

EDUCATION

ANALYTICAL STUDY

ANTI GONE

Information & Documentation Centre

RAXEN

National Focal Point

Athens, October 2002

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All European societies have gradually been transformed into multicultural societies composed of multiple linguistic, ethnic and religious groups. This multicultural social reality, however, stands in opposition to long established state structures founded upon the concept of a single national identity corresponding to a single nation – state.

Attempts to reform these state structures both by national authorities as well as by EU institutions met with varying degrees of success, but also with opposition. The nationalist political discourse focused on the migrant populations affecting social and political behaviours in ways that contradict the long established European tradition of tolerance and the political desire and objective to build a multicultural and plural European society. Migrants became frequent victims of racist and xenophobic attitudes and behaviours along with the other traditional targets of intolerance, the Roma and other autochthonous minorities.

The content of political discourse and its ability to convey successfully racist and xenophobic messages and meanings are largely determined by the cultural context which is articulated through processes of political socialisation whose primary agent is the educational system and particularly the primary and early secondary level (compulsory education).

Education is therefore a primary concern both of EU institutions and national governments, although the structures, funding, management and evaluation of education and training systems is the sole responsibility of national authorities. In this rapidly evolving arena of education, the European Union lacks a “common education policy”, although it does attempt to influence national policies through the funding of projects on multicultural education, training and youth partnerships, exchange schemes and innovative teaching and learning projects.

Still most national educational systems in the EU support a “traditional concept of national identity which is derived from the belief in an entitlement on the basis of ancestry and a shared historical and cultural past”¹. Should we therefore abandon a political socialisation based on the construction of a thus constructed national identity? Should we and can we redefine national identity?

What should be the role of schools in the mechanisms and processes essential in the construction of individual and group identities that may promote, condone or prevent racism?

None of these questions can be answered lightly and the process of educational reform with a view to developing a tolerant multicultural educational system is still, and will continue to be, a process of learning by doing and – sometimes – failing. However, the contribution of education to the formation of a truly multi-cultural society is crucial and must be

¹ Jones M. (2000), “National Identity – Bestowed or developed? Do we need curriculum for intercultural learning?”, Edge Hill College of H.E. available at <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ccs/conference2000/papers/pde/papers/jones.html> p.2

restructured so as to incorporate the “shifting and kaleidoscopic nature of ethnic differentiations and identities and their divisions of class and gender”.²

The school is the institution in which culture is moulded through “communication and interaction between individuals on the one hand, and the communities resulting from this activity on the other”³ and, as such, is the main vehicle through which we can promote young people’s understanding and acceptance of the “others” by making “the processes of communication and interaction between members of different groups key components in the learning programme”⁴.

In our present study of the educational system of Greece we have found that, despite continuous efforts for reform and the open acknowledgement of the multicultural character of modern Greek society by all major political parties, there are still many elements that may contribute in the development of intolerant attitudes towards others with a different ethnic background, religion or language.

National identity is a central point of reference for the analysis of the educational system in Greece. The formation of national identity constitutes a fundamental element of the political socialization carried out by the educational system according to the National Constitution. By the end of compulsory schooling, at the age of 15, students are expected to have developed loyalty to the nation, respect for national symbols and knowledge of the – state defined⁵– version of historical events according to which the past and present of Greece are conceptualised as an uninterrupted continuum from Ancient Greece through Byzantium to today, while national homogeneity is illustrated in terms of language, religion and territory. Minorities and migrants are absent from the curriculum, while negative representations of national “others” abound.

“National homogeneity is treated by the education system as a value. In such a context difference is negatively valued. The diversity that actually characterizes Greek society, as any other, including differences by social class, gender, ethnicity, religion and language and the discriminations that are often related to them, are, to a great extent, absent from the official curricula.”⁶

Racism, xenophobia, intolerance and prejudice are present in Greek education –in as much as they are present in all public institutions–, as both surveys and academic research have shown. Unfortunately, little effort and few resources have up till now been devoted to combating institutional or other forms of racism indicating that the government has neither

² Rattansi, A. (1992) “Changing the subject? Racism, culture and education” in Donald, J. and Rattansi, A. (eds.) *Race, Culture and Difference*, Open University Press, p. 39

³ Kaikkonen, P. (1997) “Learning a culture and a foreign language at school — aspects of intercultural learning” *Language Learning Journal*, March 1997, No 15, pp. 48

⁴ Jones M. (2000), “National Identity – Bestowed or developed? Do we need curriculum for intercultural learning?”, available at <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ccs/conference2000/papers/pde/papers/jones.html> p.7

⁵ The curriculum and textbooks are defined, ratified, produced and distributed (public education) or sold (private education) by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs through its Pedagogical Institute and its Publishing Organisation of Textbooks (OEDB). More information available at www.ypepth.gr.

⁶ Karakatsani D. (2000), “Civic Education and socio-political changes: The case of the Greek educational system”, paper available at <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ccs/conference2000/papers/epsd/papers/karakatsani.html>

attached the appropriate level of priority nor allocated sufficient resources to the fight against racism, discrimination and intolerance within state structures.

The situation in the area of education is therefore at the moment far from satisfactory. There are still no provisions in place in education for encouraging effectively the promotion of equality and diversity. Furthermore, the inadequacy of reliable official statistical data, the absence of monitoring mechanisms and the poor national funding of academic research hinder the study of phenomena of racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination.

However, the trends are not all negative. We can observe a significant number of encouraging signs demonstrating a slowly emerging commitment both by the state and civil society to combat racism, discrimination and intolerance in education in the past five years: Significant funds from the 2nd Community Support Framework were devoted to the academic study and pilot implementation of intercultural and minority education and these large projects will continue with further funding from the 3rd Community Support Framework. Finally, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs established in 2001 the “Institute for the Greek Diaspora Education and Intercultural Studies” to study and propose policies concerning intercultural education.

Certainly more needs to be done; in our analysis we have tried to point out the major problems and formulate proposals for improving the situation further. As National Focal Point of the RAXEN network we hope that the present study will provide EU institutions, national and local administration, decision makers and NGOs with a valuable tool in their fight against racism, intolerance and discrimination in education.

2. AIM AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

1. AIM AND NATURE

The aim of this study is to provide a starting point for the systematic documentation and exploration of the issue of racial discrimination, racism and xenophobia in the Greek educational system. In fact it should be treated more as an “analytical report”, rather than as an “analytical study”, which in view of the problems mentioned below and the limitations of the current project is not realistically feasible. The relative inadequacy of official statistical data and the few academic studies on the topic of racial violence and discrimination in Greece does not allow us to provide a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the phenomenon, as it appears in the Greek educational system within the context of the RAXEN project.

2. ORGANISATION & STRUCTURE

The study basically follows the model proposed by the EUMC. The number and actual size of each chapter, however, differs, as demanded by the nature of the topic, the country specific situation and the availability of data and information. The analysis of the situation is embedded within the presentation of the situation of vulnerable social groups.

3. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES – SOURCES & LEGISLATION

A. METHODOLOGY & DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Data collection process

Data collection and research relating to racism and discrimination in the education sector is still in its infancy in Greece. The lack of relevant data and studies led us therefore to a more qualitative approach scrutinising all available evidence in our attempt to analyse the current situation.

Our findings rely primarily on data collected in the context of the RAXEN2 and RAXEN3 (update) data collection activity. We would like at this point to stress that the collection of data, perhaps uniquely among other NFPs, is carried out exclusively through personal interviews and visits by one expert (Georgios Mavrommatis) assisted by the Focal Point responsible for Northern Greece. Furthermore, our legal expert (Nassos Theodoridis, advocate) has assisted in collecting and analysing the legal framework.

The only available official statistical data concerning discrimination, racism and xenophobia in Greek education are student records compiled into statistical data by the Education Ministry. On this basis one may in fact draw some conclusions concerning social exclusion, which affects especially the Roma population, but no further quantitative or qualitative data is available on phenomena of racism and xenophobia in schools.

A small number of surveys are also available, but, in our view, their sampling methodology does not allow generalisations to be made concerning national trends. Nevertheless, racial incidents in schools do happen, especially concerning Albanian and Roma pupils. Teachers' unions and the press have repeatedly reported racial "stress" particularly in inner city schools. It is therefore essential for research establishments and public authorities to initiate research that would allow these phenomena to be studied in depth.

Data collected came from the following sources:

- **Existing official statistics** on education, the regularization process for migrants and the number of refugees and asylum seekers from both national and international sources,
- **Studies** on education, migration issues, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, religious minorities, the Roma, etc.,
- **Ad hoc reports by** NGOs on cases of discrimination,
- **Projects, programmes, initiatives and action plans** by public and private bodies,
- **Conferences, workshops and meetings** by public bodies and NGOs
- **Unstructured and semi-structured interviews** (formal and informal) that took place during the Raxen2 data collection and the RAXEN3 update with teachers, relevant

(migrant, refugee, minority, Roma) associations, NGOs and public authorities (local and national).

- **Media reports** of incidents of racism in schools.
- **Press statements** by the Ministry of Education and other public authorities⁷.

The data collection process encountered serious difficulties and problems:

- **Inadequacy of official statistical data:** the only available data refer simply to the number of foreign students and the number of students in the officially designated “Minority Schools” of Western Thrace. There are no statistical data on Greek Muslims (Turks, Pomaks or Roma) or Christian Roma⁸ in other schools or areas that could be made available to us by the Education Ministry. Furthermore, there are no official data concerning incidents of discrimination or racism in education since no public body, authority or mechanism is mandated to record and collect such data.
- **Unreliability of official statistical data:** many of the statistical data we were given in 2001 during the RAXEN2 data collection were subsequently changed and the data presented by the Education Ministry in its Report of the Greek Educational System differ still. Also, our own research indicates that some schools do not operate the reception classes or the special support courses, but nevertheless report doing so to the education authorities. This is possible since there is no effective inspection or evaluation system in place to control the daily operation of schools. Our evidence suggests that this occurs mostly because of the lack of necessary facilities (i.e. there are not enough classrooms or teachers available for the extra “reception” or “support” classes) and also pressure by parents to use school time and space more “productively” by offering “normal students extra tuition in English or IT (Information Technology).
- Very few academic studies relying on primary research on migrants and minorities in education and not a single such study on racism in schools per se.
- Problems with the quality of the data provided by NGOs, as their level of organisation and mode of operation do not allow them to record verifiable and consistent information.
- The need to rely on media for reports of racial incidents in schools, due to the absence of monitoring mechanisms; these reports were verified, but the process proved to be extremely time consuming.

⁷ Greek public authorities frequently publish ad hoc in press statements data that are not released to researchers.

⁸ It should be noted that in our in depth interview with the Director of Education of Argolis (Prefecture of Argolis, Peloponnese) he revealed that “unofficial data” concerning the number of Roma students in primary schools was sent to the Education Ministry, but since Roma are not recorded as a separate category in the official school Student Register (Mathitologio), such data cannot be made publicly available. However, the Education Ministry has released such data to the Press on occasion in reply to criticism concerning the educational provisions for the Roma; the reliability of such data cannot be evaluated, since sources or collection methods are not publicized.

The present study relies largely on data collected during 2001 and the first six months of 2002, while an effort has been made to include data covering the period up to the end of October 2002, when deemed very important.

B. SOURCES

- **The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs**⁹. Although initially the Ministry was very reluctant to release any data to us, eventually after applying formally we were able to acquire some data that were published¹⁰ a month later in a yearbook.
- **Directorates and Bureaus of Education in Prefectures**
Local Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education informed us by telephone that statistical data is only available centrally from the Ministry of Education. However, some were interviewed by us offering an important insight into the problems faced locally.
- **Teachers Confederations** (Primary and Secondary Education)
Trade unions have no data concerning racism in education. In interviews they stressed the need for more intercultural teacher education and informed us of the various problems faced by teachers in schools with a large number of foreign students.
- **“Intercultural” and “Minority” schools**
School records are not publicly available since they contain private and confidential information. Raw data are sent directly to the Education Ministry for statistical compilation. Teachers were helpful and spoke to us in length about their experiences and problems.
- **Departments of Education in Universities**
Departments of Education have carried out a variety of theoretical studies and several research based doctoral dissertations on institutional racism and social exclusion in education. Particularly the Departments of Education at the Universities of Thessalonica (REDS Group), Ioannina (“Roma Children Education Programme”) and Athens (“Muslim Children Education Programme”) have been recorded in detail.
- **Research establishments**
The Centre for Intercultural Education and the National Centre for Social Research are the two main research establishments with very little relevant data.
- **NGOs**

⁹ Helpful information available in Greek mostly and some in English at <http://www.ypepth.gr> (23/10/2002)

¹⁰ Centre for Educational Research (2002), “The Greek Educational System”, Ministry of Education, Athens

All our partner NGOs and especially the Department of Preschool Education at the University of Thessalonica, the Research Centre for Minority Languages and the Network for Support of Migrants and Refugees have helped in the collection of data from a variety of other sources.

- **Media**

Media reports and press statements by Ministries were verified and included in the RAXEN database.

THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs is according to the Constitution responsible for all matters concerning national and foreign, public and private primary, secondary and tertiary education.

The “Integrated Administrative Section for the Education of Diaspora Greeks and Intercultural Education”¹¹ established in 1996 and headed by Special Secretary Prof. Stella Priovolou has two separate Directorates administering the education of aliens, migrants, Roma, religious minorities and repatriate ethnic Greek students at primary and secondary, general and technical education level. The Section is mandated to collect statistical data covering the years 1995-2000 from the local Directorates of Education.

There is no single competent public authority for aliens, migrants, Roma, religious minorities and repatriate ethnic Greek students concerning vocational or Higher Education. Vocational Training is nominally supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

1. “Directorate of Education for Diaspora Greeks and Intercultural Education”

Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

Mitropoleos 15, Athens 10 185, Greece

Tel +30 210 3231787, fax +30 210 3246298, no e-mail

This Directorate is responsible for:

A. The education of “Diaspora” Greeks (immigrants returning from western countries - Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Australia, USA, Canada, etc- and ethnic Greeks -with or without Greek citizenship status- who migrate or repatriate to Greece mainly from Albania, Russia and the Newly Independent States.

B. The education of the Roma (except Muslim Roma living in Thrace under special Muslim minority status).

¹¹ (Eniaios Dioikitikos Tomeas Pediai Omogenon kai Diapolitismikis Ekpedeysis)

C. The state examinations for the *Greek Language Certificate* in co-operation with the **Centre for Greek Language**¹² which acts as a co-ordinating, advisory and strategic organ of the Ministry of Education (in co-operation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture) on matters of language education and policy.

In 1999 the first examinations were conducted in 13 Examination Centres with 460 candidates, in 2000 in 24 Examination Centres with 1000 candidates and in 2001 in 31 Examination Centres with 1400 candidates. The examinations (open to everyone over the age of 12) are conducted on 4 levels of linguistic proficiency: reading comprehension, writing, verbal comprehension and speaking. An official certificate of attainment in Greek is issued by the Education Ministry. Holders of Level C Certificate according to Presidential Decree 138/9-7-99 certificate may attend a Greek university. Level D Certificate allows EU citizens to apply for employment in the Greek public sector. Employers in the private sector also require a level of proficiency in the language, and the certificates serve as official proof of linguistic proficiency.

D. The education of foreign nationals in Greek schools: **Intercultural Education**

A school is officially designated as “intercultural” when the number of students of foreign nationality “reaches or exceeds” 45% of the total number of students. In practice, however, although several inner city schools in both Athens and Thessalonica have by far exceeded this ratio they have not been designated as intercultural to avoid the increased operational costs.

Currently 26 intercultural schools (13 primary schools, 9 lower secondary and 4 higher secondary) operate throughout the country, mostly concentrated in the urban centres of Athens and Thessalonica catering for the needs of repatriating Greeks, ethnic Greek migrants from Albania and the NIS and migrants of other nationalities.

Intercultural schools must contain a balanced mixture of “majority” and “minority” pupils and follow the state curriculum with additional hours devoted mainly to language tuition. In many of these schools other activities (such as health or environmental education) may also be organised by the teachers on an ad hoc basis. There is no provision for the teaching of the migrant’s languages, history or culture.

Critics, such as teachers’ trade unions, stress that the concept of “intercultural” education implies more than gaining language skills. It involves developing positive attitudes towards others and learning interactive and cooperative skills. Also, it implies that an interactive methodology is used in the classroom that allows the voices of all pupils to be heard. Finally, intercultural education is about building bridges between communities and between individuals from diverse backgrounds. However, the “intercultural” school system in Greece fulfils none of these conditions, while 500 reception classes and 701 special courses in 2000, 2001 and 2002 are not nearly enough to cover existing needs. Furthermore, most

¹² For more information <http://www.greeklanguage.gr> (12/10/2002)

such classes begin in January, as there are not enough teachers or classrooms in the existing schools. It should be noted, though, that in 2002 the Ministry managed by planning well in advance to start these classes at the beginning of the school year.

Law 2413 of 1996 on intercultural education attempts a radical break away from the traditional perceptions of “cultural identity”, “multicultural” or “intercultural” etc. However, it is indicative of the importance attached by the legislators to intercultural education that from a total of 37 articles -14 pages- only 4 -1 page- refer to 'intercultural education', with the remaining of the Law dealing with issues concerning the educational provisions for Diaspora Greeks. This is perhaps characteristic of the lax attitude of public authorities to the numerous problems arising from the coexistence of various ethnic, religious and cultural sub-groups within an increasingly multicultural society.

The provisions made by Law have been criticised considerably by educationalists as the perpetuation of implicit school segregation between mainstream schools and “minority schools”. These provisions reject the ideas put forward by proponents of “cultural pluralism”, according to which the various value systems and modes of life of individuals are considered as of equal value and deserve the same respect in a multicultural society.

Critics suggest that the intercultural education model applied in Greece is largely a copy of outdated educational policies implemented during the 1970s and 80s in other western European countries which was eventually replaced shifting attention from an “education for aliens” to “multicultural education”¹³. This model while retaining a mono-cultural and assimilative educational system for the majority ethnic Greek pupil population offers a “different but separate system” for foreign pupils legitimating division and segregation through the notion of “distinctiveness”. There is therefore concern intercultural schools may in fact reinforce segregation and develop socio-political racism.

At a conference organised in November 2001 by Greek Euro MP Myrsini Zorba, Prof. Stella Prioivolou, Special Secretary for Intercultural Education, concluded that the Greek educational system still largely disregards the presence of minority group members in the classroom and that the implementation of a multicultural policy is limited, although efforts are being made to improve the situation. During the same conference participating teachers stressed the need for additional staff, training and resources in order to be able to address the needs of the growing foreign student population.

2. “Directorate of Foreign and Minority Schools”

Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
Mitropoleos 15, Athens 10 185, Greece
Tel +30 210 3238551, no fax, no e-mail

¹³ Damanakis G. et al (2000) “The Education of the Repatriated and the Non-native Students in Greece - An Intercultural Approach”, Athens, Gutenberg pp. 86 - 88

This Directorate is responsible for:

A. All foreign schools operating in Greece: There are 10 foreign schools (not following the state curriculum) operating in Greece. Until 1987 only non-Greek nationals were allowed to enrol, but now they are open to all nationalities. They are expensive private schools with the exception of the Polish School that is financed by the Polish Ministry of Education and caters specifically for the needs of Polish migrants. One small day care centre and one nursery for Philipino migrants operate unofficially.

B. The education of the autochthonous Muslim minority, as defined by the Treaty of Lausanne. There is no available data on the Turkish minority of the islands of Rhodes and Kos, since they are not legally recognised as a minority and therefore do not have minority rights to education. According to the Annexation Treaty of the Dodecanese islands to Greece no indigenous religious (Muslim) or ethnic (Turkish) minority is recognised on the Dodecanese islands – consequently the minorities on these islands have none of the rights of the “recognised” Muslim minority in Thrace, i.e. no minority schools or provision for the teaching of their culture/religion/language in schools or positive discrimination measures for access to higher education.

C. Legislation governing the education of minority and alien students¹⁴

The legislation governing the education of aliens was until 1996 concerned mainly with ethnic Greek immigrants who had studied abroad and had to ratify their qualifications upon their return and a very small number of foreign residents who attended foreign schools in Greece. Following the massive migration of both foreigners and ethnic Greeks from the NIS and Albania during the 1990s a number of legislative provisions were introduced to support the integration of ethnic Greek and foreign migrant children into the Greek educational system. The legislation distinguishes clearly between ethnic Greeks and foreigners providing to the former a preferential treatment. There are vague references in the statutes for the possibility of teaching the language, history and culture of foreign migrant students, but they have not as yet been implemented, while the existing policies seem to indicate a clear preference for an assimilative approach in their education.

The legislation governing Muslim minority education is founded upon the Treaty of Lausanne and a large number of subsequent bilateral agreements (such as the 1968 Bilateral Cultural Protocol that contains recommendations for the exchange of school books for the use of Muslim students in Greece and Christian students in Turkey). Both countries, at least during the last decade, in an effort to retain good diplomatic relationships are following the

¹⁴ This is a non exhaustive collection of the most important legislative provisions. Legislation texts in electronic form available to subscribers only from the National Printing Office at <http://www.et.gr> (21/10/2002)

treaty and agreement provisions to the letter with rather negative consequences for the actual education of the minority, as will be analysed later.

- **The Greek Constitution of 1975/76¹⁵** (reformed on April 6, 2001) guarantees the personal rights, dignity, respect of person and property and freedom of religion and thought. Article 5, par. 2 states that “All persons living within the Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life, honour and liberty irrespective of nationality, race or language and of religious or political beliefs.” However, it should be noted that generally the constitution does attribute the same social and political rights and privileges to Greeks and foreign nationals. Also, according to the constitution special status is accorded to the Orthodox Church as the “prevailing religion”.
- **Convention** Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (Appendix A, Article 2), Lausanne January 30, 1923 between the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Greek Government.¹⁶
- **Law 927 of 1979 (Government Gazette 28-A/10-10-1979)** is the only anti-racist criminal law: it states that “whoever intentionally and publicly instigates, either orally or in the press or through written texts or illustrations or through any other means, acts of activities capable of provoking discrimination, hatred or violence against persons or a group of persons, only due to their racial¹⁷ or national origin, is punishable by imprisonment of up to two years or a fine or both.” These penalties also apply to “whoever creates or participates in organizations pursuing organized propaganda or engaging in any other activity of any kind aimed at racial discrimination.” The penalties are one year in prison and/or a fine for “whoever publicly expresses...ideas offensive to any person or groups of persons due to their racial or national origin.” In 1984, after repeated appeals by the Central Jewish Board of Greece, the Parliament passed an amendment to Law 927 in a new article -appended to Law 1419/84- specifying that, “discrimination on the basis of religion is also punishable”. In 2001 another amendment -appended to Law 2910/2001- allowed the public prosecutor to bring charges ex officio. However, as it has repeatedly been pointed out by human rights NGOs the law is very difficult to apply: consequently there has only been one attempt to enforce the law, when the Greek Ombudsman asked in a special report¹⁸ formally the Public Prosecutor to bring charges against the

¹⁵ Available in English at <http://www.hri.org/docs/syntagma/> (13/09/2002)

¹⁶ English text available at <http://www.hri.org/docs/lausanne/> (09/09/2002)

¹⁷ The term “racial discrimination” or “racism” is defined according to Article 1. 1. of the International Convention for the Eradication of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966) that was ratified by Law 494/1970. The term “race” is to be considered as a “social construction” based on personal and social characteristics of individuals including their religion, culture, nationality and ethnic origin.

¹⁸ Office of the Ombudsman (2000), “Special report on the situation in Nea Kios” Athens, Ref No 8267, available at http://www.synigoros.gr/reports/por_8267_2000_da.doc (12/06/2002)

Municipality of Nea Kios for issuing a formal municipal decision barring the local Roma from entering the city.

- **Law 2341 of 1995 (Government Gazette 208-A/06-10-2000)** on Muslim minority education teachers and the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessalonica.
- **Law 2413 of 1996 (Government Gazette 124-A/17-6-1996)** on Intercultural Education (aim, content, teaching staff, designation and administration of schools) and the establishment of the Institute of the Greek Diaspora Education and Intercultural Studies.
Law 2621/1998 whereby the two Koran Schools of Komotini and of Echinus in the Xanthi Prefecture have been recognized as equivalent to the Religious Studies Lyceums of the country
- **Law 2740 of 1999 (Government Gazette 186-A/16-09-1999)** on the establishment of the Greek Language Certificate.
- **Law 2790 of 2000 (Government Gazette 24-A/16-2-2000)** on the reinstatement of repatriated ethnic Greeks from the NIS – issues of education and culture.
- **Law 2817 of 2000 (Government Gazette 78-A/14-3-2000)** on matters of the education of Greeks abroad and Muslim minority education.
- **Law 2910 of 2001 (Government Gazette 91-A/02-05-2001) amended by Law 3013 of 2002 (Government Gazette 102-A/01-05-2002)** is the fundamental statute currently regulating the entry and stay of aliens within Greek territory as well as the acquisition of Greek nationality by naturalisation. The law defines the legal status of alien students from third countries, who are studying at Greek Institutions of Higher Education or Institutions of Technical Education (especially chapter D articles 10-18 on the entry and stay of aliens for the purpose of studies).
- **Presidential Decree 155 of 1978 in conjunction with Royal Decree 664 of 1969 and Royal Decree 585 of 1972, as amended by Presidential Decrees 182 of 1984 and 86 of 2001** on the status of alien graduates of foreign schools operating in Greece; Greek and alien graduates of foreign schools abroad.
- **144483/13-1-56 Ministerial Circular** allowing students of the Protestants denomination not to attend religious instruction classes.

- **C1/11/2-1-90 Ministerial Circular** allowing students of the Jehovah's Witnesses denomination not to attend religious instruction classes. Both parents must sign a sworn declaration statement that they belong to Jehovah's Witnesses.
- **C1/116/342/19-4-1991 Ministerial Circular** on the enrolment of foreign students only following official ratification of foreign school certificates with the exception of ethnic Greeks from Albania who cannot procure such documentation from the country of origin.
- **ST'/11/171B/18-3-1996 Ministerial Decision** on the establishment of an Integrated Administrative Section for the Education of Diaspora Greeks and Intercultural Education.
- **F10/20/C1/708/28-9-1999 Ministerial Decision** on the establishment of reception and special support classes in the context of intercultural education.
- **F12/896/C1/693/6-9-2000 Ministerial Circular** on intercultural education and the social integration of migrants, refugees and repatriated ethnic Greeks.
- **F4/115/C1/791/12-05-2001 Ministerial Circular** on the improvement of the role of education in combating social exclusion.

There are currently no specific legal provisions for the prevention or monitoring of racial, ethnic, cultural or religious harassment and discrimination in education.

4. THE GREEK NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

A. Brief overview

Traditionally education has constituted the primary means of upward social mobility for large sections of Greek society¹⁹. At the same time, however, public education, suffering from a chronic shortage of funds, was also generally characterised by outdated and formalist curricula, bureaucratic and ineffective management and low quality infrastructure. This pattern largely continues even today, despite major reforms in the past 20 years in all levels of education.

Educational modernization and democratization have been arduous tasks in all liberal societies, but more so in Greece, a country with very limited resources, conflicting ideologies, a history of educational conservatism linked to its nation building effort following the annexation of large territories in the late 19th and early 20th century²⁰, as well as frequent major political changes and upheavals. The nation building process was particularly difficult and complex given the continuous incorporation of various ethno-linguistic populations within its expanding borders²¹.

The Greek educational system remains highly centralized. Central government, through the Ministry of Education and its departments formulates and adopts education policy²². The Greek school curriculum is national and compulsory. There are standard numbers of hours, content and textbooks dictated by the National Ministry of Education for all levels of schooling.

Therefore, the treatment of cultural, religious and ethnic minorities by the Greek educational system, which, as we shall analyse later, remains both inadequate and assimilative, can best be understood in terms of the traditional primary role of the Greek educational system which is political socialization and the formation of a strong national and religious identity rather than simply in terms of its recently formulated migration policies.

The most characteristic feature of the Greek educational system is its high degree of centralisation necessary for the close control of curriculum, teaching methodology and the teachers themselves. The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and its Pedagogical Institute are responsible for defining:

- **The school curriculum** (analytiko programma) at the primary and secondary levels of education – essentially this is a guide prescribing in great detail what is to be taught.
- **Daily school timetable** (orologio programma) at the primary and secondary levels of education –this guide prescribes exactly how many hours each subject will be taught.

¹⁹ For a detailed analysis of the significance of education for Greek society see Tsoukalas, K. (1992) “Dependence and reproduction: The role of educational mechanisms in Greece 1830 – 1922”, Themelio Editions, Athens

²⁰ The latest territorial expansion was in 1947 when the Dodecanese islands forming part of the Italian overseas territories were annexed to Greece.

²¹ Christopoulos D. (2001). “The end of ethnic homogeneity: traditional and new forms of heterogeneity in Greece” in Marvakis, A., Pavlou M., & Parsanoglou D. (eds) “Migrants in Greece”, Athens: Ellinika Grammata

²² Ifanti, A.A. (1995), “Policy making, politics and administration in education in Greece”, *Educational Management and Administration*, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 271-278

- **Textbooks** – all school textbooks are developed by the Pedagogical Institute, ratified and printed by the Ministry of Education and distributed gratis to all students of public schools. Private school students are charged a nominal rate.
- **Employment of teachers;** public school teachers are tenured civil servants.

Local Authorities (Municipalities) are responsible for school buildings.

Formal education is characterized by the fixed length of study and the award of a formal school-leaving certificate at each level which is a necessary prerequisite for further education.

The National Curriculum is obligatory for all teachers, schools and students in Primary and Secondary Education. This curriculum prescribes both the general and the specific aims and objectives of each subject, the precise content to be taught from the official textbooks, guidelines to the teaching methodology and rules for the evaluation procedures. In this sense it does not constitute a framework for the guidance of teachers, but a complete and detailed list of what should be covered by any class/year and at what speed.

Schools are internally non – hierarchically structured with the faculty deciding on all issues and school directors have only a co-ordinating role. However, practically the centralised nature of the educational system does not allow the faculty any real autonomy to decide on issues concerning school life.

A chronic shortage of classrooms in urban areas due to the rapid urbanisation of the 1950s and 60s led to a two shift system of morning and afternoon schools. According to this system two schools operate on the same premises alternating as morning and afternoon schools every month. However, this system is only present today in the poorest of urban areas, as many new schools were built during the 1990s. It should be noted, though, that as migrants tend to live in poor areas many migrant children visit such two-shift schools with negative effects on their educational attainment.

The infrastructure of most schools in both urban and rural areas has improved significantly in the past few years. However, since parents and pupils cannot choose which school to attend, since this depends upon their registered residence, it is obvious that migrant pupils can only attend schools in the poorest districts, where the infrastructure is still not satisfactory.

Almost 90% of the schools in Greece are public. Worth stressing that, in Greek educational system, religious lesson has a (Greek – Orthodox Christian) preaching character; is taught in all levels (Dimotiko, Gymnasium and Lyceum) and is obligatory for all pupils. Children who declare written that they follow other dogma or religion and atheists can stay out of the classroom during the religious lesson.

B. The Educational System - Description

⇒ School System (Primary and Secondary)

Pre-school education is optional and available for children from the age of 2 – 6 in public (state and local authority) or private kindergartens (supervised by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare) and public or private Nursery Schools (supervised by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs).

Primary Education and Lower Secondary education is compulsory for all children 6 – 15. Public schools operate from 8:30 to 1:30 and a small number of primary schools operate with an extended timetable and an enriched curriculum as “all-day schools” (07:00 – 16:30).

Post-compulsory Secondary Education, according to the 1997 educational reform, consists of two school types:

a. Unified Upper Secondary General Education Schools –“Eniaia Lykeia” with duration of studies of 3 years. Following graduation through competitive national examinations graduates may, depending on the grade achieved, enter the University or Technological Educational Institutes (all courses are competitive through a numerus clausus system).

b. Technical Vocational Educational Schools – TEE with a duration of studies of either two years (A' level) or three years (B' level).

Students may transfer from one type of school to the other.

A small number of Nurseries and schools of Primary and Secondary Education are designated as schools for students with special needs. There are also Musical, Ecclesiastical and Physical Education secondary education schools.

Post-compulsory Secondary Education also includes the Vocational Training Institutes (IEK), which provide a formal, but unclassified level of education. These Institutes are not classified as an educational level, because they accept both Gymnasio (lower secondary school) and Lykeio (upper secondary school) graduates according to the specializations they provide.

⇒ Higher Education System

Higher education is divided into Universities and Technological Education Institutes (TEI). Students are admitted according to their performance at national level competitive examinations taking place at the second and third grade of the “Eniaio Lykeio”. Additionally, students are admitted to the Hellenic Open University upon the completion of their 22 year of age by drawing lots.

Entrance requirements for the TEI are the same as for universities. Studies in higher education last for eight semesters (in the TEI including the compulsory professional placement and the completion of a graduation project), and lead to a degree. Subjects include compulsory courses, as well as mandatory elective and optional elective courses. In most

cases – apart from the legal, medical and engineering professions, where an additional professional qualification is mandatory – the degree qualifies holders for immediate employment, while allowing them to continue their studies at postgraduate level. There are also other Higher Education establishments that do not rank as universities, such as the Higher State Academies for the Merchant Navy.

⇒ **Teacher Education**

Pre-primary and Primary school teachers receive a university education combined with pedagogical training for eight semesters at a faculty of pre-primary or primary education. In service training is also available, though not mandatory, at Teacher Training Centres²³, Regional Training Centres²⁴ and through specialist courses on a variety of issues (culture and arts, environment, etc).

Secondary general education teachers are graduates of faculties whose primary subject matter is taught at secondary level (i.e. mathematics, physics, literature, etc). They receive pedagogical training during a one-semester course on Pedagogy that is not always mandatory. No further teacher training or education training is required for their employment in general secondary education. However, some categories of teachers, like economists, sociologists, jurists, engineers must have a teaching qualification obtainable upon completion of an annual course at the Pedagogical Training School (PATES). Secondary technical or vocational teachers are trained in a Vocational and Technical Teacher Training Academy (SELETE). Secondary education teachers also receive limited in service training at Regional Training Centres and through specialist courses on a variety of issues (culture and arts, environment, etc). Generally the pedagogical training of secondary general and technical education teachers is not considered adequate and the Education Ministry has repeatedly implemented a variety of in-service training courses.

In the context of the 2nd Community Support Framework projects a number of primary and secondary school teachers received limited training in intercultural education:

- “Education for Repatriate Greeks and Foreign Students” carried out by KEDA²⁵ (1997-1999) conducted 64 teacher training seminars with 2,500 teachers participating in various regions.
- “Muslim Children Education” carried out by the Department of Primary Education of the University of Athens conducted training 231 Christian and Muslim primary Minority school teachers and 25 secondary Minority school teachers in Thrace.
- “Roma Children Education” carried out by the Department of Education of the University of Ioannina conducted 59 training seminars with more than 4,000 teachers participating.
- “Education for Diaspora Greeks” carried out by EDIAMME²⁶ conducted 62 training seminars with 3,616 teachers participating.

²³ Didaskaleia.

²⁴ Perifereiaka Epimorfotika Kentra

²⁵ Centre for Intercultural Education of the University of Athens. More information available at <http://www.keda.gr> (25/10/2002 site under reconstruction)

⇒ Adult education

Adult education – beyond the traditional “evening schools” available to working adults lacking formal education (*esperina scholeia*) – was gradually introduced during the 1980s, largely as a result of the new labour market situation which developed after Greece’s full membership of the European Community in 1981. Funding by the European Social Fund led to the growth of a number of learning and training activities, concerning mostly adult vocational training.

In 1983 the Adult Education Department of the Ministry of Education was upgraded to a State Secretariat under the supervision of the Education Ministry. The General Secretariat for Adult Education (GSAE), headed by a general secretary, is a public institution operating on a national basis, which plans, co-ordinates and supports non-formal adult education programmes and projects in the field of general, socio-cultural and job-oriented adult education dealing with adult literacy and basic education, vocational pre-training and training, combating social exclusion and activities related to culture. The target groups are primarily young adults, women, members of disadvantaged groups, such as Roma, migrants, ex-offenders, etc. The Secretariat is staffed by 60 full time civil servants in the central service and 330 at regional level. Most of GSAE’s programmes are nationally funded. The projects supported by the ESF²⁷ are co-financed by 75 % from European structural funds.

However, it should be stressed that GSAE does not co-ordinate all aspects of adult education on a national level: Greece still lacks a general comprehensive policy on adult education and thus each public body, local authority or private organisation, such as the Ministry of Education, Agriculture, Justice, Labour, Social Welfare, Health, Communication and Transport, Commerce, National Economy, Environment and Planning, Mercantile Marine, Municipalities, Prefectures, Banks, the National Organisation of Tourism, etc..., develop their own adult education programmes without reference to the work carried out by others.

General adult education is also provided by regional and local authorities: Each Prefecture has a section for adult education primarily funded (until recently) through the ESF. Municipalities also organise adult education programmes, but not in a systematic way due to financial constraints and lack of human resources.

Some NGO’s provide adult education courses at a relatively low price, like the Greek YWCA, the Greek Council for Refugees, etc

Since the start of ESF funding many private Centres for Vocational Training²⁸ were established throughout the country running a variety of courses. Their impact cannot be evaluated, though due to the lack of any evaluation of their work.

²⁶ Centre of Intercultural and Migration Studies of the University of Crete. More information available at <http://ediamme.edc.uoc.gr> (28/10/2002)

²⁷ European Social Fund

²⁸ Kentra Epaggelmatikis Katartisis (KEK)

During the 1990s many projects, funded primarily by the European Social Fund, were implemented in order to support mainly ethnic Greek migrants from the NIS and, to a much lesser extent, other migrants to adapt to the demands of the Greek labour market, basically by teaching them the Greek language and vocational skills. The number of these programmes has been drastically reduced due to limited EU funding for vocational training after 2001.

During 2001 we registered a number of vocational training projects targeting migrants and implemented mainly by either private or public Centres of Vocational Training (Kentra Epagelmatikis Katartisis – KEK). The projects were supervised by the Greek Ministry of Labour, but no evaluation reports exist or were made public or available to us, despite our repeated requests. During 2001 we recorded 15 projects for Greek language learning²⁹ and 36 for vocational skills with additional preparatory Greek language lessons³⁰.

Furthermore, a number of projects developing support structures and providing support services were also implemented³¹ with the support of the Special Secretariat of Repatriated ethnic Greeks from the NIS (Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace).

The lack of any centralised administration and co-ordination agency for the wide variety of projects meant that recording (as well as evaluating) all these activities is a very difficult task. We presume that the actual number of training and support projects might be double or even triple from what we have been able to record. Nevertheless, close scrutiny of the projects we did record showed that overall the cost per person was very high at 7, 462 Euro. None of the projects we recorded had been evaluated apart from a formal accounting audit. In addition to these projects there was also a small number of research and other projects³² carried out by public or private KEKs.

The largest public body offering vocational training to adults is the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED). A complete programme of Initial and Continuing Vocational Training Programmes is implemented through its network of 52 Vocational Training Units. The number of the students attending classes increases rapidly with the operation of Employment Promotion Centres. In the framework of the national policies for Training and Employment and the directives of European Union, OAED has improved, expanded and modernized its Initial Training (Technical and Vocational) programmes addressing upper secondary education graduates.

These programmes are also open to migrants and repatriate Greeks, however, there are still bureaucratic problems to be resolved, for instance the insistence on the production of certificates of secondary education (most migrants either have none or cannot ratify them by

²⁹ RAXEN2 Database No. 3A0003, 3C0007, 3C0027, 3C0032, 3C0033, 3C0036, 3C0037, 3C0044, 3C0045, 3C0051, 3C0052, 3C0064, 3C0066, 3C0067, 3C0077

³⁰ RAXEN2 Database No. 3C0029, 3C0034, 3C0038, 3C0039, 3C0046, 3C0047, 3C0049, 3C0050, 3C0053, 3C0059, 3C0060, 3C0065, 3C0071, 3C0072, 3C0073, 3C0074, 3C0075, 3C0078, 3C0079, 3C0080, 3C0081, 3C0082, 3C0085, 3C0086, 3C0088, 3C0089, 3C0090, 3C0091, 3C0092, 3C0093, 3C0094, 3C0095, 3C0096, 3C0097, 3C0098

³¹ RAXEN2 Database No. 3C0061

³² RAXEN2 Database No. 3B0014, 3B0015, 3B0030, 3B0031

the Greek authorities – the ratification process is arduous requiring a large number of original documents).

Information and Advisory offices in the Apprenticeship Schools of OAED operate as pilot projects in two cities³³, in the framework of the community initiative YOUTHSTART.

³³ Moshato in Athens and Ioannina in Northern Greece.

5. VULNERABLE SOCIAL GROUPS IN EDUCATION - DEFINITION, DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs applies the definitions adopted and used by two other ministries, namely:

a. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (responsible for asylum seekers, refugees and the Muslim minority) adheres to the existing international legal definitions (1951 Geneva Convention) for asylum seekers and refugees and the 1923 Lausanne Treaty for the Muslim minority of Thrace.

b. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security³⁴ to be used in the context of policies and projects aimed at combating social exclusion. The following groups are listed (non hierarchical categorisation):

- Roma
- Repatriated ethnic Greeks
- Migrants
- Refugees
- Cultural and Religious Minorities
- Inhabitants of mountainous and remote regions
- Single parent families
- Prisoners and ex-prisoners
- Juvenile delinquents
- Addicts and ex addicts of narcotic substances
- Disabled individuals
- Mental patients
- HIV positive patients

For the purpose of this study we will examine the political – cultural situation of the following groups that are possible victims of discrimination and racism in education due to their ethnic, religious and cultural specificity:

- **Documented and undocumented migrants (aliens)**
- **Asylum seekers and refugees (aliens)**
- **Roma (Greek citizens)**
- **Religious Minorities (Greek citizens)**

³⁴ Indirectly in the sense that there is no official list, but such groups are defined as vulnerable in policies and projects aimed at combating social exclusion. Relevant information in Greek only available at <http://www.labor-ministry.gr/index.html> (22/05/2002). Also some additional information on definitions of vulnerable groups can be found in the “National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2001-2003”, prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and available at europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/jun/napincl2001el_en.pdf (21/06/2002).

- **“Repatriated” ethnic Greeks from the NIS and migrant ethnic Greeks from Albania (NIS repatriates acquire Greek citizenship through a special process and Albanian ethnic Greeks hold a special residence permit)³⁵**

A common feature of all the above groups is their relative social exclusion³⁶ from essential public social services, such as education, vocational training, social welfare, health care, other social activities and their marginal position in the labour market. The problems created by social exclusion have led many such groups to develop and rely on extensive informal aid and self-assistance networks that have further alienated them from mainstream society.

Racism and discrimination experienced by vulnerable groups is part of the general social conditions under which they live and work in Greek society. These groups are not homogenous as far as their main (attributed or acquired) social characteristics are concerned, such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, education, skills, and occupation³⁷, because these characteristics are constantly changing through the influence of a multitude of political, economic and social factors across time and these changes influence their lifestyles, life chances, expectations and choices. Consequently, the social profile and status of these groups are constantly re-structured through the past and present organizations of social relations and practices.³⁸

The debate on the relationship between the social position of vulnerable groups and racism surfaced in Greece during the 1990s with the influx of considerable numbers of undocumented migrants and the rapid political changes in the ethnic landscape of the Balkans. However, even today the issue of discrimination and racism experienced by such groups still constitutes a marginal and “secondary” issue within a broader debate concerning the ethnic composition and inequalities of the Greek social structure and stratification. Therefore, primary research on the social situation of vulnerable groups is scarce, as indicated by recent reviews of the relevant research literature.³⁹

Findings from the few existing studies, however, seem to concur in that poverty, deprivation and social exclusion are common characteristics affecting the social life of all vulnerable groups. The situation is aggravated by the relative underdevelopment of the public social services and its inadequate provisions affecting low income groups more seriously. Among the vulnerable groups under consideration some undocumented migrants, most asylum seekers and many nomadic Roma seem to be in the worst position living in conditions

³⁵ Official data concerning the number of special permits issued are not available.

³⁶ Although formally entitled to such services, members of these groups will in many cases not use them either because they are (self) intimidated by poor language skills or because of ill-treatment by officials or because they see no real benefit.

³⁷ OECD (2001), “The employment of foreigners: Outlook and issues in OECD countries”, p.172

³⁸ Petracou, E. “Exploring the social and historical dimensions of migration in Europe with special reference to Greece”, unpublished PhD Thesis CRER, University of Warwick, UK, p. 43

³⁹ National Center for Social Research (1999), EuReporting Working Paper No. 8: Greece: “Contributions to Social Reporting, Institutions, Activities, Publications”, p. 2

of absolute poverty, namely lacking even basic housing, employment of any type and even suffering from malnutrition. In contrast there seems to be a marked improvement in the living conditions, life chances and the social situation of the Muslim minority in Thrace during the past decade.⁴⁰ We can also assume, as there are still no relevant data available, that the situation of documented migrants is improving since their legal status allows them both access to public services and better wages and living conditions.

Regrettably, however, since there is no monitoring system in place it is not possible to have reliable and regular data concerning the situation of vulnerable groups. Our analyses must rely, therefore, on data from existing studies and primarily on reports produced both by official (independent authorities) and unofficial (research institutes, individual researchers, NGOs) sources.

I. Resident Aliens – Documented / undocumented migrants, asylum seekers & refugees

***Documented migrants** are foreign nationals who reside and work in Greece legally holding a residence and work permit.⁴¹*

***Undocumented migrants** are foreign nationals who reside and work in Greece illegally either without a residence and work permit or holding one that has expired.⁴²*

***Asylum seekers** are foreign nationals and their immediate dependants (wife/husband, minor or handicapped children and parents) who apply or have applied orally or in writing to any public authority for political asylum according to the 1951 Geneva Convention as amended by the 1967 New York Protocol or have entered the country with the intention to apply for asylum according to the Dublin Convention 1990 as transposed in national legislation.⁴³*

***Refugees** are foreign nationals who reside and work in Greece legally having acquired the status of political refugee by the competent authorities following the due process prescribed by international law and transposed on national legislation.⁴⁴*

Documented and undocumented migrants

According to the first preliminary results of the 2001 Census, published in May 2002, the number of resident aliens has risen significantly: The number of recorded non nationals has reached a total of **797,093⁴⁵ (7.3%)** of a total population of **10,964,080**. In the Athens

⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch (1999), “Greece: The Turks of Western Thrace” available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/greece/index.htm#TopOfPage> (28/08/2002) and Mekos, Z. (1999) “Thrace: Aspects of the minority problem”, Komotini: Thracian Research Association, p. 125 – partly available at http://orpheus.ee.duth.gr/Mekos/Mekos1/ENG_EDITION.HTML (10/08/2002)

⁴¹ Greece, N. 2910/2001 (02/05/2001)

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ Greece, P. D. 61/1999 (06/04/1999)

⁴⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁵ Including refugees and asylum seekers. In relation to economic migrants the number of refugees and asylum seekers is very small. UNHCR data show that since 1980 and until 2001 Greece awarded refugee status to a total of 6,460 persons with a refusal rate of over 90%.

Metropolitan Area the recorded non nationals are **376.732 (10%)** in a total population of **3.761.810**.⁴⁶

However, the use of Census data for the purpose of monitoring is still problematic because on the one hand of the large number of unregistered migrants and on the other hand of the high mobility of the Albanian migrants (forming the majority of the migrant population) who may frequently leave the country to return days, weeks, months or years later. We are dealing therefore with a highly mobile immigrant population that is either not adequately monitored⁴⁷ - concerning those that cross the borders legally - or not monitored at all - concerning those that cross the borders illegally.

Another indicator of the number of foreign migrants is the results of the two migrant registration processes in 1998 and 2001. In 1998 **371,641**⁴⁸ migrants registered for residence and work permits with the National Manpower and Employment Organization⁴⁹ (OAED), but the National Institute of Labour (EIE)⁵⁰ estimated that more than **150,000** did not register mostly because they could not secure the necessary documentation (minimum number of work days certified officially by social security or tax authorities) or because were prevented by their employer under threat of dismissal.

Official data concerning the 2001 registration process are not yet available, since the processing of applications will not be finished before the end of 2002, but the Ministry of the Interior⁵¹ announced in December 2001 that approximately **351,000** migrants had applied for residence and work permits by then - some of whom may have applied unsuccessfully during the earlier period. Thus we can assume that the number of both registered (approximately **720,000**) and unregistered (200,000 – 300,000) migrants is about **900,000** that roughly corresponds to the findings of the 2001 Census taking into account that many unregistered migrants preferred not to participate in the Census for a variety of reasons, mainly fear of deportation. The migrant population constitutes, then, roughly **8.5% - 9%** of the total population. A rising number of migrants are forming families characterized by high fertility⁵².

⁴⁶ National Statistical Service (2002), Census 2001 Data, available at http://www.statistics.gr/new_site/Hellenic/gr_tables/S1100_SAP_1_pinakas1b_i.HTM?code= (12/05/2002)

⁴⁷ Data concerning visas held by the border authorities (Ministry of Public Order) are not correlated or crosschecked with data concerning residence & work permits (Ministry of the Interior). Therefore it is not possible to have data on the number of migrants residing in the country. Existing data refer to rough estimations.

⁴⁸ Kavounidis J. and Hatzaki L., (2000) "Alien Applications for Residence and Work Permits", Athens: National Institute of Labour, available at http://www.eie.org.gr/Greek/contents_keimena_ergasias2.htm (12/05/2002)

⁴⁹ More information mostly in Greek from www.oaed.gr (03/03/2002)

⁵⁰ More information mostly in Greek from www.eie.org.gr (13/03/2002)

⁵¹ The Ministry of the Interior has replaced the Ministry of Labour and the National Manpower and Employment Organization as competent public authority according to Law 2910/2001.

⁵² "The question of low fertility was also raised in relation to the relatively recent immigration flows into Greece. This discussion focused on the differential fertility between immigrants and nationals. The publication of the SOPEMI 1999 report, and in particular the point raised that in several countries the percentage of births in the immigrant population is higher than the percentage of immigrants within the total population, has generated further discussion on this topic. Despite the lack of reliable statistical data in Greece, it has been estimated that during 1999 30% of all live births came from immigrants. In addition, it has been argued that if the actual patterns of immigrant fertility continue for the next 20 years, 150,000 births will come from the immigrant population. For further information see the report by the European Observatory on Family Matters (2001), Bagavos Ch., "Focus Monitoring 2000: Fertility, Greece: "General context in relation to the perception and discussion of demographic trends and family needs".

Most undocumented migrants have no family with them. However, in general undocumented migrant children are nevertheless allowed to enrol in primary schools. In 2001, when the new immigration law was tabled at the Parliament, the Primary school teachers' Federation⁵³ arguing on the basis of pedagogical and humanitarian values intervened asking all children to enrol in public primary schools regardless of their parent's residence status and for a stay in the deportation of parents until their children finish their school studies⁵⁴.

Economic migrants entered the country "illegally" in large numbers since the 1990s and remained undocumented until the registration processes of 1998 and 2001: Albanians working in agriculture and construction, Poles and Rumanians as skilled manual labourers, Philipinos as seamen and domestic workers, Pakistani, Indians and Bangladeshis as unskilled workers in small factories and manufactures, Africans as small traders and peddlers.

A major pull factor for economic migrants has been the large informal economy that accounts for up to 30-35% of Greece's GDP. Until 1998, when the first migrant registration process was initiated, undocumented migrants provided Greek industry and agriculture with the cheap labour that was essential for their survival in the emerging competitive European market. Small labour intensive enterprises in agriculture, construction and manufacturing that are still prominent in Greece tried to remain competitive through the use of the cheap labour provided by the undocumented migrants who were willing to be both geographically *mobile* and *flexible* regarding working conditions, practices and wages.

The very low income, a part of which is in most cases sent back to the country of origin, accounts partly for the harsh conditions of life characteristic of most economic migrants in Greece. Housing, particularly for those working in rural areas more often than not consists of makeshift huts with no heating or sanitary facilities. In urban areas the high cost leads many migrants to rent substandard accommodation and/or to cohabit in large numbers. Public health and social services are available to documented migrants, but, although there are no specific data available, it is likely that discriminatory practices may also prevail.

Migrants are also largely "invisible" in most entertainment facilities (cinemas, theatres, bars, coffee shops, etc) of both urban and rural areas. In interviews with representatives of migrant organisations we were told that the migrants' absence from such facilities can be attributed both to the cost involved, but also the fear of a control by the police and racist verbal incidents. To put it in simple terms we were told that there is still a "fear of going public" even for documented migrants.

The absence of a concrete migration policy and legal framework that left migrants for several years in a legal and social vacuum has contributed in their exclusion from both the use of public social services and participation in social life and especially education and training. Furthermore, the continuing absence of adequate social support structures, such as advice centres for the legal, social and economic orientation and integration of migrants

⁵³ DOE. More information available at <http://www.doe.gr> (21/10/2002)

⁵⁴ RAXEN2 Database No. 3C004

makes it difficult for them to satisfy basic social and cultural needs, such as political, cultural and social expression and recreation.

There are, however, also positive signs. Migrant associations have been formed, some of which, like KASAPI, the Philippino Association, have been particularly active in providing essential social support structures in the form of a kindergarten, information and legal aid centre, etc. Models of inter-cultural education have gradually been introduced to some Greek schools and at least one large scale anti-racist project was implemented by the Pedagogical Institute. The public administration is gradually developing structures for the management of migration and the social support and integration of migrants.

Asylum seekers and refugees

Demographic data concerning asylum seekers and refugees in Greece are collected by the Ministry of Public Order, but are not publicly available. However, the UNHCR office in Greece releases such data in Greek through its website⁵⁵.

The total number of refugees in Greece, as of 01 January 2002, was 6,948, of whom 60% are Turks and Poles. During the year 2001, 5,499 asylum applications were submitted, mainly by Iraqis, Turks and Afghans, 1,312 of which were examined. 147 persons were granted refugee status, while another 148 were granted residence permits for humanitarian reasons. Of the total number of applications, 306 concerned unaccompanied minors⁵⁶.

During the first seven months of 2002, 2,838 asylum requests were submitted and 2,810 were examined (including earlier pending cases). 25 persons were granted refugee status and another 34 were granted humanitarian status. The main countries of origin for asylum applications are Iraq (1,190 – 41.93%) and Afghanistan (841 – 29.63%). 429 asylum seekers withdrew their applications probably, because they had already remained in Greece long enough to be able to apply for a residence permit as migrants.

Refugees and asylum seekers have entered Greece in increasing numbers since the 1990s. Greece is a major entry point for asylum seekers given its proximity to countries with authoritarian regimes or in conflict and with its long and difficult to patrol sea borders very close to the Asian mainland. Emergency reception facilities are thus critical, since people arrive throughout the year and without warning, often in considerable numbers.

Greece formalized the administration of its main reception centre for asylum seekers, as well as certain health and welfare issues, through Presidential Decree 266/1999, assigning responsibility to the Ministry of Health and Welfare for the Lavrion Refugee Centre, the country's only government funded reception centre with a carrying capacity for 300 persons. Five more reception centres operated mostly by NGOs and located around Athens, in Lamia, Thessalonica and Evros, near the northern border with Turkey accommodate in total a maximum of 600 - 700 persons. Therefore, for most asylum seekers there is no free

⁵⁵ Ministry of Public Order data available from UNHCR at http://www.unhcr.gr/exec/article_1.htm (12/09/2002)

⁵⁶ Ministry of Public Order data available from UNHCR at <http://www.unhcr.gr/research.htm#i> (03/09/2002)

accommodation available and most – even during the winter – resort to sleeping in parks or public squares in Athens until they find employment that will allow them to pay for housing.

Temporary reception and accommodation facilities available to asylum seekers vary, but generally conditions are very poor. International organisations like the UN Committee against Torture⁵⁷, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), NGOs like The Greek Council for Refugees, the Medecin sans Frontier and the Social Support Network for Migrants and Refugees, as well as independent administrative authorities like the Ombudsman⁵⁸ and the National Commission for Human Rights⁵⁹ have repeatedly reported on the very poor conditions of detention for asylum seekers and migrants awaiting deportation for several months, due to the lengthy bureaucratic procedures involved.

Refugees, asylum seekers with pending claims and persons granted temporary residence under the humanitarian status provisions are granted a work permit and access to health care, education and social assistance. While this theoretically facilitates legal employment, in fact their situation is very problematic given the high rate of unemployment among unskilled workers and the large number of migrant workers competing for jobs. Although many asylum applicants hold qualifications from their home countries, they usually cannot provide proof of it and therefore their employment is usually limited to unskilled jobs either in the tourist trade or in the agricultural and construction sectors. This has led to increased competition among refugees for jobs where language skills and further qualifications are not required.⁶⁰

II. “Repatriated” ethnic Greeks from the NIS and migrant ethnic Greeks from Albania

*Repatriated ethnic Greeks (palinnostountes omogeneis) are residents of the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union of Greek ethnic descent who have the right to apply for the acquisition of Greek citizenship, if their nationality cannot be established by the procedures laid out by the Ankara and Lausanne Treaties. Citizenship is granted on the basis of the findings of a special committee appointed jointly by the Minister of the Interior and the Foreign Minister on the basis of an interview and examination of all or any of the following original documents: passport, birth certificate, marriage certificate, family status certificate, identity card or internal passport or any other document that can prove Greek descent.*⁶¹

⁵⁷ CAT (2001) 26th session, 9 May 2001, Concluding Observations on the Report by Greece available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/48265AF463FDBC01C1256A48002E764C?opendocument> (10/09/2002)

⁵⁸ Office of the Greek Ombudsman, (2001), Report on the Conditions of Detention for asylum seekers awaiting deportation, available at <http://users.hol.gr/~diktio/reportsinigoros2001.pdf> (14/09/2002)

⁵⁹ National Commission for Human Rights, Annual Report 2001, pp. 43 – 47, Athens: National Printing Office

⁶⁰ Mestheneou, E., (2000), EU CARE: Refugee Entrepreneurs in Greece”, p.9 available at <http://www.gcr.gr/investigations/EU-CAREReport.doc> (08/09/2002)

⁶¹ Greece, N. 2790/2000 (16/02/2000)

Migrant ethnic Greeks (omogeneis) are Albanian citizens of ethnic Greek descent. They are entitled to a special residence and work permit of three year duration that is issued by the Aliens Department of the Greek Police after examination of all or any of the following original documents: passport, birth certificate, marriage certificate, family status certificate, identity card or internal passport or any other document that can prove Greek descent.⁶²

There are no reliable demographic data concerning the number of repatriated ethnic Greeks from the NIS or ethnic Greeks migrants from Albania⁶³. It should be noted that the demographic situation of both groups is considered to be a politically highly sensitive issue.

Repatriated Greeks from the NIS: Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the outbreak of violence in several former socialist republics a large number of ethnic Greeks⁶⁴ migrated to Greece. According to a demographic study made by the General Secretariat of Repatriated Greeks (Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace) with the help of repatriate NGOs in the regions of Macedonia and Thrace, approximately 135,000 ethnic Greeks entered the country since 1980.⁶⁵ This group is commonly referred to as “Ellinopontioi” – ethnic Greeks from Pontos or – in a derogatory sense – as “Rossopontioi”, a term used to implicitly question their Greek ethnic descent by describing them as Russians from Pontos.

A number of legal provisions were introduced to facilitate their acquisition of Greek citizenship: According to the 24755/6-4-1990 Joint Ministerial Decision (Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Defence) repatriated Greeks could enrol on the municipal registers and remain in Greece indefinitely without providing the necessary documentation. In 1993 according to Law 2130/1993 the concept “repatriation” became a legal term and ethnic Greeks were distinguished from other foreign nationals in the acquisition of Greek citizenship by a special rapid process. By 1998 more than 95,000 repatriates had acquired Greek citizenship status. A Committee of Inquiry⁶⁶ that investigated the special process of repatriate citizenship acquisition discovered many irregularities.

The issue of the exact number of ethnic Greek repatriates from the NIS and the special process of citizenship acquisition applicable especially to them has been repeatedly discussed in Parliament as both major parties have accused each other of falsely attributing citizenship status when in power in order to influence electoral results.

⁶² Greece, Ministerial Decision 4000/3/10-e (15/04/1998)

⁶³ For example the following source quotes a far smaller number than indicated by Greek sources for repatriate Greeks from the NIS: CEMES (1998), Ethnobarometer Working Paper No. 2, Codagnone C.: “New Migration and Migration Politics in Post-Soviet Russia”, available at http://www.cemes.org/current/ethpub/ethnobar/wp2/wp2_ind.htm (13/06/2002)

⁶⁴ Another smaller group from both the NIS and CECs were political refugees who had fled Greece after the 1946-1949 civil war.

⁶⁵ More information available in Greek from the website of the General Secretariat of Repatriated Greeks that is part of the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace available at <http://www.mathra.gr> (21/06/2002)

⁶⁶ Karamanlis Foundation (2001): “Findings of the Electoral Committee of Inquiry on the 2000 National Elections”, available at http://www.idkaramanlis.gr/html/arxeio/anal_eklog.html (10/09/2002)

Migrant ethnic Greeks from Albania: Official Albanian statistics puts the number of ethnic Greeks at 35,000, while various Greek sources claim that 200,000 – 400,000 ethnic Greeks occupy regions of Southern Albania. Greece discourages Albanian ethnic Greeks from acquiring Greek citizenship and offers them preferential treatment vis-à-vis other foreign migrants through a special residence and work permit of unlimited duration. In this way Greece can still claim the existence of a substantial ethnic Greek minority in Albania, although in practice most have already migrated to Greece. However, as it has been argued repeatedly in the Greek Parliament the process of issuing these special permits was flawed and many ethnic Albanians have fraudulently also acquired such permits. Official data concerning the number of these permits is not publicly available, but various estimates put it at 80,000.

Despite preferential treatment by the Greek state (after control of their ethnic descent credentials they receive 500 Euro for the purchase of household equipment and a small annual supplement of 230 Euro) most repatriated ethnic Greeks⁶⁷ from the NIS who usually arrive with their families face serious difficulties integrating into mainstream Greek society. Culture shock, language problems, lack of educational qualifications, the inability to ratify existing qualifications and discriminatory practices are only some of the issues, which have not yet been systematically studied or monitored.

In the words of the social support centre “Efxini Poli” set up by the Municipalities of Acharnon and Nea Liosia, “we have to approach with sensitivity the difficulties that this population faces in a place in which they belong, but in which they also feel strangers: limited knowledge of the Greek language which results in difficulties in communicating and transacting; limited and sometimes erroneous information regarding the functions and laws of the Greek State; differences in education/training and many times differences in work – experiences; lack of job seeking skills; limited social networking; lack of any established social integration system (i.e. housing, bureaucracy, acquisition of jobs, pensions, educational system, recognition of degrees, etc); negative stereotypes and prejudices of the majority of the population against these groups and vice-versa. All the above mentioned lead repatriated Greeks to feel insecurity, uncertainty, discouragement, social isolation and social exclusion.”⁶⁸

Ethnic Greeks from Albania settled both in rural areas providing Greek farmers with much needed cheap labour and in urban centres reviving small labour intensive firms. Increasingly difficult to distinguish from ethnic Albanians members of this group frequently became victims of racism and xenophobia during their first years in Greece. Although they

⁶⁷ Greeks colonised Mediterranean and Black Sea coastal areas since the antiquity. Some of them did not assimilated with local populations and retained a Greek ethnic or cultural identity until modern times. Such groups were mainly to be found in the Black Sea region (Pontians). In 1922 the Greek defeat from Turkey resulted in the relocation of more than one and a half million ethnic Greeks who lived in coastal regions of Asia Minor and the Black Sea to Greece. Large numbers of ethnic Greeks also lived in the Soviet Black Sea coast. After the downfall of the Soviet Union many were forced by war or unemployment to migrate to Greece. The Greek government acknowledged them as ethnic “repatriate” Greeks and facilitated their “return” by introducing favourable legislative and other support measures including the acquisition of Greek citizenship.

⁶⁸ <http://www.mitnet.gr/kepyy/English/Description.htm> (15/06/2002)

probably outnumber the repatriated Greeks from the NIS they seem to have gradually integrated and “merged” with the Greek population more successfully. A major contributing factor seems to have been precisely their attempt to escape identification with Albanians. Many retain links with their homeland mainly through relatives, the Church and political affiliation to the Albanian Greek minority party “Omonoia”. Most have by now reunited with their families in Greece and as we shall see later they seem to be integrating more successfully than the other groups at least in education.

Resident foreign and repatriate ethnic Greek pupils in primary and secondary schools

Migrant and refugee pupils attended school during the school year 2001 – 2002 in the 24 intercultural and other public primary and secondary schools⁶⁹. Only 13% of all foreign pupils attended the 500 reception classes and 7.5% of all foreign pupils attended the 700 special support courses in primary education⁷⁰.

According to the latest available data⁷¹, the migrant (foreign and ethnic Greek) and refugee pupils enrolled in public schools constituted in the school year 1999-2000:

- 5.2% of the total pupil population in nursery schools
- 10.7% of the total pupil population in primary schools⁷²
- 6.7% of the total pupil population in lower secondary schools
- 1.4% of the total pupil population in higher general education schools
- No data are available concerning secondary vocational or technical education

Practically no minority students are enrolled in private schools.

The evidence shows a high drop out rate of migrant and refugee pupils after primary education in that ; despite the fact that lower secondary education is compulsory a significant number of pupils seem to drop out, probably to seek employment in order to assist their parents.

Examining the growth in the number of migrant and refugee pupils between 1995 and 2000 we can observe a rapid increase from 30,193 to 58,571 in primary education, from 13,900 to 27,667 in secondary education, and from 44,093 to 86,238 in its total. It is also worth noting that during this five year period (1995 – 2000), the number of Albanian pupils has quadrupled, whereas the number of other nationalities has remained relatively stable. Still the drop out rate for Albanian pupils is very high, while repatriates ethnic Greeks are far more likely to continue into secondary education for reasons that will be analysed later. The continuing rapid increase in the number of migrant pupils related to their high fertility rates (see footnote 19) has initiated a public debate concerning the problems created by the co-existence of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, different mother tongues and cultures in mono-cultural schools that are not prepared to deal with a multicultural pupil population.

⁶⁹ RAXEN2 Database No. 3C0006, 3C0015, 3C0016, 3C0017.

⁷⁰ RAXEN2 Database No. 3A0012

⁷¹ RAXEN2 Database No. 3A0009, 3A0010

⁷² 69.57% of the above category were foreigners (of whom 82.7% Albanians) and 30.43% repatriate ethnic Greeks

The problem is most acute in Athens as there are many schools where foreign migrants constitute up to 76% of the pupil population. According to October 2002 data from the Prefecture of Athens during the present school year foreign nationality pupils in primary education constitute 20.75% of the total⁷³.

Foreign schools

A number of foreign schools⁷⁴ operate in Greece on the basis of bilateral treaties mostly catering to the needs of embassy and corporate personnel.

The Polish and the Filipino schools were created by Polish and Filipino migrants who were the first migrant group to arrive during the late 1980s as “guest workers”.

The Polish School⁷⁵ was established in Athens in 1986, on the basis of a bilateral treaty and it is supervised by the Polish Ministry of Education. The school follows the curriculum of Polish schools and Greek is offered as a foreign language. An adequate school building is housing some 500 pupils in two shifts daily. Another 100 pupils who attend Greek schools follow supplementary classes during the weekend, while others who live away from Athens attend lessons at some weekends and via correspondence. The school is financed by the Polish State, as the Polish Constitution calls for the provision of free education for all. The school is successful in teaching the mother tongue at primary school level, but in general pupils' performance is low and the percentage of school drop out rate high. Few students complete their secondary education studies. It seems that most students are not satisfied with an education that is not directly related to their life or future prospects in Greece and many choose to transfer to Greek schools.

The Filipino School “Munting Nasyon”⁷⁶ provides nursery and primary education, but it is not registered with the Education Ministry. It operates in Athens with 125 pupils and nine teachers, in an old building with a very small yard. The daily programme lasts for eight school periods and three languages are taught (Filipino, Greek and English), plus Computers, Mathematics and Physics. It is financed by fees of 100 Euro a month per child, which is about 30% – 40% of the rates charged by Greek private primary schools. The main aim of the school is the preservation of the mother tongue and the provision of an education based on Philippine values. Most Filipino migrants, however, enrol their children at Greek public schools.

Migrants from Sierra Leone⁷⁷ founded in 1998 the Inter-Cultural Day Care Centre offering much needed help to some 20 African migrant families who have very young children and cannot afford to pay for private day-care services.

⁷³ Press statement newspaper “Kathimerini”, 26/10/2002 available at http://www.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w_articles_ell_100024_26/10/2002_7 (30/10/2002)

⁷⁴ German High School, French Lyceum, Italian High School, Iranian School, Japanese School, etc

⁷⁵ RAXEN2 Database No. 3C0010

⁷⁶ RAXEN2 Database No. 3C0003

⁷⁷ RAXEN2 Database No. 3B0032

III. Roma

*Roma are members of a social group sharing certain common ethnic – linguistic – cultural characteristics that may differ according to their tribe or clan – **there is no official definition.***

It is virtually impossible to obtain reliable demographic data on the Roma population. There is no relevant ethnic or linguistic category recorded by the Census, many Roma will not declare them as such and many are mobile and cannot be easily recorded. The last Greek Census that contained linguistic data in 1951 recorded 7,500 individuals speaking Romani. However, several studies⁷⁸ indicate that the number of Roma was always far higher than that.

Existing research on selected samples in certain municipalities indicates that their number is 150,000⁷⁹ – 300,000⁸⁰. They are loosely organised in “tribes” and clans that are distinguished by features not always identifiable by the non-Roma. The demographic situation becomes even more complicated in view of the entry into the country of Roma from neighbouring Balkan countries after the Bosnian and Kosovo wars.

Until 1955 the Roma were stateless. Since then gradually until 1978 they were all granted Greek citizenship, but many still do not register with either the police in order to acquire an identity card or with a municipality in order to receive social benefits⁸¹.

The problem of recording accurately the Roma population presents unique difficulties on the one hand because a significant number continues to lead a nomadic life and on the other because many settled Roma refuse to be recorded as such due to the stigma attached. In interviews with Roma representatives we were told of several cases of educated and settled Roma who keep their Roma identity secret for fear of losing their jobs or the respect of their colleagues and non Roma friends.

Most Roma in Greece are Christian Orthodox, while around 20.000, living mainly in Thrace are Muslims⁸². Many members of this latter group have during the past 20 years moved to the urban centres of Athens and Thessalonica in search of employment. Studies indicate that Roma consider their religious affiliation an important part of their identity and also a means for social integration. Many speak Romani as their mother tongue, but there are also many with Greek as mother tongue. The Roma in Thrace are mostly Turkophones and some Roma in Macedonia speak Serb and also Vlach/Romanian. However, to a greater or lesser extent all Roma speak Greek (using a characteristic accent that is often ridiculed by other Greeks) and only a small number who migrated to Greece from neighbouring countries after 1990 is not able to speak the language, but manages to communicate with other Roma using the Romani language.

⁷⁸ Vaxevanoglou, A. (2001), “Greek Gypsies: Marginalised and family men”, Athens: Editions Alexandria, p. 17

⁷⁹ Komis, K. (1998): “Gypsies: History, Demography, Culture”, Athens: Editions Ellinika Grammata

⁸⁰ EETAA (2001): “Integrated Action Plan for the Greek Roma”, Athens: EETAA, p.45

⁸¹ ROM Network, (2000) “Panhellenic Census Study investigating the social, housing conditions and needs of Greek Roma Citizens”, unpublished, available on request from the ROM Network <http://www.romanet.gr>

⁸² Zeginis E. (1994) “The Muslim Gypsies of Thrace”, Thessalonica, IMXA, No. 255

All studies agree that most Greek Roma suffer from social exclusion⁸³. However, some studies⁸⁴ point out that there are significant differences between Roma groups as far as social stratification, life chances and social expectations are concerned. In fact some theorists⁸⁵ go as far as denying the definition of a “Roma community” with a unified set of social characteristics.

The Roma issue in Greece is multidimensional and complex. It is evident that there is a growing need for more primary academic research in order to understand the social characteristics and life of this social group.

The attitudes of the Greek population towards the Roma are, as in other southern European countries, mostly negative. Despite the fact that discrimination and racial prejudice against the Roma has always been widespread, no attempt has ever been made either by schools or the media to raise awareness and educate the Greek population concerning the culture, characteristics and problems of the Roma people who have come to constitute the most marginalised and socially excluded social group.

Roma are usually employed as unskilled and unregistered workers in agriculture and trade experiencing insecurity and discrimination despite the fact that they are considered to be Greek nationals⁸⁶: “The chances of finding employment within an increasingly competitive labour market are virtually nonexistent. If one adds to the above the prevailing stereotypes concerning the indolence of the Roma, it will be only the ‘bravest’ employer who will ever think of employing a Roma. In the public sector, the possession of a lower secondary graduation certificate (compulsory education) is the legal precondition for employment, thus excluding practically all the adult Roma.”⁸⁷

Roma housing conditions are also reported⁸⁸ to be very poor particularly for the nomadic Roma who have no access to regular sanitary facilities, garbage disposal, water or electricity, while some of their camps are situated in or bordering landfill sites or heavily polluting factories. Roma wishing to rent houses are discriminated against and are refused or offered substandard accommodation at high prices. Roma purchasing houses find it very difficult to secure a mortgage, because of the nature of their employment. The absence of reliable demographic data do not allow us to have a clear picture of the number of nomadic Roma, however the ROM network suggested that they probably constitute about 20% - 30%

⁸³ For more information consult Exarchos G. (1998) “The Social Exclusion of Roma, in Kassimati K. (ed) “Social Exclusion: The Greek Experience”, Athens, Gutenberg and also Polyzos I., Vlastos Th, Karathanassi E., Terzopoulou M., Tounta F. (1995) “The phenomenon of marginalisation of minorities in the Attica region – the specificity of Roma in the urban space”, National Polytechnic, Department of Urban Planning, General Secretariat for Research and Technology

⁸⁴ Karathanassi E. (2000) “Roma life: The bio- and socio-space of Roma”, Gutenberg, Athens

⁸⁵ Georgiou G., Terzopoulou M. (1996) “Gypsies in Greece: History – Culture”, Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs – General Secretariat of Popular Education, Athens

⁸⁶ Exarchos, G. (1998), Social Exclusion of Roma, in Kassimati, K. (ed) Social Exclusion: The Greek Experience, Athens: Gutenberg.

⁸⁷ Statement on the Situation of the Roma in Greece by the International Romani Union Secretary General Christo Kyuchukov, 20 December 2001, available at http://www.erc.org/rr_nr1_2002/noteb5.shtml (23/05/2002)

⁸⁸ EETAA (2001): “Integrated Action Plan for the Greek Roma”, Athens: EETAA, p.57, and also several reports from the Greek Helsinki Monitor available at <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/special-issues-roma.html> (12/09/2002)

of the total population. It is also difficult to define the nomadic Roma, as many tend to transform camp sites to semi-permanent or permanent settlements sometimes purchasing land from private individuals. Local authorities are often in conflict with groups of Roma that set up unregulated camps on public land and there are several recorded cases where they have forcibly evicted them.

In 1998, the Pan-Hellenic Federation of Greek Roma Associations (POSER) was established, around which, in time, 22 associations from around Greece, among them Turkish speaking Roma associations, coalesced. In the mid-1990s, the Rom Network was established, which was an effort by the local authorities to approach local Roma populations, to recognise their realities and problems and to propose, in co-operation with them, policies that would contribute to finding solutions. Currently the Rom Network numbers 61 members out of a total of 110 Municipalities with Roma within their boundaries. It has a consultative role to the Prime Minister's Office and has contributed to drawing the Integrated Action Plan and monitors its implementation.

Since 1996 a number of projects have been carried out in support of the Roma. However, the general evaluation of the effectiveness of these projects is clearly negative: According to the official EETAA⁸⁹ Report: "these projects can only be evaluated empirically, since there is a total absence both of reliable and scientific appraisals of the quantitative and qualitative data concerning these projects and of official statistics concerning the Roma population."⁹⁰

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2001-2003⁹¹ refers to the ambitious "Integrated Action Plan" for the Roma according to which 310 million Euros will be spent in the next six years to improve the social situation of the Roma population. Approximately 20% of the above sum is earmarked for various training and employment measures.

Roma pupils in primary and secondary schools

Official data concerning Roma enrolment are not reliable: Roma pupils are not recorded systematically and many enrol in order to collect the €300 benefit and do not attend classes. There are no official statistical data on attendance and dropout rates nevertheless the Education Ministry has repeatedly stated that after the implementation of the programme "Roma Children Education" project, the dropout rate was reduced from 75% to 24%⁹².

The available official statistical data indicate that during the school year 1999 – 2000 8,500 Roma pupils were registered in primary schools, 1,500 in lower secondary and 250 in

⁸⁹ Elliniki Etaireia Topikis Aytodioikisis (public body supporting local authorities). More information available at <http://www.eetaa.gr> (18/09/2002)

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 23

⁹¹ Ministry of Labour and Social Security, "National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2001-2003", available at http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/jun/napincl2001el_en.pdf (21/06/2002)

⁹² Stamelos G., (ed), (2002) "The Greek Educational System", Centre for Educational Research, Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, Athens, p. 238

higher secondary⁹³ schools. It is obvious that the dropout rate is extremely high by any standards.

Roma educational attainment is at very low levels: According to the final report of the 2nd Community Support Framework Project “Roma Children Education”⁹⁴ and other studies⁹⁵ approximately 60%-80% of the Roma (18-50 years old) are illiterate (they have never attended school), while around 20% are functionally illiterate (UNESCO standards). The Roma find often that schoolmasters under pressure from local parents will -illegally- refuse to enrol their children. On the other hand studies also suggest that many Roma will avoid sending their children to school either because they fear the loss of their Roma identity or because they see no value in education.⁹⁶

A recent national survey⁹⁷ on the educational level of male leaders of Roma families (average age 40), shows that: 35% has never attended school, 27% attended erratically primary school up to the 4th grade, 26% are primary school graduates and only 2% have completed compulsory education (lower secondary), while another 2% has graduated from higher secondary education.

Until two years ago a significant number of Roma children could not enrol at all due to the lack of necessary documents and proof of vaccination. Since 2000 the establishment of the “Roma Student Card” by the Education Ministry⁹⁸ enabled Roma pupils to enrol without further formalities. However, even today after they manage to enrol, often against opposition from other parents – and on occasion teachers and local authorities –, they are faced with insurmountable difficulties, as they mostly speak only Romani and are thus largely incapable of communicating either with other children or teachers. Furthermore their socialisation and family life patterns are not compatible with the dominant norms and values of the primary school: discipline, obedience to authority and individual achievement. Public school teachers have had little, if any, training in dealing with the problems of Roma children and find it difficult to understand or empathise with the Roma culture. Unofficial teacher reports also indicate that Roma children are often met with hostility by other children and some teachers. A 1997 study has indicated that incidents of racist behaviour against Roma children by other children, parents and teachers have increased as more Roma children enrolled and started to attend school.⁹⁹

In a further effort to provide incentives to families with a declared income of less than € 3,000 annually (mainly Roma families) the Education Ministry established an annual benefit of €300 for every child enrolled in primary education.

⁹³ RAXEN2 Database No. 3A0010

⁹⁴ As yet unpublished, but kindly released to us by Professor A. Gotovos, scientific co-ordinator of the project

⁹⁵ Tsiokos G., Vergidis D., Nikolakopoulos I., (1998) “National study on illiteracy”, National Book Centre – Book Observatory, Athens

⁹⁶ *ibid*, p. 144

⁹⁷ RAXEN2 Database No. 3A0013

⁹⁸ As proposed by the “Roma Children Education” project report.

⁹⁹ Dussas D., (1997) “Rom and racial discrimination”, Gutenberg, Athens

Still, most Roma children find themselves in a hostile environment as they constitute a cultural minority with different mother tongue, customs and norms. There have been several media reports of parents complaining that the co-existence of their children with Roma children will affect negatively educational attainment due to the cultural differences and the low educational level of Roma children which slows down the progress of the entire class.

Researchers¹⁰⁰ have attributed poor attendance and academic performance also, partly, to the Roma perception of the value of education: Although in surveys all Roma find that educating their children is desirable, it seems that they do not consider that education has anything to offer to the Roma in terms of improved life chances, since even well qualified Roma will not be able to find suitable employment due to the prejudice of employers. Moreover, some Roma consider that daily school attendance may even be harmful in that it deprives children from spending time with their family and socialises them into different values and norms.¹⁰¹

Many Roma parents seem to expect from the education provided by the school to be complementary to the education they provide to their children, which, they believe, is the main one; the education which socialises them and provides the necessary knowledge and skill for their future life. So, since their needs and expectations regarding formal education are limited, and since children learn from their parents how to calculate and have dealings, the thing parents expect from the school is simply to teach their children reading and possibly writing.

Most importantly the Roma have had no “tangible proof” that formal educational qualifications can be translated into improved life chances, better employment, improvement in the quality of life and their social status. In a “cost – benefit analysis” practically all Roma find that education has a very high cost and provides few and questionable benefits¹⁰².

Poverty, social exclusion and lack of educational qualifications create a vicious circle: deprived and socially excluded Roma find it very difficult to attend school, while the lack of formal educational qualifications does not allow them to improve their social status and life chances¹⁰³.

IV. Religious minorities

The Jewish community

There is no official definition apart from “Greek citizens of Jewish faith”, since they are not considered legally a minority, but a religious community. Jewish communities exist in Greece for more than 2,000 years. The largest arrival of Jews was recorded at the end of the

¹⁰⁰ Chryssakis M., (1989) “Family investment practices by the poor and non poor and educational inequalities”, *Revue of Sociological Research*, Vol. 75, p. 89 – 120

¹⁰¹ Vasilidou, M, Pavli – Kore, M, 1996, “KON JANEL BUT, BUT C’RDEL” AMA ÉM “KON C’RDEL BUT, BUT JANEL”, (in Greek), Athens, Ministry of Education / General Secretariat on Popular Education

¹⁰² Kogidou D., Tressou – Mylona E., Tsiakalos G., (1993) “Social exclusion and education – the case of linguistic minorities in western Thessalonica

¹⁰³ Kogidou D., Tressou – Mylona E., Tsiakalos G., (1993) “Social exclusion and education – the case of linguistic minorities in western Thessalonica”, *Poverty Editions -3*, Thessalonica

15th century, when Spanish – speaking Jews fleeing from the Spanish Inquisition migrated to the Ottoman Empire¹⁰⁴. During World War II, when Greece was occupied by Nazi Germany, 86% of the Greek Jews perished owing to enemy actions, extermination and execution, and in many cities where prosperous Jewish Communities existed, only a few individuals remained. Out of 77.377 Greek Jews, only 10.000 survived the Holocaust. Nowadays there exist 9 active Jewish Communities in Athens, Thessalonica, Larissa, Chalkis, Volos, Corfu, Trikala, Ioannina and Rhodes.

The education of the Jewish community

The educational needs of the Jewish community were acknowledged through Law 1623 of 1882. Nowadays, there are 3 Jewish primary schools in Thessalonica, Larissa and Athens connected strongly with Jewish Communities (public bodies). There are no Jewish secondary schools.

About 130 pupils in total attend the three Jewish elementary schools¹⁰⁵, which follow the national curriculum and in addition are taught the Jewish religion, Hebrew and Jewish history. No problem concerning discrimination or racism has been recorded or reported concerning the Jewish schools and the education of the Jewish Communities in general.

Other religious minorities

No other religious minority has separate schools. A number of schools are run by catholic institutions, but they function as Greek private schools with their main pupil population being Orthodox. They do, however, offer Catholic religious instruction to the small number of catholic Greek students.

The Muslim Minority

Muslim Greek citizens are considered to be the Muslim inhabitants of *Western Thrace established in the region to the east of the frontier line laid down in 1913 by the Treaty of Bucharest*.¹⁰⁶

The autochthonous Muslim minority of Thrace, (consisting of Turkish speaking Turks, originally Slav speaking Pomaks and originally Romani speaking Roma)¹⁰⁷ is the only officially recognised minority in Greece. This recognition is based on the religious character of the minority, which is treated as a homogeneous entity. Nowadays, it is estimated that 85,000

¹⁰⁴ Molho R. (2001) “The Jews of Thessalonica, 1856 – 1919”, Athens, Themelio

¹⁰⁵ RAXEN2 Database No. 3A0007 and 3A0008

¹⁰⁶ Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (Appendix A, Article 2), Lausanne January 30, 1923 between the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Greek Government. English text available at <http://www.hri.org/docs/lausanne/> (09/09/2002)

¹⁰⁷ Dalegre, J., (1997) “La Thrace Grecque - populations et territoire”, L' Harmattan, Paris

Muslims live in Thrace and over than 15,000 Thracian Muslims live elsewhere in Greece¹⁰⁸ (mostly in Athens). Furthermore, about 4,000 Muslims (having Turkish as their mother tongue) live in the Dodecanese islands of Rhodes and Kos.

The legal status and rights of the Muslim minority in Thrace are governed by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty and other subsequent bilateral agreements. According to the 1951 census, there were 92,443 Turkophones, 7,429 Gypsies, and 18,671 Pomaks, for a total of 118,533. The difference between that figure and the 112,665 Muslims total can be explained by the fact that some of the Turkish speakers were probably ethnic Greek Christian Orthodox who came to Greece from Anatolia as a result of the 1923 population exchange. After the 1951 census, the Greek National Statistical Service removed the categories national/ethnic origin, language use and religion for reasons of national policy.¹⁰⁹ Today the Muslim minority of Thrace, depending on estimates, numbers between 80,000 -120,000, roughly the same as the number in the 1951 census, which taking into account their high birth rate indicates that a significant number has left the country during the past decades. The Muslim minority is composed of three ethnic groups, namely Turks, Pomaks and Roma, but the largest group by far is constituted by ethnic Turks. It is not possible to acquire more specific demographic data concerning the ethnic composition of the Muslim minority as many Pomaks and Roma have come to identify themselves as ethnic Turks, while speaking less the Romani and Pomak languages than Turkish.

There are no studies concerning specifically the social situation and conditions of life of the Muslim minority in Thrace. The status of Muslims in Greece is precarious, because they represent a group that is viewed not only in religious, but more in ethnic terms as “Turks” and thus as a possible “threat”: Already at school children are taught that “the primal national enemy is the eastern neighbour who had for centuries enslaved the nation”; stories of forced conversions to Islam and equally heroic deaths and martyrdoms in defence of Christianity abound in Greek history textbooks. Consequently racist tendencies fuelled by the rhetoric of the “Turkish threat” have rendered most Greeks hostile, unresponsive to, and frequently in violation of the human rights of Muslims who are often portrayed as intolerant and uncivilised, monolithic, intolerant of pluralism and dispute, patriarchal and misogynistic, fundamentalist and potentially threatening to the Greek cultures and therefore not really deserving the rights of a free people. The human rights violations suffered by Muslims in Greece over the years under the guise of the formal, “to the letter”, application of the Lausanne Treaty have confined them to the role of second-class citizen.

The Treaty of Lausanne gives Muslims in Thrace the right to maintain social and charitable organizations (“wakfs”). Differences remain within the Muslim community and

¹⁰⁸ Trubeta, S. (1999) “Die Konstitution von Minderheiten und die Ethnisierung sozialer und politischer Konflikte - Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der im griechischen Trakien ansässigen Muslimischen Minderheit”, Peter Lang, Frankfurt

¹⁰⁹ Rozakis Ch. (1996), “The international protection of minorities in Greece,” in Featherstone K. and Ifantis K., (eds) “Greece in a Changing Europe: Between European Integration and Balkan disintegration?”, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 98

between segments of the community and the government over the means of selection of muftis (Islamic judges and religious leaders with limited civic responsibilities). There is also controversy between the Muslim community and the government over the management and self-government of the wakfs (Muslim charitable organizations) regarding the appointment of officials as well as the degree and type of administrative control. While traditionally the law placed the administration of the wakfs in the hands of the appointed muftis and their representatives, a 1996 Presidential Decree issued in response to objections from some Muslims that this arrangement weakened the financial autonomy of the wakfs and violated the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne, put the wakfs under the administration of a government appointed committee for 3 years as an interim measure pending a final resolution of the problem.

The Muslim minority in Thrace has generally been isolated and economically depressed for decades. However, claims of discriminatory denial of Muslim applications for business licenses, tractor ownership, or property construction have diminished greatly in recent years. Nevertheless, the development of public utilities (electricity, telephones, and paved roads) in Muslim neighbourhoods and villages continues in many cases to lag far behind that of non-Muslim areas. Muslim leaders have also complained that the government routinely withholds permission from Muslims seeking to change their legal residence, which determines where they vote, from rural to urban communities within Thrace or from elsewhere in Greece to Thrace. They said permission to change legal residency from Thrace to elsewhere in Greece was granted readily, and charged that the practice was part of a government policy to encourage Muslim emigration from the region and to prevent the urban concentration of Muslims in Thrace.

The percentage of Muslims employed in the public sector and in state-owned industries and corporations is disproportionately far lower than the percentage of Muslims in the population. In the cities of Xanthi and Komotini, while Muslims hold seats on the prefectural and town councils, there are no Muslims among regular employees of the prefecture or the police. Muslims in Thrace are hired only for lower level, part-time work. According to the Government, lack of fluency in written and spoken Greek and the requirement for university degrees for higher level positions limit the number of Muslims eligible for government jobs.

The Treaty of Lausanne provides that the Muslim minority has the right to Turkish-language education, with a reciprocal entitlement for the Christian (Greek) minority in Istanbul (reduced to about 3,000 mainly after the persecution of the late 1950s). Under a 1952 educational protocol, Greece and Turkey may exchange annually 35 teachers on a reciprocal basis. The teachers serve in Istanbul and Western Thrace, respectively, but in recent years the Greek side limited the exchanges to 16 teachers per country due to the dwindling needs of the small and aging Greek population in Turkey. Most Muslim children attend the Turkish-

language minority public schools, but many Muslims attended high school in Turkey, as they seek to continue their education in Turkish Universities.

Improving relations between Greece and Turkey led to significant improvements in the life of the minority in the past ten years: Concerning education the government started in 1997 a continuing large scale educational project financed by national funds and the 2nd (now 3rd) Community Support Framework. Since 1996 all universities and technical institutes are obliged by law to reserve 0.5% of all places or at least one place per department for Muslim students; 464 such places were available in 1998 and 58 Muslim female students as well as 54 male Muslim students enrolled in universities.

The Muslim minority has traditionally been a target for influential nationalists from both the right and the left –members of the Greek Parliament or elected representatives in Local Authorities – from all major political parties. Their rhetoric and arguments are rarely openly racist, but they will invariably put forward the argument that Muslims are “foreign” to Greece in ethnic as well as cultural terms. In their discourse the distinction between ethnicity and religion is often intentionally blurred, implicitly identifying Muslims with Turks and thus suggesting that they represent the “enemy”. Racist views and discourses against Muslims do not necessarily take the form of open verbal attacks. The message “Ausländer Raus” that could under certain conditions constitute in itself a criminal act¹¹⁰ in Greece, can easily be disguised as an “analysis” of the “dangerous consequences” of the presence of indigenous and migrants Muslim minorities in Greek society -for instance the threat for public safety, rising unemployment, etc- that will not in itself be considered as criminal or even politically condemnable.

Several reports from national and international NGOs¹¹¹ suggest that, despite the difficulties, conditions have gradually improved during the past 10 years along the marked improvement in the relationship between Greece and Turkey that has always affected the Muslim minority. Some data from the 2nd Community Support Framework project “Muslim Children Education” that included a small study of the social conditions corroborate these findings. However, it is clear that the social situation of the Muslim Roma and Pomaks who mostly live in remote and relatively isolated mountainous villages in the Rodopi region of Thrace is far worse compared to that of others living in the cities.

The relative lack of evidence led us to arrange a series of formal interviews with two representatives of the Muslim minority on August 23, 2002, the religious leader, Mufti Metso Jemali and Member of Parliament, Galip Galip. They did not report any problems concerning the exercise of religious duties or institutional discrimination¹¹² and suggested that Muslims face similar social and economic problems as the Christian population. Both singled out the

¹¹⁰ According to article 1 of the 927/1979 Law “any public incitement to acts that could cause discrimination against persons or groups because of their race, national origin, or religion is a criminal act punishable with imprisonment and a fine.”

¹¹¹ Human Rights Watch (1999), “Positive steps by the Greek State”, update to the Report: “The Turks of Western Thrace”, available at http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/greece/Greec991-05.htm#P196_32031 (10/09/2002)

¹¹² For instance difficulties in the acquisition of driving licenses or the sale and purchase of land, etc

following problems that remain to be solved: The control exercised by the Greek state on the religious educational establishments, the heavy taxes imposed on Muslim communal property (Wakf) in response to similar taxation on Greek property in Turkey¹¹³ and the delays in the reattribution of Greek citizenship to members of the minority that were deprived of it in past years¹¹⁴. Both community leaders expressed their concern over the harsh conditions of life in mountainous villages and the serious economic difficulties faced by local farmers both Muslim and Christian.

The education of the Muslim Minority

Official statistical data concerning minority education are not easily accessible, because minority education is a politically sensitive issue affecting bilateral relations – in the past any such data were classified as state secrets. Education is provided to the Muslim minority at segregated, primary and secondary minority schools, regulated strictly by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and subsequent bilateral agreements between Greece and Turkey. As a measure of positive discrimination, according to Law 2341 of 1995, admission to Greek Universities is facilitated for the Muslim minority and the number of guaranteed places exceeds the demand for them. However, the number of Muslims in Greek Higher Education is relatively small, as many prefer to study in Turkey, where they also enjoy a privileged status.

The number of Muslim pupils in minority schools has been dwindling. Main reason for this decrease is the internal migration of members of the Muslim minority to the cities, where according to the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty they can enjoy none of the minority rights.

The most important attempt by the government to improve minority education is the project “Muslim Children Education” co-financed by the 2nd Community Support Framework and the Ministry of Education.

The Muslim minority enjoys certain special rights in education that only apply to members of the minority resident in Thrace¹¹⁵.

The educational needs of Turkish speakers in Greece were acknowledged for the first time, before the annexation of Western Thrace by Law 1623 of 1882 on Turkish and Jewish schools in reference to the terms of the Treaty of Constantinople of 1881. Turkish schools in Thrace functioned before the annexation on the basis of the Ottoman educational system, which was founded on the millet¹¹⁶ approach: each religious community controlled its own schooling. In the 1920’s, these pre-existing Muslim/Turkish schools were integrated into the

¹¹³ The problem is being resolved as both countries have agreed to bilaterally suspend these property taxes.

¹¹⁴ According Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code (Law 3370/1955): “A person of non-Greek ethnic origin leaving Greece without the intention of returning may be declared as having lost Greek citizenship. Article 19 was abolished in 1998. According to the then Minister of the Interior, A. Papadopoulos, since the article’s introduction in 1955, 60,000 Greek citizens, mostly Muslims had lost their Greek citizenship.

¹¹⁵ RAXEN2 Database No. 3B0012 and 3C006

¹¹⁶ Denoting a religious community, since nations were not legally recognized in any other sense by the Ottoman Empire.

Greek national educational system as “minority schools” under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923¹¹⁷.

The Treaty of Lausanne ratified by Greece in 1923 constitutes the legal basis of the minority education system. Articles 40 and 41 give the minority the right to establish private and public schools but in practice this division between public and private schooling is not implemented. Actually, the legal status of minority schools combines elements of private and public education. In effect, the minority schools are registered as private schools, but are under the direct control of the state, while a complex system of legal provisions governs the establishment and function of the minority schools. Furthermore, the Greek-Turkish Cultural Protocol of 1968 regulates the co-operation between the two states for the technical assistance of their mutual minority education¹¹⁸. Further binding legal instruments concerning the education on the minority mother tongue are also provided by international human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 27), ratified in 1997 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 30), ratified in 1992¹¹⁹.

All the above provisions do not affect the Muslims of Kos and Rhodes, since at the time of the Lausanne Treaty the Dodecanese islands belonged to Italy. In Rhodes and Kos the teaching of the Turkish was *de facto* abolished in 1974¹²⁰ after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. It is worth noting that in the village Platani (Turkish name, Kermetes) in Kos, Muslim pupils attending the public primary school, were obliged, despite their parents objections to attend Christian religious classes. This practice was stopped in 2001, after the formal intervention of the Ombudsman¹²¹.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education are jointly responsible for minority education, as it is considered that minority education stems from Greece’s international obligations in reciprocity with Turkey’s relevant obligations regarding the Christian Orthodox minority in Turkey¹²².

Pre-school education

All Muslim minority pre-school children have the right to attend public kinder gardens. No official statistical data are available, but it is estimated that in 2000 about 300 minority children received pre-school education. The limited attendance could be attributed to the nature of family relationships in the minority society (mainly agricultural and traditional) and also to the fear of some parents that the long-term stay of their children, at that age, in a Greek speaking and Christian environment, might threaten their ethnic and religious identity.

¹¹⁷ RAXEN2 Database No. 3B0011 and 3B0012

¹¹⁸ RAXEN2 Database No. 3B0012

¹¹⁹ For an extensive analysis of the legal aspects of minority education refer to Baltiotis L. & K. Tsitselikis (2001) “The Education of the minority in Western Thrace”, A.N. Sakkoulas, Athens-Komotini

¹²⁰ Chiotakis, S. (1997) “School education and social integration of the Muslims in Rhodes”, *Synhrona Themata*, 63/1997, pp. 79 - 83

¹²¹ RAXEN2 Database No. 3B0023

¹²² RAXEN2 Database No. B0025

During 2001 we recorded a pilot project, implemented by the French organisation ACEPP¹²³, aiming to facilitate the attendance of minority infants of mountainous villages in kindergartens¹²⁴.

Primary education

All Muslim minority children have the right to attend either Greek or minority public primary schools and most choose to attend minority primary schools. In primary and secondary minority education in Thrace standard Turkish and Greek are used equally for the language teaching as well as for the teaching of the curriculum. All minority schools follow a bilingual – half Greek half Turkish – curriculum. Turkish subjects: Turkish language, Islamic Religion, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Arts and Physical Education. Greek subjects: Greek language, History, Geography, Environmental Studies and Civic Education.

The textbooks used by the minority schools for the subjects of the Greek part of the curriculum, take into consideration the religious culture of the community and the fact that for these children Greek is not the mother tongue. The textbooks are printed in Athens, by the Education Ministry. The textbooks used for the subjects of the Turkish part of the curriculum, are written, edited and printed in Turkey especially for the minority pupils of Thrace (according to an older Greek – Turkish educational agreement) and are imported and used with the approval of the Greek government¹²⁵. Minority schools follow the annual programme of the public elementary schools, with some more extra holidays for the Islamic religious celebrations.

Currently (2001-2002), 223 primary minority schools operate with approximately 7,000 pupils and 900 teachers¹²⁶. The dropout rate is very high¹²⁷: From 1985 – 1995 the average dropout rate was 23.5% in the minority primary schools with the national average primary school dropout rate for the same period to be about 1.2%). This high dropout rate is largely attributed to the socio-economic status of Muslim minority families, and the very low level of labour market integration.

Turkish is taught only in the minority schools and is not offered, even as a foreign language, in the other elementary or secondary public schools in Thrace, where a significant number of minority children prefers to study. On the other hand most Muslim pupils attending minority schools have a poor knowledge of Greek, as several studies indicate¹²⁸. This is

¹²³ More information available at <http://www.acepp.asso.fr/> (27/10/2002)

¹²⁴ RAXEN2 Database No. 3C0062

¹²⁵ During the 1990s the Greek Education Ministry published textbooks for the teaching of the Turkish language at the primary minority schools. These books were not acceptable to the minority and in some cases there were serious problems with schools and communities that refused to accept the books with subsequent court convictions of minority members. See Stathi, P. (1997) “The Turkish textbooks in Thrace”, *Synchrone Themata*, 63/1997, pp. 65 – 68 and Aarbakke, V. (2000), “The Muslim minority of Greek Thrace”, PhD Thesis, Univ. of Bergen, Norway

¹²⁶ RAXEN2 Database No. A0004

¹²⁷ Tressou Ev. (1997) “Minority education in Thrace : the reasons of failure”, *Synchrone Themata*, 63/1997, pp. 49 – 53

¹²⁸ For more information consult: Dimoulas, I. (1992) “Written communication and expression of Christian and Muslim pupils of primary schools in Rodopi”, published by the author, Komotini; Kanakidou, E. (1994) “The Education of the Muslim Minority on Western Thrace”, *Ellinika Grammata*, Athens; Sarvanakis Th. (1987)

attributed to the low quality of the educational system followed by the minority schools¹²⁹, the constant and exclusive use of the Turkish language in the family and immediate social environment, the limited interest in learning Greek, the socio-economic inequalities within the minority, the unequal status of the two languages and to nationalism¹³⁰.

Secondary education

All minority children can enrol in public secondary schools. There is one minority lower and higher secondary school in Komotini and one in Xanthi. Both are formally private schools, but in practice there are no fees and both are controlled by the state having a similar legal status as the minority primary schools. Furthermore, two “Ierospoudastiria” (*medrese*, Islamic seminars) operate since 1999 following the system of Greek ecclesiastical secondary schools; one is located in Konotini and the other in the village of Ehinou, in the mountainous area of Xanthi¹³¹. Girls were allowed to enrol in these for the first time in 2000.

In addition to the two minority secondary schools, in the mountainous areas, there are also five public secondary schools, attended exclusively by minority pupils, which follow the Greek curriculum with the addition of Islamic religion taught in Turkish.

In secondary minority schools the curriculum is divided into the Turkish and the Greek part: Religion, Turkish language, Physics, Mathematics, French or English, Drawing and Music are taught in Turkish, while Greek language (modern and ancient), History, Civic Education and Geography are taught in Greek.

The two Islamic Seminars follow a different pattern: Turkish language, Arabic language, Islamic History and various subjects connected with the teaching of religion are taught in Turkish and all other subjects are taught in Greek.

Textbooks for secondary schools are produced at national level and thus textbooks for the subjects of the Turkish curriculum are imported from Turkey. Some religious books are donated by Arab institutes.

The minority secondary schools have a total (2001) of 1150 pupils and 100 teachers. It should be noted that more than 1,500 Muslim pupils chose in 2002 to attend Greek public high schools in Thrace¹³².

“Factors affecting Muslim children in learning the Greek language”, published by the author, Alexandroupolis; Panayotides N. (1995) “Muslim minority and national identity”, TEDK Evros, Alexandroupoli; Moustafa, M. (1999) “Educational support and social participation: The case of the Turkish minority in Thrace”, in Spanou El. (ed.) “Human dignity and social exclusion—Educational policy in Europe”, Ellinika Grammata – Eteria Pilitikou Provlitismou Nikos Poulantzas, Athens, pp. 223 – 228

¹²⁹ Onsonoglou, Ib. (1997) “Criticism on the minority education: through the view on a member of the minority”, *Synchrona Themata*, 63/1997, pp. 61 – 64

¹³⁰ Mavrommatis G. (2001) “Why little Mehmet does not learn Greek”, in Tressou E. & Mitakidou S. (eds) “The Education of linguistic minorities”, Paratiritis, Thessalonica, pp. 394-401

¹³¹ Panayotides N. (1995) “Muslim minority and national identity”, TEDK Evros, Alexandroupoli, p. 122

¹³² RAXEN2 Database No. 3A0005

Vocational training

No official statistical data is available concerning the participation of the minority in vocational training. Members of the minority can participate in all vocational training courses offered after completing the 9-year compulsory education. In these courses the Turkish language is not used either as a subject or as a medium of instruction.

The Association of Minority Scientists operating in Komotini, offers, every year, lessons in sewing and embroidery to about 50 Muslim girls from rural areas that have not necessarily completed compulsory education using Turkish as the medium of instruction¹³³.

Higher education

The first minority students enrolled in Greek universities in 1996 using Law 2341 of 1995 providing easier access for university studies in Greece to minority students as a measure of positive discrimination. The law sets aside 300 student places (0.5% of the total and at least one in every university department) for Muslim minority students allowing thus any minority higher secondary school graduate to enrol at a Greek university¹³⁴. In 2001, 138 Muslim minority students from Thrace have enrolled at Greek universities. Until 1996 the small number of academically proficient minority students preferred, due to their limited knowledge of Greek and the difficulty of the national university entrance examinations, to attend Turkish Universities where they received preferential treatment in placement.

Teachers of the Turkish curriculum of the minority primary schools are educated at the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessalonica (EPATH)¹³⁵. Thirty Greek Muslims, higher secondary school and Islamic Seminar graduates, are accepted annually¹³⁶. The study lasts 2 years and strangely all subjects are taught in Greek. Students are offered only a lesson of Turkish Literature for 2 hours per week and since they are considered “native speakers” they receive no further instruction in Turkish subject terminology or teaching methodology. This is the only category of teachers that does not follow a university level four year course, but the Foreign Ministry and the Education Ministry announced recently that EPATH will be upgraded to a University Department¹³⁷.

Adult education

In recent years several projects were implemented by NELE¹³⁸ (Prefectural Committee for Popular Education) and private as well as public KEK (Vocational Training Centres) financed by national and EU funds addressed to both Muslim and Christian¹³⁹. Turkish is not used in any of these projects either as a subject or as a medium of instruction.

¹³³ RAXEN2 Database No. 3C0041

¹³⁴ RAXEN2 Database No. 3A0006

¹³⁵ Eidiki Paidagogiki Akadimia Thessalonikis

¹³⁶ RAXEN2 Database No. 3B0028

¹³⁷ RAXEN2 Database No. 3B0025

¹³⁸ Nomarchiaki Epitropi Laikis Epimorphosis

¹³⁹ RAXEN2 Database No.3C0054 and 3C0055

During 2001 we recorded 2 seminars on vocational training financed by national funds with both Muslims and Christians participants¹⁴⁰ and one addressed exclusively to Muslim Pomak men¹⁴¹. The NELE of Xanthi also organised Greek language courses in co-operation with the army to assist Muslim young men doing their military service to improve their knowledge in Greek¹⁴². There seems to be a growing demand among the minority for both language and vocational training courses.

¹⁴⁰ RAXEN2 Database No.3C0054 and 3C0055

¹⁴¹ RAXEN2 Database No.3C0083

¹⁴² RAXEN2 Database No.3C0063

6. RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM – INITIATIVES AND ACTION COMBATING DISCRIMINATION, RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

I. Problems of racism and discrimination in Greek schools

The massive migration of the 1990s that added more than one million migrants to the Greek population affected seriously the educational system, since during this decade many migrants either created a family or were reunited with their families from their countries of origin. The number of non Greek pupils in inner city schools rises rapidly, while public authorities have not as yet intensified their efforts or increased funding for the educational needs of this group of pupils. This paradoxically has not, as yet, led to the appearance of many or serious racist incidents in schools, although institutional racism and discriminatory practices are partly to blame for the high dropout rate of many migrant and repatriate pupils.

Severe criticism in international fora, such as the OECD and the Council of Europe coupled with mobilization by NGO within the country have also led, public authorities to take steps to improve the education of the Roma population since 1997. Nevertheless, the situation, although improved, is still far from satisfactory and problems of discriminatory and racist incidents are frequent and intense.

Improving bilateral relationships with Turkey have also contributed positively in creating a favourable climate for the improvement of the education offered to the minority, as far as this is possible given the narrow legal confines of the Lausanne Treaty and subsequent binding bilateral agreements. No problems of direct racism or discrimination have recently been recorded concerning the Muslim minority in Thrace, but any of its members choosing to relocate in other areas in Greece face the problem of losing their minority status and thus the protection and positive discrimination measures provided by law. This is a serious problem since the region of Thrace is – not accidentally – the poorest and less developed area in Greece leading members of the minority to seek better employment and conditions of life in the urban centres and thus losing their minority status.

A. Surveys and studies

The surveys and studies referred to below have not been released to us and have therefore not been evaluated concerning reliability or validity. Information was only released in the form of press statements.

A recent attitude survey conducted in March 2001 in Athens and Thessalonica by the private research firm “Kappa Research” on behalf of the Greek branch of the United Nations

ethnic groups that live in their country to facilitate understanding and build confidence between them.

A small scale study on the problems faced by foreign students at the Aristotle University of Thessalonica led by Professor Th. Oikonomou found that nearly half of the 50 students interviewed at Thessalonica's Aristotle University did not indicate any problems with other students, but of the remaining 30% percent said they had experienced forms of racist behaviour, like occasional insensitive remarks made by fellow students and professors - especially those who had not studied abroad. The study recommends that the commonly used term "foreign student" be replaced with "international student» and suggests the establishment of an international students' club as well as a magazine geared to their interests. More all-round integration into both campus and community life is also recommended.¹⁴⁵

The final report of the EU funded CONNECT Initiative project "Tackling Violence in Schools", suggests that, "...measures have to be taken to help minority students whose numbers are steadily increasing deal with difficulties in adjusting to school. Experienced problems may lead to the possibility of intercultural conflict, which might pave the way to an escalation of alienation and racism. Schools need to develop beyond the oppressive homogenisation, which characterises them today to respect of heterogeneity of the background interests and abilities of students, of Greek and non-Greek origin alike¹⁴⁶.

A survey conducted in December 2001 by the Research and Support Centre for Victims of Abuse and Social Exclusion found that 50% of Greek students are xenophobic, while 60% have ethnocentric attitudes. Although 90% believe that Greek immigrants in Germany and Australia should enjoy the same rights as their fellow citizens, only 30% feel that migrants in Greece should also have equal rights. According to the findings of the survey 87% of lower secondary school students would gladly extend hospitality to a peer from Yugoslavia, but only 49% would do the same for an Albanian. Nearly 80% of secondary school students said that they would not mind having an Asian as a good friend, but 9.3% feared the presence of Asians in classrooms would cause problems at their school. These findings are comparable to a study conducted by the private research firm Metron Analysis in 1999, which found that 50% of Greek secondary school students would consider having an Albanian as a friend.¹⁴⁷

In the context of a poll of pupils' attitudes commissioned by the Education Ministry and conducted under the aegis of the Institute for Political Sociology of the National Centre for Social Research from March to May 1999, 85% of higher secondary school pupils do not trust the educational system, while 50% of lower secondary school pupils admitted to xenophobia, the viewpoint rising to 60% among higher secondary school pupils. On the other hand 64%

¹⁴⁵ Athens News on 26/04/2002, page: A12 Article code: C12959A122

¹⁴⁶ Houndoumadi A., Pateraki L. & Ioannidou M. with the assistance of Laskaratou P. (2001) "Tackling Violence in Schools: A Report from Greece" DG Education and Culture, "CONNECT Initiative", Project UK-001 available at <http://www.gold.ac.uk/connect/reportgreece.html> (13/10/2002)

¹⁴⁷ Athens News, 09/02/2001, page: A04 Article code: C12873A041

percent of lower secondary school pupils believed that the presence of foreigners in Greek society "gives us an opportunity to learn about their cultures", although 35% percent thought that the presence of many foreigners in a residential area downgrades it.¹⁴⁸

Two sociolinguistic analyses of the discourse of higher secondary school and primary school pupils conducted by the Aristotelian University of Thessalonica showed that most Greek pupils have a very negative image of Turks considering them as "a wild and warlike people". Although almost half primary school pupils stress the need for peace between the two countries, higher secondary school pupils define Turks as the "enemy" with 79% expressing a highly negative opinion about them. Most pupils make justify their opinion by reference to specific historical events (wars, massacres, ethnic cleansing) that are taught in school.¹⁴⁹

B. Racist incidents

The following are two examples of racist incidents reported by the press and recorded by NGOs, since there is no public authority mandated to monitor racist phenomena in schools. The Education Ministry may at its discretion instigate administrative proceedings or ask the Prosecutor General to instigate criminal proceedings in cases it deems necessary. No such cases were reported to us by the Education Ministry.

In November 2000 the Parents Association of the Halastra Public School in Thessalonica closed the school protesting against the enrolment of 32 Roma children from the neighbouring "Aghia Sophia" Roma settlement in addition to 27 that had already enrolled. Parents argued that the school was already functioning at full capacity and overcrowding would occur through the enrolment of more pupils. The Roma pupils were sent to this school on the order of the Prefect of Thessalonica following a written suggestion and recommendation by the local Directorate of Primary Education.¹⁵⁰

In October 2001 the most recent and glaring example of racial attitudes occurred in a school in Thessalonica when Albanian schoolboy Ohdisë Qena unwillingly sparked a heated public debate on racism in schools after being forced by the school authorities to withdraw from his flag carrying position as best student from the official school parade¹⁵¹. Local parents angrily objected to him carrying the Greek flag although he was entitled to the honour as he had received the highest marks in his school after living only three years in Greece. What started as a schoolyard row, however, grew swiftly into a national dispute over whether migrants should be assimilated or just remain foreign labour. Politicians, war veterans, teachers and even Olympic athletes supported the student. The President of the Greek

¹⁴⁸ Athens News, 09/12/2000, page: A02 Article code: C12824A023

¹⁴⁹ To Vima, 09-12-2001 Article code: B13438A541

¹⁵⁰ DROM Network for Gypsy Social Rights (NGO), Press Release, 15-11-2000

¹⁵¹ Athens News, 31/10/2000, page: A03 Article code: C12790A031

Republic strongly defended the boy and all political parties warned against dividing children because of their ethnic background. Parents assaulted members of the Confederation of Teachers who protested in favour of the boy. Despite the intense disagreement, there was an overwhelming feeling of public sympathy for Qena. The leader of the Orthodox Church refused to make any direct public comment on the dispute, later; however, he claimed that migrants are threatening Greece's national identity.

II. Initiatives and actions combating discrimination, racism and xenophobia

The number of projects combating discrimination, racism and xenophobia in education that were implemented in the past five years is relatively small due on the one hand to the lack of national funding and on the other the lack of interest by most teachers.

The major anti-discrimination projects carried out since 1997 are the following:

I. Project “Muslim Children Education” launched in 1997 under the auspices of the Ministry's Special Secretariat of Intercultural Education. This project aimed at the reform of the education provided to the Muslim minority. The main goals of the project have been:

1. To discover the causes for the massive educational underachievement.
2. To produce new textbooks and educational materials for the teaching of Greek language and the subjects taught according to the Greek curriculum (i.e. history, geography, environmental studies and civic education).
3. To provide adequate in-service training of the teachers in the principles of anti-racist education, in new pedagogical techniques and in the use of the new materials produced.

The specific objectives of the in-service teacher training were to:

- (i) instigate a dialogue between minority and majority teachers who alternate in the minority school classes, and establish the notion that collaboration between teachers is not only necessary but inevitable;
- (ii) cultivate the idea that respect for a different religion, culture and language, and the integration of minority children into society is to the benefit not only of the minority, but of the entire population;
- (iii) introduce conflict resolution techniques;
- (iv) introduce bilingualism and give the teachers evidence that a different maternal language is not a barrier for the acquisition of a second language, and that a new method of teaching Greek as a second language is required;
- (v) train teachers in the social causes of school failure, since most of the children come from poor and isolated villages, and in suitable pedagogical techniques.

The project was implemented by the Department of Preschool Education at the University of Athens by an interdisciplinary team of experts under the direction of professor A. Frangoudaki.

The project was on the whole well received by academics and NGOs. However, there was criticism concerning its implementation that was flawed by the strict interpretation of the Lausanne Treaty and later bilateral agreements that the Greek government insisted on which meant that the project was not allowed to “intervene” in the Turkish curriculum resulting in a rather schizophrenic approach whereby pupils follow a modern, state of the art, curriculum in the subjects of Greek Language, History, Geography, Environmental Studies and Civic Education that belong to the “Greek Curriculum”, while the subjects that belong to the “Turkish Curriculum” Turkish Language, Religion, Mathematics, Physics, Music and Physical Education follow a different, outdated, pedagogical approach . Nevertheless the reform of the Greek part of the curriculum provided seems to have set in motion the other side as well. The impact of the project has not yet been publicly evaluated¹⁵².

II. Project “Roma Children Education” launched in 1997 under the auspices of the Ministry's Special Secretariat of Intercultural Education. This project aimed at the reform of the education provided to the Roma (excluding Roma children living in Thrace and enjoying official Muslim minority status. The main goals of the project have been to:

1. Study and understand the conditions of existence of the Greek Roma and the causes for their massive educational underachievement.
2. Develop the appropriate curricula, syllabi and educational material as well as mechanisms for the integration of the Roma children to the educational system.
3. Implement the educational curricula to selected schools
4. Develop innovative strategies for the enrolment of nomad Roma children to schools.

The project was implemented by the Department of Education, Faculty of Philosophy, Psychology and Education of the University of Ioannina by an interdisciplinary team of experts under the direction of professor A. Gotovos.

The project was generally considered successful in producing highly regarded textbooks and other educational material. However, the actual implementation of the Roma education programme in schools was met in most cases with resistance by local authorities and parents. There was an insistence on segregation, which would undermine the main objectives and the philosophy, and therefore the implementation is still limited to a very small number of schools that alternate every year. Nevertheless the programme succeeded in establishing the “Roma Pupil Identity Card”, namely an official document that allows nomadic Roma to enrol and follow classes in any school of the area in which they temporarily reside for any amount of time. This provides them with the desired flexibility to continue their way of life and receive the benefit of state education. In practice this card also allows permanently settled Roma to avoid various bureaucratic formalities when enrolling their children. According to the Education Ministry the project was instrumental in raising Roma enrolment in the educational system at primary school level from 25% to 75%. Critics point out though, that the actual participation of

¹⁵² More information available at <http://www.ecd.uoa.gr/museduc> (12/09/2002)

Roma children in the Greek educational system is still too low and more efforts must be made by the state especially in employment and housing to improve the situation. The impact of the project has not yet been publicly evaluated.¹⁵³

III. Project “Education of Repatriate Ethnic Greek and Foreign students” launched in 1997 by the Centre for Intercultural Education (KEDA) of the University of Athens that was created in 1996. This project aimed at developing intercultural education programmes catering for the needs of repatriated ethnic Greek students from the NIS and Albania as well as for foreign migrants in the context of a “multicultural classroom”. In the context of this project 25 schools have until today been designated as “intercultural” and “reception classes” as well as special Greek language courses were introduced in several other schools. The main goals of the project have been to:

1. Study and develop the appropriate educational and administrative structures for the integration of repatriate Greeks and foreign migrants to Greek society.
2. Develop the appropriate curricula, syllabi and educational material for intercultural education.
3. To implement the above to schools with repatriate Greek and foreign migrant student population.
4. Develop counselling support structures
5. To raise public awareness concerning intercultural education and the special needs of repatriate Greek and foreign migrant students.
6. To combat racism, xenophobia and social exclusion

The project: was implemented by the Centre of Intercultural Education of the University of Athens under the direction of Professor G. Markou.

This project resulted in the creation of the existing structures of intercultural education in schools. In a relatively brief period of time its achievements are remarkable given the very limited resources put at its disposal by the Greek Ministry of Education. Intercultural education is one of the main instruments for combating racism and xenophobia in schools and should be more actively promoted by the state. Academics and NGOs have repeatedly stressed the need for more resources, namely teachers and classrooms in order to run the special programmes of intercultural education. The impact of the project has not yet been publicly evaluated.¹⁵⁴

Apart from the above major projects educational departments of Greek Universities have also carried out several studies and projects. The most significant contribution comes from the **REDS**¹⁵⁵ (Research group on Exclusion and Dominance Structures) team at the Department of Primary Education of the Aristotle University of Thessalonica under the

¹⁵³ More information available at <http://www.uoi.gr/services/epeack/metro11/ergo0664.htm> (15/06/2002)

¹⁵⁴ More information available at <http://www.keda.gr> (12/05/2002) – at the moment under construction

¹⁵⁵ More information available at <http://www.eled.auth.gr/reds> (21/10/2002)

direction of professor G. Tsiakalos. Since 1989 several projects have been and are being implemented in the strands: POVERTY 3, HORIZON, ECOS-OUVERTURE, The city beneath the city, Combat against social exclusion, Promoting Research Potential in the Human Sciences and “Internationales Lernen” with target groups: Migrants, Roma, single-parent families, repatriate ethnic Greeks, inhabitants of isolated distant regions, groups with particular cultural/linguistic characteristics, juvenile offenders, recently released prisoners, etc. The REDS team uses the structures, resources and facilities of the Aristotle University of Thessalonica, while its research activities are mainly funded by the European Union. The team members are staff of the University, candidate lecturers, independent researchers, as well as researchers in other Greek and European Universities.

The 87th Primary School of Athens project was an early experimental implementation of intercultural education. The school is located in a very poor district of Athens. More than 50% of the pupils are not Greek. The school was adopted as a pilot project on intercultural education and for research on the roots of xenophobia by the Athens University Department of Education. The project aimed at creating a different environment for minority children who were not treated as disadvantaged. Their knowledge of different languages and cultures and the survival techniques they have developed were considered as an advantage over Greek children.

The project developed a holistic approach using parental involvement and an individualistic treatment for the students giving psychological and social support. Lunch was offered at school and an after school club was organised at the schools premises. The University organised a weekly teacher training and supervision programme. Over the two years of the project, the school became very popular and the number of students increased. There are now three more schools supported by the Athens University Department of Education in the region of Thrace, close to the border with Bulgaria.¹⁵⁶

The National Youth Foundation (E.I.N.) under the leadership of Professor Maria Tzanni of the University of Athens conducted a project¹⁵⁷ providing Greek language courses aiming "to facilitate the adaptation of Muslim minority pupils to the Greek educational system and alleviate the cost of education for families in need by providing free supplementary education". In 1996 there were 91 classes with 61 teachers and 685 pupils. In 1997, there were 137 classes with 116 teachers and 1145 pupils. In 1998, there were 356 classes with 318 teachers and 3922 pupils. In year 1999, there were 363 classes with 348 teachers and 4680 pupils of primary and secondary education. There has been no evaluation of the project results or impact. Critics have considered that the project was ethnocentric – despite the title “intercultural”.

¹⁵⁶ More information in the “Draft Minutes of the Madrid regional expert meeting on education for refugees” available at http://www.refugeenet.org/pdf/education_madrid.pdf (22/09/2002)

¹⁵⁷ RAXEN2 Database No. B0024 and 3B0028

The Comenius (SOCRATES) project "Me and the Other: a voyage of discovery in game form"¹⁵⁸ was developed in 1997 as a teaching tool for primary school teachers and pupils offering an alternative way of seeing Greece and the world from the prevailing stereotypes. The game, presented as a teaching package, is offered to pupils (aged between 9 and 12) and teachers. The main theme is travel. The participants make imaginary trips around the world and retrace the routes of their ancestors. At the end, they realise that the movement of people, ideas and objects has always shaped the course of history. With maps, documents and photos, pupils first reconstruct the routes followed by different immigrant families throughout the world. The examples, which are fictitious, enable the pupils to launch themselves into an imaginary story and to discover, with the teacher's help, the similarities and differences between cultures and histories.

During the second stage pupils are urged to ask their parents and grandparents where they have come from. The following day, maps of the world and of Greece are unfolded in class. Using coloured threads, the pupils trace the routes of their respective families and compare them with the routes followed by their fictitious heroes. The journeys criss-cross and overlap all over the globe. This vivid depiction of movement helps the children to link their family history to world history. All of them will realise that, for Greeks and non-Greeks alike, movement and exchange have taken place in all their families. This perception builds the collective memory of the class and explains the presence of their peers.

The project was tested in several schools in Athens and was adopted by the Education Ministry.

¹⁵⁸ More information from Ms. Alexandra Androussou, Themelio Ltd, Solonos 84, GR-106 80 ATHENS, Tel: +30 1 360 8180 Fax: +30 1 361 2092

7. SUMMARY

The Greek educational system has in the past ten years been undergoing significant structural transformations as is evident both by the 1997 educational reform and the continuous legislative, curricular and organisational changes in an effort to adapt to the changing reality of Greek and European society.

The multiethnic and multicultural reality of modern Greek education is not at present adequately served by the existing educational system and structures, although serious, but inadequately funded and not always effective efforts are being made by the competent public authorities.

It is clear, however, that it is not possible to simply copy an existing educational approach from another country, since multiculturalism is experienced by each country in its own unique way and the response must comply with its own particular norms and traditions. Therefore, combating discrimination and racism in the Greek educational system and improving the situation of vulnerable groups and the communication between the different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups is and will be largely a matter of “learning by doing”.

In order to facilitate such an approach, however, it is essential to set in place flexible administrative structures and grant more autonomy to the educational practitioners at the level of teachers and school principals. This will require not only legislative reforms, but more importantly a change in the attitudes of policy makers.

The root of racism is embedded both in the economic structures and prevailing attitudes and values within society. Prejudice acquisition is a process of acculturation or socialisation from family, peer groups, school curricula, the media, and so on and is constructed; if this is the case then it should be possible to also deconstruct it with the right interventions by the same major agents of socialisation that give rise to it in the first place. In this process education has a pivotal role to play in the near future.