

RACIST VIOLENCE

ANALYTICAL STUDY

ANTIGONE

Information & Documentation Centre

RAXEN National Focal Point

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1948 the UN member states formally declared their opposition to any form of discrimination based on biological or cultural differences by stating in Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Since then two covenants – the Civil and Political Rights, and the Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 – elaborated on this statement and in 1963 the UN adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination stating that racial discrimination is not only a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, but "an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations and as a fact capable of disturbing the peace and security among peoples".

The European Union considering racism as a "major challenge for European societies" and acknowledging "high levels of racist incidents and discrimination"¹ acted by introducing Article 13 in the EC Treaty and thus allowing the adoption of European legislative and other measures to combat discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin and religion or belief. Later, the Council of Ministers adopted the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 and the Equality in Employment Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November to be transposed into national law in 2003 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

In Greece the political discourse inexorably linked to the myth of an ethnically, linguistically, culturally and religiously homogenous society precluded, until the 1990s, any discussion of racism and discrimination. Such issues were also conspicuously absent from the political agenda of the left which was dominated by concerns about the democratization of the state and the political system, while being particularly sensitive to any charges of "national treason", especially since the civil war (1946-49).

It was only during the 1990s that the rapid change in the composition of Greek society through the influx of almost a million foreign migrants, refugees and repatriates from the NIS and Albania forced issues of racism and discrimination on the political agenda. However, racism and discrimination were from the start defined by media and influential opinion leaders as "imported problems" largely to be attributed to the "sudden appearance of foreigners" in an otherwise traditionally homogenous society and thus enforcing the myth of the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious homogeneity of Greece which has always constituted a fundamental aspect of its national political ideology.

The absence of adequate regulatory and social support functions by the state combined with the migrant's desperate economic and social situation contributed in the creation of an environment of social exclusion and discrimination that soon led to the construction of negative stereotypes about foreigners in the collective unconscious. The media focused on crimes committed by foreigners, especially Albanians, who soon became

¹ "An Action Plan Against Racism", Brussels, 25.03.1998, COM(1998) 183 final.

the “nation's villains” and authorities responded by hardening their policies towards migrants, especially Albanians, despite strong criticism by independent public bodies such as the Greek Ombudsman, the National Commission for Human Rights and NGOs.

During the 1990s racist attitudes and xenophobic feelings amongst the Greek population were for the first time documented by international Organisations, NGOs and Eurobarometer reports. Public authorities and politicians rejected the “allegation” that Greek society was affected by and responded to racist ideological discourses, as much as any other European society, blaming the rising number of foreigners for the racist and xenophobic manifestations that were explained away as regrettable, but “natural response of a homogenous community”.

As Greek society became more aware of racism, the media also focused on racist manifestations and incidents that may have gone unreported (or underreported) in the past, like police raids on Roma settlements or cases of police brutality against foreigners. However, public authorities, while acknowledging the growing problem did not take any specific administrative measures for recording racist incidents or discrimination; neither did they improve the existing anti-racist legislative framework consisting of general statements in the Constitution and criminal Law 927/1979, which has never been used. Consequently, there is a conspicuous absence of official data² concerning racist incidents and discrimination. This makes not only the study of racism in Greece particularly difficult, but also impedes the formulation of concrete and effective anti-racist policies.

Racism, xenophobia and prejudice are also present in public institutions, including the judicial system and the police. Little effort and few resources have up till now been devoted to combating institutional racism indicating that the government must attach a higher level of priority and allocate sufficient resources to the fight against racism, discrimination and intolerance within state structures.

The development of the appropriate anti-racist and anti-discrimination legislative provisions in penal, civil and administrative law at national and local level with specific and comprehensive measures covering all key social areas must, therefore, constitute an important national priority in the coming years. The other crucially important task will be the creation of the appropriate competent public bodies or the empowerment of public authorities to monitor social manifestations of racism and the implementation of the legislation.

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.

² According to the “European Statistical Atlas on Racial Violence 1995-2000” quoting official statistics Greece has not recorded a single incident of racial violence.” Virtanen T., “The European Statistical Atlas on Racial Violence 1995-2000” available at www.eumc.eu.int/projects/raxen/meetings/wg/doc/Presentation/Presentation_Virtanen.pdf (05/05/2002)

2. AIM AND STRUCTURE

1. AIM AND NATURE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to provide a starting point for the systematic documentation and exploration of the issue of racial violence and discrimination in Greece. 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 absence of both official statistical data and primary scientific research on the topic of racial violence and discrimination in Greece does not allow us to provide a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the phenomenon of racial violence, as it unfolds during the successive historical transformations of Greek society in the context of the RAXEN project.

Research on issues regarding racial violence against vulnerable groups, such as migrants, refugees and autochthonous ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious minorities constitutes a new field of scientific inquiry in Greece. Consequently, as researchers we were faced with serious difficulties, such as:

- Absence of official statistical data; where some data do exist, they have usually not been statistically elaborated (raw data); also, public authorities tend to provide them selectively requiring special permissions that are granted after long bureaucratic processes.
- Absence of relevant Greek research literature;
- 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 incidents of racial violence, due to the absence of public monitoring mechanisms; most of these reports were verified by addressing the competent authorities, but this process has proved to be extremely time consuming, while in some cases authorities invoking the personal data protection legislation refuse to give information to third parties, such as the NFP.

The present study relies largely on the data collected during 2001, while an effort has been made to analyse data covering the period up to the end of August 2002, when deemed important.

2. ORGANISATION & STRUCTURE

The study follows the model proposed by the EUMC. The actual size of each chapter, however, differs from the proposed size, as demanded by the nature of the topic, the country specific situation and the availability of data and information. Finally, the proposals address both the need for more specific state policies and the necessity for research and documentation activities.

- The 1st chapter **contains** an executive summary
- The 2nd chapter **presents** the aim and structure of the study

- The 3rd chapter **examines** the political – social situation, and the demographic and social characteristics of vulnerable social groups
- The 4th chapter **discusses** the methodological issues and difficulties encountered, **compares** definitions of and comments on the concept of racial violence by different NFPs, **reviews** some theoretical approaches and presents the sources used
- The 5th chapter **reviews** existing data and discusses briefly the difficulties encountered due to the relative absence of such data and the inadequate structures and organisation of the available sources
- The 6th chapter **elaborates** on the most important initiatives, bodies, actions and events and comments on their impact
- The 7th chapter **attempts to briefly analyse** the data
- The 8th chapter **summarises** the main findings of this study

3. Racism in Greece: political and ideological background; the social situation of vulnerable groups

Political and ideological background

The appearance of a significant and therefore “visible” number of foreigners (either as migrants or as refugees) is a new feature of Greek society and therefore there is no evidence of xenophobic or racist attitudes or incidents in past decades neither any relevant research literature. In this sense it is very difficult to understand and interpret adequately the recently documented³ rise in racism without resorting to oversimplifications and generalisations referring to the presumed fear reaction of a community – *Gemeinschaft* – towards the Other, although such interpretations abound in media debates. It would therefore seem to be more productive to probe for the multidimensional causes and nature of racism in the socialization processes forming the dominant “national – ethnic” ideology that actively promotes the image of a unified and homogenous community.

The formation of ethnic identity is a process involving “...a number of forces: social exclusion and stigma and political resistance to them, distinctive cultural and religious heritages as well as new forms of culture, communal and familial loyalties, marriage practices, coalition of interests and so on.”⁴

Since the achievement of national independence in 1830, the Greek state engaged in a vigorous nation building process that required a powerful national myth moulding the multiple traditions and different collective memories into a unifying scheme: Thus “...the historical trajectory of the nation has been traced in a linear form and without ruptures or discontinuities from antiquity to modernity. Thus, any changes which have marked the past and the history of the national community have been re-constructed in such a way that the nation is represented as a homogeneous and compact unit. In contrast to contemporary times that Greece appears as a nation-state, the Greek nation survived through the centuries within a number of different political formations such as the great Empires (Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman) which succeeded each other in the region. Nationality was thus defined as the expression of genealogical descent and in direct reference to the glorious past of Themistocles, Pericles and Alexander the Great.”⁵ This national myth was easily transformed into a powerful irredentism that fuelled the successive expansions of the Greek state at the expense of its neighbours throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, while also serving as a political strategy to relieve popular discontent.

In this way Greeks have learned to feel different from, but also superior to all their neighbours, Turks, Albanians, Bulgarians and Serbs not only in terms of ethnicity and religion,

³ EUMC (2001), “Attitudes towards minority groups in the EU: a special analysis of the Eurobarometer 2000 survey”, p. 12

⁴ Modood T., Beishon S. and Virdee S. (1994), *Changing Ethnic Identities*, Policy Studies Institute, p. 120 available at <http://www.psi.org.uk/publications/ETHNIC/identity.htm> (09/09/2002)

⁵ Triandafyllidou, A., Calloni, M. and Mikrakis, A. (1997) 'New Greek Nationalism', *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 2, no. 1, available at <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/1/7.html> (12/09/2002)

but because they could make no claim on the universally acclaimed classical Greek culture. Nationalist sentiments are strong in Greece and nurtured further both by the educational system and by the political parties not only as a means of keeping the voters' attention away from serious economic and social problems⁶, but also as a means of using “glories of the past to recompense for the failures and dissatisfaction of the present”.

In a speech delivered in Northern Greece in 1989 the former President of the Hellenic Republic M. Sartzetakis defined the Greek nation as “anadelphon” –alone, without siblings–, a neologism that encapsulates the essence of modern Greek nationalist ideology and hints to the link between the Greek nationalist ideological discourse and the current manifestations of racism, xenophobia and intolerance in Greek society.

The study of ethnic myths and nationalist discourses can only partially account for phenomena of racism and intolerance. In addition it is necessary to examine the social, legal, economic, political or demographic factors that may contribute in the creation of a climate of hostility⁷ and furthermore, the social groups expressing hostility towards the “other”, especially the “*Modernisierungsverlierer* (“modernity losers”) —young, elderly, uneducated, farmers, and unskilled and semi-skilled workers— who have purportedly turned en masse to the parties of the new radical right in an “expression of protest over unrepresented political demands”.⁸ This element needs to be examined particularly carefully in Greece with unemployment levels fluctuating constantly at a high level of 10.5% - 11.5% for the past decade and affecting primarily the above mentioned groups.

Vulnerable social groups – definition, demographic and social characteristics

Our initial intention was to analyse in this chapter the social characteristics of both social groups, namely possible victims and perpetrators. Unfortunately a careful and detailed search of both available data and available research literature on racism as well as criminology revealed a total lack of information on perpetrators of acts of racial violence and harassment. We are therefore obliged to limit this chapter to the analysis of the social situation of the vulnerable groups and insert a limited analytical description of perpetrators in the 7th chapter.

A. Definition and demographics of vulnerable groups

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.

The Ministry of Public Order (supervising the Police and Border Guard), the Ministry of Merchant Marine (supervising the Coast Guard), the Ministry of the Interior (supervising Local Authorities and responsible for migration issues) define vulnerable groups according to the

⁶ Mouzelis, N. (1978) “Modern Greece: Facets of Underdevelopment”, New York: Holmes & Meier. p. 135

⁷ Saxton G. (2001) “The Origins of Socially and Politically Hostile Attitudes to Immigrants and Outgroups: Economics, Ideology, or National Context?”, available at <http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~gsaxton/Politics&Policy.pdf> (01/09/2002)

⁸ Dalton, R. (1990) “Germany Transformed: Public Opinion and German Studies.” German Studies Review p. 174

taxonomy adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security⁹ 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 racial violence 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)**
- **“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)¹⁰**

A common feature of the above groups is their relative social exclusion¹¹ from essential public social services, such as education, vocational training, social welfare and health care and from 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.

⁹ 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_gr.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/napincl2001e1_en.pdf (21/06/2002).

¹⁰ Official data concerning the number of special permits issued are not available.

¹¹ 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.

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.¹²

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.¹³

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.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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 **797,093¹⁶ (7,3%)** of a total population of **10,964,080**. In the Athens Metropolitan Area the recorded non nationals are **376.732 (10%)** in a total population of **3.761.810.¹⁷**

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 monitored¹⁸ - 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 are the results of the two migrant registration processes in 1998 and 2001. In 1998 **371,641¹⁹** migrants registered for residence and work permits with the National Manpower and Employment Organization²⁰ (OAED), but the National Institute of Labour (EIE)²¹ estimated that more than **150,000** did not register

¹² Greece, N. 2910/2001 (02/05/2001)

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Greece, P. D. 61/1999 (06/04/1999)

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ 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%.

¹⁷ 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)

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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)

²⁰ More information mostly in Greek from www.oaed.gr (03/03/2002)

²¹ More information mostly in Greek from www.eie.org.gr (13/03/2002)

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 December 2002, but the Ministry of the Interior²² announced in December 2001 that approximately **351,000** migrants applied for residence and work permits by the end of the deadline - 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. It should also be added that a rising number of migrants are beginning to form families characterized by high fertility in contrast to the Greek population²³.

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 website²⁴.

The total number of refugees in Greece, as of 31 December 2001, 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 minors²⁵.

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.

²² 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.

²³ “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”.

²⁴ Ministry of Public Order data available from UNHCR available at http://www.unhcr.gr/exec/article_1.htm (12/09/2002)

²⁵ Ministry of Public Order data available from UNHCR available at <http://www.unhcr.gr/research.htm#i> (03/09/2002)

Illegal Entry

Data by the Ministry of Public Order concerning the numbers of migrants and refugees arrested for entering the country illegally are impressive. During 2001, 219,598 immigrants were arrested for illegal entry into the country, 167,168 of whom by the Border Guard (constituting 76% of the total, compared with 50% in 2000) and the rest by the Police, while the Coast Guard arrested 6,864. It should be noted that Chinese nationals were for the first time among those arrested during 2001.

Ministry of Public Order data²⁶ concerning arrests for illegal entry indicate that the main entrance points for asylum seekers are the river Evros, border between Turkey and Greece (22.3% of the total), the island of Mytilene lying very close to the Turkish mainland (21.7%), the greater area of Volos (13.3%), the island of Chios (9.71%) and Evia (8.9%).

A recently published Panteion University study “Comparative Research of the Relationship Between Organised Crime, Illegal Immigrants and Undeclared Labour”, conducted by sociology professor Constantinos Koskinas, psychology professor Stamos Papastamos and tutor of sociology George Alexias, found that, of the total number of aliens arrested for illegal entry into the EU, 24.8% were arrested entering through Greece.

II. 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 since there is no relevant ethnic or linguistic category recorded by the Census. The last Greek Census that contained linguistic data in 1951 recorded 7,500 individuals speaking Romani. However, several studies²⁷ show that the number of Roma was always far higher than that.

Existing research on selected samples in certain municipalities indicates that their number is somewhere between 150,000²⁸ – 300,000²⁹ loosely organised in “tribes” 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 benefits³⁰.

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

²⁶ “Eleftherotypia” (29/5/2002) available at http://www.enet.gr/online/online_p1_text.jsp?dt=29/05/2002&c=112&id=8062760 (01/09/2002)

²⁷ Vaxevanoglou, A. (2001), “Greek Gypsies: Marginalised and family men”, Athens: Editions Alexandria, p. 17

²⁸ Komis, K. (1998): “Gypsies: History, Demography, Culture”, Athens: Editions Ellinika Grammata

²⁹ EETAA (2001): “Integrated Action Plan for the Greek Roma”, Athens: EETAA, p.45

³⁰ 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>

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.

III. “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.³¹

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.³²

There are no reliable demographic data concerning the number of repatriated ethnic Greeks from the NIS or ethnic Greeks migrants from Albania³³. 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 Greeks³⁴ 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 1980.³⁵

Several legal provisions were instigated since then 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

³¹ Greece, N. 2790/2000 (16/02/2000)

³² Greece, Ministerial Decision 4000/3/10-e (15/04/1998)

³³ 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)

³⁴ Another smaller group from both the NIS and CECs were political refugees who had fled Greece after the 1946-49 civil war.

³⁵ 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 www.mathra.gr (21/06/2002)

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 Inquiry³⁶ 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.

Migrant 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 has discouraged Albanian ethnic Greeks from acquiring Greek citizenship, while distinguishing them from other foreign nationals 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. 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.

IV. Religious minorities

*Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace are considered to be all Muslims established in the region to the east of the frontier line laid down in 1913 by the Treaty of Bucharest.*³⁷

The term “religious minority” is used to refer primarily to the autochthonous Muslim minority in Thrace whose legal status and rights 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 Muslim total can be explained by the fact that some of the Turkish speakers were probably ethnic Greek 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

³⁶ 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)

³⁷ *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)

religion for reasons of national policy.³⁸ 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.

B. Social situation of vulnerable groups

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 occupation³⁹. 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 social position of these groups are related to an ongoing process, as it is constantly re-structured through the past and present organizations of social relations and practices.⁴⁰

The debate concerning the relationship between the position of vulnerable groups in society and racism began in Greece during the 1990s with the influx of considerable numbers of undocumented migrants and the rapid changes in the ethnic landscape of the Balkans. However, even today the issue of discrimination and racism that such groups experience still constitutes a marginalized and “secondary” issue within a broader debate concerning the ethnic composition and inequalities in the social structure and stratification of Greek society. Therefore, one can find little primary research on the social situation of vulnerable groups, as recent reviews of the relevant research literature indicate.⁴¹

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 social welfare system 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 of absolute poverty, namely lacking even basic housing, employment of any type and

³⁸ 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

³⁹ OECD (2001), “The employment of foreigners: Outlook and issues in OECD countries”, p.172

⁴⁰ 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

⁴¹ National Center for Social Research (1999), EuReporting Working Paper No. 8: Greece: “Contributions to Social Reporting, Institutions, Activities, Publications”, p. 2

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.⁴² 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 (Registered - unregistered migrants, refugees and asylum seekers)

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 labour in small factories and manufactures, Africans as small traders.

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.

⁴² 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)

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. Furthermore, the continuing absence of adequate social support structures, such as advice centres for the legal, social and economic orientation and integration of migrants 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. Dozens of small businesses belonging to foreign migrants serving both their communities and Greeks have opened in central Athens. 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. In the construction sector, some migrants –mainly Albanians– have evolved into contractors. Models of inter-cultural education have gradually been introduced to some Greek schools and at least one anti-racist large scale project was implemented by the Pedagogical Institute. Several other integration projects will be implemented in the coming years under the EQUAL initiative in employment and the media. The public administration (Ministry of the Interior and Local Authorities) are gradually developing structures for the management of migration and the integration of migrants.

Refugees and asylum seekers have also 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 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 depending on the location where the asylum application is lodged: No organized reception facilities exist on any of the islands, thus asylum seekers are accommodated in an ad hoc way, depending on their number and the options available either in detention facilities or in the case of large groups in stadiums, schools or halls of entertainment. In either case, conditions are very poor, and several problems arise due to the lack of space and suitable infrastructure leading to basic problems of hygiene. International organisations like the UN

Committee against Torture⁴³, 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 Ombudsman⁴⁴ and the National Commission for Human Rights⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

II. Roma

Roma have been living in Greece at least since the Middle Ages. However, researchers agree that it is very difficult to define the Roma as a single social group either ethnically or culturally, as they tend to form separate communities, “tribes”, with different cultural and linguistic characteristics. In terms of religion there are two main groups Christian and Muslim. The Muslim Roma lived until recently mostly in Thrace, but many have during the past 20 years moved to the urban centres of Athens and Thessalonica in search of employment. All Greek Roma speak Greek (using a characteristic accent that is often ridiculed by other Greeks) and most speak Romani as their mother tongue, while about 20,000 living in Thrace have Turkish as their mother tongue. New arrivals from neighbouring Balkan countries do not speak Greek, but manage to communicate with other Roma using the Romani language.

The attitudes of the Greek population towards the Roma are, as in other southern European countries, mostly negative. As will be discussed in detail later, the most serious incidents of racial violence have in fact been directed against Roma, but still no attempt is made either in the schools or by the media to raise awareness and educate the Greek

⁴³ 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)

⁴⁴ 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)

⁴⁵ National Commission for Human Rights, Annual Report 2001, pp. 43 – 47, Athens: National Printing Office

⁴⁶ Mestheneou, E., (2000), EU CARE: Refugee Entrepreneurs in Greece”, p.9 available at <http://www.gcr.gr/investigations/EU-CAREReport.doc> (08/09/2002)

population concerning the culture, characteristics and problems of the Roma who have come to constitute the most marginalised and socially excluded social group.

Roma are mostly employed as seasonal agricultural workers or, more often, as street vendors experiencing insecurity and discrimination⁴⁷: “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 junior high graduation certificate (compulsory education) is the legal precondition for employment, thus excluding practically all the adult Roma.”⁴⁸

There is no statistical data concerning Roma employment, but according to the ROMANET⁴⁹ network most Roma are now self-employed street vendors. Among those who have managed to settle in certain areas, particularly the areas of Agia Varvara and Nea Liosia in Athens some have established flourishing businesses, but most seek a meagre existence as street vendors. The more affluent with some capital to finance their operations will trade in household goods like plastic kitchenware and plastic furniture. The rest will traditionally sell agricultural products in local markets. Since they find it increasingly difficult to compete with the low prices offered by supermarkets, most choose to operate without registering with the tax authorities or (expensive) municipal licenses that often results to problems with the police. Since street vendor licenses are issued by the local authorities Roma are disadvantaged as most local authorities refuse to grant them.

A small number of Roma are specialist craftsmen in traditional arts or music; they have relatively stable employment, but their numbers are dwindling, as there is no interest by the young to follow the long and difficult period of apprenticeship. Although it is very difficult to estimate Roma unemployment the Social Welfare service of the Ministry of Health and Welfare has reported that the number of Roma who register for benefits is rising rapidly indicating possibly that unemployment is driving poverty levels higher.

The rising unemployment and poverty among the Roma has significant negative effects and is an important factor or the rising criminality among them. Many young Roma are attracted by the “easy money” that can be made through the drug trade and some of their settlements are already well known as drug trafficking and trading areas with all the negative consequences for the Roma social image and their relations with the local population. Racist stereotypes, a deeply rooted mistrust and cultural misunderstanding often leads to conflicts that frequently characterise the Roma’s relationship to public authorities and especially the police.

Roma educational attainment is at very low levels: According to the unpublished, but released to us, final report of the 2nd Community Framework Programme “Gypsy Education”,

⁴⁷ Exarchos, G. (1998), Social Exclusion of Roma, p. 78 in Kassimati, K. (ed), “Social Exclusion: The Greek Experience”, Athens: Gutenberg.

⁴⁸ Statement on the Situation of Roma in Greece by the International Romani Union Secretary General Christo Kyuchukov, 20 December 2001, available at http://www.errc.org/rr_nr1_2002/noteb5.shtml (23/05/2002)

⁴⁹ The Municipal Network for the Roma in Greece. More information available on <http://www.romanet.gr> mostly in Greek (23/02/2002)

approximately 60% of the Roma (18-50 years old) are illiterate (they have never attended school), while an additional 22% are functionally illiterate (UNESCO standards).

Roma housing conditions are also reported⁵⁰ to be very poor particularly for the nomadic Roma who have no access to regular sanitary facilities, water or electricity. 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% of the total population. It is also difficult to define the nomadic Roma, as many tend to transform camp sites to semi-permanent settlements. 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.

Until recently the Roma were publicly represented only by "clan" and "tribal" leaders who were usually the wealthiest individuals. The only form of collective organisation existed in the Agia Varvara Municipality, with an association established in 1939 and representing the Roma in Greece and abroad. During the last ten or so years the Roma have gradually started to organise themselves in associations⁵¹, although the influence of clan and tribal leaders is still strong in most areas.

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 some 100-110 Municipalities with Roma within their boundaries. It has a consultative role to the Prime Minister, 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 EETAA 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."⁵²

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2001-2003⁵³ refers to the ambitious "Integrated Action Plan" for the Roma according to which 310 million Euros will be spent in

⁵⁰ 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)

⁵¹ *ibid*, p. 32

⁵² *ibid*, p. 23

⁵³ Ministry of Labour and Social Security (2001), "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)

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.

III. “Repatriated” ethnic Greeks from the NIS and ethnic Greeks from Albania

Despite preferential treatment by the Greek state (and after control of their ethnic descent credentials they receive 500 Euro upon arrival for the purchase of household equipment and a small annual supplement of 230 Euro) most repatriated ethnic Greeks⁵⁴ from the NIS 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 by many employers are only some of the issues, which have not yet been systematically studied or monitored.

Many repatriated ethnic Greeks accepted the financial incentives offered by the Greek state and settled in Thrace, where they competed with ethnic Turks and Pomaks for jobs in the manual labour market resulting in tension and conflict between these social groups. Others settled in urban centres, usually in areas inhabited by other socially disadvantaged social groups, such as the Roma with whom tensions also developed. With the help of local municipalities they gradually formed associations and developed some support structures for the improvement of their integration.

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.”⁵⁵

In 1994 the General Secretariat for Repatriated Greeks (established in 1990) began to function as part of the Ministry of Macedonia & Thrace in order to facilitate their reception and social integration as well provide them with social care and housing assistance. In 1998 the Secretariat carried out a demographic study of repatriated Greeks in Macedonia and Thrace recording also their educational and vocational qualifications.

⁵⁴ 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.

⁵⁵ <http://www.mitnet.gr/kepyy/English/Description.htm> (15/06/2002)

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 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”.

IV. Cultural and religious minorities

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 a possible threat. Already at school children are taught from a very early age that “the primal 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 a “paranoia” regarding the “Turkish threat” have rendered most Greeks hostile, unresponsive to, and frequently in violation of the human rights of Muslims.

The human rights violations suffered by Muslims in Greece over the years under the guise of the formal, “to the letter”, application of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, that determines their rights and obligations, have confined them to the role of second-class citizen. When expedient, Muslims are 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 1923 Treaty of Lausanne gives Muslims in Thrace the right to maintain social and charitable organizations (“wakfs”) and provides for the function of muftis to render religious judicial services. Differences remain within the Muslim community and 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 (now reduced to about 3,000). Thrace has two Islamic seminars and several secular Turkish-language schools. The government's disputes with Turkey over teachers and textbooks caused these secular schools serious problems in obtaining faculty and teaching materials in sufficient number and quality. 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. Muslim leaders in Western Thrace complained that the Government erected bureaucratic barriers to prevent the Turkish teachers from performing their duties for much of the academic year. More than 8,000 Muslim children attended Turkish-language public schools and an additional 150 attended 2 bilingual middle schools with an additional Islamic religious curriculum. Approximately 1,300 Muslim students attended Greek-language secondary schools. However, many Muslims attended high school in Turkey, as they seek to continue their education in Turkish Universities.

In order to improve conditions of life for the minority the government has since 1996 implemented a large scale educational project financed by the 2nd Community Support Framework. In addition universities and technical institutes set aside a number of certain places for Muslim students each year; 464 spaces were available in 1998. 124 Muslim

students took the admission exams, and 58 women and 54 men were accepted in universities and technical schools.

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 act⁵⁶ 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 NGOs⁵⁷ 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, Moufti Metso Jemali and Member of Parliament, Galip Galip. They did not report any problems concerning the exercise of religious duties or institutional discrimination⁵⁸ and suggested that Muslims face similar social and economic problems as the Christian population. Both singled out the 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 Turkey⁵⁹ and the delays in reattributing Greek citizenship status to members of the minority that were deprived of it in past years⁶⁰. Both community leaders expressed their concern over the harsh conditions of

⁵⁶ 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.”

⁵⁷ 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)

⁵⁸ For instance difficulties in the acquisition of driving licenses or the sale and purchase of land, etc

⁵⁹ The problem is being resolved as both countries have agreed to bilaterally suspend these property taxes.

⁶⁰ 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. The article was abolished in 1998. According to the then Minister of the Interior, Alekos Papadopoulos, since its introduction in 1955, 60,000 Greek citizens, mostly Muslims had lost their Greek citizenship status.

life in mountainous villages and the serious economic difficulties faced by local farmers both Muslim and Christian.

B. Legal framework affecting vulnerable groups

The most important legal provisions affecting vulnerable groups primarily in relation to racial violence and discrimination have been enacted very recently indicating that the state has only recently begun to respond to take measures against racism and discrimination. Therefore, the implementation and application of this framework will require more time before its effectiveness can be evaluated.

The Greek Constitution of 1975/76⁶¹ (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”.

Law 927/1979⁶² is the only criminal specifically anti-racist 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 racial⁶³ 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 report⁶⁴ formally the Public Prosecutor to bring charges

⁶¹ Available in English at <http://www.hri.org/docs/syntagma/> (13/09/2002)

⁶² Greece, N 927/1979 (10/10/1979)

⁶³ 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.

⁶⁴ 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)

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

Law 2910/2001⁶⁵ regulates the entry, residence and employment conditions for aliens and citizenship acquisition. The law set in motion, for the second time, a registration process for economic migrants, but the government has not yet produced an evaluation of the process. The Ombudsman's Report⁶⁶ and reports from several NGOs stressed certain negative aspects of the law noting especially serious problems with its implementation and especially the migrant registration process by the Prefectures (local authorities responsible for the registration process) who had not been properly prepared, organised or staffed. Subsequently the law was amended, following partly the proposals of the Greek Ombudsman, by Law 3013/2002⁶⁷. Accordingly the six-month permits issued to migrants during the first phase of the ongoing legalisation, as well as Green Cards and other types of residence permits that had expired or were soon to expire, were extended to December 31, 2002. Also the requirement to interview each applicant was dropped, as it proved impossible to interview individually hundreds of thousands of applicant migrants.

The Law, despite some important innovations, preserves many of the provisions of the 1975/91 Immigration Law, but also antiquated immigration practices prior to 1991, as it maintains three fundamental principles: First, the need for two, separately awarded, but interdependent documents for residence and work that create unnecessary bureaucratic delays and difficulties; Secondly, onerous obligations on potential employers of immigrants for authorisation to enter Greece that cannot in practice be enforced; Thirdly, the law contains no mention of any measures for the social integration of migrants who are thus implicitly considered as a short term temporary labour force.

Several problems concerning the Law and its implementation were highlighted in the previously mentioned Greek Ombudsman's Special Report. Three stipulations of the Law were specifically criticised:

(a) Family reunification provisions; the necessary preconditions that must be fulfilled are onerous and incomplete (children who become of age are required to leave the country after one year unless they can find suitable employment –under the conditions prescribed for mi-grants that is virtually impossible– or continue their studies –highly unlikely given the living conditions and social provisions for migrants, but even so after their studies they are still required to leave).

(b) Access to healthcare; Article 54 (Par. 2) stipulates that hospitals must inform the police, if any undocumented alien seeks medical treatment. The Hellenic Data Protection Authority has ruled (19/06/2001, Ref. No. 1258) after a complaint by the Hellenic Centre for Infectious Diseases Control that this articles is unconstitutional and in breach of the legislation requirements of the Protection of Private Data and must be disregarded. It must also be

⁶⁵ Greece, N. 2910/2001 (02/05/2001)

⁶⁶ Office of the Ombudsman, (2001) "Special report on the implementation of the registration procedures under Law 2910/2001" Athens, Ref No 2013, available at http://www.synigoros.gr/reports/diavivasi_koinepstef.doc (15/09/2002)

⁶⁷ Greece, N. 3013/2002 (10/05/2002)

stressed that healthcare is provided to all individuals in Greece in emergency cases and especially victims of AIDS/HIV infection are provided free all necessary medical care.

(c) Access to education; the Law does not embrace the current *contra legem* practice of not requiring documentation for the children of undocumented migrants to attend school and consequently Headmasters who enrol children may face heavy penalties.

The Ministry of the Interior is already planning further amendments to the law aiming first at improving the social support structures available to migrants in order to improve the process of integration into Greek society and secondly at incorporating anti-discrimination provisions to protect migrants from racial discrimination in social life.

Law 3013/2002 (footnote 47) amended Law 2910/2001 and established the Institute for Migration, which has not yet been formed, as an independent public policy research organisation.

Law 2790/2000⁶⁸ regulates the repatriation procedures for ethnic Greeks from the NIS. The law established special rights, privileges and social support structures for repatriates to assist in their integration. The law was criticised for providing Greek citizenship “too easily” and thus open to possible misuse, as a previously quoted report from Karamanlis Foundation indicates. Repatriate organisations supported the special citizenship acquisition processes prescribed by this law arguing that investigations into the official records of the countries of origin could easily allow the establishment of true ethnic identity of citizenship applicants.

Law 2740/1999⁶⁹ establishes the State Certificate of Greek Language. This is the first state recognised language qualification and theoretically allows the holder to seek employment in public services (i.e. local authorities, public bodies, etc.) where knowledge of the Greek language is normally a formal prerequisite.

Law 2477/1997⁷⁰ constitutes the founding regulation of the Greek Ombudsman (Synigoros tou Politi). The Greek Ombudsman is an Independent Administrative Authority, whose actions are not subject to control by any governmental or other administrative authority and its operation has been highly praised by all NGOs. This institution is considered as a very important safeguard for democracy and human rights. On October 1, 1998, the institution of the Ombudsman began to function in Greece. In its four years of operation, the Ombudsman has gained widespread recognition within Greek society, having already proved its importance for the protection of citizens' rights, combating of maladministration and ensuring the observance of the laws. However, it should be noted that the role of the Ombudsman is to act as an intermediary between citizen and state and therefore it cannot intervene in cases of discrimination or harassment by physical or legal persons.

⁶⁸ Greece, N 2790/2000 (16/02/2000)

⁶⁹ Greece, N 2740/1999 (16/09/1999)

⁷⁰ Greece, N. 2477/1977 (18/04/1997)

Law 2413/1996⁷¹ established and regulates intercultural education and regulates the operation of the Centre for Greek Language, which is the public body responsible for the State Certificate of Greek Language.

Presidential Decree 295/2001⁷² established and regulates the Directorate of Aliens and Immigration at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This is the first public administration structure dealing specifically with migrants. Previously migration issues were mostly the concern of the Ministry of Public Order. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs remains the competent authority for issues concerning the autochthonous Muslim minority. The Ministry of Public Order has become the competent Ministry for issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers.

Presidential Decree 100⁷³: In the context of the harmonisation of Greek radio and television legislation with the provisions of European Parliament and Council Directives, the State Radio and Television Council is required to preventively ban radio and television programmes, if their content encourages or provokes discrimination, hatred or violence against persons or a group of persons due to their gender, racial or ethnic origin, their religion, political convictions or sexual preferences.

Protocol between Greece and Turkey for the implementation of Article 8 of the Agreement on combating crime, especially terrorism, organised crime, illicit drug trafficking and illegal migration⁷⁴: The Protocol ratified by Law 3030/2002 aims at the readmission of illegal immigrant being smuggled from Turkey back to that country within 14 days of arrival. Greece must provide proof that the migrants entered Greece from Turkey and asylum seekers and refugees will not be returned according to the Geneva Convention rules. NGOs and the UNHCR have voiced their concern about the possible implications of this agreement for genuine asylum seekers. According to a recently released official report of the Greek Office of the UNHCR, more than 230 persons are known to have been reprocessed to Turkey from the implementation of this protocol in November 2001 until June 2002.

The Lausanne Treaty⁷⁵ constitutes the legal basis for the legal definition, treatment, rights and obligations of the Muslim minority in Greece. Despite bilateral differences in the interpretation of certain clauses all subsequent agreements between Greece and Turkey have relied upon the Treaty. It regulates every aspect of the relationship between the Greek state and the Muslim minority.

Among other Greek statutes referring to the prohibition of racial, ethnic, cultural or religious harassment and discrimination the most significant are:

⁷¹ Greece, N 2413 (17/06/1996)

⁷² Greece, P. D. 295/2001 (19/09/2001)

⁷³ Greece, P. D. 100 (17/03/2000)

⁷⁴ Greece, N. 3030/2002 (15/07/2002)

⁷⁵ English text available at <http://www.hri.org/docs/lausanne/> (09/09/2002)

Presidential Decree 219/2000: All public and private employees must be treated equally; any discrimination on the basis to sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, religious or political convictions or sexual preference is prohibited.

Law 2683/1999: The Civil Servants Code states that civil servants must treat every citizen equally regardless of sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, religious or political convictions or sexual preference.

It should, however, be noted that anti-discrimination clauses such as the above are not accompanied by regulatory mechanisms or specific sanctions and thus cannot be practically enforced.

There are no effective legal provisions in either civil, penal or administrative law for the prevention of racial, ethnic, cultural or religious harassment and discrimination.

4. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

Since the beginning of the data collection process we approached the term “racial violence” with apprehension, as we felt that it is at best ambivalent, difficult to translate, defined differently or not at all in the various member states and thus a problem for the required data comparability, while also still lacking in analytical rigour, at least from a sociological point of view, as is evident from the existing research literature that tends to define the term operationally to cater basically for the needs of recording agencies.

The EUMC guidelines for the data collection require us to present the definition of racial violence according to the country legal system; quantitative and qualitative occurrences of different types of crimes (criminal and non-criminal offences); perpetrators; victims; and comment on the comparability of different data sources. Thus the EUMC refers primarily to the legal (criminal and civil) connotations of the term. We assume that it is for this reason that all NFPs, including our organisation, have focused almost exclusively on the legal and particularly the criminal aspect of racial violence.

Nevertheless, racial violence has many forms, many of which elude attempts to classify, record, prosecute and punish: the teenager wearing a t-shirt with an explicitly or implicitly racist slogan, the Peugeot commercial depicting an Asian as an idiot who destroys his old car to make it resemble a new model that he obviously cannot afford, school text books reproducing nationalism and intolerance, etc.

A careful examination of the data collection reports of the other NFPs reveals that most share our apprehension:

The Austrian NFP⁷⁶ stresses that the term “racial violence is not used “by anyone of the actors in the field...The problem of terminology is not merely an academic one. Given the above stated facts, we can presume that no data will ever be officially collected under the heading “racial violence” in Austria. So, if we want to have comparable data on the subject in a harmonised European approach, we must find a new terminology combined with a clear definition.”

The Belgian NFP⁷⁷ also points to problems with the use of the term that is perhaps more encompassing, but also more difficult to study or even to record than for instance the term “hate crime” used by the UK police.

The Danish NFP⁷⁸ underlines at the beginning of its report that the existing data are very limited, because of the notion “racial violence”, which is not use in the Danish context, since violence is categorised in accordance with the “concrete actions, i.e. threats, fights, killings etc.”, while motivation does not comprise a separate category of crime and is not recorded.

⁷⁶ Austrian NFP, (2002), EUMC, Data Collection Report on Racial Violence, p. 23

⁷⁷ Belgian NFP, (2002), EUMC, Data Collection Report on Racial Violence, p. 2

⁷⁸ Danish NFP, (2002), EUMC, Data Collection Report on Racial Violence, p. 1

The Finnish NFP⁷⁹ points out on p. 5 of its report to problems in the definition of “racist motivation” by the police officers who are required to classify criminal acts and stress that many racially motivated crimes may not be recorded.

The French NFP⁸⁰ begin their report by arguing that “the issue of ‘racial violence’ raises major conceptual and methodological problems. The range of phenomena corresponding to the notion of “violence” is very wide, and notoriously poorly covered by legal definitions and procedures. To introduce racism as a qualification - and perhaps as an explanatory variable - merely compounds these difficulties. Furthermore, the notion is not familiar to the French debate, and it is therefore not possible to draw on extensive research and on an established policy framework as in some other countries.... Qualification of acts as “racist” (the word “racial” is hardly ever used in this context in French, and in any case raises theoretical issues that are beyond the scope of this report) in the media covers a wide range of phenomena. Sometimes, violence, attacks and murders are considered as “racist” by the press...The connection makes it apparent that what is being qualified here is the intention of the perpetrator, which is usually ascertainable from the circumstances. On the other hand, there is no presumption that the status of the victim (in terms of skin colour, religion, “origin”, nationality, etc.) *in itself* creates a presumption of “racial” or “ethnic” violence. This is partly common sense, partly a reflection of the French ideological climate, which is hostile to “racial” or “ethnic” categorization. As a result, other kinds of violence are not considered as “racial”, even when “ethnic” issues are part of the context: so-called “urban violence”, for example. On the other hand, the context may be referred to by news, media and social science research. For instance, foreigners may be said to suffer from “institutional violence”, that is to say the symbolic violence of public agents engaged in discriminatory practices. Violence in schools is also often set within a similarly racialized context, and is sometimes analyzed in “racial” terms.”

The German NFP⁸¹ is also critical of the terminology used and comment on the problems associated with its use in the German context: “The usage of these terms in German varies somewhat: whilst ‘anti-Semitism’ is not open to other interpretations, the term *Rassismus* (‘racism’) would be rarely used in this context. In specialist literature, the media and amongst the general public, the terms *Rechtsradikalismus* (‘radical right-wing’), *Rechtsextremismus* (‘extreme right-wing’) and *Fremdenfeindlichkeit* (‘xenophobia’) are employed as virtual synonyms. Only the newly introduced ‘Criminal Investigation Registration Service - Politically Motivated Criminality’ (KPMD-PMK) of 2001 offers some degree of differentiation, but even this source does not use the term ‘racism’. This leads to the fact that the differentiation between ‘racism’ and ‘xenophobia’, as suggested by the EUMC, is frequently impossible....In this report, the term ‘racial violence’ will not be employed as the German translation of this term (‘rassisch’) is one which is tainted by history and could lead to confusion. Instead reference will be made to ‘racist violence’. Furthermore the German NFP

⁷⁹ Finnish NFP, (2002), EUMC, Data Collection Report on Racial Violence, p. 5

⁸⁰ French NFP, (2002), EUMC, Data Collection Report on Racial Violence, pp. 1 & 2

⁸¹ German NFP, (2002), EUMC, Data Collection Report on Racial Violence, p. 18

points out to what it calls “incidents in the twilight zone” and highlights the problem with those incidences that may for a variety of reasons go unreported.

The Dutch NFP⁸² presents the most detailed proposal for defining “racial violence”. They point to the problem of differentiating between racial violence and violence incited by the extreme right and underline the significance of underreporting which makes “only a portion of the phenomenon visible”. Furthermore they refer also to the problem of the frequent anonymity of the perpetrators which does not allow us to assess motives and backgrounds. As a possible solution they suggest the use of a “broad working definition of racial violence as behaviour in which one party intentionally harms or threatens to harm another party, and in which this behaviour is mainly aimed at physical damage to objects and/or persons. Following on this definition, *racial violence* can be understood as: that form of violence in which the victims or targets are chosen on account of their ethnic, racial, ethnic-religious, cultural or national origin. However, *racial violence* can also exhibit a wide range of inter-ethnic dimensions: 1. native versus non-native, or ‘white against black’; 2. the reverse: non-native versus native, or ‘black versus white’; 3. non-native versus non-native belonging to different ethnic groups, as in a confrontation between a group of Antilleans and a group of Moroccans.

The UK NFP⁸³ finally, suggests a very simple definition, proposed in the Macpherson Report and used by the British Police since 1999 for the purpose of recording only, in order to maximise the capture of racist incidents: “A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”.

In our attempt to provide a more comprehensive and theoretically rigorous definition we were faced with similar problems to those mentioned above. Time limitations due to the nature and structure of the RAXEN project, the absence of an official definition and the relatively small number of reported incidents in Greece led us to adopt the simple, but embracing UK definition that allows further qualitative elaboration on a case by case basis, while at the same time taking into account also the important inter-ethnic dimension stressed by the Dutch NFP and often found in the Greek setting.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Racist violence has been extensively researched on an international level. It is commonly accepted that it may take many forms from relatively rare, but serious incidents of murder and assault to more frequent incidents of racial abuse, harassment and threatening behaviour, damage to property, racist or other offensive graffiti, arson, and verbal abuse. Racial harassment and the “less serious” racial violence are nevertheless the most dangerous forms as they contribute forcefully to the everyday racism that affects the people’s lives.

It should also be noted that racial violence is rarely a regularly occurring activity, as its patterns of frequency are influenced by a number of different, but interrelated factors including unemployment and immigration rates, the political climate and public discourse

⁸² Dutch NFP, (2002), EUMC, Data Collection Report on Racial Violence, p. 2

⁸³ UK NFP, (2002), EUMC, Data Collection Report on Racial Violence, p. 1

regarding migrants and foreigners, the activities and influence of anti-immigrant and extreme right wing organisations and activists, the way the media treat incidents of both xenophobic violence and crimes perpetrated by foreigners, and, most importantly, the responses racial violence by political authorities, the police, the legal system and institutions. However, these macro level factors cannot fully explain actual acts of racial or xenophobic violence without reference to the level of individual perpetrators in the context of the groups to which they belong, and on these youth groups and gangs in the context of their local communities, since "... racial and xenophobic violence is a typical group crime, and group dynamic processes obviously play an important role in the development leading up to such acts."⁸⁴

Racial violence may also be a contested term, as perpetrators may not define their acts as "racial", a term carrying negative connotations, either by claiming a different motive or, as is often the case with extreme right wing parliamentary parties by defining their discourse as "nationalist". Such is the case in Greece with the political party LAOS that vehemently denies allegations of racism, while adopting an anti-foreigner rhetoric which is justified by reference to the sovereign right of a country to define more or less arbitrarily the rights of foreign nationals.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS: THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

As we have already frequently stated, both data collection and research relating to acts of racial violence and harassment perpetrated against vulnerable social groups do not exist. The lack of relevant data and studies led us 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 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 by one expert assisted by a Focal Point responsible for Northern Greece. Furthermore, we also employ on a full-time basis a legal expert who monitors the Ministries of Justice and Public Order and the Athens Courts and Thessalonica.⁸⁵

The EUMC asked NFPs generally to avoid relying on media reports. However, in the case of racial violence the general lack of monitoring and data left us with no alternative but to use the media that frequently documents such cases. After consulting with the EUMC we included such reports in the data base, although we were concerned about both the quality and comparability of such data despite the fact that gradually we were able to examine and verify many of the reported cases ourselves.

The data collection used the following sources:

- **Ministry of Public Order**

⁸⁴ Tore Bjørge (1997), "Racist and Right-Wing Violence: Patterns, Perpetrators, and Responses", Oslo: Tano Aschehoug, p. 38

⁸⁵ Greek courts have no computerised system that would facilitate monitoring. The Athens Bar Association has recently created a data base that is, however, not searchable by keywords requiring knowledge of the details of a particular case. We are therefore forced to visit regularly and examine the Court Secretariat records in Athens and Thessalonica, but we have to rely on reports from other sources for litigation cases in other provinces.

Officials at Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Public Order gave us a “public relations” set of data, which was later also published on the internet⁸⁶, and asked for more time to prepare a “more suitable” dataset, which we have not received yet. When and if it becomes available to us it will be incorporated into the existing database. The dataset that was given to us includes general summary data on criminal activity incorporating the variable nationality, but not ethnicity. The Ministry informed us that neither ethnicity nor religion are variables that can be included in data made available to the public as it contains “sensitive information of a private nature”. Racial motivation is not recorded by police authorities and are no recorded arrests or prosecutions on the basis of the anti-racist criminal Law 927/1979. More –unspecified– data on crime are released to Europol and Eurostat, but are not publicly available.

- **Ministry of Justice**

The Ministry has no data on racial violence since any criminal act is prosecuted irrespective of race, religion or ethnic origin and there are no data on the motivation of crimes. No recent data were made available to us concerning prison population and statistics of convictions and acquittals from judicial authorities, as the Ministry has data only up to 1996 available also from the National Statistical Service. The Ministry has initiated a computerized data collection programme, however, staffing problems have led to the accumulation of more than 80,000 prisoner and litigation files that will take a considerable amount of time to process. Neither prisons nor the courts are linked to the Ministry electronically.

- **Ministry of Merchant Marine**

The Ministry of Merchant Marine has data concerning the number of foreigners arrested for illegal entry into the country that were made available to us and are also available in the form of Ministry press statements through the internet.⁸⁷ The Ministry also has case data, but no statistics, on acts of racial violence perpetrated by Coast Guard officers, but they are not publicly available, because they constitute part of an ongoing official investigation and/or they are protected by the personal data protection legislation.

- **The Greek Police**

Referred us to the Ministry of Public Order

- **The Greek Coast Guard**

Referred us to the Ministry of Merchant Marine

- **The Greek Border Guard**

Referred us to the Ministry of Public Order

- **The Greek Army (Ministry of Defence)**

The Greek Army has no public data that can be made available to us. There are no recorded incidents of racial violence or harassment.

- **The Office of the Ombudsman (Synigoros tou Politi)**

The Ombudsman has conducted a number of investigations and reports that were made available to us. However, it should be noted that as an independent public authority the

⁸⁶ Available in Greek only at <http://www.ydt.gr/index12.htm> (12/08/2002)

⁸⁷ Available in Greek only at <http://www.tidis.yen.gr/Upload/20021.TIFF/200219134236.tif> (01/09/2002)

mandate of the Ombudsman limits his jurisdiction to disputes between persons and public authorities and therefore cannot acknowledge or record allegations of racial violence or harassment perpetrated by persons, groups or organisations. It should also be noted that we have established a regular working relationship with the Ombudsman.

- **The National Commission for Human Rights**

The NCHR has compiled recommendations to the government and two Annual Reports that were made available to us. It should be noted that we have established a regular working relationship with the NCHR.

- **The Greek Office of the UNHCR**

The UNHCR retains records of human rights violations concerning asylum seekers and refugees including incidents or acts of racial violence perpetrated by public authorities only that were made available to us.

- **The National Statistical Service of Greece**

The NSSG has only information provided by the above competent Ministries.

- **National and international NGOs and IGOs**

The following NGOs and IGOs collect data either through their own investigations (Medecin du Monde, Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Helsinki Monitor, Human rights Watch, Amnesty International), in the form of complaints (Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Helsinki Monitor, Network for the Social Support of Migrants and Refugees) or from media reports (Greek Helsinki Monitor, Greek section of the Youth Against Racism in Europe, Anti-Racist Initiative of Thessalonica). Data were made available to us either in person or through their Internet websites and we have established a good working relationship with the Greek NGOs.

- **University Departments, Research Organisations and Institutes**

No studies have been carried out specifically concerning racial violence or harassment, although some studies incorporate theoretical elaborations or observations.

- **Media**

The absence of monitoring by any agency has made press reports the main initial source of information and newspaper articles and references constitute the bulk of the available data on racial violence after verification and in certain cases independent inquiry by our staff. We monitor the press regularly through a press clipping service and all publications that concern racist violence are recorded, substantiated, if possible and recorded on the RAXEN data base.

5. DATA ON RACIAL VIOLENCE

“In Greece “social reporting” and the systematic monitoring and measuring of changes in the social structure are largely underdeveloped. Up to the present there has been not been an effort to design comprehensive social surveys, particularly for social reporting purposes.”⁸⁸

In this section we will present a representative compilation of the most characteristic incidences of racial violence and harassment classified in sections according to perpetrator. The data are included in the RAXEN2 database or its updated version:

Police and Coast Guard

18/5/2000 Repatriated Greek history teacher P. Tsatsanides was arrested in a bus by policemen controlling identification cards and severely beaten because he asked them to behave politely.

25/06/2001 More than 100 asylum-seekers reported having suffered beatings and other inhuman treatment at a makeshift detention centre in Hania, Crete, upon arriving on the island at the end of May. The asylum-seekers also accused the officers of confiscating their personal belongings. Two months later an official inquiry found that five men and one officer of the Coast Guard had committed acts of violence and a criminal investigation was launched by the Naval Tribunal to establish possible criminal charges. The case is pending and all involved officers work normally having been transferred to other posts.

02/08/2001 Albanian, R. Tafili, was severely beaten by police officers at an Athens police station and hospitalised with a ruptured spleen.

04/08/2001 Two young Roma, Th. Stephanou and N. Theodoropoulos, were reportedly insulted and subjected to ill-treatment by police officers in the town of Argostoli on the island of Cephalonia.

24/10/2001 21 year old Roma Marinus Christopoulos was shot and killed by police officer G. Tylianakis in the area of Zefiri near Athens for failing to stop at a police roadblock. The police officer was charged with premeditated murder, but was released on bail. For some days the Roma population in the area rioted.

21/11/2001 20 year old S. Selnikou from Albania was shot and killed in a cafeteria in Athens by police officer I. Rizopoulos, allegedly because the gun was fired accidentally during a police control.

⁸⁸ Greece, National Center for Social Research, EuReporting Working Paper No. 8: Greece: Contributions to Social Reporting, Institutions, Activities, Publications (1999), p. 2

30/11/2001 Coast Guard officer Y. Markolefas was punished with 30 days confinement for "not preventing a refugee from cleaning his boots in public" after an incident shown on national and international television.

28/01/2002 150 heavily armed police officers raided a Roma settlement in Aspropygos near Athens causing a pregnant Rom woman, Y. Tsakiri, to have a miscarriage after an as yet unidentified officer reportedly kicked her repeatedly in the back and stomach, while many Roma residents were subjected to humiliating and harsh treatment.

03/04/2002 Albanians D. Blendar and S. Elidon filed charges against a police officer in Pylos for severely beating them during their detention as suspects of theft. Their wounds are substantiated by public hospital reports.

Trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children

We have included trafficking as a form of racial violence first because of its link to migration and the nationality of its victims who are never EU nationals, but usually of the CEEC, NIS and Albania; secondly, because the treatment of trafficked women and children by primarily Greek traffickers constitutes one of the most hideous forms of racial violence.

According to the US Department of State Annual Report on Trafficking (2001) Greece is primarily a destination country (Tier 3) and, to a lesser extent, also a transit country, for women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Major countries of origin include Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria, Albania, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Romania. Women from North Africa (Tunisia and Algeria), Asia (Thailand and the Philippines), the Middle East and other countries (Moldova, Georgia, Poland, and Kazakhstan) are also trafficked to Greece.

The Government is now beginning to take some steps toward combating trafficking, but although the Minister of Public Order, M. Crysochoides has described it as a first priority for the Greek police, the long awaited Bill on Trafficking⁸⁹ (announced in November 2001) has not yet been introduced to Parliament. The lack of a specific law makes the prosecution of traffickers very difficult and consequently there have been few arrests and prosecutions, while fines and sentences are minimal. Regarding protection, traditionally victims have been deported, but the amendment to the 2910/2001 Immigration Law in May 2002 allows victims to remain in the country if they press charges against their traffickers. The law also temporarily suspends deportation of victims if deportation raises humanitarian concerns.

⁸⁹ The Bill has been praised, but also criticised by the Ombudsman, the National Commission of Human Rights and Human Rights Watch: Recommendations Regarding the Draft Law for the "Fight against Trafficking of Human Beings and the Provision of Aid to the Victims of Crimes related to the Financial Exploitation of Sexual Life", March 8, 2002 available at http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/greece/greece_law.htm (11/09/2002)

However, there is no provision in the law or in the proposed Anti-Trafficking Bill for shelters or services to trafficking victims. Police academies included training on the identification and treatment of trafficked women in September 2001.⁹⁰

A recent study,⁹¹ suggests that the years 1991-1996 saw a 60% rise in the number of clients for prostitutes while sexual transactions saw a 100% rise. Another survey by G. Lazos found that 26% of prostitutes had been introduced to prostitution only after prolonged physical and psychological violence. Of the 13,677 foreign women brought to Greece as "artists" from 1991-1995, 1,277 were arrested on prostitution charges a number referring only to recorded arrests and not the hidden prostitution camouflaged by socially accepted professions such as waitresses, dancers, masseuses, hostesses, beauticians, strippers and actresses in pornographic videos.

Racial violence perpetrated by individual and communities

Individuals and small communities have perpetrated few, but significant acts of racial violence. Communities and even local authorities have also engaged in acts of racial violence particularly against the Roma.

The most extreme phenomenon of racial violence ever perpetrated by an individual in Greece concerns the case of P. Kazakos, who on the nights of October 19 and 21, 1999 shot a number of foreign migrants killing two and injuring seven, because, as he stated at court, he hated foreigners. Kazakos was convicted to double life imprisonment plus 25 years in prison, while his appeal trial is pending, scheduled for 6 November 2002. The three judges and a four-member jury of the Criminal Court of Athens reached unanimous guilty verdict on two counts of murder and seven of attempted murder, as well as several lesser charges. Interestingly, however, he was not charged with violation of the main anti-racist Law 927/1979, although the prosecution, described him as a "racist murderer".

Human rights NGOs have strongly criticised the government for failing to support the victims of the racist killings. Only one, Egyptian Shaad Abdelhani, 33, receives a small disability pension, as he is partly paralysed.

20/05/2000 Following a dispute over an illegally parked vehicle owned by a local Roma, the municipal council of Nea Kios adopted a resolution to evict all Roma from the land they own and live on in the region. The municipality also asked the police to assist in implementing their decision to evict all the Roma within 48 hours. The municipality further established "surveillance groups" and organised a series of demonstrations by local residents against Romani presence in the town. Roma were reportedly prevented from entering the town, shopkeepers were instructed not to sell anything to Roma, and Romani children were afraid to go to school. Ten days later, the neighbouring municipality of Nea Tirynta issued a similar ban on Romani presence, requiring that Roma leave the region by August 30, 2000. These

⁹⁰ US Department of State (June 2002), Annual Trafficking in Persons Report 2001, available at www.state.gov/documents/organization/10815.pdf (15/09/2002)

⁹¹ Emke-Poulopoulou I. (2001), "Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a country of destination and transit", MMO Working Paper No2, available from <http://www.uehr.panteion.gr/pdf/MMO-wp2.pdf> (14/09/2002), p.10

municipal decisions sparked off a series of violent incidents in the region. On June 9, 2000, in Nea Kios, a shack owned by a Romani man was burned to the ground during the night by unknown perpetrators. On June 15, a seventeen-year-old Romani youth was shot and wounded by two non-Romani youth in Nea Kios. The Ombudsman issued a report on the events in Nea Kios characterising the municipal council's action as "illegal". On June 30, 15 lawyers and politicians submitted a signed complaint to the public prosecutor's office in Nafplion asking for criminal charges to be filed against Municipal officials according to anti-racist Law 927/1979.

27/03/2001 In Lesvos two police officers arrested A. Hodi, aged 24, an documented Albanian migrant, who had reported to the police that he and some of his compatriots had been denied entry to a night-club because of their nationality. The two officers allegedly punched and beat him with truncheons threatening him with summary deportation if he insisted filing his complaint. Later he was released severely injured and had to be admitted to hospital. A. Hodi filed charges against the policemen and criminal proceedings on charges of "torture and other offences against human dignity" under Article 137A of the Greek Penal Code were instigated against the police officers. Similar charges were brought against one more police officers who was present at the police station while A. Hodi was being beaten. A. Hodi subsequently withdrew a criminal complaint he had filed against the police officers after the latter apologised publicly and paid his hospital fees. However, the withdrawal of the complaint has not halted criminal proceedings. An official inquiry by the Police recommended that one officer be dismissed from service, and the other police officers receives lesser sanctions. Local newspapers strongly supported the officer who was dismissed.⁹²

30/07/2001 A fight broke out at a bar in Mytilene, involving A. Hodi and a group of Albanian friends and the owner and employees of a bar, in which five or six Greek men were wounded, one of them seriously. According to the owner of the bar, Arjan Hodi and his companions had tried to force their way into the bar, while the Albanians claimed that the dispute had started because they had been refused entry because of their nationality. Three days later A. Hodi and three other Albanians were tried in Mytilene on charges of forming a criminal association, possession and use of weapons, threat and causing grievous bodily injuries. Three were tried without a defence lawyer, since they were unable to provide documented proof that they lacked sufficient funds and therefore were not eligible for legal aid. The four defendants were convicted, sentenced to suspended 37 months imprisonment each and deported from Greece immediately. Furious crowds tried to lynch the four defendants on their way to and from the court room and the trial took place under strict security measures. Television showed angry local citizens with shotguns making threatening statements about Albanians and other immigrant workers. In the meantime a during a meeting held at the nearby village of Loutra it was decided to expel some 150 Albanians, including families and children from the village in

⁹² Amnesty International Report Amnesty International February 2002 AI Index: EUR 25/003/2002 [http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/index/EUR250032002ENGLISH/\\$File/EUR2500302.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/index/EUR250032002ENGLISH/$File/EUR2500302.pdf), p.1

48 hours. The government and most politicians, as well as the media, accused the villagers of racism.⁹³

13/09/2001 The municipal authorities of Aspropyrgos destroyed 6 makeshift Roma huts and their possessions. Aspropyrgos Mayor G. Liakos had conducted similar actions in February 1999 and July 2000. The Ombudsman and the Greek Helsinki Monitor asked the Public Prosecutor's Office to initiate an ex officio prosecution, applying the in flagrante procedure, according to Law 2910/2001, Article 39, Paragraph 4 in reference to the racist offences contained in Articles 1 to 3 of Law 927/1979, as well as Greek Penal Code Articles 241 (violation of domestic asylum), 259 (violation of duty), 331 (self-administration of justice), 381-382 (destruction of foreign property), and 137A, paragraphs 1 and 3 (ill-treatment-based upon the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights).

17/11/2001 A group of Greeks attacked five Albanian migrant workers who were leaving from a night club in Gera village on Lesbos, stabbing one of them with a knife, and seriously wounding him. Two of the Albanians were taken to hospital for treatment. Four Greeks were arrested; they reportedly claimed that the Albanians had initiated the fight. However, witnesses claimed that the Greeks had attacked the Albanians for having "dared" to enter a club reserved for Greeks.⁹⁴

01/04/2002 The Municipal Council of Lehena and Manolada asked for the eviction of all foreign migrants from the area arguing that they constitute a public health hazard unless their dwellings can be subject to inspections. Migrant workers are employed there as seasonal agricultural workers and live in makeshift huts in the fields without sanitary facilities.

28/05/2002 At the International Book Fair held annually in Thessalonica a group of around 100 persons led by a well known extreme-right activist K. Velopoulos entered the stand where the publications from Balkan countries were and tore and burned books from Bulgaria, Romania and FYROM, the content of which was considered to be insulting. Employees of the Fair were verbally harassed, with comments like "are you Greek or Bulgarian?".

Religion and intolerance

Religion plays a significant role in social life, even if individuals tend to have little regard for it in their private life. The role of religion is primarily symbolical. The Constitution starts by revoking the Holy Trinity and the Orthodox faith is attributed the privileged status of "prevailing religion". The national myth has since the formation of the Greek state in the 19th century awarded a prominent position to religion as the "backbone of the nation", the only surviving Greek public institution after the Ottoman conquest. The separation of the Greek Church from the cosmopolitan Patriarchate of Constantinople allowed it to develop into a

⁹³ *ibid.*, p.3

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p.3

national religion articulating nation and faith into the single most important attribute of “Greekness”.

In this context the Orthodox Church finds it increasingly difficult to tolerate the existence of any other religion, except Islam and Judaism for historical reasons, let alone other Christian denominations. Consequently, both Greeks and foreigners who are not Christian Orthodox may face harassment or discrimination that will very rarely be open.

Asylum seekers: Reception and Detention Centres

The conditions under which asylum seekers are received and treated is a measure of the country’s humanitarian ethos, its level of tolerance and its respect for human rights. Unfortunately, reports from a variety of international organisations and NGOs like the European Council’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture Degrading Treatment or Inhuman Punishment (CPT), the UN Committee for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT), Amnesty International, the International Helsinki Monitor, Human Rights Watch and others rate Greece as a country with a seriously flawed record and little regard in its treatment of asylum seekers.

The absence of any reception centres at the border regions led the Police and Coast Guard to use various buildings such as basements, storage facilities, deserted industrial facilities, football grounds, etc. as temporary detention centres. Living conditions in these are appalling and the situation is usually aggravated because most of those crossing the border illegally already face health problems. The example of Vena in Thrace, repeatedly reported by the Medecin du Monde is typical; over 200 persons detained in a very narrow space had recently to brake the locks because of the lack of fresh air. Similar conditions apply for the Athens airport and other detention facilities that have been criticised in the strongest possible terms by all human rights organisations.

It should be also be noted that the border between Greece and Turkey is still laid with mines, resulting in frequent deaths of people trying to cross it. According to a survey conducted by the Medecin du Monde (based on hospital records and newspaper reports) 56 people have been killed and 49 wounded in mine explosions since May 1994 were all near the Turkish border. These minefields are only marked on the Greek side. On March 20, 2002, the Greek Parliament ratified the Ottawa Convention, banning the use of anti-personnel mines and it is hoped that Turkey will soon reciprocate.

The extreme right in Greece

The traditional topographic classification of the political spectrum into a “right”, a “centre” and a “left” was absent from Greek politics dominated by issues linked to the nation building process and economic reform (transition from an agrarian to a modern economy) until almost the interwar years. The two main political forces dominating Greek politics until World War II were then categorised according to their policies vis-à-vis the modernisation drive, however, both adopted in different ways the national myth and irredentist aspirations.

During the political cum economic crisis of the 1930s General I. Metaxas using a threatened general strike by the communists as pretext, persuaded the king on Aug. 4, 1936, to suspend key articles of the constitution. This was the beginning of a dictatorship which lasted four and a half years, till the occupation of the country by the Axis forces, in 1941.

The Metaxas dictatorship is heralded by most historians as the first appearance of the extreme right in Greece. However, the strong economic and political links to Britain coupled with Italy's aggressively expansionist policies did not allow the regime to align with either the Italian or German regimes established during the same period. On the contrary soon after the outbreak of the II WW Italy invaded Greece forcing Metaxas into a defensive war that was soon to become an anti-fascist struggle mobilising the entire population and resulting into a counter offensive and the defeat of the Italian forces in Albania.

During the German occupation of Greece the communist party organised the partisan movement and gradually became identified with the struggle for national liberation invoking memories of the Greek revolt against the Ottoman empire. After the war as the conflict between the pro-communist and anti-communist escalated leading eventually to the bitter three year civil war (1946-1949) both sides laid claim to the same nationalist ideology.

Greece emerged from the civil as a "dual society": the defeated pro-communist rebels were tarnished with the label of national traitor, while the victors took over the state, which did not merely remain, as always, at the centre of clientelist policies, but, in addition, assumed an active ideological role in the perpetuation of the division between the losers and the winners of the war, by offering jobs and state subsidies to ones, repudiating and purging the others, long after the end of the hostilities. Almost one third of the civil servants were fired between 1946 and 1948 and an official "certificate of loyalty to the nation" (established by the Law 509/1947) was required not only for a job in the civil service, but also for acquiring a driving license or for the participation at University entrance examinations.

The dictatorship of the colonels (1967-1974) imposed its authoritarian yoke invoking as the official alibi the "communist menace" primarily directed not at socialist reform, but "national treason" with the presumed surrender of national sovereignty to neighbouring socialist, but traditionally hostile countries (i.e. Bulgaria). However, as the junta extended political persecution against the whole political spectrum, including the conservative citizens and politicians, after its collapse, the old ideological recipe of legitimation became unusable. The junta, politically isolated, collapsed after its failed coup d'Etat in Cyprus and the consecutive Turkish invasion ironically charged with similar "national treason" charges to those that legitimated its own rise to power.

The first post-dictatorship government led by the conservative K. Karamanlis opted for the modernisation of state structures, investing especially in the perspective of the admission of Greece in the European Communities. In order to achieve the necessary "European – democratic" acceptance the communist party was soon legalised and political institutions became more tolerant.

More than ten years passed before the first extreme right political manifestations appeared in the form of very small and marginalised organisations that never enjoyed popular support and were mostly ridiculed by media and opinion leaders.

During the late 1990s, however, the appearance of racial incidents and the growth of xenophobic discourse coupled with the deregulation of the electronic media allowed some members of extreme right wing organisations to enter the dominant political discourse primarily by opening small TV stations and later by occasionally entering debates held at major TV stations, thus enlarging their potential audience.

Generally, however, extreme right wing organisations remain politically marginal and enjoy minimal popular support, as was evident in successive elections and Euro elections in which such groups participated without managing to achieve more than a couple of thousand votes, since their ultra-nationalist rhetoric actively competing with the nationalist discourse of the main political parties is forced to such extremes as to become ridiculous.

The only party that seems to be growing in popularity with a mainly anti-foreigner nationalist platform – largely copying the French “Front National” – is “LAOS”⁹⁵ (Popular Orthodox Alarm). Its leader George Karatzaferis owns a small TV station (TILEASTY former TELECITY) and is a member of the Greek Parliament elected with and later expelled from the main conservative opposition party “New Democracy”. Its participation for the first time in the prefectural and municipal elections on October 13 will show its potential, which according to a recent opinion poll⁹⁶ is impressive (voting intention 10.3%).

Four main small right wing extremist organisations are active in Greece:

“Chrysi Avgi”⁹⁷ (Golden Dawn) is the largest neo-Nazi organisation with about 300 active members. It is considered by anti-fascist NGOs responsible for several cases of verbal intimidation and some attacks during the past two years against migrants, foreigners and left wing demonstrators. However, the police has no record of a particular incident of racial violence involving members of this organisation. On June 16 and February 2, 2001 it organised small demonstrations against the migrants’ legalisation, and on April 9, 2002 a rally in support of the French “Front National” and Le Pen’s campaign for the French Presidency.

“Proti Grammi”⁹⁸ (Front Line) is an ultranationalist organisation. It participated in the last parliamentary elections receiving approximately 12.000 votes and during the 1999 Euro elections when it received approximately 48.000 votes.

“Elliniko Metopo”⁹⁹ (Greek Front) a new ultranationalist organization producing a newspaper, a webpage and through its spokesman M. Vouridis active in the media especially TV. It will participate in the forthcoming municipal and prefectural elections on a broadly anti-immigration platform. The organisation claims to be related to the French “Front National”.

⁹⁵ <http://www.karatzaferis.gr>

⁹⁶ Kappa Research on behalf of the National Radio and Television Corp. conducted this survey on August 22, 2002.

⁹⁷ <http://go.to/4thAugust>; WAP site <http://www.wapdrive.com/andmark/metaxas> ; <http://www.xrushaugh.org/>

⁹⁸ <http://www.hellas.org>

⁹⁹ <http://www.metopo.gr> and <http://www.e-grammes.gr>

NON EXISTING DATA SOURCES

The lack of statistical and other data concerning racial violence are due to:

- absence of public monitoring mechanisms and specialised bodies,
- absence or technical deficiencies in the electronic recording of data where it exists,
- inadequate co-ordination of the competent authorities on collecting data and information,
- lack of interest in collecting data by the competent public authorities¹⁰⁰,
- lack of funding for scientific research¹⁰¹,
- the nature of racial violence that is frequently unrecorded.

Moreover, even in cases where data exist, public officials as a general rule are very hesitant to release information largely due to a deep rooted fear of the possible consequences of releasing “state documents” without authorization from a higher authority. The lack of availability and reliability of data coupled with the unwillingness to disclose existing information has not only affected our own research, but anyone contemplating research in issues of discrimination and racism and especially academic research that has the tendency to refrain from the huge effort required to conduct systematic research into these phenomena; however, such research is essential for the formulation of adequate and effective policies and measures against discrimination.

Therefore, our analysis utilises any and all relevant information and research finding. We have deliberately chosen to use all available sources not simply to “make up” for the lack of data, but to approach our subject matter as comprehensively as possible.

¹⁰⁰ Officials in several public authorities seemed genuinely puzzled at our insistence for reliable data and our scrutiny of the methods used in their data collection. We could argue that in Greece there is a deeply rooted suspicion of “statistics” that can perhaps be explained with reference to the political use of statistics in the not too distant past.

¹⁰¹ Primarily those who fund it largely determine the subject matter and focus of scientific research. Consequently, it seems that neither the relevant national public authorities nor private institutions or social partner organisations have considered discrimination in employment to merit further attention.

6. COMBATING RACISM - SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

Very few projects or initiatives combating racial violence and harassment per se can be cited. However, all projects combating racism and supporting vulnerable groups indirectly assist in the fight against racial violence. Such projects date from 1994 and are fully or partly financed by the EU. In this section we will briefly present the most important projects, actions and initiatives.

I. LARGE SCALE PROJECTS

1. **The EQUAL Initiative** has approved four projects to develop actions combating racism and xenophobia in the strands “Combating Racism and Xenophobia in connection to the Labour Market” and “Support of Social and Professional Integration of Asylum Seekers”. 18% of approved projects¹⁰² in all strands relate to vulnerable social groups (migrants and refugees, religious minorities, repatriated ethnic Greeks). However, as we have discovered by contacting all migrant organisations in Greece, very few participate or are even aware of EU-funded projects. Representatives of migrant community organisations suggested to us that this is mainly due to the inadequate and inappropriate dissemination of information. The approved projects are the following:

1. “Dream”: Combating racism and xenophobia in the media; the agency responsible is the Vocational Training Centre “DEMETRA”; the project is to be implemented in Athens, Thessalonica and Volos with actions mainly focused on foreign migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, repatriated and migrant ethnic Greeks.
2. “Forum on Social Cohesion”: Combating racism and xenophobia in the media; the agency responsible is the Athens News Agency; the project is to be implemented in Attica with actions mainly focused on foreign migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, repatriated and migrant ethnic Greeks.
3. “Post-Information Centre for Immigrants – Repatriated – Refugees”: Developing vocational skills as a means of combating racism and xenophobia; the agency responsible is the Greek Mission of the International Organisation of Migration; the project will cover the whole of Greece with actions mainly focused on foreign migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, repatriated and migrant ethnic Greeks.
4. “Web – Feedback”: Use of the internet for combating racism and xenophobia; the agency responsible is the Greek Red Cross; the project will cover the whole of Greece with actions addressing asylum seekers exclusively.

We will be monitoring closely the implementation of these projects scheduled to start in late 2002 closely.

¹⁰² Information on the approved EQUAL Projects in Greek only available at <http://www.labor-ministry.gr/ekt/equal/index.htm> (22/04/2002)

2. The Integrated Action Plan for the Roma¹⁰³ includes measures and practices to be implemented by various national actors including local authorities, prefectures, NGOs and others for the improvement of the social situation of the Roma population in Greece. It is a six-year (2001-2008) plan to be financed partly from the 3rd Community Support Framework and partly from national funds to a total 35 MEURO. Actions are aimed at the creation of **infrastructure** (housing and Roma support centres) and the provision of **services** (training, employment, adult education, etc). The project is the result of a long consultation process between the government, Local Authorities, the ROMANET network and the national Federation of Greek Roma Associations. The measures for **services in employment** include interventions for pre-training, training, access to employment, counselling and supporting services and education of Roma as well as relevant organizations and individuals involved. The Action Plan appears to be well designed and it is supervised directly by the Prime Minister's Office as a sign of the importance attached to it by the government.

Most of the actions are focused on housing and sanitary facilities. Since 1999 the state has provided Roma with 2,500 pre-fabricated houses in settlements around Greece. Meanwhile, a recent Ministerial Decision 18830/09-05-02 defined the terms for granting 3,500 housing loans to Greek Roma, 80% of the loans' interest being subsidised by the state. However, a major problem that remains to be solved is the legal definition of the Roma population, which given the lack of demographic and other statistical data will prove to be a daunting task that may seriously delay or even endanger this project. In this context the competent agency EETAA has already tendered a demographic study to be conducted in 2003.

In this context the Rom Municipal Network has started during 2002 to implement an information, training and awareness campaign¹⁰⁴ addressed to local communities. Meetings are held by the Network in co-operation with the Greek Committee for Co-operation with UNICEF, and the Greek Social Workers' Association, under the title "Travelogue for Combating Social Exclusion and for the Social Integration of the Greek Roma". The three meetings held up to this moment have been attended by over 400 people, while another three meetings are pending in 2002 and 2003. These meetings are intended to mobilise local opinion makers, train local officials and raise public awareness on issues that concern the Greek Roma. The contribution of the Roma to local community development is given particular emphasis.

3. The National Action Plan for Employment 2001 (and the subsequent NAP for Employment 2002) co-funded by the 3rd Community Support Framework introduce a novel approach based on the following:

"Neither economic growth nor technological progress is enough in itself to limit inequality and poverty and to combat the problem of social exclusion. New disparities are now developing alongside the old, some of them transitory and others permanent. If ignored,

¹⁰³ EETAA (2001): "Integrated Action Plan for the Greek Roma", Athens: EETAA

¹⁰⁴ There is no published information available. For more details please contact the NFP (ind@acn.gr)

they are capable of jeopardising social cohesion and impeding economic growth. Precisely because the causes of poverty are complex, and very often differ among the various vulnerable groups within the population, our policy focuses on - and is specifically designed for - particular target groups. The actions intending to promote employment among the vulnerable groups involve a new method of approaching these groups: facilitating the admission to programmes of employment, work experience and vocational training; activating the individual to develop his/her skills; participation in programmes of special 'empowerment' themes, such as boosting self-confidence, psychological support, resolving legal issues and accessing health services; combating racism and xenophobia in the labour market. Specifically: Provisions of support services; Integrating programmes; Pre-training preparation and developing language skills; Employment subsidy.”¹⁰⁵

The most significant element of the 2001 and 2002 National Action Plans is that the need for positive action on combating racism and discrimination is acknowledged.

COMMENTS

In view of the numbers of individuals affected by discrimination it is obvious that a greater and more systematic effort is required to significantly improve the situation. NGOs and migrant community organisations have repeatedly stressed that EU financed projects are simply not sufficient to combat discrimination and racism in any area of social life. They have also pointed out to the inadequate dissemination of information¹⁰⁶ claiming that most Roma and migrants learn little about these projects who target and affect very small numbers anyway.

It should also be noted that the evaluation results of such projects and initiatives should also be publicly available (for instance on the project's or the funding authority's website) to allow public scrutiny of their impact and effectiveness especially since large sums of public funds are used. The common practice of simply announcing the number of beneficiaries and the cost of actions is not sufficient.

Finally we should point to the absence of any single central authority co-ordinating the efforts of nationally controlled projects and programmes. It is assumed that projects selected, financed and evaluated directly by EU DGs are coordinated by the relevant DG, however, the absence of such a national authority leads frequently to the duplication of efforts, the waste of valuable resources and most importantly hinders the flow of information and data concerning the actions and results of such projects and programmes.

¹⁰⁵ Ministry of Labour and Social Security (2001), National Action Plan for Employment 2001, p.19 available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2002/may/nap2002/nap2001_el_en.pdf (14/09/2002)

¹⁰⁶ Projects results are “disseminated” through elaborate conferences, the internet or leaflets left in local authority offices and thus beyond the “reach” of most members of vulnerable social groups. Additionally, very few projects are in fact disseminated in any language other than Greek rendering them incomprehensible to most migrants or Roma who cannot read well or at all.

II. ACTIVITIES OF PUBLIC BODIES

- 1. The Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED)¹⁰⁷** operates since 1994 a number of vocational training and employment projects and programmes aimed at social groups facing or endangered with social exclusion in the labour market. However, OAED has not implemented any projects dealing directly with issues of racial violence, harassment and intimidation at the work place.

Generally the anti-discrimination activities of the Manpower Employment Organisation concerning vocational training and employment are significant, but limited to a very small number of beneficiaries and thus acting more as an example of good practice than actually making a difference in the employment situation of vulnerable groups. Furthermore these activities are neither monitored or externally evaluated and relevant records or data are not available.

The General Secretariat for Adult Education¹⁰⁸ is a public body catering primarily to the needs of Roma and repatriated ethnic Greeks. It focuses on employment and vocational training issues, but has carried out no work on racial violence or harassment. Like OAED the beneficiaries are few and the operations and activities are not externally evaluated. There are no available statistical data concerning its activities.

The Labour Inspectorate Body¹⁰⁹ supervised by the Ministry of Labour is responsible for receiving and examining complaints related to employers' abuses and is also empowered to examine on its own initiative various issues regarding the labour market. This body could, potentially, monitor racial violence, harassment and intimidation at the workplace.

- 2. The Research Centre for Equality Issues¹¹⁰ (KETHI)** is a public body that has set up Information Centres for women in co-operation with the General Secretariat for Equality within the framework of the NOW (New Opportunities for Women) Community Initiative in the cities of Athens, Thessalonica, Patras, Herakleion and Volos. Since 2000 their operation has been partly financed by 3rd Community Support Framework funds. The Centres address the needs of: (i) women seeking legal aid; (ii) women residing in remote communities; (iii) women who are in danger of social exclusion, such as heads of single-parent families; immigrants and repatriates; the victims of domestic or other kinds of violence; women released from prison. The Information Centres: (i) employ specialist personnel, trained in the provision of information, advice and support of women in employment and social incorporation; (ii) ease the re-integration of women into the labour

¹⁰⁷ Directorate for Special Social Groups responsible for the planning, implementation, coordination of the supporting programmes and measures (according to Laws 2643/98, 1262/82 and Presidential Decrees 246/86, 1836/89, 1892/90, 2081/92, 2431/96 and 33485/98). More information available at <http://www.oaed.gr> (10/05/2002)

¹⁰⁸ More information available on line in both Greek and English at <http://www.gsae.edu.gr> (28/06/2002)

¹⁰⁹ Established by Law 2639/98. More information available at www.labor-ministry.gr (22/06/2002)

¹¹⁰ More information available on line in both Greek and English at <http://www.kethi.gr> (21/06/2002)

market; (iii) promote women's entrepreneurial activities; (iv) motivate unemployed women towards the assertion of their personal and professional future; (v) aid women with psychological and social problems. KETHI has made available to us some statistical data and other information concerning its activities. However, the data refer to earlier periods (1995-1998) and are not collected systematically due to staffing shortages.

- 3. The Ministry of Public Order** has organised a variety of training seminars for civilian staff and the police concerning the rights of asylum seekers, refugees, women etc, mainly through actions funded by the EU (ULYSSES Programme, STOP), in co-operation with agencies such as the Greek Council for Refugees, the Greek mission of the International Organisation of Migration etc.

In April 2001 the Ministry formed the Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings (OKEA) in order to study the phenomenon of trafficking in Greece and develop an effective national plan of action in co-operation with national, European and international law enforcement agencies. The Task Force concluded its study with the drafting of an anti-trafficking Bill that was adopted by the Ministry and is expected to be tabled to the Greek Parliament. The Task Force has already compiled a data base concerning trafficking and developed plans for the creation of a new police department specialising in trafficking. Additionally it has prepared a new syllabus for the Police Academy concerning sexual exploitation and trafficking and a awareness raising campaign for the general public. The Task Force is composed of high ranking officers of the Greek Police, representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Public Order, the General Secretariat for Equality, the International Organisation of Migration and specialist experts.

COMMENTS

It is evident that the number and scope of public bodies involved in combating racism and discrimination and promoting diversity and equality in employment is limited. We have not included the Ombudsman's Office, because it does not deal directly with issues concerning employment as its legal mandate limits its powers to intervene only between individuals and public authorities. Since none of the vulnerable groups in question has until now been employed or tried to be employed in the public sector there have been no such cases brought before it. However, the Ombudsman has dealt repeatedly with issues concerning the regularisation process itself and has highlighted in its Special Report the problems in the application of Law 2910/2001. Accordingly, the government amended the law on May 1, 2002 improving the relevant procedures and automatically extended the validity of all residence and work permits until the end of 2002, since it was proved impossible to examine existing and new applications before that time due to the complexity of the procedures and the lack of an appropriate computerised process¹¹¹.

¹¹¹ Until today all residence and work permits are handwritten (more than 700,000). The burden added to the workload of the civil servants engaged in the process and the unavoidable delays in the process are immense.

III. ACTIVITIES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1. **Local Councils for the Prevention of Crime**¹¹², are to be established according to Law 2910/2001 in every Municipality, the aims of which include, *inter alia*, combating racism and violence. Ten Municipalities have formed such councils, but the process is still in its early stages of development.
2. **“Anti-racist Charter for Local Authorities”**: In view of the October 2002 municipal elections the “Citizens’ Movement against Racism” drew up in May 2002 this charter and urged candidates to incorporate it into their election programmes and campaigns. Many candidates supported by PASOK and/or left wing party SYN have signed the charter.
3. **The Municipality of Rahes**, on the island of Ikaria, actively supported the creation of the association “Multi-National Workers of Ikaria”.
4. **The Municipalities of Daphne and Nea Smyrni**, in the greater Athens metropolitan area, actively supported the creation of the “Greek-Kurdish Solidarity Association”.

Local authorities have also implemented a large number of EU financed projects for the improvement of the social integration of vulnerable social groups usually involving vocational training and social support structures. Some examples are the following:

1. **Advisory Service**¹¹³ set up in the Municipality of Perama in the context of a transnational project aiming at the support of individuals who experience discrimination and social exclusion. Among the objectives of the project were to establish an "access point" in the form of an advisory service for persons wishing to report incidents of discrimination and social exclusion in employment and housing, seeking psychological and legal support, while also providing " first hand" advice to these persons regarding their legal, civil and financial rights and direct them to appropriate agencies for further advice and help, in order to establish their rights and resolve conflict. However, although the reported incidents will be registered in a data bank in order to derive a typology of discrimination situations no such information is as yet available and the project has not yet been evaluated. In the interview we held with the project manager we were informed that there have been only a few reports of incidents of discrimination in employment. It was suggested that the low response rate could be attributed to the very limited (if any) action that could be taken to redress the reported problem.

¹¹² There is no published information available. For more details please contact the NFP (ind@acn.gr)

¹¹³ More information available on line in both Greek and English at <http://www.ombudsman.gr> (01/06/2002)

2. **Information Material** in the form of booklets in three languages, Greek, Turkish and Russian, providing information on local government, legislation, rights and employment were published by the Municipality of Sapes¹¹⁴ in the context of the project “Backing up a new life – integration of refugees entering through North Eastern Greece” has published three information booklets. They address immigrants, refugees and the Muslims living in the area and are provided free of charge. Sapes’ population is estimated at: 40% Christian; 35% Muslim; 25% ethnic Greek repatriates. This activity, coupled with vocational training programmes and other initiatives are aimed at improving co-existence of the different ethnic, religious and cultural social groups in the area. It is an example of good practices on the part of the municipality in its attempt to undertake a new role for local governments on immigrant and refugee issues.

3. **Service Centre (KYA)** set up by the Municipality of Agia Varvara¹¹⁵ targeting socially vulnerable groups threatened by unemployment. The Centre attempts to bring in touch local businesses and unemployed. This is a positive attempt to inform and advise both prospective employers and the unemployed, who find a source of support in the Centre. Furthermore, KYA is a permanent structure, which not only organises the local market within a framework of co-operation and mutual support, but also plays a significant part in the sensitisation of businesses and the local community in general as regards training and employment.

II. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Various other organisations such as NGOs, Trade Unions and Migrant Organisations are also engaged in work combating racism. Examples are:

1. **The “Centre for the Information and Support of Repatriates” (KEPYP)**¹¹⁶ is one of the most active NGOs mainly in the field of the social integration of repatriates, including refugees and immigrants. KEPYP is active in many fields and particularly the employment of repatriates, as well as other refugee and migrants. It provides information, and advisory and psychological/social support, professional orientation and support of new business initiatives. The Centre operates a Greek language education programme and is a certified entity for the provision of Support Services for the Exclusion from the Labour Market EU project (sub-project2: repatriates, migrants, refugees), and a leader at the national level for the Integra project.
2. **The General Confederation of Workers** has established a Migrants’ Office¹¹⁷ as part of the Information Centre for Workers and the Unemployed. At present staffing shortages allows the Office to disseminate only information, but in the future migrants will also be able to register complaints on racist treatment or harassment.

¹¹⁴ More information available on line in both Greek and English at <http://www.dsapes.gr> (05/06/2002)

¹¹⁵ More information available on line in both Greek and English at <http://www.agiavarvara.gr> (01/05/2002)

¹¹⁶ More information available on line in both Greek and English at <http://www.mitnet.gr/kepyp> (03/05/2002)

¹¹⁷ More information available on line in Greek at http://www.gsee.gr/KEPEA/kepea/Greek/gpe_index.htm (02/04/2002)

3. **The Piraeus Labour Centre** (a social partner organisation) has set up a similar Migrants Office since 1998.
4. **The Foreign Women's Network**¹¹⁸ (NGO) is a non-profit organization run by and for foreign women, provides in person and through the Internet information on employment and various other matters informing Greek state agencies, private enterprise and NGOs of the needs, aspirations and the potential of the foreign community.
5. **The Annual 3-day Anti-Racist Festival**, organised jointly by the "Social Support Network for migrants and refugees" (part of the Greek NFP structure) and migrants' organisations.
6. **STOP Now!** Campaign against trafficking carried out by the Research and Action Centre for Peace.
7. Other active NGOs include the "Support Centre for Repatriates and Migrants of the Orthodox Church of Greece", the "Ecumenical Project for Refugees of the Orthodox Church of Greece", the Greek "Anti-Poverty Network" and the "Nostos Society of Social and Cultural Support of Repatriates" who have carried out various anti-racist projects none, however, aimed specifically at racial violence.

¹¹⁸ More information available on line in both Greek and English at <http://www.foreign-womens-network.gr> (01/03/2002)

7. RACIAL VIOLENCE: THE SITUATION TODAY

“To tolerate someone is an act of power; to be tolerated is an acceptance of weakness.”¹¹⁹

The country specific historical development of the social and cultural conditions for the development of racist and xenophobic attitudes has already been briefly outlined in Chapter 3 (The extreme right in Greece). On the basis of this evidence, intolerance and xenophobia seem to relate not to any assumed supremacy of "races" embedded in the collective unconscious, but rather to the “unbridgeable” difference between ethnic, religious and cultural groups. This difference presented as the “natural” consequence of conscious or unconscious fears serves to justify xenophobic attitudes and racist behaviours.

However, as Hervik points out: “Xenophobia is not natural but naturalized. Naturalizing xenophobia is precisely what cultural fundamentalism is about. Cultural fundamentalism is Verena Stolcke’s term for denoting the shift of rhetoric of the political right (Stolcke 1995). “Rather than asserting different endowment of human races, contemporary cultural fundamentalism emphasizes differences of cultural heritage and their incommensurability” (ibid.:4). Cultural fundamentalism recognizes the equal status and rights of the other, but stresses the incommensurability of cultures in such a way that the alien is opposed to the natural. People naturally belong to certain territories. When they are deterritorialized, the incommensurable cultures will evoke antagonistic reactions unless their bearers assimilate (Gullestad and Hervik 2002). Karin Norman has pointed out that if xenophobia is in play, then one would avoid “the foreign” at all costs, but in the case of refugees and immigrants from third world, hostility and aversion still makes room for contact, but then at some historically defined moment there is an attack. This then is not xenophobia. “Xenohostility” would be a more appropriate concept than the medicalizing xenophobia. (Norman 2002:11). Also, if xenophobia is a medical condition, any foreigners will cause outbursts of “xenophobia”, but this xenophobia is selective following a hierarchy of rejected groups.”¹²⁰

This seems to be often the case in Greece that seems strangely to tolerate certain migrant groups who have “behaved” themselves remaining relatively invisible and making no demands, even when they had been exploited and cheated. Those, on the other hand, that seek to actively claim and protect rights are seen as a threat and treated with hostility and suspicion. Thus, the rise of racism and xenophobia may also be related to the improvement of the vulnerable groups’ social status and conditions of life. Furthermore, the naturalisation of racism has another intended effect: it relieves opinion leaders and policy makers from responsibility, while also indirectly absolving even individuals and groups for their behaviour.

The data presented indicates that until today public authorities (national and local) and particularly the police are responsible for more incidents of racial violence than

¹¹⁹ Walzer, M. (1997), “On Toleration”, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p.52

¹²⁰ Hervik P., “Limits of Tolerance and Limited Tolerance:How tolerant are the Danes?”, The Board for Ethnic Equality, p.12, available at <http://www.evensfoundation.be/Commonlang/Hervik%20.pdf> (10/08/2002)

individuals or social groups. State racist violence is mainly expressed through the police, the Coast and Border Guards policing sea and land borders. It is also expressed through actions of local authority officials constituting discrimination against individuals or groups. For the Greek context this is not surprising: police and public authorities lack adequate training and funding. Furthermore, working conditions for the police are often also very bad with long hours and difficult conditions without overtime pay or other benefits. As a militarily organised and disciplined body, the police reacts more like a military than a civilian organisation exercising primarily a repressive rather than a communal and preventive role. Consequently, the public and especially vulnerable social groups come to view the police as a threat. These problems will persist despite good intentions by police officers and policy makers so long as the police retain its military structure and organisation that prevents any attempts to reform it.

Existing data also indicates that incidents of racial violence perpetrated by individuals or groups few. Nevertheless, racist and xenophobic attitudes are on the rise as Eurobarometer reports and other studies indicate. In fact negative attitudes towards minority groups are above the EU average with the lowest percentage of people classified as “tolerant” (7%), a high percentage of “intolerant” (27%) and “ambivalent” (43%), while those described as “passively tolerant” are only half the EU average.¹²¹

This may also be partly attributed to media influence: “The general media discourse is characterised by the common use of overtly racist and offensive language. ‘Political correctness’ or minority sensitivity is rejected out-of-hand, especially by tabloids and newspapers adopting extreme nationalist views. Accusations of racism are denied and any anti-racist argument is turned on its head; authors are not racists, they simply point to the danger or damage inflicted to the country and its people by foreigners.”¹²² Foreign migrants and refugees as well as the Muslim minority have been a favourite target for nationalists from both the right and the left, some of which are academics and influential politicians who frequently air their views on TV chat shows.

On the other hand one cannot fail to notice also a positive attitude towards migrants and refugees, predominantly in a philanthropic sense. The lack of adequate facilities and provision by the state to cater for the thousands of asylum seekers has created a public climate of compassion as many of them are forced to sleep in parks and on pavements under harsh weather conditions.

At the same time, however, the government, influential opinion leaders (even bishops) and politicians have been voicing their concern over what they term as the “carrying capacity” of Greece and the need to find ways to secure the borders against illegal border crossing. On October 20th 2001, the Prime Minister told the European Union summit in Ghent, Belgium that Greece will have received about 250,000 illegal migrants by the end of the year adding that this situation creates serious problems that should be dealt with in the context of a comprehensive and “realistic” European strategy concerning illegal immigration.

¹²¹ EUMC (2001), “Attitudes towards minority groups in the EU: a special analysis of the Eurobarometer 2000 survey”

¹²² EUMC (2002), “Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media”, p.157

The complex interaction between racism and migration government and EU policies remains inadequately researched, despite its increasing salience in European countries over the last two decades. Current political developments, however, indicate that in the future main political parties will not necessarily respond to the perceived threat that migrants and “others” represent only by efforts to integrate them, but also by seeking to exclude them at the border.

The recent and unexpected electoral success of the far right in France is a warning sign that extremist political discourse may generate a more widespread climate of xenophobia, as established mainstream political parties are beginning to respond to the ultra right wing rhetoric not by adopting its discourse, but its concerns: “Extremism breeds a fanatical, racist and exclusionary discourse, which is heterogeneous, changeable and nationally specific... Current extremist discourse is an amalgam of themes and topics of an opportunistic and populist nature... Western European extreme right ideology generates a climate of xenophobia and racism against multiculturalism and immigration while Eastern European extreme right breeds a climate of ethnic intolerance. In Eastern Europe there is a prevalent conception of the nation where citizenship is defined in narrow ethnic terms and ethnic nationalism has come to form the ideological justification for a more violent and exclusionary approach towards other nationalities and ethnic groups. Reaction to international interference is also pronounced in the Eastern European extreme right discourse. Overall, as a system of beliefs the European contemporary extreme right lacks a cohesive and powerful ideological framework, opting instead for a volatile and highly opportunistic fanatical and exclusionary ideological discourse.”¹²³

It seems that at both national and European level the migration and integration debate is moving in a direction that distances it from concerns about the well being of the minority and the vulnerable groups: “There is an almost exclusive attention for migration restriction and prevention. There is widely shared concern about the feared or real consequences of uncontrolled and irregular migration, integration is considered to be a total failure and after 11 September immigrants are seen as a security threat. In terms of integration the emphasis is on the affirmation of Western democratic values and principles of human rights. Immigrants are expected to respect them (fair enough) and their integration is a matter of them becoming like us (difficult to see how that works out in practice). The suggestion seems to be twofold: one that immigrants are the greatest threats to Europe's common values and two that they will have to be incorporated into our societies which are assumed to be integrated and inclusive. As we all know, there are other types of forces at work that are or are potentially a threat to Europe's common values, and there are other forces that have a des-integrating effect on our societies. And that makes it difficult to talk about the integration of immigrants into our societies.”¹²⁴

¹²³ Anastasakis O. (2000), “The Extreme Right in Europe: A Comparative Study of Recent Trends”, The Hellenic Observatory, The European Institute, London School of Economics & Political Science, p. 29 available at http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/European/hellenic/Anastasakis_Discussion_Paper3.PDF (07/09/2002)

¹²⁴ Niessen J. (2002), speech at the EcoSoc Conference on 'Immigration: the role of civil society in promoting integration', available at <http://www.migpolgroup.com/publications/default.asp?action=publication&pubid=83> (15/09/2002)

8. SUMMARY

The available data and evidence indicate that racial violence and harassment affect the situation of the vulnerable social groups in Greek society. This study has highlighted the absence of data that would allow a deeper and conclusive analysis which could guide effectively the measures taken by the authorities to improve the situation. In the next section specific recommendations will be proposed in order to resolve this problem and facilitate good governance. The study has also pointed to serious methodological problems concerning definitions and the operationalisation of concepts used.

The Roma population seems to suffer most from incidents of racial violence and harassment directed against them primarily by the police and local authorities. Marginalised and neglected the Roma and especially the nomadic section try to survive in an evidently hostile environment, unable to, and because of social attitudes and racist behaviour, also unwilling to integrate into mainstream society.

The Muslim minority seems to enjoy a relatively privileged status with social characteristics and a social stratification system fairly similar to those of the rest of the Greek population. Nevertheless, its characteristic “absence” from public sector employment can only lead to their further alienation from the state structure inhibiting their social integration. The extend to which religious, cultural and ethnic differences influence the modes of Muslim participation in public life remains to be investigated. And as more members of the minority seek a better life outside their “designated” area of Thrace, the reform of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne provisions that essentially provide them with rights by preventing their free movement becomes a matter of priority.

The repatriated ethnic Greeks from the NIS and the migrant ethnic Greeks from Albania still suffer from discrimination in many spheres of social life, primarily employment, and (unrecorded) harassment. They face difficulties in the formal recognition of their educational qualifications and in learning the language both of which affect their prospects of integration. Despite the problems, though, the state has assisted repatriated and migrant ethnic Greeks in multiple ways and many seem to be gradually integrating into Greek society.

Finally the migrant and refugee population that compose by far the largest vulnerable social group face serious problems in their integration, occupy disadvantaged positions in the labour market and suffer from varying degrees of racial violence, harassment and discrimination less by individuals and more by indifferent public authorities and the police.