeker entering illegally in the country emphasising pursue of a better life and the fact that they are risking their lives for it. Especially, stories of women from eastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine and Moldavia especially that are brought to Greece under false work pretences and are then forced into prostitution are very frequent.. Many reports and articles put particular emphasis on the fact that there are schools where children of immigrant origin have become the majority and how this influences schooling. It is often argued that due to Greek language difficulties that some children of immigrant origin may encounter, teaching is slowed down, leading many Greek parents to prefer private education or relocating to neighbourhoods and educational institutions with smaller immigrant populations in order to offer their children a 'better' education. On the other hand, there is an almost yearly recurrent theme of immigrant children topping their classes in terms of highest grade. (Gropas, Triandafyllidou, 2005)

## **2 Private, Public, and Education sectors**

### **2.1 Cultural Diversity in the Private Sector**

The data from the 2001 Census in Greece (the last available official data) indicate that immigrants represent 7% of the total population in the country and about 9 % of the labour force. Immigration affects predominantly the private sector, as the Greek legislation reserves public sector for Greek citizens with some exceptions for the EU citizens.

The highest percentage of economically active immigrants is registered in Attica and tourists areas, such as islands. According to the relevant surveys, in Greece the possibilities for immigrants to be employed are very stereotypical and rigid and depend on the nationality and gender. The labour market for immigrants is characterized as highly segmented and non-competitive. It is dominated in number by Albanians who are involved mainly in construction and agriculture. Bulgarians and Indians are mostly working in

the field of agriculture [although of different types]; Bangladeshi and Pakistanis are specialized in industry; Polish and Georgians tend to work in construction.

With regard to the gender of immigrants in the private sector the data show that non-EU immigrant male employment is concentrated in construction, agriculture and industry – although with some presence also in tourism. Female employment is also characterized with the predominance of Albanians. The majority of female immigrants, more than 50% of Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Romanians, Russians and Filipinas, work in the field of “live-in housekeeping and cleaning”. Other sectors that female immigrants are involved are agriculture and to a lesser extent tourism.

In rural areas male immigrants are occupied in agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and construction, and women work as housekeepers. In urban areas, men work mainly in construction or construction related jobs, and in small-scale businesses, while women work as cleaners in buildings and hotels, housekeepers, or even as dancers and “entertainers” in night clubs.

A research made on the Albanian immigration in Greece indicates that over the years the Albanian immigrants thanks to the increased ability in the Greek language and a better understanding of employment possibilities, they started to move out of unskilled farm work, and enter into construction sector, small firm employment, technician’s work, and transport services. 82% of the sample held steady employment, with 57% paying regular social insurance. Of men, 30% worked in construction, 24% in industrial small companies; women tended to work as domestic cleaners (27%), with a quite high, and increasing, proportion (28%) as housewives (Baldwin-Edwards, M. 2004).

According to the researches the jobs occupied by Albanian immigrants, that form 57 % of all immigrants in Greece, are usually temporary and part-time. These jobs are usually refused to be done by Greeks for different reasons: the jobs require heavy or dangerous work, especially in construction, heavy

industry and agriculture labour, it is low paid or with a low status. Immigrant employment is almost solely in the secondary sector, regardless of skill levels; it is frequently under-insured or illegal; and often in abusive conditions (Baldwin-Edwards, M. 2004).

Immigrants receive usually less than a Greek would receive for the same job. In his research on the impact of immigration on the Greek economy Lianos argues that immigration does not seem to have significant depressing effects on wages overall. However he admits that the view that the wages of unskilled and semi-skilled workers have been constrained by the inflow of immigrants is not without support (Lianos, T. et al., 2004). According to the data provided by the state-sponsored National Employment Observatory, 60 % percent of immigrant workers earned between 500 and 800 euros per month and 20 % less than 500 euros. In comparison half of all Greek workers insured with in the Social Insurance Institute - IKA ( the largest social security organization in Greece) earned less than 824 euros a month. The monthly IKA figures show that in August 2004, the non-EU immigrants accounted for 12,32 % of the 1,831,270 people insured. Meanwhile, about 45,000 are insured with the farmers' pension fund OGA and another 10,000 immigrants are self-employed and insured with TEVE (Greek Professional Workers and Craftsmen's Fund).

Existence of immigration workforce in Greece is regarded in the majority of the studies as a boost to economic growth and to the country's social insurance system. The findings made by the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute reveal that the state collects nearly one billion euros annually in social insurance contributions from immigrant workers. In 2003 (the last year for which figures are available for the entire year), approximately 346,000 immigrants contributed 887 million euros to the Greek Social Insurance Foundation (IKA) - the country's largest social security fund.

Many of the immigrants coming to Greece are employed as unskilled workers. The percentage of immigrants employed at positions requiring high qualifications is very low. Generally, the immigrants' employment is determined by the demand in various vacancies in the local labour market and

not by their capabilities or their experience. A study has shown that the employment of immigrants is to a very important extent in jobs for which they over-qualify (Lianos, 2004).

There are several factors that affect the performance and role of immigrants within the Greek economy and society. Among these factors, more important are the following: (1) Lack of knowledge of the Greek language. (2) Ignorance of the labour market networks. (3) Risk of employers by employing immigrants due to their ignorance as regards the personal and other characteristics of immigrants; and (4) the restrictions imposed on the labour market by the regulation of many professions (Lianos, T., 2004).

With the exception of immigrants from the Greek Minority of (Southern) Albania and of immigrants of Greek decent, all other immigrants in Greece did not have knowledge of the Greek language. This is a serious disadvantage especially for professions where good knowledge of Greek language is a necessity (for ex. teacher, lawyers etc.) Limited use of the labour market networks, which make available information on job openings, labour availability, wages and other related variables, puts the immigrants in a disadvantaged position on the labour market. In many cases it is difficult for the immigrants to meet the special requirements for the exercise of a regulated professions in Greece, as they are faced with structures related to recognition of specific level of education, examination or period of apprenticeship.

### **2.1.2 Agriculture sector**

Agriculture is most heavily reliant on immigrant labour. The Greek farmers depend on immigrant labour to pick olives, pack grapes and gather vegetables across the country. The jobs in this sector are not preferred by the Greek citizens, because of the long hours of intense physical labour under less-than-comfortable working conditions. In addition immigrants are paid less than the Greek citizens for doing the same job (about 40% lower). Research

conducted in the 1990s estimated that immigrants made up only 32.7 % of hired farm labour. Statistics show that now about 90 % of all hired labour in the Greek farms is from immigrants. The larger farms in Greece now depend extensively on the availability of cheap migrant labour.

Other reasons why the sector is dominated by immigrants is the seasonal demands for labour which cannot be satisfied because of the demographic decrease in rural areas and ageing of the population. Farmers usually hire foreign workers through a seasonal visa scheme designed to bring workers for a short period of time (six months maximum) during the year. According to data published by the Mediterranean Migration Observatory at Panteion University in Athens, seasonal work accounts for only 8,000 immigrants (mainly Bulgarians, Albanians and Egyptians) annually.

According to an article prepared in the frames of a special survey conducted by the "Athens News" weekly newspaper, "from the southern Aegean island of Crete to tiny villages in northern Greece, immigrants (mainly Albanians) harvest potatoes and melons and pick olives and oranges from trees". The article continues that in Marathon, eastern Attica, several thousand Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi immigrants pick hundreds of tonnes of vegetables and fruit. They supply Athens' markets daily. In the village of Velo, Corinthia, the harvest, handling and packaging of grapes is carried out almost entirely by immigrant workers. The men work in the fields and the women in seven of the local packaging companies. By the same token, immigrants harvest greenhouses, growing vegetables on the island of Crete.

Before the influx of immigrants to rural Greece, the backbreaking burden of tending the fields rested on farmers' families. However, it's been years since farmers were able to rely on their livestock and harvest their crops without immigrants in the northern Greek area of Mastorochoia, 12 villages near the border with Albania. Two-thirds of the population are pensioners whose children have moved to urban areas. According to Mastorochoia Mayor Cosmas Sdoukos, the immigrants - all from neighbouring Albania - are a boon to the local economy. "The Albanian immigrants are important in regard to

production," he says, "because the population here since the 1960s has emigrated abroad or to the big cities and has started to age."

According to the researches immigrants employed in seasonal agricultural work in the rural areas are not restricted only to agriculture. They are also engaged in nonagricultural economic activities in rural areas including the overall support of aged populations, especially in the marginal, mountainous rural areas especially.

### **2.1.3 Help in the house**

According to a media publication nearly every babysitter and housecleaner looking for work in Chrysi Efkeria (Golden Opportunity) - the country's largest circulation classified newspaper - is an immigrant. Bulgarians, Poles, Georgians and Russians outnumber Greeks three to one. Data published by the National Employment Observatory shows the majority of immigrant women are employed as cleaners, babysitters and caretakers for the elderly.

The ENAR Shadow Report 2003 on immigration in Greece pointing towards complaints and interview by SOS Racism in 2003 from the women themselves indicates that many are alone in Greece but have families and children (mainly from eastern European countries) that are left behind. Thus, this shows that these women generally work for an unlimited number of hours, they have to be available at any hour of the day and night and hardly take a day off, unless the occasional Sunday. They are paid the basic salary without overtime or bonuses and many of these women must also pay their social security contributions, which under normal circumstance is the responsibility of their employers. The majority of their employers are not willing to pay their social security contributions for them. In addition, they may be treated unfairly even worse, be sexually harassed by their employers who also illegally confiscate their passports. Unfortunately, the victims willing to come forward are few because they are afraid of losing their jobs especially when they do not have resident or work permits, possibly leading to deportation.

#### **2.1.4 Conclusions**

In the recent years Greek economy has become increasingly dependent on the immigrant workforce coming into the country. Most of the reports put an accent on the fact that in reality immigrants do not take the job of the Greek citizens, therefore competing or substituting them, but are usually employed on a job position rejected by Greeks for different reasons: hard and dangerous work, low payment or low status. From an economical aspect immigrants represent a low paid work force that contributes to maintaining low levels of inflation in the country. Analysis of labour market data reveals that important sectors of Greece's economy would be in serious trouble if their foreign-born workers were to suddenly disappear. Cultural diversity became an inherent feature of the Greek society nowadays including the economic sector. The positive influences of immigration on economic indicators are obvious. However the society needs to be supported on an interpersonal level in order to adapt to the new emerging multicultural reality.

### **2.2 Cultural Diversity in the Public Sector**

The Greek Constitution provides that only Greek citizens are eligible for positions in the public sector. However the emerging multicultural society requires the establishment of new values that guide the work of civil servants. Although currently the demand for the use of public services such as schools, hospitals, administration, etc. by immigrants has not been excessive, it may have changed considerably in the years to come because of the legalization of immigrants and the unification of their families (Lianos, T., 2004).

### **2.3 Cultural Diversity in Education**

As already described above the most intensive immigration waves towards Greece came from the Balkan and Eastern European countries including the territory of the former Soviet Union after the collapse of the socialist economic

and political systems in these countries in the 1990s. As mentioned above the data collected in the 2001 Census of the population in Greece, which are the last available official statistics for Greece, show that immigrants represent more than 7 % of the total population and about 65 % of them are Albanian. The presence of a large number of immigrants in Greece in the last years has turned the Greek society into a multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. This fact has brought about some problems as far as education and training of children of different culture, race and language is concerned.

Exact statistical records concerning the number and distribution of immigrant children (including immigrants from Greek origin) in Greek schools of all levels have been available since 2003, when the Institute for the Greek Diaspora, Education and Intercultural Studies started investigating the situation of immigrant children in the Greek educational system.

A research made by the Institute for the Education of Ethnic Greek Immigrants and Cross-cultural Education shows that 9 % of all children who attended school in Greece in the fall 2002-summer 2003 term came from foreign or ethnic Greek immigrant families. From the total the children of foreign (mostly Albanian) immigrants were 98,241, while 31,873 were born to ethnic Greek immigrants. The number of asylum seeker and refugee children was very small compared to the number of migrant children in the country.

According to the research carried out by Institute for the Education of Ethnic Greek Immigrants and Cross-cultural Education 42.7 % of the foreign schoolchildren have lived in Greece for at least six years, while 57.3 % have spent no more than five years in the country. Most of the foreign pupils are enrolled in primary (where they form 10.60 % of all classes) and lower secondary schools (10.17 % of the total), followed by pre-school classes (8 %) and upper secondary schools (5.13 %). About 35.6 % of the Greek schools have no foreign pupils, while 45.8 % have up to 10 %. In 17.1 % of the schools - 10-50 foreign pupils are studying and in 1.5 % of the schools -

over 50. The highest concentration of foreign and ethnic Greek pupils (11.92 %) is in Attica.

The fact that almost 11 % of the pupils in the Greek schools are coming from the families of foreigners or ethnic Greek immigrants motivated Greek governments to take specific steps towards introducing intercultural education in the country. The general policy of the Greek government towards introducing intercultural dimension in the national school is in compliance with the Greek Constitution (article 5, par. 1) recognizing the right of everyone to develop freely and without obstacles his or her personality, as a supreme value in the Greek society and other international conventions on education that Greece has ratified. According to the international law, minority groups have private and collective rights. They can have their own education, civilization and religion. It is also worth mentioning that the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950 recognizes the freedom of thought and religion (article 9) and the Convention of UNESCO against Discriminations in Education forbids any kind of discrimination in education due to race, colour, sex, ethnicity and social origin and binds the states to promote equality of opportunities in education (articles 1 & 4). The UNESCO Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 acknowledges the obligation of the states to respect the right of children to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to take measures, as far as they have sufficient funds, to protect children's social and cultural rights.

The existing legal framework in Greece ensures that educational services are provided to all immigrant children aged 6 to 15 (primary and lower secondary education – compulsory stage of education in Greece) independently of their parents' legal status in Greece. Article 40 of Law 2910/2001 states that 'all foreign children living in Greece are obliged to attend compulsory education schools on the same basis as Greek nationals'. The same article regulates free access for immigrant students to all forms of school life through common procedures. It also obliges the school administration to enrol immigrant or refugee children even if the necessary documents fail and at the same time opens the possibility for optional instruction in the mother tongue and in the

culture of the country of origin in the form of additional, extra-curricular student support activities and programs.

Within the intercultural dimension of the Greek policy on education three categories of children living in Greece are taken into consideration:

- Children whose parents are citizens of another state coming to Greece in order to stay for a limited period of time or in order to settle down permanently, independently of their legal status (legal/illegal immigrants);
- Children whose parents (or at least one of them) are ethnic Greeks or Greek nationals living abroad and migrating from a third country to Greece;
- Children whose parents are or have been asylum seekers and have been given refugee or humanitarian status by the Greek authorities, or are irregularly resident in Greece.

The beginning of the process for introducing intercultural dimension in the Greek educational policy can be found in 1970s with the adoption of some preferential measures regarding the migrant students aimed to facilitate their integration. For example the foreign students (including the migrant students from Greek origin) benefited from criteria reduction as well as time grants, i.e. in the first two years of study pupils are marked with a pass mark of 8 (the pass mark is 10 for the rest of the students), particularly with regard to language subjects. In 1970s and 1980s, the religious, national, ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences of immigrant students were not considered as justifying a need of parallel educational structures (schools, curricula, textbooks, examinations, entitlements etc.).

The Greek authorities adopted the main measures aimed at the introduction of intercultural dimension in education later in the 1990s. The most important laws introducing the intercultural dimension of education are:

- Law 1404/83 setting up Reception Classes and Tutorial Courses for return and foreign pupils; this Law was amended and improved in 1990

in order to render Reception Classes and Tutorial Classes more flexible and productive.

- Law 2413/1996 on intercultural education in Greece.

After the accession of Greece into the European Union a European dimension in the Greek policy on education has been introduced as well. It is based on the following documents, which contain recommendations regarding language proficiency, pupil and teacher mobility, cooperation between schools, etc.:

- The Single European Act (1986);
- The Resolution of 24 May 1988 on the European dimension in education;
- The Maastricht Treaty, specifically articles 126 and 127 (1992);
- The Green Paper on the European dimension in education (1993);
- The White Paper on education and training (1995).

As a member state Greece had the obligation to implement in its national legislation EU Directive 77/486/EEC, which refers to the education of children of relocating workers from European countries. The Directive expressly provides that the State has to take appropriate measures to promote, in coordination with normal education, teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin for the children in compulsory education stage.

The law 1404/83 introduced the reception classes and tutorial courses in order to facilitating the adjustment and mainstreaming into the Greek educational system of repatriated and foreign pupils. In 1996 the Law 2413/96 on intercultural education in Greece for the first time designated the aim of introducing intercultural education for migrant students in Greece. According to this law the aim of intercultural education is to organise and run primary and secondary schools to provide education to young people who are educationally, socially or culturally distinct and who have been taught using different teaching methodology.

Article 34 of Law 2413/1996 provides for an adaptation of the mainstream curriculum in special schools or classes of intercultural education in order to facilitate an intercultural approach and to account for the special social, cultural and learning situation of a multicultural environment. Many studies analyse and criticise this law finding in it controversies as for example that while in the composition that accompanies this law it is mentioned that: "Intercultural Education starts from the recognition of multiculturalism in societies and the special value of all civilizations", the aim stated in the law is the promotion only of the Greek cultural identity, the advancement of the Greek language, Greek and orthodox tradition and not the advancement of multiculturalism (Makri, Vassiliki ,2003).

Two types of reception classes (type I and type II) are available in the Greek schools to all immigrant children according to their needs. There is no obligation for schools to conduct language tests for the placement of pupils. The first type of reception classes (I) is those in which students are organized in special learning groups. Pupils in these classes get systematic instruction in Greek and other school subjects, joining the mainstream classes when subjects such as music, sports, arts and foreign language are taught. The maximum duration of reception classes of this type is two years and the school in cooperation with the student's family takes the decision for the student's participation in them. In 2002/03 school year, 548 type I reception classes were organized for a total of 7 863 pupils, mainly in the Attica region (39.05% of classes were organized here) followed by Central Macedonia (27.4 %).

According to some pedagogical studies separate classes could lead to isolation, if they do not function properly or not in the school hours. It is also possible, that pupils with learning difficulties will go to these classes and as a result, these classes will deviate from their original purpose (Makri, Vassiliki, 2003). A survey conducted by UNICEF showed that the coexistence of Greek and foreign children at school distinguishes gradually or discourages xenophobic and racist attitudes.

Reception classes of the second type (II) are those in which students do not have to form parallel learning groups in any subject, as they get additional supportive instruction in the form of individual-oriented, specific teacher interventions while they are attending the normal courses with their classmates. In 2002/03, 127 type II reception classes were organized for a total of 1 633 pupils (Eurydice Report, Greece, National Report, 2003/2004). This type of class was most frequent in Central Macedonia (35.4 % of classes) followed by Attica (15 %) and the South Aegean and Crete (both 11 %).

Apart from the existence of reception classes, preparatory courses are organised mainly as an afternoon activity as an additional possibility for extracurricular remedial or compensatory instruction at school. The preparatory courses are aimed at students either attending a reception class or in need of further instruction in order to achieve the schools' academic requirements. In 2002/03 school year there were a total of 525 preparatory classes organized for some 3 719 pupils. These classes were most often organized in the Attica and Central Macedonian regions.

The teachers involved in the different forms of teaching described above are either mainstream teachers with additional qualifications, or teachers hired by the state for this specific form of instruction. During the personnel selection procedures of the teachers particular attention is given to their awareness or knowledge of the culture of the country of origin of the students as well as their knowledge of students' native language. In-service training is provided for all types of teaching staff and is overseen by the educational administration and by the school counselling services.

The Greek Ministry of Education (mainly) as well as the local state or municipal authorities as much as their budget allows it cover the expenses arising from these support measures (i.e., teacher allocation and in-service teacher training, infrastructure, educational material (e.g. textbooks) and educational equipment). The schools with high percentage of immigrant students receive additional funding indirectly through the implementation of

special measures, such as the 'School Integration of Return Migrant and Immigrant children' project, jointly funded by the European Union and the Greek Ministry of Education.

In addition Intercultural education and training for teachers is provided by some University Departments organizing for initial primary and secondary school teacher training. In-service training seminars are also organized by the Ministry of Education for teachers involved in programs of intercultural education, as obligatory training or for teachers interested in the topic as optional training.

On the basis of the Law 2413/96 were established Intercultural Education Schools. The state, local government organization, church foundations and other non-profit charitable associations are entitled to establish such schools. According to Greek pedagogical researches the Law 2413/96 contains inconsistencies but is also considered to be a milestone in the Greek educational policy towards foreign and repatriated Greek students (Damanakis, Michael, 2005).

Schools or classes of intercultural education enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy concerning the curriculum design and the organization of school life. Although these schools are part of the public sector and follow the general goals of education as they are set in Greek educational legislation, they are intended to meet the educational needs of immigrant groups with their social, cultural or religious background. For this reason the curricula followed by all intercultural schools are similar to those of the regular public schools but they are also adapted to the cultural, social and learning needs of the students. Intercultural schools possess the autonomy to further develop their curriculum and the other school activities in order to respond in the best possible way to provide for the needs of these groups (Eurydice Report, Greece, National Report, 2003/2004).

Students attending these schools are of both native and of immigrant origin. The teachers are selected through a special procedure in which knowledge

and skills in intercultural education and awareness of the students' cultural background are assessed. Teaching is provided in Greek. There are three intercultural primary schools as well as two gymnasia and two upper-secondary schools in the greater Athens area. The number of intercultural schools across all educational levels around the country is presently about 20. There are also a number of primary schools in Thrace in northern Greece where students are taught both in the Greek and Turkish language.

In the period since 1999 different support measures for the immigrant students in the Greek schools have been introduced. Measures adopted by the Greek state to support the school integration of migrant, return migrant and refugee children are general involving all schools, or specific applying to certain type of schools depending on the presence of immigrant students in these schools.

Within these measures support for the language, culture and religion of origin of the students is provided. Mother tongue and culture lessons are possible on an optional basis, as an extra-curricular activity and can comprise up to 4 hours per week at the express request of a minimum of seven students. Funding is provided by the Greek state as well as by the European Union.

In order to facilitate the access of immigrant pupils (including asylum seekers) to school services they are eligible to receive special financial assistance on equal basis with the native students in the Greek schools covering the transport costs. The financial assistance is provided to students whose parents have low income and in the regions where public transport is not well organised. Currently there are no special rules supporting the adaptation of daily school life in recognition of the cultural and religious needs of immigrant children (e.g. menus served at school canteens, observation of religious or cultural holidays etc.).

School-based Greek language tuition for parents and families of immigrant pupils is offered by schools taking part in the "School Integration of Return

Migrant and Immigrant Children” network. The Institute for Lifelong Education (I.D.E.K.E.) also offers Greek language classes to adult immigrants.

Parents’ consent is always requested prior to participation in any of the support activities. In some types of instruction it is obligatory. Within the context of the ‘School Integration of Return Migrant and Immigrant Children’ project, an action known as ‘Connecting school and families’ has been implemented. Its targets are to inform pupils’ families of the education system, to give parents a chance to participate in the learning process of their children and to enable discussion in order to achieve successful integration into the education system for the pupils concerned.

In order to facilitate the introduction of intercultural and European dimension in education e-networks are established and operates between Greek and foreign schools. Competitions among students (essays, theatre, poster etc.) on subjects closely related to this topic (for example, peace, human rights, fighting xenophobia and racism in the modern world, etc.) are organized and the award of prizes to the best products is provided. It is worth noted that the Greek government also provide financial support for projects regarding education for Greeks abroad and ‘culturally distinct’ groups at home. The currently financed projects for the education of Roma, Muslims and foreign pupils form a group under the general title ‘Intercultural Education Programmes’.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education incorporated the European and intercultural dimensions into the new curriculum for the compulsory course of education (9 years), under the general principle of “Strengthening cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society” (published in Government Gazette vol. ii, 303/13-3-03). The most significant points of this general principle are as follows:

- Mutual understanding and cooperation with other European peoples, so as to promote development in all sectors.

- Enrichment of Greek society and other European societies with individuals and groups that are bearers of other cultures, so as to broaden cultural diversity.
- Respect for and acceptance of cultural difference among others, and harmonious coexistence in multicultural environments.
- Development of social and communicative skills necessary for participation in contemporary social developments.
- Cultivation of national and cultural identity in the spirit of cultural and linguistic diversity provided for in article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty.

Following the introduction of the intercultural approaches in education an interdisciplinary methodology has been implemented with respect to the teaching of subjects like history, geography, literature and second or third language in all secondary education schools and partly in the elementary school. Teachers are encouraged to adopt an intercultural approach in this area. An optional curriculum zone of at least two hours per week was established which is previewed to provide a forum where various topics can be discussed, including European identity, multiculturalism and globalisation.

However it must be mentioned that a study evaluating the results of the Greek education policy concludes that while the Ministry insists in its attempts, both by legislating and financing programmes, educational practice continues to resist. The agents of resistance in educational practice are parents, teachers and educational administrators. The obviously given for the majority of the Greek citizens remains to be national homogeneity.

#### **2. 4 Pedagogical studies in Greece - Intercultural approach in education**

Many studies in Greece concentrate on the introduction of the intercultural approach in the Greek education and the elaboration of successful intercultural methodology. In one of these studies are discussed the positions of the main parties concerned following their principles, beliefs and interests. From one side the position of the foreign students and their parents is taken

into consideration. Generally their main aim is to be integrated in the society but without losing their relation with the culture of their country of origin.

On the other hand, Greek parents, sometimes influenced and affected by racial prejudices and xenophobic attitudes, do not like the presence of foreign children at school, because they think that these children are responsible for delay in progress and, to a large extent, for school violence. For these reasons they demand that these children go to separate classes or to separate, segregated schools. The values that they adopt and express are social harmony and high quality in education. (Makri, Vassiliki, 2003)

Teachers on their side want to be better and further trained, in order to be able to handle the cultural heterogeneity of their class and help foreign pupils with their difficulties. They want to communicate with the foreign pupils of their class and to have contact with their parents. They believe in the principles of equal treatment and education.

According to the recommendations in the studies carried out in Greece related to intercultural education the school, as a broader system has to provide peaceful coexistence and cooperation of the pupils, their progress in class and in the examinations. Its general aim is to contribute to the social cohesion and harmony in Greece.

## **2.5 Conclusions.**

The most important role of intercultural education in the schools is to support civil society based on democratic principles and multiculturalism as well as to raise the awareness of students about their civil, social and political rights.

For the reasons stated above the most favourable form for integration of immigrant students will be schools where flexible education programmes are provided. Their integration will be further facilitated if separate classes on an optional basis are organised where immigrant students can learn their native

language and culture. The instruction in these classes should be both in Greek language and in the native language of the immigrant students. These classes should be open for Greek students as well. Teaching methodology based on communicative and cooperative approach is recommended.

In the curricula of the Greek schools it is recommendable to be included more subjects with content related to the different cultures of the immigrants students. The aim of the educational programmes should be to encourage critical thought and imagination of students as well as to support their openness towards different cultures. The lessons in the schools should strengthen cultural interaction and lead to abolishment of ethnic and racial stereotypes and prejudices.

Special attention should be given to training of teachers in the field of intercultural matters. The intercultural training should be available for all teachers and trainers in Greece especially for those who work directly with immigrant students. The training should be provided through short-term courses, seminars as well as a part of the formal education programme for teachers. Adequate and high-quality training materials in intercultural matters should be developed addressing the specific needs of the Greek society.

On behalf of the Greek state a long-term programme in the field of intercultural education should be adopted. It should be ensured with sufficient financial resources. Further measures for the implementation of the Law 2413/96 should be adopted aimed at promoting social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, tolerance and prosperity of the Greek society.

The Greek society and in particular the Greek education system should adhere to cultural diversity and pluralism, in order to survive and flourish. The major challenge nowadays is to integrate cultural differences as organic elements of contemporary society as it is the way for future prosperity.

### **3 CONCLUSIONS**

The Greek government has been unprepared to receive the large numbers of immigrants of the last decade, and has hesitated to introduce the necessary legal and institutional changes for the regularization and integration of this population.

The government, however, was forced to adopt a regularization procedure under often contradictory pressures. From one side, in an environment of growing xenophobia, the public demanded the registration of immigrants. From another, human rights and labour organizations sought more humanitarian and less exploitative treatment.

The integration debate is linked to this shift in the public debate. However, there is still some disparity between the government's rhetoric and the implementation of policies. There is still significant discrimination in terms of access to public services and in society more broadly. It is important to understand that the integration debate is still quite new. The government has stated its commitment to integrate immigrants to enable them to participate in Greek society. However, this is taking place in a climate of negative attitudes and social discrimination.

One solution to problems arising from immigration was the granting of dual citizenship. Often, however, bilateral cooperation resolved some cases, but not all, especially during modern times. One of the most recent developments in this respect concerns current negotiations between Greece and Albania regarding dual citizenship for Albanians of Greek descent (members of the Greek minority of southern Albania) who apply for Greek citizenship as they are now living on Greek territory (Pavlou 2003: 265). Dual citizenship in that case becomes of major importance. As more than 80% of the minority population have moved from Albania to Greece, both governments have attempted to balance their tactics to secure power over the minority in their favour. Greece attempts to ensure dual citizenship for the minority and

Albania tries to avoid the presence of a population with Greek citizenship on its territory. Granting dual citizenship to the minority, now residents of Greece would entail political gains for the Greek government and reduce the odds that members of the minority would return to Albania. So far, multilateral agreements on citizenship issues have not been not binding on Greece. Greece has signed the European Convention on Nationality but has not ratified it. Furthermore, European Union law created a common dynamic internal space where freedom of movement regarding persons and capital, links the legal and symbolic “value” of Greek citizenship with the member-states.

Dual citizenship in the case of Greece, by birth or by naturalization, would enhance inclusion and reduce phenomena of legal and social exclusion insofar as citizenship/nationality can be considered as part of the individuals' identity.

Nonetheless, much remains to be done in Greece, as nationalism still plays a key role in law-making and drastically affects the perception that states have of themselves. The autonomous dynamic of human rights in the European and international institutional infrastructure, which tend to homogenize national policies regarding inclusion/exclusion, have affected the relevant policies in Greece and will do so more and more in the future.

In the new policies and laws, discrimination on the basis of descent should be abolished and policy makers must re-think the conception of “ethnic origin”. Social exclusion, racism, and discrimination have to be confronted, taking into account the new demographic challenges. Thus, a new content of Greek citizenship has to be formed and legally applied.

In this sense dual, or multiple citizenship, has to be seen as a basic integrative mechanism that can prevent social exclusion and eventual ethnic tensions on the basis of national, ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliation.

The policies providing rights and even citizenship to immigrants who wish to be included as Greek citizens of equal value and with an equal share in the social network and the political and constitutional entity of the Greek state, are complementary rather than alternative. The immigration experience may and must be put to good use for a critical/reformative contemplation of the national self. Offering civil rights to immigrants requires a reinvention of Greek citizenship. A new view on citizenship would regard both the ideological nucleus of nationality—which suffers from outdated fixations of national-religious purity—and true access to social and civil benefits for excluded and minority social groups of Greek citizens. Introducing elements of *ius soli* to temper the absolute domination of the *ius sanguinis* is of major importance.

Moreover, along with legal regulations, steps must be taken for the establishment of an education for citizenship which would ease the implementation of an active and effective citizenship. But first of all, mentality and social behaviour among Greek policy makers and citizens must change, so as to include otherness and respect it within a “community of citizens” with no ethno-ideological constraints.

In January 2005 Greece adopted the two European anti-discrimination Directives. The purpose of those directives was to lay down a framework for combating discrimination, as regards employment and occupation, on the grounds of religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation. The Directives make clear that people affected by discrimination should have adequate means of legal protection and an effective right of redress in order to be able to put rights. Presumably, therefore, workplace equality has currently the backing of the law. However, a history of discrimination can't turn overnight. The law on its own can change very little of it.

Greek society finds itself significantly transformed and still undergoing a transition period. It is now fully integrated in the European Union, and while it may still have a significant informal economy, which is difficult to curb, it is a member of the Euro-zone. The country is facing the economic and cultural tensions of globalization and EU enlargement, and at the same time has

become host to nearly a million immigrants in less than a decade. The national education system has undergone significant changes but still strives to find a new orientation towards multiculturalism alongside more effective and efficient learning in secondary and higher education. Moreover, during the last decade, steps have been taken for a more open policy towards the country historical minorities – in particular towards the Muslim minority of western Thrace, which remains the largest one. Also Greek authorities and citizens have made some hesitant steps towards immigrant incorporation in Greek society – e.g. the inclusion of immigrant families in state housing for the first time in October 2004. The native population is rapidly ageing, therefore causing preoccupation among other things, for the state welfare system. The relatively high unemployment rate is paradoxically coupled with severe labour shortages in some sectors. Migration policies are necessarily being considered against this background.

Another policy the Government should be engaged in, is also the development of an open knowledge exchange for the workforce system in general. This knowledge exchange platform will be an effective means for sharing and re-using knowledge among all members under the workforce development umbrella independent of race and origin, as well as a necessary step in shaping and pushing forward the evolution of a workforce development system. Such a pilot platform will include 1) a workforce ontology that serves as a semantic framework connecting various disciplines, organizations and programs engaged in workforce development; 2) a knowledge base; 3) user interfaces, and 4) tools and templates for automatic knowledge capture.

These two recent trends affect public policy and strategy in addressing both the investment priority for education in Greece and the labour absorption policies for new market entrants in the country.

- The first is the increasing labour market premium for workers with partial or complete secondary education. Education inequality correlates strongly with income inequality. Although education services

have been improving, a strong implication is that changing technology is changing the skill profile of higher earning jobs (thus the premium for workers with the necessary education level) faster than the improving education distribution is raising education profiles.

- The second is the slowing of demographic increases, the generation gap and an ageing population, as has been explained above.

There is an impending need for Greece to form a public conscience regarding immigrants through the sensibilization and removal of prejudices based on a rights-based approach, facilitating their integration in a stable community and access to human services that everyone is entitled to.

## PART 2: CASE STUDIES

### 1. INTRODUCTION: Aims and Methodology

The following case studies investigate some key aspects already raised and presented in the previous section. The main aim of the case studies is to review specific intercultural working environments, to detect challenges that are presented in the multicultural workplaces of Europe and to highlight recommendations for the creation of educational tools to deal with those challenges.

In order to accurately present the prevailing situation in the Greek multicultural workplaces with regard to cultural diversity six case studies have been selected, investigated and elaborated from the public, educational and private sectors. The table below presents an accurate image of the sectors and organisations investigated:

**Table 1.1: Distribution of case studies per sector of professional activity**

<b>Public Sector</b>	Social Sector of Patras Municipality	Greek Council for the Refugees	
<b>Private Sector</b>	Technical building company	Technical building company	Private foreign enterprise
<b>Education</b>	Secondary Schools		

The sample of our survey was constituted by 20 Greeks and 18 foreigners that are distributed in the three target groups of the present research in the following way:

**Table 1.2: Distribution of sample per target group**

	<b>Foreigners</b>	<b>Greeks</b>
<b>Managers</b>	2	6
<b>Workers</b>	13	8

<b>Users of Services</b>	3	6
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For the realisation of the survey the following inquiring tools were used:

- **Individual semi - structured Interviews.**
- **Questionnaires.**

For the needs of the survey, 4 different questionnaires were made up:

- For managers (Greek/ foreigners)
- For workers (Greek/ foreigners)
- For teachers (Greek/ foreigners)
- For students (Greek/ foreigners)

In the majority of cases the questionnaires were supplied in combination with the interviews, to guarantee a bigger validity and reliability of results.

The method of common interviews (focus group), was not used in the present research, on one hand because the selection of a sufficient number of individuals of the same target group (at least 8) was not possible and on the other hand because the method of individual interviews was considered the more reliable for the detection of personal opinions.

The research on behalf of Greece was realised by the Hellenic Regional Development Centre in the time period Autumn 2005 – Winter 2006.

## **2. CASE STUDY: Greek Council for refugees, Cross—cultural centre for promotion of refugees integration**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The ***Greek Council for Refugees*** began his action in 1989 and has its central offices in Athens. It is a non-profit association, which serves refugees and asylum seekers and/or applicants for asylum in Greece that are eligible for protection according to the Geneva Convention of 1951.

The realisation and implementation of programs fighting social exclusion and marginalisation of refugees is also among the objectives of GCR, facilitating in this way their integration in the Greek society. This objective is promoted also by the ***Centre for Promotion of Integration "COMPASS"***, which guides applicants for asylum and refugees in their efforts to adapt and to be incorporated in the country (Greece), promoting their active participation in this process and informing the local community for their capabilities.

The activities of COMPASS are addressing mainly children, but also adults, and its programs are shaped based on sex, cultural particularities, specific needs and preferences. Greek citizens may also participate occasionally in the programs of the centre as volunteers, willing to offer their help and services.

COMPASS helps children of refugees face the requirements of Greek School and Education System, in general, so that they do not interrupt prematurely their education. It offers them a space where they can cultivate their talents, broaden the horizons of their knowledge, put robust foundations for their future and present them with new opportunities.

Adult men and women, on the other hand, find in COMPASS solutions and response to some of the problems and needs they are faced with, e.g. to familiarise with the Greek and English language, to achieve a satisfactory and adequate level of comprehension and writing in these languages and learn additional vocabulary to facilitate their communication with locals and native

speakers, to familiarize with the use of PC, to discuss about human rights, and most importantly, their violation, and explore their various interests, to borrow books, but also to entertain themselves.

Aim of the centre is the substantial integration of refugees in the Greek society. Constant efforts are put on the familiarization of refugees with the manners, customs, traditions and the way of life in Greece, so that they can play an active role in the Greek society, while maintaining their cultural heritage. In order to achieve the aim described above, the refugees are invited in a friendly environment in which they meet persons that comprehend and speak their language (Mediators) and are included in various programs and activities, in order to learn, on the one side, the Greek language and, on the other, the Greek history and culture, as well as everything that has to do with the Greek way of life in an urban setting (city life), but also in a rural setting (countryside).

Apart from an organised system where psycho-sociologic help and advice is provided, the Centre also has the objective of providing legal advice on issues concerning aspects of national and international law related to migration – so that they gain knowledge of their rights and obligations towards the Greek state, and vice versa, and additionally, what is the procedure and the documents required for a stay permit, as well as, how to get these documents for their legal stay in the country - and of course how to find a job.

Through the provision of additional formal qualifications (learning of Greek and English language, and basic computer skills), and with a constant update of the information flow on work demand and job opportunities and programs of integration of refugees, an effort is being made for the admission of these persons in the job market, with the aim of becoming economically independent, active members of the society and thus harmoniously incorporated in the Greek environment.

Another point worth mentioning is that various recreational and cultural activities are organised by the centre, in which both foreigners and Greeks participate in joint action. This way, communication and social interaction between persons from different cultural environments is established and

social bonds created. During the course of the last years, Greek society is in a process of gaining information and knowledge, becoming accustomed to and familiarizing with the coexistence with groups of different cultural background.

Most important however, is that through their active participation in every day's activities, the refugees themselves have the occasion to develop positively their linguistic, religious and other particularities and make them known to the wider public, which is unaware of their distinctive characteristics.

The Greek Council for Refugees and the Centre for Integration of Refugees are also concerned with and work for:

- The promotion of measures for the cross-cultural collaboration with relevant institutions, aiming at identity tracing and enhancing the knowledge base of the cultural identity of refugees and to the harmonious coexistence and collaboration of Greeks and foreigners.
- The fighting of xenophobia, racism, antisemitism and the promotion of respect of fundamental human rights, in order to avoid social exclusion, marginalization, racist behaviours and offences against human freedom and dignity.
- The sensitization and briefing of the public on the possibilities of refugees in making a contribution to the overall social life of the country.

The Centre for Promotion of Refugees' Integration is consisted at present of 62 persons in total, 37 women and 25 men. Fourteen members of the staff originate from different cultural groups and work as interpreters, cross-cultural mediators, labour advisers and one of them is the office-cleaner.

The users of the centre services are individuals from different cultural groups that are protected by the Geneva Convention and live in our country in a refugee status. The nationalities of individuals that usually approach the centre seeking help are Kurdish, Iranian, Iraqi, Nigerian, Turkish, Afghan and others.

## Methodology

The Centre of Promotion of Refugees' Integration conducted a survey that was carried out in two levels. The first constituted the completion of a questionnaire by the centre staff for Greek or foreign managers and the second the completion of another version of the questionnaire by the centre staff for Greek or foreign lower employees. A survey in the group of users of centre services was not realised because the policy of the centre protects the identity of users.

**Table 2.1: Survey tool and sample of survey, the Case of the "Greek Council for Refugees"**

Survey tool	Managers	Employees
Questionnaire	Legal adviser (Greek woman)	Translator - interpreter (Iranian)
Questionnaire	Person in charge of social service (Greek)	Interpreter (Arab)
Questionnaire		Interpreter (Afghan)

A first point, that gives food for thought and needs further consideration, is that as regards the Centre of promotion of refugees' integration, the individuals that have higher positions (administratively) are all Greeks. The foreign employees have positions of translators, cross-cultural mediators and labour advisers, while the office-cleaner of the centre is also foreigner.

The results of the survey will be presented in three thematic units:

1. Challenges.
2. Examples of good practices.
3. Proposals for improvement.

The presentation of the results will be divided in two sub-sections, separately for the Greek and foreigners, for the detection of possible differences and discrepancies in perceptions due to nationality.

## 2.2 Issues & Challenges

From the examination and analysis of questionnaires, we were encountered with the following challenges, for which the Centre of Promotion of Refugees Integration is concerned with:

The main point arising in the particular cross-cultural work environment is the different **perception of time** depending on the cultural background of employees. The absence of punctuality and time accuracy in the meetings with the colleagues or with the users of services seems to constitute a problem for the realisation of programmed work of the centre. For example, one of the employees reports that on several occasions his colleagues are assembled for a programmed meeting 10 minutes or even a quarter later from the agreed time plan, causing disruptions in the workflow management, and reactions from the workers, for which precision, punctuality and correct planning constitute a competitive advantage for their work. Despite the fact that Greek employees apologize and always present some explanation and excuse, complaints are expressed, but the administration does not appear to be willing to take preventive or corrective action nor measures for settling the situation, according to the reports of the same employee. The same problem is being pointed out also by the interviewed manager who reported that Greek workers consider being on time for an appointment even when they show up with a 10 minute divergence, an occurrence not typical for individuals of other nationalities. Such a stand and attitude proves the need for a cross-cultural education between employees, which would avoid lacking behind schedule or being the root cause of complaints and dissatisfaction from their colleagues, if they were aware of their cultural models and habits.

Another matter highlighted as particularly important is the **issue of conflicts in the working environment** that arise between employees.

Not only the manager but also the social worker stated problems related to compliance of directives, or the process of entrusting competences in foreign workers, which do not have a clear and comprehensive view and awareness of their responsibilities and tasks because of the insufficient knowledge of the

Greek language. At this point, another fact underlined as a negative element is that the administrative management addresses workers writing statements and official email in Greek. However during personal conversations and consultations with the management and foreign workers, there is a change of the strategy line, since in these occasions the English language is being used to facilitate communication. Oral explanations and discussions face to face with the workers are considered sufficient and adequate for the resolution of problems of comprehension of directives that the administration has given.

This particular issue is also reported by foreign workers of the Centre of Promotion of Refugees Integration who stated a big difficulty with regard to the use and comprehension of Greek language. One of the interviewed employees in the centre reports that he feels uncomfortable towards his colleagues, since he often needs their help for the interpretation and explanations of text or even directives of administration, that are written in Greek. Moreover he mentioned that sometimes he feels he is causing nuisance and becoming troublesome when interrupting constantly a colleague of his to ask clarifications.

Other issue refers to racist behaviours expressed by certain Greek employees toward foreigners, users of centre's services. This racist behaviour takes mainly the form of negative comments or hostile disposition towards the users of services. For example a woman adviser of the centre comments negatively, underestimates or keeps a depreciative stand at women who wear bourka, guided from the negative stereotypes or prejudiced biases that accompany this piece of clothing.

Non verbal communication, facial expressions, body language or even the use of singular form in certain users of services, are some examples of racist behaviour that are observed in the particular work environment.

With reference to the challenges that result in this work environment it is worthwhile to underline that:

- Greek managers report that during the breaks from work and holidays they associate only with individuals with whom they share the same cultural background.
- No Greek manager associates with individuals of different cultural background outside of work.

The interviewed themselves report that the fact that they do not interact with individuals of different nationalities outside their work environment (or during breaks) in no case does it influence or affect their performance and efficiency in the work field or their working relations. As a main reason for the lack of social interaction with foreign colleagues they point out the lack of common interests because of the cultural differences. For example, the director of the centre reports that although she considers foreign colleagues absolutely capable and competent in their work, she believes she would have no common interest to share and discuss beyond certain cultural differences that are related with the manners and customs.

Most of the interpreters working in the centre are Muslims. The **alimentary habits** of Greeks, the time they have their breaks as well as the food served in the canteens constitute a problem for these persons. For example, sometimes canteens do not have meals from meat that has been slaughtered according to the Moslem law or food acceptable by the Muslim religion. This results in foreigners being forced to bring food from their house and adapting in the hours of breaks, a fact causing them dissatisfaction, especially when they need to combine their lunch time with the time of prayer.

Another issue troubling foreign workers is the different **dressing style** costume in the work environment. It has been noted that the way they dress causes negative non verbal reactions and responses by colleagues. They feel their colleagues are facing them with curiosity or a negative attitude when the way they dress is different from what is brought out and presented by the western fashion. Differences in clothes are related to the choice of textiles and

fabrics, colours and lines-styles. On the other side, Muslim workers usually perceive the dressing style of their female colleagues as provocative or even inappropriate. For example they comprehend that a short skirt or an open bodice is considered as an acceptable dressing style for a work environment of the western world, however, such an image is something opposite and unacceptable with what are used to see.

A number of employees also report difficulties with regard to their **collaboration with people of the other sex**. They have trouble giving or receiving instructions from persons of the other sex. This stems mainly from the perception of the roles of the two sexes, which Muslim workers have in the centre. For them, the woman belongs and has a separate social place and status from the man and consequently, they feel awkward, if no uncomfortable when they have to receive directives and assume responsibilities from a female colleague. The fact that the director of the centre is a woman causes them great embarrassment causes and they find themselves at a loss of words to explain how they feel. Her role requires her to be strict at several occasions and to take responsibilities and behaviours that these people have connected with the male sex.

With regards to crisis management, conflict resolution or problem solving in the work environment, patience and dialogue are mentioned as the main solutions. When personal effort and intervention between the parties involved is not sufficient for the resolution of problem, the mediation of the department's responsible or the director is called for and required.

Regarding equal opportunities and possibilities for promotion and rise in the hierarchy, none of the employees believes to have the same opportunities for advancement with his Greek colleagues. Generally speaking, foreign workers express their insecurity for their stay in the particular position, a deduction derived from the fact that the organisational structure of the organization appears to be supported in its operation by donations. They believe that if, for economic reasons, there is a need for reduction of personnel, foreign workers

are more affected and in danger of being fired more than Greek workers. Answering the question where this faith and belief stems from, they mention that it is not supported by objective facts but by their personal insecurity.

Foreign employees report that they face problems with **alternation of the use of singular/plural** forms, as well as with the expression of their feelings in a direct way. In their communication with other persons they are always careful and self-controlled. These particular reports are related to their ease and freedom of expression in the work environment and the informal working relations that are created in it. Workers, in general, stated a difficulty in distinguishing the limits between abiding by polite and gentle conduct of politeness and keeping a distant attitude towards others. What for some people can be considered discretion, many times can be perceived from others as remoteness or lack of interest for social interaction.

As reported by one of the employees: *"I try to address others at a suitable time and manner, to create and maintain a friendly climate and to express myself always in the limits and the possibilities of each one"*.

### **2.3 Good practices**

In the framework of the present survey, the feedback from the foreign (immigrants, refugees) users of services of the Centre of Promotion of refugees Integration was not possible. However, the survey presented certain examples of good practices that are followed by the centre for the incorporation of refugees. Some of these practices are summarily reported below.

#### **Courses of Greek Language for adults**

The courses are carried out by volunteers, are addressed to adult refugees and aim to give them the basics of language to facilitate them in their daily communication as well as in job finding. These courses are the basic step to

integration, since they help the refugees to improve their relations with the environment. There are classes for beginners but also for advanced students, while there are also separate classes for children.

## **Support Teaching**

Support teaching is addressed to the young refugees studying in the Greek school. Its aim is to support the skills of children to cope with the lessons at school but also to keep the pace of the Greek pupils, so that they do not feel disadvantaged and achieve equality in the school community. The support teaching concerns mainly courses of language, but also of sciences.

## **2.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

From the issues covered above, we can summarize the following:

- While the Greek managers identify only three issues as a result of multiculturalism, the foreign employees identify 6 issues, which indeed cover all the sectors of interaction in the workplace.
- While the Greek managers report being aware and having noticed racist behaviour of Greeks towards their foreign colleagues, the foreign employees themselves do not make any reference to such behaviour against them.
- Finally, both the Greek and foreign employees of the centre report that during the breaks and holidays, they associate only with individuals of the same cultural background.

All the above lead us to the conclusion that Greek directors have a different approach and conception of the relations and problems of the specific work environment from foreign workers. A general observation is that, while there are no reports of great difficulties with regards to the implementation and realization of work processes, the informal relations between colleagues are stiff and dysfunctional, a fact demonstrated by the lack of social interaction between individuals of different nationalities.

## Recommendations and training material development

- Improvement of communication between the colleagues for the achievement of better work environment and performances.
- Education of the Greek society, but also of the individuals that work for the integration of individuals from various cultural groups, against racism and discriminations through Guides (brochure or booklet) addressing the above mentioned issues.
- Provision of information, to all the involved parties, with regard to legislation, equality and diversity through the creation of interactive forum whereas information on those issues will be analysed and discussed.

## **3. CASE STUDY: Technical Construction Company**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The decision to focus on a small and medium construction company should be seen as representative of a typical case scenario in the Greek construction sector. The firm started in 1964, when K. K., founded in Patras the homonym technical company. This occurred during the period of the reconstruction of

the city of Patras and the specific company earned quickly a reputation with the construction of buildings and blocks of flats in the city centre.

The firm follows an ongoing developmental course and a route of progress for several years now and is evolving into one of the biggest manufacturing companies in Western Greece. Today the firm is distinguished and has earned respect and a brand name in the construction sector. The owners, keeping the family tradition, undertake all the stages of buildings' construction, from the study, to the phase of planning and concretisation up to the delivery.

The firm undertakes and contracts the construction of buildings, blocks of flats and detached houses, as well as the study and construction of private and professional spaces and working environments, as shops, commercial fairs, factories, repairs of buildings, and restorations of preservable buildings, both in the prefecture of Patras and in the wider region of Western Greece

The firm employs in total 4 people, two directors, as well as 2 persons as administrative personnel, all of them Greeks.

With its long history in the construction sector, the company has created a wide network of steady collaborators in all the building professions. It has established and preserves stable collaborators and workteams, but employs also seasonal personnel, when work requirements are increasing

Strategic planning of the company also entails collaboration with other companies that undertake part of a building's construction (stable and constant cooperation with companies of concrete production, or with companies selling sanitary fixtures etc.

Even if the persons in charge of workteams are all Greeks, a big part of workers are foreigners and mainly Albanians and Russians. Most of the foreigners are construction workers, while a small number is occupied in other work, for example electricians, technical assistants, plumbers, painters etc.

A first point, therefore, that deserves our attention, is that while Greek and foreign workers, in the specific company, are proportionally almost equal in numbers, the Greek workers occupy all the higher places, while the foreigners are assistants or mere workers.

As regards the methodology, semi-structured interviews were held with the company management and employees after sharing the objectives of the EIW project with them and defining the group of people to be interviewed. We created a pattern of questions that was used as a guide for the interviewer. Given their poor knowledge of the Greek language it was not advisable to use a written questionnaire, which probably could not be comprehensive by the foreign workers. Based on that reasoning, the interview was conducted by a quantitative oral questionnaire which was judged as the better method for the detection of daily challenges and good practices that appear and are expressed in such a multicultural work environment.

In the following table we present analytically, the survey tool and the sample of the specific case study:

**Table 3.1: Survey tool and sample of survey, the Case of ‘K &Co’ Construction Company**

Survey tool	Greeks	Foreigners
Semi-structured interview	Civil Engineer	Builder (Albanian)
Semi-structured interview	Civil Engineer	Builder (Albanian)
Semi-structured interview		Builder (Albanian)
Semi-structured interview		Builder (Albanian)
Semi-structured interview		Builder (Russian)
Semi-structured interview		Builder (Russian)

With regard to the sample, it is advisable to stress that the company managers were the ones to indicate the foreign workers that would participate in the survey. They are foreigners that live in Greece for years, have adapted well to the Greek way of living and have very good knowledge

of the Greek language. The company does maintain a stable and long-standing relationship with these individuals.

Even if this steady collaboration and the confidence, that has been developed between the administration and the particular workers, constitutes alone an example of good practice, however, it has not been entirely possible to identify and track down different treatments or behaviours toward foreigners that have lived in our country for several years and still have not adapted to the Greek environment.

### **3.2 Issues & Challenges**

The in-depth examination of interviews' results, as well as the personal opinion of the interviewer, led to the following conclusions, with regard to the challenges that exist in the particular multicultural labour environment.

Both managing directors of the company reported that the most important problem of their collaboration with immigrant workers, is communication and the question of **language**, since ethnic minority employees have difficulties with technical vocabulary and expressions frequently used and necessary in the construction sector. The poor knowledge of Greek language often leads to misinterpretations and misunderstandings. As it was reported by one of the directors: *"This is a very important problem. If your worker does not understand well what you ask him to do there will be errors that cost money and time. When we speak for the construction of a building, there are no margins for errors. All must happen accordingly to the rules and the requirements of the customer."* The respondents admitted that literacy and fluency in understanding and speaking Greek seem to be related to economic self-sufficiency. Immigrants who are literate only in their native language or in a language other than Greek are more likely not to continue being employed and earn less than those literate in Greek. For this reason many immigrants following their urge to learn Greek attend adult education programs for studying Greek as a second language.

Another important subject is the fact that many of the foreign workers often speak and communicate in their own language between them. It is reported: *"The fact that they speak their language constitutes a problem, because you do not understand if they want to cover an error or to hide something. And the other workers resent and a climate of mistrust is established "*. Although both directors of the firm consider the knowledge of the language an important criterion for the selection of their employees, in reality it seems that they in particular, engage foreign workers, and in almost the same proportion with the Greeks because they believe that learning in the context of work can improve language skills while improving work skills. In addition, employers are reluctant when it comes to offering training taking into account scheduling issues, cost, perceived lack of benefit to the company, and a sense that it is not their responsibility.

As the second most important issue, the company managers reported the **conflicts** that often arise mainly between the workers of different specialities and sectors. In the same working environment individuals of different specialities, whose activities intertwine, coexist daily. Often tensions and conflicts incur between them, as well as cast of responsibilities from the one to the other, when something does not function according to the planned procedures and time schedule. The persons in charge of the building site play the role of mediator in these cases, even if many times the intervention of the directors is required for the resolution of problems. From the management perspective the lack of knowledge of diversity issues and skills of intercultural communication can create anxieties, misunderstandings and conflicts which often plague the workplace and negatively impact business productivity and effectiveness. One interviewed manager felt that people may share similar values, such as respect or need for recognition, but how they express and demonstrate those values through behaviour and attitudes may be different for different cultures. According to him "Moving from the view that "our way is the best way" to a culturally relative perspective "let's take the best of a variety of ways", it will help us manage more effectively in a diverse work environment.

Both directors report having noticed events of **racist behaviour** by Greek workers towards their foreign colleagues. Even if they are individuals in the same hierarchical position, the Greek workers often present a disdainful behaviour against their foreign colleagues. Comments regarding their origin and their cultural background are recorded almost on daily basis. It is emphasized that: "*Certain workers do not like at all the Albanians! They can work together and you hear calling them "Albanian" and not by their name!*". It is underlined, however, that such incidents do not occur when the collaboration of individuals is long-lasting and the persons known each other well. The administration's principle is not to pay attention to the country of origin of its employees but give special emphasis to their effectiveness, hard work and productivity.

In specific responses from the immigrants' interviews, cases of racist behaviour against them are not only related to their workplace but may happen anywhere, anytime. Despite campaigns of information and sensitization towards diversity and intense antidiscrimination activity, negative stereotypes linked to minority groups and legitimizing of racial violence prove to be hard-to-die. According to the respondents any incidental event (e.g. a football game) is readily used to fire racist tension and angry responses against the major immigrant group (Albanians).

Another aspect raised from the interviews is the communication style that differs depending on the nationality of each person. An important parameter that was particularly stressed is the subject of humour. Foreign workers do not seem to sympathize with Greek humour, and the way it is expressed and they receive similar reactions when they try to make humour with their Greek colleagues. Sometimes it seems difficult for the immigrants to understand the jokes, humour or even humoristic proverbs using slang language. The interviewees said that many times they have to ask several times and in different ways in order to make sure that they understood the meaning of the joke or proverb.

Another communication problem arising from the interview appears to be the expression of personal opinions and sentiments, mainly of the workers from Albania and not from the Russians. They face great difficulties in expressing their opinions. In most occasions they select a neutral attitude and do not externalise their sentiments. As reported by one of the workers: *"I do not want to give motives. I want to make my work and leave. Many times the other search for a reason to quarrel with you, but I do not want to give them a cause "*.

### **3.3 Good Practices**

In the frames of the survey we asked both the directors and the workers to present certain examples of good practices with regard to the coexistence of individuals from different cultural environments and the collaboration in the same working place. The Interviewees reported certain behaviours or strategies that they believe to be important when facing challenges as a result of multiculturalism.

The directors mentioned as more important the maintenance of a stable collaboration with certain individuals. They do not resolve collaboration nor break bonds, when there are no problems with it. It is reported: *"When you know a person and collaborate with him, without problems, his nationality is not important nor does it make any difference for you. Me and my brother have foreign collaborators that began working with us, when we undertook the enterprise, in 1992. We consider them our own people "*.

The criteria set for the selection of a worker, are not related, by no means, to his nationality. For this reason, when they find a good and promising worker they try to establish and preserve collaboration with him, being consistent to their obligations as employers and maintaining a friendly relationship. As reported, the most important factor when building these relationships is to

comprehend their needs as persons and respect their opinion as professionals. According to the company managers heterogeneity promotes creativity and sometimes that heterogeneous group has been proved to generate better solutions to problems and a higher level of critical analysis.

Another strategy that the directors judge important for the harmonious collaboration of workers is their own behaviour towards the workers. *"They take example from us and we face them all the same. Of course they are not children and you cannot control what they say and do, but it is important you show them that you do not like conflicts and racist behaviours "*.

The managers are treating the workers in the same way, independent of their nationality. They are addressing everyone with their first name and dedicate the same time for all when it comes to the resolution of problems arising in the work environment.

Most of the workers did not seem to understand the meaning of good practices and they chose –despite the insistent efforts of the interviewer - not to report anything on this question.

### **3.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

From the aforesaid, we can conclude that the adaptation of many kinds of organisations, private firms and small medium enterprises to intercultural reality and efforts to engage immigrants in their work can promote integration.

Access to the labour market is an essential ingredient of successful integration and could be very useful in ensuring that the potential of immigrants is fully utilised. It is to the benefit of this firm that it does not pay

attention to the country of origin of its workers, accommodates and gains from this diversity in ways which promote profit-making without abusing and exploiting its employees but also providing opportunities to vulnerable groups of foreign people.

Enabling immigrants to acquire basic knowledge of the host society's (in this case, Greece) language, history and institutions is essential for their integration. Knowledge of the language of the country concerned is seen as crucial not only for migrant workers but also for their family members.

Frequent interaction between immigrants and Greek citizens is another fundamental mechanism for integration and an effort to overcome discrimination in employment and the extent and severity of these phenomena in reports of mistreatment against migrants, refugees and other non-nationals.

#### Recommendations and training material development

The majority of the interviewees stressed that working across cultures is a new experience for many people. Intercultural communication can be a dynamic and creative affair but occasionally due to the inability to interpret people correctly it can be a challenge. Both company managers and employees pointed out that it is necessary to receive information on the cultural background, on cross cultural differences and diversity in the workplace.

Some respondents considered that intercultural training should aim at a mutual understanding between managers and employees of various social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It should also aim to make them aware of their similarities and differences and to combat Eurocentrism and racism. Linguistic and cultural diversity should be adequately reflected in workshops, characteristics of the working place (posters and worksheets in different languages, celebration of Christian and non-Christian holidays etc.).

In order to face the challenges that arise from the collaboration of individuals from different cultural environments, the directors proposed the elaboration of a linguistic list for improving the language and communication within the specific construction sector. Moreover they suggested the formation and

setting up of short training seminars by an official employment office whereas both Greek and ethnic minorities' employees could be taught different aspects of intercultural communications such as understanding values and beliefs, bridging cultural barriers, cross cultural understanding.

## **4. CASE STUDY: Construction Company**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The company "P & co." began its activity in the building sector in 1995. It is a small – medium size family enterprise, which is managed by two brothers. The activities of the company began with the reconstructions and restorations of buildings and little by little they began to enter the building sector.

Their competences include planning, supervision and the construction of private houses, but also professional spaces. During the last years, the company undertakes the purchase, repair and re-sale of real estates.

Moreover it undertakes the purchase of plots of land with the repaying system (the seller has the ownership of some of the flats that are builded) and it is ready to expand also in the sector of construction of condominiums, but also of groups of residences in the suburbs of the city of Patras.

The company has a technical office in the centre of Patras, which is used as headquarter and the meeting point with the customers. The office is not staffed by other personnel, apart from the directors. As a small to medium-sized enterprise, the company does not employ permanent staff. However it has created a stable network of collaborations with certain workteams that are engaged in building.

The strategy of the company is to accept tenders for each work that it undertakes and to select the collaborators evaluating the bids of each one. Naturally, the final choice is guided by experience and successful collaboration with certain persons and workteams in previous works of construction.

The workteams with which the company cooperates are constituted mainly by Greek workers (80%), while a small percentage (20%) is covered by foreign workers, mainly Russians and Albanians. In certain cases, the firm may also need to engage seasonal personnel – which will only work for some days and not through the entire building period - in order to avoid delays.

As stated by one of the owners: "*We prefer collaboration with Greeks. The foreigners many times do not know the language well and it is difficult to collaborate with them*".

On the other hand, when engaging seasonal personnel, they prefer the foreigners, because the cost is smaller.

It is obvious, therefore, that the particular employers adopt and preserve an explicit stereotype attitude towards foreign workers. They consider their work of inferior quality and collaboration with them difficult and problematic. In consequence, they cannot but behave and treat them differently than Greek workers.

## Methodology

The survey in this construction company was conducted with the method of semi- structured interviews. Initially, we carried out the interviews with the directors and then interviews with foreign builders. The sample of builders was based on a random selection. We interviewed a sample from the building site that was implementing a job for the company at that period.

Table 4.1 describes analytically the survey tool and the sample of interviewees.

**Table 4.1: Survey tool and sample of survey, the Case of “P& Co” Constructive Company**

Survey tool	Greeks	Foregneirs
Semi-structured interview	Civil Engineer (Owner and director of company)	Builder (Albanian)
Semi-structured interview	Graduate of department of Structural works (Owner and Director of company)	Builder (Russian)
Semi-structured interview		Builder (Russian)

Once again, we can observe that the foreign workers are engaged in hierarchically lower jobs. All the foreign workers in the specific company are builders. The persons in charge of building sites and the supervisors are all Greeks.

## 4.2 Issues & Challenges

An in-depth analysis of interview results led us to identify certain challenges for the examined work environment. Both directors of the company consider **language** as the most important issue at work as a result of multiculturalism. Most foreign workers do not have adequate knowledge of the Greek language and when they do speak, they have an accent, therefore comprehension and communication is hindered. One of the company managers state: «*The foreigners many times do not know the language well and it is difficult to collaborate with them. You can never be absolutely certain that in they have understood you. On the other side in order for you to understand them, you should ask them to explain what they are saying in different ways!*».

The lack of sufficient language competence among ethnic minorities is considered by the directors as one of the basic criteria for the choice of workers. Most times they avoid employing people that know little or no Greek at all. Usually they prefer Greeks and when they do select foreigners, they usually prefer people who have spent enough years in Greece. They emphasised that difficulties with expressions, technical vocabulary and lack of communication skills hinder working efficiently and leads to misunderstandings.

The language issue as a challenge and a hindrance in the work environment was also expressed from the Albanian builder, who has less years of stay in Greece and his level of knowledge is mediocre. He states: "*Many times I do not understand precisely what they say, but I don't show it. I prefer not to show my ignorance. It is always easier when I work with somebody of my country. He explains to me what they say*". Responding to the question whether the company managers explained things, the employee pointed out that many times they were careful not to use difficult expressions.

The second important issue arising from the interaction of persons from different environments, is the dysfunctional interaction between Greeks and foreign workers in the same work place. It is clarified, of course, that this not

something that constitutes an obstacle for the performance and finishing of work, since foreign workers are particularly focused on the work they undertake and efficient. Greek workers however, are reported to be more social and communicate well with foreigners which are shy and inward.

We should also point out that the Greek directors do not refer to events of racist behaviour in the work environment. However, one of the directors points out: *"OK, there are certain times jokes are made that have to do with the nationality, but such types of jokes exist also between the Greeks. These things happen in the building sites. We are not a college!"*. These kinds of jokes can many times lead to frictions and misunderstandings between the colleagues and impact on their daily contact and communication in the work environment. In an intercultural environment one man's joke is another's insult. For this purpose, being wary of differences in the sense of humour and also acceptability of banter in a business environment would support relationships between co-workers.

Both directors, finally, report that they do not associate with persons from different cultural environments, except in the work environment.

The sample of foreign workers questioned in the company "P& co" are 3 builders, 2 Russians and 1 Albanian. The Russians builders live in our country over 10 years, while the Albanian lives in our country for the last 5 years. With regard to the challenges that they face in the work environment, they reported the following issues:

The majority of the interviewees pointed out the issue of **unequal treatment** in the sense of not being treated in the same way with the Greek employees. The foreign builders, in most cases, do not have the same wages with the Greeks, but when they do, there is no insurance (they do not receive revenue stamps). *"Without the revenue stamps we cannot receive a retirement pension. Many times I am forced to buy them myself so my net wage is still smaller"*. According to the respondents the presence of migrant workers in positions of expertise or management would demonstrate and prove to other

migrant workers that there are opportunities for career advancement in the Greek workplace. However the employees had very few examples to exhibit of migrant workers who had been promoted or indeed who had sought promotion. Migrant workers' perceptions of equality of opportunity in this regard were low due to different barriers such as lack of funding for training, difficulties in accessing information on how to advance their career.

Apart from the unequal treatment, it was also pointed out by the immigrant employees that possible prejudices on the part of Greek people can emerge and **discrimination** may be expressed in case they want to start up their own business. All the foreign builders said that their future dream is to create their own work team that will undertake building works. However such thing is exceptionally difficult, because the Greeks will not easily allow a foreigner to gain potential and become competitive. One of the employees said: *"As long as we work for them they accept us. Think however if we took the jobs from them! They will not allow this, but also the customers will not prefer us"*.

The majority of foreign builders reports **a difficulty in the expression of sentiments and opinions** in the work environment. This difficulty however was not connected with the knowledge of the Greek language, but with the difference of cultures. *"The Greeks are always more spontaneous and on the other side they are always ready to misinterpret. We must be careful how we speak and we must often ignore certain comments or behaviours"*.

### **4.3 Good Practices**

On the other side, the foreign builders report certain examples of good behaviours and attitudes in their work environment:

*"Things are not always difficult. When I began with the construction work some Greeks helped me a lot. They explained the work and tried to help if I did not understand something"*.

*"We always hear music at the building site. Our music does not differ so much, therefore, we often sing together. Sometimes we drink beer and discuss about our families".*

*"If you are good it is rare that they fire you from a building site. I collaborate with the same persons for 8 years now. We are friends and collaborators. With the foreman we have also become best men, he has baptized my child".*

#### **4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Even if the two directors place the knowledge of the language as the basic criterion of choice and they do not generally prefer collaboration with foreigners, it is worth noting that the foreign builders are judged as particularly hardworking and efficient in their job. This could mean that their hesitation in employing foreign workers, is not owed to bad experiences, but to mistaken stereotypes.

One more point that deserves particular attention concerns events and incidents of racist behaviours in the work environment. They state a lack of racist behaviours, while at the same time they report negative comments and jokes that are related with nationality. These racist episodes, however, are accepted as natural and as characteristic of the particular work environment. In this context, providing a positive working environment, where diverse cultures are respected and valued, is becoming an even more important element of good business practice. Where the potential of racism goes unchecked, or where diversity is not valued, workers depart or are unable to give their best.

All the foreigners participating in the present research declared that they wish to remain permanently in our country. Moreover, most - actually all, apart from one – have stayed in our country for a long period and declare they feel part of the Greek society. This also influences the issues that they consider as more important. We note, therefore, that they are more concerned with issues that have to do with planning the future (retirement or their future professional development).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that neither the directors nor the builders reported as a pending issue to be examined or resolved, the matter of conflicts between the workers, and between the management and the employees. This means that there has not been a particular problem of conflicts or that there are effective ways of resolution from the parts involved.

### Recommendations and training material recommended

The respondents at individual interviews considered absolutely essential the careful recruitment of personnel, with face-to-face meetings in order to have a precise image to ensure a smooth collaboration in the same work environment; particularly important are also considered the daily supervision of work and the control of workers performance.

With regard to the government care, the directors think that there should be a better institutional framework with regard to the entry and stay of foreigners in the country. Moreover, for those who live and work in the Greek society, they consider the provision of suitable education that might decrease differences, essential. Training workshops organised by the official Employment services would help ethnic minorities develop self-awareness of how their own individual and group perceptions, beliefs and values, and influence how they interact with the diversity people in the company and the community.

The company managers have not excluded top management from the training seminars pointing out that training seminars would help high and medium managers develop personal strategies and practices towards effective communication and inclusiveness of all people in the company's services and activities. They also stressed the necessity of organising intercultural training courses promoting a better understanding of racism and how it is expressed in society & share practical skills on how to combat racism in our community.

The great majority of the employees interviewed, emphasized the provision of information for the foreigners with regard to the administrative and legislative

matters, as a very essential aspect. The interviewees declared that they faced great difficulties in the past, due to the lack of correct and precise information. *"What we learned, we learned from our compatriots. Partly because we did not know the language, partly because the persons did not want to help, we had to search for months in order to regularize our papers "*.

To facilitate and deepen integration processes in the Greek society, the interviewees reported that the state should be more concerned and aware of the situation and problems faced by foreign people.. Activities that could bring diverse populations closer should be organised and there is a need for education on tolerance for the diversity. Elaborating a handbook or a guide about culture, communication and cultural codes for rituals and habits, food traditions, religion and rituals would also be very helpful.

## **5. CASE STUDY: Freelancing - Chinese clothing shop**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The fourth case study, concerns a Chinese clothing shop in the centre of Patras. The specific shop opened in our country in 2002 and since then it is growing constantly with regard to sales in the local market.

The number of Chinese that lives and works in Greece, reaches the 10.000 units, of whom most work as owners of Chinese restaurants, or as owners of shops of clothing and footwear.

The specific clothing shop is situated in a central point of Patras and is under the property of two cousins who have been staying in Greece for 4 years now. The owners live in our country in a legal status, since they managed to issue from the beginning the licences for Residence and for Practice of Independent Enterprising Activity.

The customers of the shop are Greeks, but also foreigners that live and work in Greece, mainly Albanian.

The products it trades are mainly female, male and children's clothing, and naturally, female clothing accessories, all of Chinese origin.

This small enterprise is staffed by 4 individuals, all Chinese – the two cousins with their wives.

## **Methodology**

The survey in the Chinese enterprise, was realised through the method of semi-structured interviews, as well as with the additional use of questionnaires, only for the customers of the company services.

The two Chinese owners conceded to an interview, which was hindered by the problem of comprehension of language. The interviews were realised with the use of the Greek and English language, as well as with the help of a third "intermediary" Chinese, who has lived in Greece for more years and his knowledge of the Greek language is at a better level.

The survey concerning the customers was carried out mainly with the issue of a questionnaire, as well as with additional discussions, that concerned the main thematic units of the present research (challenges that are faced in a multicultural environment of work, racism, opinions for improvement of situation). The selection of customers, that constituted the sample of our research, was random, since it depended on the present clientele of the

enterprise, during the realisation of the survey, as well as from the consent of customers to participate in the research.

Table 5.1.1 describes the sample and the survey tools that were used in the case study.

**Table 5.1: Survey tool and sample of research, the Case of Chinese Clothing Shop**

Survey tool	Greeks	Foreigners
Semi-structured interview		Chinese, owner of enterprise
Semi-structured interview		Chinese, owner of enterprise
Semi-structured interview + Questionnaire	Greek woman (customer)	
Semi-structured interview + Questionnaire	Greek woman (customer)	
Questionnaire	Greek woman (customer)	

At this point it is worthwhile mentioning that even if the service of the customers, hence also interaction with the clientele, were undertaken exclusively by the women – the men either sat at the cashier or somewhere in the back side of the shop -, none of the two women accepted to participate in the survey. This is possibly due to their cultural characteristics and the traditional position of the women, or their insecurity with regard to the personal skills or to the use of Greek language.

## 5.2 Issues & Challenges

The analysis of data that resulted both from the semi-structured interviews, and from the issuing of questionnaires, led us to the following challenges with regard to the work environment.

With regard to the Chinese clothing shop, the owners considered both a problem and a challenge the knowledge, use and comprehension of Greek **language**. Both interviewees have poor knowledge of Greek and limited vocabulary. They try to cover their weakness with the additional use of English language, which is poor as well. They report as an important factor the lack of an organised structure, in which they could learn Greek. They state that the bad knowledge of the language prevents their daily activity in various social sectors (in their work, in their daily transactions and in the search of guidance from government institutions). They underline the weakness of government services to approach linguistically persons that do not know the English language.

With regard to their daily activity in the work place, the owners report that they compensate their bad knowledge of Greek with the use of body language. The Greeks are expressive enough and use intensely the body language (hands movements, facial expressions of person, alternations in the tone and intensity of voice, etc). This is reported by the Chinese who is helping in their daily practice.

On the other hand, this causes confusion when two or more individuals speak to each other or when they speak simultaneously. In these cases, they are unable to catch the meaning of the discussion and have feelings of embarrassment.

It is reported as well that the language constitutes for them the bigger problem in other environments beside work.

The poor knowledge of Chinese owners and workers with regard to the Greek language is perceived by the customers as weakness. Two of the customers consider that from the moment that they are address Greek consumers, it is their obligation to know the language. The responsibility to learn the language

rest on the Chinese people, while only one individual of the sample considered teaching Greek to foreigners an obligation of the state.

As the second challenge with regard to the interaction in a multicultural environment of work they mentioned the difference in the **communication forms and style**, between them and the Greeks. As reported previously, they consider the Greeks very effusive; a fact that many times embarrass them creates problems and makes them feel bad as the Greeks are more open and tolerant to the bodily contact than the Chinese. Another problematic point is the voice intensity. The Greeks raise generally the intensity of their voice in various situations, when they are angry, enthusiastic, surprised or glad. This generally creates confusion to the Chinese, since the poor knowledge of the language often does not help them understand what happens and they do not know how to react.

Problems with conflicts in the environment of work or events of racist behaviours were not reported in the above study. What deserves particular attention is the fact that none of the interviewees stated associating with individuals of different nationalities except in their work environment.

The only relation that the Chinese owners have developed with individuals with different cultural background, is the one salesman - customer. Their network of acquaintances is limited to persons of their nationality, even at the level of commercial activity. The suppliers of their products are Chinese, the individuals that work for them are Chinese, their friends and acquaintances are all Chinese.

This fact leads us to wonder about the level of integration of these persons in the Greek society. The fact that their interaction with the Greeks is limited exclusively to the sale of products probably influences also their perception with regard to the racist behaviours against them. The examination of perception of Greek customers perhaps sheds more light on this point.

Even if the difference in the way of communication and expression was not articulated as a factor that impedes the professional relation between foreign

owners - Greek customers, it was however mentioned as factor that prevents the social interaction of these persons. Most Greeks reported that their knowledge of the behaviour and the way of life and thinking of Chinese is very poor. The Chinese are seen as very silent, as introvert persons that never express their opinions. It was reported: "*These persons are very quiet. You see them everywhere, but you seldom hear them! They are quiet. They work very hardly and do not create problems*". From the aforesaid, we can clearly discern a stereotyped perception, that exists with reference to the Chinese ("they are working and do not create problems"). Simultaneously, there is expressed a need for a closer interaction between the two populations and exchange of knowledge for the culture of other.

To the question if they would establish more familiar relations with these persons, all the women answered positively, however one of them said "*I do not have any problem with anyone, wherever he comes from, however I believe that I would not match in the company of a Chinese woman*".

The above statement is another proof that the behaviour of the Greek women that constituted the sample of our research is derived and guided more by stereotyped perceptions, than from real knowledge of the Chinese culture. That is to say, they are connected, with specific characteristic individuals and behaviours that are attributed in an entire population. The contact and acquaintance between individuals is a good method for the lifting of these stereotypes. It is worth mentioning at this point that all the Greek women that constituted the sample of our survey, associate with individuals from different cultural environments. All the women who participated in the research, reported having interactions with people from different cultural environments either in work relations, or in the personal level, so they are accustomed to everyday communication with people from other nationalities.

Moreover, even if they do not report events of racist behaviour, the discussion with three of these women revealed that they behave towards the Chinese on the basis of stereotypes that exist for this cultural group rather than from their knowledge, that would come from the daily contact and communication.

Chinese, in general, are not seen as a threat to the Greek society. The fact that all the Chinese that live and work in our country, have legal immigration documents and generally maintain a low profile, contributes to this perception.

Even if they do not report confrontation with problems of racist behaviours, none of them admitted having the same occasions or possibilities of growth and development with the Greeks. The absence of organised information and a common knowledge base for institutional and practical questions is reported as the cause for this perception on unfavourable treatment. For example, the Chinese tradesmen are less aware and ignorant than the Greeks with regard to the favourable regulations for the freelancers, and consequently, they have less opportunities of developing their enterprise than the Greeks. They consider access to information regarding entrepreneurship of immigrants unattainable and the information available in web pages not updated.

Finally, they reported facing some sort of competition from their Greek colleagues (tradesmen of ready clothing), due to the fact that their products are sold at quite lower prices than Greek ones. However this competition is expressed in indirect ways and never directly – verbally. It is stated and spread, all the more often, that Chinese products are not only of inferior quality than Greek, but in many occasions also dangerous for the public health (more with regard to children's games or the electric appliances). This has as result the Chinese products being faced with suspicion, a fact affecting also their sales.

### **5.3 Good Practices**

With regard to the confrontation of challenges in the workplace, due to cultural diversity, and as a counterbalance to the problems they are facing, the

Chinese owners of the clothing shop reported the maintenance of tight bonds with the community of Chinese that live in Greece. The Chinese that live in Greece are organised in local communities, with which they have established close relations. With the creation of this powerful network, they can exchange information, solve problems that are related with their work, find a residence and adapt in the Greek society. The persons that have lived more years in Greece help the newcomers with the learning of the Greek language or the acquisition of documents that are essential for obtaining a legal status and ensuring a quality, decent way of life.

With the creation and preservation of such communities, the Chinese achieve to maintain their particular cultural characteristics alive, while at the same time they are supported in the integration process in the Greek society. The maintenance of their cultural particularities is of great importance for them and their organisation in closed communities appears to serve this aim.

Another element that deserves particular attention at this point is that the Chinese, contrary to other foreigners that immigrate in our country, are quite aware of the legal procedures and their obligations to the Greek state, before they enter our country. Unlike other economic immigrants of other nationalities, the Chinese settle the legislative and bureaucratic issues before developing their activity in the Greek society.

#### **5.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

To confront the challenges they are faced with in the multicultural work environment, the provision of organised programs and the elaboration of opportunities from the Greek state for Greek language learning, is essential for the foreign newcomers to adapt more easily to the Greek society and enabling them to organise their activities for professional and social re-establishment.

We should not neglect the provision of cross-cultural education, which will address both the Greeks and the foreign immigrants that come to live permanently in Greece. This type of training has the aim of educating on the

tolerance of diversity, as well as promoting awareness and lifting of stereotypes that exist for each nationality. With regard to the development of opportunities of foreign immigrants and their legal obligations and rights as citizens of Greece, the publication of informative booklets and the development of relevant web pages should be examined and provided by the Greek state in cooperation with the social partners.

The creation of an information network, in which both Greeks and Chinese will participate, as an effort of communication and resolution of problems that accrue, will reinforce respect of cultural differences and intercultural communication.

Finally, measures for the promotion of cross-cultural education, specifically in the framework of official school education, but also provision of briefings for the wider public - about the life of foreigners in Greece – is aiming at the familiarization with cultural diversity. Most women that took part in our survey, reported that even if they are aware of the fact that the composition of Greek society has changed, however they do not have sufficient knowledge of the characteristics and the cultural particularities of cultural groups that live in their country.

## **6. CASE STUDY: Social sector of the Municipality of Patras, Office for refugees integration**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The **Social sector of Patras Municipality** is the official government institution that undertakes to solve the social problems affecting the city of Patras and the wider region of Achaia. The Social sector address both special groups of the population (individuals with disabilities, sensitive social groups), and the population at large, with actions of prevention, support and health promotion. Concretely, within the frames of the Social Sector, the following services are supplied:

- Socio-psychologic support
- Social actions
- Minorities
- Individuals with disability
- Municipal Welfare.

The **Office for Integration of Refugees** is one of the structures of the Social Sector of Patras Municipality.

Aim of the centre is the support of individuals and families that, as a result of voluntary or forced immigration, face difficult conditions of survival and adaptation in a new cultural environment.

The users of the Office services are the legally recognized political refugees, the applicants for asylum, those having a residence permit for humanitarian reasons, but also the illegal immigrants.

Between the objectives of the centre are included:

- The avoidance of phenomena of xenophobia and racism
- The avoidance of ghettoization
- The facilitation of adaptation and integration of refugees as well as their support
- The integration of refugees in the local society
- The information and sensitization of common opinion

- The study and research about the conditions and the repercussions of immigration in the personal and family life of refugees.

Patras is the harbour that links Greece with Italy. Living the dream to enter illegally in Italy and from there in other European countries, in Patras there is gathered a big number of foreigners - mainly of Kurdish origin. These persons live literally in the streets, in squares, in old abandoned houses and old wagons of trains, in areas around the harbour. Their conditions of living are sordid, since many times they are even deprived of water. The Office for Integration of Refugees, in collaboration with the department of Municipal Welfare of Patras Municipality, provides clothes and food to legal and illegal immigrants, in order to ensure them a decent existence. Moreover, the office cooperates with doctors of Patras hospitals, to ensure medico-pharmaceutical care to the foreigners that do not have legal documents or insurance.

In addition, the Office for Integration of refugees participates to programs that are financed by the European Union and are related to or examine national diversity, cross-cultural communication and social incorporation of refugees and immigrants. With the attendance in European programs, the office achieves to ensure more resources for the employment of personnel and the extension of its activities. Much of the actions targeting immigrants and refugees are financed exclusively by such programs, since the government does not provide the essential funding. It is pointed out, however, the danger that the office could 'under operate' when these programs are completed.

The personnel of the Office for Integration of Refugees is comprised of 6 individuals, all Greeks. The person in charge of the Office is a social worker and is occupied under the status of a permanent public worker. Moreover in the centre there are four more social workers (all women), with a time contract of work, as well as a lawyer, also engaged with a time contract.

While the employees of the Office are all Greeks, the users of the services provided are immigrants and refugees from various nationalities and mainly Iraqi, Kurdish, Afghans, Romanians and Afghans.

A large number of users of the services of the centre are immigrants, which have entered illegally in our country and address the centre for legal advices with regard to the issue of being provided with a green card.

The Centre for Integration of Refugees also provides advisory support – on an individual and general base, consultation, support for the coverage of everyday needs and problems (feeding, clothing, help for work finding), while it constitutes the interface among immigrants and the public services of our country.

## **Methodology**

The survey in the Office for Integration of Refugees of Social Sector of Patras Municipality was realised with the method of semi - structured interviews as well as with the issuing of questionnaires. It was not possible to reach the target group of customers of the Office for practical, but also institutional reasons. The office protects the personal data of users of its services, whereas, even if it was possible to issue an authorisation for the research, this could not be realised, since the customers addressing the centre have poor knowledge of the Greek language.

***Table 6.1: Sample tool and sample of research, the Case of Social Sector of Municipality Of Patras***

<b>Survey tool</b>	<b>Managers</b>	<b>Employees</b>
Questionnaire + Semi-structured interview	Social worker, person in charge of the Office for Integration of Refugees	Social worker
Questionnaire + Semi-structured interview		Social worker
Questionnaire + Semi-structured interview		Social worker

Questionnaire		Social worker
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## 6.2 Issues & Challenges

From the elaboration of data and their qualitative analysis the following challenges with regard to the Office for Integration of Refugees resulted:

As the most important issue that results from multiculturalism, both the director and the centre workers consider the language. Most – if not all - users of services of the office for integration of refugees do not know the **Greek language**. All workers know and use in their daily work, English as second language, however they declare that this is not sufficient for the in-depth communication and the detection of needs of users of services of the centre. This, according to the respondents opinion hinders both the communication, and the organisation of actions that should be done in order to help these persons.

On the other hand, the users of services are individuals from all the education levels. Some of them know the English language and some type of communication is achieved through that knowledge. However, to overcome this important obstacle, the use of volunteer "mediators" is applied, which will be developed in detail in the next pages.

Time: The users of the office services are reported to be punctual and consistent to their appointments. However the constant change in their jobs prevents the organisation of establishing a constant program flow of meetings. Those who address the centre are mainly refugees, which do not have the legal residence and work permits in Greece. This means that they work casually and in particular they constantly change work, so they cannot have continuous collaboration with the centre.

The lack of sufficient working **spaces** stressed by the social workers, causes them discomfort and hinders their work when it comes to personal appointments with the users of services. The fact that in the same premises two or three appointments can be held simultaneously is considered by the

social workers themselves, factors that impede their work, since the suitable environment is non-existent, so that they can give adequate, suiting attention to someone's problem. This restriction in space, as well as the lack of material and technical equipment in the centre is considered by workers as another factor hindering the social atmosphere and increasing the conflicts between the colleagues. At the office there is only one computer and a fax, which means, that employees encounter difficulties when it comes to the direct resolution of issues arising, for example, communication with another government owned institution for the guarantee of residency to a refugee. Another difficulty concerning the material and technical infrastructure, is that it is exceptionally difficult to keep electronic files for the users of the services, which renders it impossible for personal files to be kept and tracked.

The majority of respondents in the research think that interaction with persons from different cultural environments increases the potential of conflicts and quarrels in the working place. It is reported that the difference with regard to the cultural background of users, in combination with the poor knowledge of Greek language creates in several occasions, misunderstandings and tensions.

It would be mistaken to ignore employees' opinion that beneath the surface of generally satisfactory relations, a gulf of misunderstanding and miscommunication separates them from the customers of the centre. The respondents stressed feeling uncomfortable at times, puzzled, lost, and irritated, based on some unfamiliar customs and behaviours demonstrated by the customers. According to them, nothing can cause greater comfort and a feeling of security than understanding the cross-cultural aspect. Understanding can facilitate communication and avoid misunderstanding. When it comes to dealing with the customers, they point out that in many cases, what may be considered to be acceptable by Greek standards may be unacceptable to the customers and at the same time, no customer would give Greek employees a single clue informing that what they have done might not have been acceptable.

Although minor mistakes are permissible, misunderstandings and failure to recognize important cultural subtleties may lead to stagnation or dismissal of interactions.

### **6.3 Good Practices**

To deal with the challenges that result from multiculturalism, but also for the maximisation of the offer of the Office for Integration of Refugees to the target groups, the office has created a network of volunteer “mediators”.

As already mentioned above the Office for Integration of Refugees is staffed exclusively by Greek workers, which use English as a second language. In order, therefore, to solve the problem of communication with the refugees, the responsible social worker utilizes former users of services of the centre as mediators. They are individuals that live and work legally in Greece for a number of years and know, henceforth, the Greek language. These persons find themselves in contact with the office and when there is a problem of communication, they offer their help to their compatriots with regard to the question of language, but also for their contacts with public institutions.

The selection of these individuals is based on their years of stay in the country, their general educative level, their communication skills, and mainly due to the experience that they have gathered through years of work in an intercultural working environment. The centre examines the information it has assembled on these individuals, and then calls them in interview in order to check their actual social and professional situation. Since these individuals provide free services to the centre, the person in charge of the centre offers them the possibility of follow-up of seminars of basic or continuous training of adults. On other occasions, they are provided with courses of learning of Greek language from the Centre of Cross-cultural Education of Pedagogic department of municipal education of University of Patras.

The Social Sector of Patras Municipality and the Office for Integration of Refugees organise at regular intervals programs of information on racism and xenophobia, but also programs of cross-cultural education in primary and

secondary schools. A body of volunteers and the social workers in the office collaborate with the schools of Patras, with regard to the briefing of students concerning the questions of cultural diversity.

For the information of refugees with regard to the offered services, but also for the sensitization of the public towards the refugees and immigrants, the Office organises events, meetings and seminars for professionals, which are publicised in the local press.

## **6.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

At this point it would be advisable to add that:

It is also reported that contact with certain foreigners is constant and long-lasting and on several occasions it is extended beyond the work environment. Some of the foreigners have established contacts with the institution involved, and in particular, they often contribute to his activities, assuming the role of “mediator” between the institution and their compatriots that do not know the Greek language. The director, herself has established and developed relations of confidence with some of them and also meets them outside the work environment. The personal interest and real disposal for the offer of help - besides her professional duties - have led to the creation of these relations.

Moreover, while the director declares an absence of conflicts, the interviewees consider the dealing with conflicts and tensions between employees and customers, as one of the challenges in this multicultural environment of work.

The Office for Integration of Refugees of the Social sector of Patras Municipality has a statute, which contemplates the employment of personnel of nationality other than Greek, with regard to the cover of its needs. However, this regulation is not applied and even the auxiliary personnel of the centre is all Greek.

## Recommendations and training materials

The professionals of the centre declare that they have occasionally followed educational seminars, that are provided by their institution and which are related to the management of legal subjects and the organisation of work. Even when helping, the interviewees evaluate that such programs are not sufficient in order to prepare them suitably, to deal satisfactorily with the challenges of multicultural work environment. They consider attendance of programs of cross-cultural education, but also the application of policies for the diversity from the central government as essential for their advancement. They pointed out that a five day in the job training delivered by experienced trainers would help them obtain a good understanding of the basic conceptual frameworks of the intercultural field, would enable them to define how national and individual cultural values may influence attitude and behaviour. In addition the staff could profit from multimedia tools (such as DVD) designed as a flexible cross-cultural tool that can be used by HR personnel, intercultural trainers and trainers from a non-intercultural background including interviews, discussion questions, role plays activities.

Another approach stressed by the person in charge of the office could be the publication of guidelines aiming to develop a whole organisational approach to address racism and support interculturalism within an organisation. The guidelines will be about promoting good practice and will be designed to be consistent with the legislation, the development of national action plans and the equality/diversity aspects of the government.

With regard to the users of services, the organisation of programs for apprenticeship of Greek language is considered as more important for the improvement of their situation. It is reported that without the basic tool of the language, these persons cannot achieve anything. Management of such programs would facilitate the integration of foreigners in the local society and would exclude all the other problems due to such ignorance. (For example, aliens cannot find work, if they do not know the language, they cannot assemble the documents in order to issue the green card, etc).

## 7. CASE STUDY: Five Secondary Schools

### 7.1 Introduction

Today in Greece there are 108.000 foreign students studying in the schools (out of 2.173.337 students in total). The 66% of them are of Albanian origin, 4,08% are Romanians and 10,58% are Bulgarians.

The general public school is a combination of high school and lyceum situated in the city center of Patras. The number of students from ethnic minority background has increased from 3% in 1999 to 25% nowadays.

### Methodology

For the needs of the survey in the secondary schools we prepared a questionnaire for teachers (Greeks / foreigners) and a questionnaire for students (Greeks / foreigners), while a sequence of interviews with students and teachers was realised.

The research was realised on an informal basis - without official authorisation and participation from the ministry and hence without official attendance and inspection of the schools participating in the survey. The students and the teachers that constituted the sample of our research participated willingly, representing only their own self, for this reason the sample is considered occasional, and it does not concern one school, but different schools of secondary education of Patras.

Choosing the right sample was achieved through visits in the schools and after a short briefing with regard to the project and its aims.

**Table 7.1: Survey tool and sample of survey, Secondary schools**

Survey tool	Greek Professors	Students
Questionnaire + Semi-structured	2 female teachers of high school	3 Greek students (2 girls and 1 boy)

interview	1 teacher of Lyceum	3 Albanian students (3 girls)
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With regard to the sample of the survey we need to highlight that:

- No foreign teacher works in the schools with which we made contacts.
- No school director (male or female) accepted to take part in the survey.
- Women were more willing than men to take part in the survey.

## 7.2 Issues & Challenges

The **language** factor is considered by all the teachers that took part in our research, as the most important factor for the performance of their didactic job. Foreign students encounter difficulties at times to follow the lessons and either ask for further explanations or, most times, they keep apart from the training process. Teachers are willing and try to give all the necessary explanations during the courses or the breaks, while on several occasions; they devote time after the end of the school day with students who need help. It is also reported that many Greek students make fun of their foreign schoolmates because of their accent, a fact that not only hinders the social atmosphere in the classroom but also creates tensions and conflicts. Teachers use punishment as a means for the confrontation and decrease of such events and phenomena from Greek students to their foreign schoolmates. They are reprimanded and advised with recommendations in front of the classroom and all the schoolmates. It is reported, however, that this method does not suffice for the confrontation of the problem outside the school premises. At this point, the teachers declare ignorance of the right way of handling the subject.

The foreign female students report as paramount challenge of a multicultural school environment, the knowledge and use of Greek language. They need to spend a lot more time than their Greek schoolmates for the preparation of school work or for the comprehension of didactic matters. Moreover, they declare that many times they abstain from participating in the lesson from fear that they do not accomplish to express themselves correctly. With regard to the help that they receive from the other, most students declare happy with

the support of professors and schoolmates. They report, however, that there are certain teachers which do not comprehend the difficulty they are facing and reject them indirectly or directly.

On the other hand, the Greek students declare that due to their poor knowledge of Greek language, the foreign students decrease the level of efficiency in the class. The teachers many times need to move on more slowly in the lesson or to repeat something, in order to help the foreign students. Such occurrences cause dissatisfaction to the Greek students and degrade the social atmosphere in the classroom. Additionally, it was reported that the parents of students also consider that the foreigners influence negatively the level of the class.

This results, in several cases, the parents asking the teachers not to include foreign students in the same classrooms with their children or even asking the expulsion of a foreign child from school. In consequence, problems and intensities are created, that clearly influence in a negative way the behaviour of Greek students towards their foreign schoolmates.

Participating teachers report that **conflicts** in the school environment between students are from the most common problems, which all the teachers have to face at all levels of education. Even if somebody expresses the opinion that these conflicts are nothing more than usual phenomena concerning school environments with cultural diversity, others report several incidents of racist behaviour from Greek students towards their foreign schoolmates. It is stated: "*A lot of students make fun of their foreign schoolmates, laugh and mock at them for their clothing or their accent or their school records*". These behaviours are considered as the cause of many conflicts between students in the school environment. In order to face this challenge, individual efforts from teachers are reported, which are limited to discussions with the students in the classroom, with regard to the acceptance of diversity and the right of equal opportunities in education. Teachers, however, underline the need for an organised and joint effort to achieve a complete settlement of this problem.

Nevertheless, indifference and obstructionism is reported, so much from the side of the official educational system, as from the school administrations.

Cultural diversity and the differences in the personal expression are considered by many students as the cause for conflicts in the school environment. The events of racist behaviour - mainly by Greek students towards their foreign schoolmates - increase the conflicts and the behavioural problems. A student declares with regard to this: "*The students from other countries, mainly the Albanians, quarrel constantly. They are not the only ones to be blamed however; also the Greek students are at fault, since they do not stop provoking them*".

The Greek female students reported that they do not differentiate their behaviour depending on the nationality of their schoolmates and in particular they associate with foreign students inside and outside the school environment. On the contrary, a male student says that he does not consider foreign students equal to Greeks and does not associate with them, not even in the framework of school activities.

Moreover all the Greek students are judging girls from other countries more positively than boys. Boys originating from foreign countries are considered more undisciplined and appear more introvert behaviour, communication and social activities. This point can mean that girls with national diversity have better opportunities of being incorporated in new cultural environments or it could be a characteristic of the particular age group, since independently from nationality, boys are more energetic than girls.

Finally, the school record of foreign students appears to influence the behaviour and the perception that their Greek schoolmates have for them. Foreign students with good school records are reported to be more acceptable by their Greek schoolmates than those with bad school records. At this point it is worthwhile reflecting on whether the factor "*school record*" influences more the behaviour of students than the factor "*nationality*". In general, it seems that students are more willing to interact and establish close relations with students who "do well" in school, while isolating and creating

negative stereotypes for the “weak” students. Good students are accepted and perceived as capable competent and bright people, while weak students are considered of a lower level, connected with other conducts, such as juvenile delinquency.

In combination to the expressed problem in the use of Greek language, the foreign female students report a difficulty in the **expression of opinions and feelings**. The cultural differences in the communication style are considered another cause for the insecurity of girls, when they need to express their opinions in the class or to draw the attention in school teamwork. The Albanian female students consider that the stereotypes and the prejudices that exist with regard to their nationality in the Greek society, are transferred in the school environment and make their Greek schoolmates suspicious towards them, and themselves hesitant, when they express their feelings and opinions.

None of the foreign students that took part in our research reported events of racist behaviour from Greek teachers or schoolmates. However, the distrust mentioned, the negative behaviour and uneducative conduct of certain teachers and some indirect comments during the interviews, prove that they have suffered racist behaviours, but did not wish to report it. These students live in Greece from a tender age and they want to continue living in our country.

The teachers participating in our research, report as problematic the behaviour of certain colleagues, which face their students with particular psychological needs or from different cultural environments with lack of sensitivity and with bias. They consider that the education they receive from the universities is insufficient, since it does not guide them on how to be for in position and equipped to detect stereotypes and their biases, thus, improving their behaviour towards their students. The need for continuous training and training of teachers is evident, which unfortunately is carried out in a limited extent or is non-existent.

The majority of the teachers that took part in the research declare their dissatisfaction with the administration of each school and pointed out a **lack of commitment on behalf of the administration** with regard to the management of subjects related to multiculturalism. The public secondary schools of our country do not have a written policy on the national diversity. The teachers try with personal efforts, with patience and insistence to improve the collaboration of students from different cultures. They declare their dissatisfaction with the directors, which are restricted in the mere implementation of laws and are indifferent to the real problems of the school. It is reported characteristically: "*The directors are sticking to the conventions and the bureaucracy. They are not involved personally in the problems and do not see the essence of things*".

### **7.3 Good Practices**

To face the challenges of multicultural school environments certain strategies are applied, either generally, in all the secondary schools of the country, or separately in certain schools.

#### **Programs of reinforcing teaching for students**

With the term "reinforcing teaching" we mean the following by the students of independent supporting program of teaching in the courses: Greek language (Classic and Modern), Mathematic, Physics, Chemistry and Foreign Languages.

The program of reinforcing teaching, is targeting all the students (foreigners and Greeks), that fall short on the above sectors of knowledge, so that they can watch and participate efficiently in the school process of learning, or students who want to improve their performance in the above courses. Aim of program is the reincorporation of students in the training process, the reduction of school dropouts and the improvement of their performance.

The daily program of Reinforcing Teaching covers 1-3 hours of teaching per day. Each student can follow from one up to all courses of reinforcing teaching and up to 15 hours weekly. In each section of the courses of reinforcing teaching participate from 5 to 10 students. The program commences at the beginning of the school year and expires with the end of examinations. The program of reinforcing teaching helps in the resolution of certain problems that exist in multicultural environments. Concretely, during these courses, the performance of foreign students in the school courses is improving, a fact diminishing intensities and bad reactions in the school classes. The Greek school environment is grade-centric and grade-hunting, which means that students are judged as individuals depending on their school records. Improvement of their school records means, on the one side increase of the self-esteem of the foreign student, motivating him to do even better and on the other side, a more favourable confrontation from teachers and schoolmates.

### **Teamwork and other common activities**

All the teachers reported that in order to improve the communication and interaction between their students from different cultural environments they often assign common tasks, where it is required from Greek and foreign students to work together. Aiming an intercultural team-building, teachers wish to cover critical topics such as differences in communication styles, use of time, building relationships and expressing different cultural manifestations. Moreover, the weaker students will be helped by the best and, in this way they will come closer, get to know each other, try for a common objective and thus, take the edge off any differences which separate them.

Apart from the common school work the Greek and foreign students participate as well, in environmental and cultural programs (theatrical and dancing representations, athletic events etc), that are organised in certain schools. The professors take care that in these programs Greek and foreign students participate equally (as long as this is possible), while trying in particular to include students that are socially isolated.

## **7.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

With regard to the teachers that took part in the present survey it is worth mentioning the following:

- All interviewees declared that a multicultural school environment would improve communication and the relations with the students or between the students, while at the same time improving their socialization.
- All the teachers reported that during breaks they associate and discuss with Greek as well as, with foreign students and consider that they behave to all equally, without discriminations.
- In none of the schools that participated in the research are occupied individuals with national or cultural diversity.

Both teachers and students make their own proposals on the improvement of the situation with regard to the multicultural school environment and for the better collaboration of persons from different cultures.

### **Greek Teachers**

Greek teachers consider that to face the challenges that result from the coexistence with diversity it is required by them and by the school administration the following:

- Cross-cultural education
- Anti-racist education
- Seminars on cultural diversity
- Educational seminars on the better approach of students and the confrontation of school problems.

With regard to the confrontation of problems that foreign students face and for their better incorporation in the Greek society, the teachers propose:

- Organisation of courses of Greek language, inside or outside the school environment. Some also propose the creation of classes for the reception of foreigners before the official beginning of the school year

and the organisation of tutorial courses in the school, for the confrontation of training problems of these pupils.

- Care for the teaching of mother languages of foreign students and teaching of certain elements of their history and culture, so that these pupils can maintain their cultural diversity.

## **Students**

Both the Greek and the foreign students that constituted the sample of the present survey consider that for the reduction of problems that result from multiculturalism it is required, so much for themselves, as for the teachers:

- Anti-racist education
- Cross-cultural education
- Linguistic education.

The Greek students consider that the teachers are sufficiently prepared in order to work in a multicultural school environment. The opposite opinion, however, have so both the foreign students and the teachers themselves. It is characteristic, the fact that none of the teachers interviewed consider herself sufficiently skilled and prepared for the confrontation of challenges of a composite school population. Some of the students suggested the elaboration of a Methodological guide for teachers, able to suggest ways of promoting intercultural values in school and of introducing intercultural education in school curriculum as well as the elaboration of a resource pack to be taken as a starting point in developing local intercultural projects of school development.

## **8. SUMMARY- COMPARATIVE RESULTS**

From the total outcomes of the case studies, that were the subject of the Greek survey, we can be led to certain comparative results with regard to the multicultural work environments in Greece:

### **8.1 Issues & Challenges**

#### **8.1.1 The Language**

The most common challenge, according to all the target groups of our survey, is the question of knowledge and use of Greek language. Most foreigners that reside in the country feel that their knowledge of Greek language does not suffice for covering the daily needs of communication. The lack of programs for learning the Greek by the government is expressed as an essential problem for their smooth integration and incorporation in the society.

In the work environment, the poor knowledge of the language creates problems and misunderstandings, hinders their work and it can lead even to conflicts with the colleagues or with the management. Most of the foreigners that participated in the research report that they have difficulties to express openly their opinions and feelings, from fear that they are not expressed correctly and do not become comprehensible.

Even the foreign students in secondary education, which have been born in Greece or have lived in the country from a young age, report the question of language, as of fundamental importance and as a factor of reduction of their school performance and of their acceptance from the schoolmates.

But also the Greek employees and managers report that the language hinders the communication and the good collaboration both with the foreign employees, and with the foreign users of services of their institution.

### 8.1.2 Racist Behaviour

With regard to episodes of racist behaviour, the present research led us to very interesting conclusions. All the participants (managers, employees, teachers and students) report that have witnessed incidents or episodes of racist behaviour from Greek to foreign colleagues or schoolmates, or from Greek employee to foreign user of services of the institution. All the reported incidents declare the event of racist behaviour in an indirect way (negative comments, looks, teases etc). There is no report of racist behaviour from a Greek manager to his employees, while all participants in the survey consider that their own behaviour is not influenced by the cultural background of individuals with whom they associate.

At this point it is worth mentioning, that none of the foreigners participating to the present research think to have an equal treatment with their Greek colleagues.

### 8.2 Training needs

All the participants to the present survey, without exceptions, believe that they are not prepared for the confrontation of challenges of a multicultural work environment. All report the need for the acquisition of additional skills, that will allow them to interact in a more efficient way with individuals with different cultural background.

Concretely, with regard to the educational needs:

▣ All the **foreigners** that took part in the present research consider as of fundamental importance the linguistic education, and the reception of information on the different cultures. The information on legal subjects and subjects that are related to the resolution of daily problems are also important for their smooth incorporation in the Greek society.

▣ On the other side, the **Greeks** participating consider essential the organisation of programs of anti-racist and cross-cultural education. The

reception of information on the diversity and the equal opportunities, are considered of fundamental importance as well.

### **8.3 Good Practices**

With regard to good practices, the use of "***cultural mediators***", is considered most effective for the improvement of communication between Greek and foreign managers, employees and customers of organisations and companies. The value of such practice was pointed out so much by the Greeks, as by foreigners participating in the research. The specific practice in certain cases is applied officially – based on the official statute of the institution - (cf. "Greek Council for the Refugees"), while in other cases informally (cf. "Office for Integration of Refugees of Social Sector of Patras Municipality" and "Chinese Clothing Shop").

### **8.4 Epilogue**

Closing this report it is considered advisable to point out that all the elements that are reported in the present study refer to specific multicultural work environments, to which the research was directed and they do not constitute in any case a generalization for other labour environments, in which both the conditions of work and the constitution of the personnel are different.

However, with regard to the present study, the conclusion of certain comparative results, which are common to the majority of participants, lead us to sure conclusions both with respect to the challenges that face the particular work environments, and with the measures that need to be taken for the most effective interaction of individuals with different cultural background, that coexists in the same labour environment.

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