

NETWORKING REPORT 2006

Introductory Note

During the year 2006 the Greek National Focal Point managed to improve its data collection system concerning RAXEN research purposes by retaining close and regular contacts with all the research centres, public authorities and non governmental organisations that are affiliated with “ANTIGONE”. A team of experts co-ordinated by the Director of the NFP ensured the overall collection and the timely production and submission of the requested deliverables to the EUMC. Several internal meetings as well as the helpful presence of Member Organisations of the RAXEN Network aimed to evaluate research progress, identify and address difficulties in gathering and analysing data, confirm that all possible relevant sources have been thoroughly examined and ascertain that the collected data are correct and accurate. Therefore, the production of each deliverable was based on a very effective data-collection strategy which “ANTIGONE” has developed and built upon a dense and very extensive network covering Greece as a whole.

1) Collection of statistical data

A) Broad enlargement of crucial collaborations.

Throughout the year 2006 “ANTIGONE” was constantly expanding its extensive network in order to multiply its sources of information both in the public sector and the Greek civil society. In an attempt of “ANTIGONE” to deliver reports based on the most accurate information and guarantee the maximum possible improvement of its future data-collection task, a new close operation with various respectable research centres was launched in early 2006. In particular due to the help of EKKE¹, ELIAMEP², KEMETE / OLME³ and four University Sections⁴ the process of accumulating, sharing and crosschecking data has started contributing efficiently in the quality and quantity of the information used in our reports is maximised.

B) Employment

a) The Section of Equal Opportunities of the Ministry of Labour along with the Special Agency for European Community Fund Actions were the recipients of many of ANTIGONE’s requests for information regarding measures aiming at increasing employment

¹ National Centre for Social Research

² Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy

³ Centre for Studies and Documentation of the Federation of Employees of the Public Second Degree Education

⁴ International Law Section the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Criminal Law Section the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Public Law and Political Sciences Section of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Faculty of Education of the Aristotle University

in minority groups, immigrants, and refugees, as well as initiatives for a life-long education for the latter and specific practices for the promotion of employing minority members.

b) Labour Inspectorate Body cooperated with “ANTIGONE” mostly in regards to the working conditions of immigrants and refugees, since no cases of discriminations in the relevant field have been registered so far by the competent authority.

C) Education

a) Among other sources the Special Secretariat of Intercultural Learning of the Ministry of Education kept on providing “ANTIGONE” with data and information on its new Special Programs for Muslim and Roma students.

b) The Directorate of Second Degree Education of the Ministry of Education informed “ANTIGONE” about changes in religious practices within the educational system (such as the abolition of confession at schools, etc).

D) Legislation

a) “ANTIGONE” – thanks to its experienced mechanism of data collection – monitored all new laws concerning the situation of migrants or other minority groups⁵.

b) “ANTIGONE” referred to all legislative good practices such as the ones in the new Code of Municipalities⁶ and also received useful material from all relevant public authorities⁷.

E) Racist Violence.

a) The close relations of “ANTIGONE” with the “Pan-Hellenic Federation of Police Employees” helped it to crosscheck all information regarding possible involvement of police officers in racist acts⁸.

b) “ANTIGONE” was quickly, adequately and permanently aware of all developments in the major event of alleged kidnappings of Pakistani migrants, thanks not only to its contacts with the specific community but also to its access to various sources of information (such as mass media).

F) Housing.

a) Several Roma organisations and local or national NGOs provided “ANTIGONE” with useful details about forced evictions of Roma families in the area of Patras and addressed to

⁵ such as enforcement of EU Directives already transposed, establishment of language conditions for obtainment of long-term permits of stay, Ministerial Decision reserving open market sellers’ licenses only for persons of Greek or EU citizenship, or immigrants of Greek ethnic origin, conviction of Greece by the ECHR in the case of the Mufti of Xanthi, etc.

⁶ concerning inclusion of Roma, repatriated Greeks, migrants and refugees

⁷ e.g. Report on Ombudsman’ s first year as an Equality Body

⁸ such as incidents of police brutality against foreigners in the port of Patras or in Nikaia

its broad network of experts in order to check to which extent international and European standards of human rights had been violated.

b) With the valuable help of local media and relevant NGOs, ‘ANTIGONE’ managed to monitor the housing conditions of irregular migrants in the detention centres of the islands of the Eastern Aegean Sea.

2) Participation in other networking activities

In order to fulfill its task throughout 2006 “ANTIGONE” was regularly interacting with relevant key actors and stakeholders and was organising or participating in important events and activities.

Some of the most important activities in which “ANTIGONE” played a principal role were the following:

A) 4- 6 February 2006 (Athens) and 24-26 February 2006 (Thessaloniki) : Special seminars on fundamental rights :

In the framework of the EU Project “*It is your fundamental right*”⁹, a series of seminars on basic human rights were conducted in Athens and Thessaloniki, with the cooperation of participating NGOs . In the seminars the experts of ANTIGONE had the chance to analyse to students the content of the EU legislation against discrimination and discuss with them the dimensions of the notion of “citizenship”. In the closure conference, distinguished persons from the academic community intervened in the dialogue.

B) 10 March 2006 :

The Director of ANTIGONE was the main speaker in a conference organized by the “British Council” in a Greek High School with the topic “Analysis of the phenomenon of migration in Greece”.

C) 21 March 2006 :

On the International Day against Racism, “ANTIGONE” was represented by its expert in the field of education to make the main speech in a conference largely attended by people at the city of Kavala.

D) 25 March 2006 :

The quality daily right of centre newspaper “Kathimerini” published an interview of the Director of ANTIGONE in a one page report concerning the problems in the procedure of legalising migrants, which was taking place at that time.

E) 30 March 2006 :

⁹ aiming at reinforcing active citizenship on the basis of the rights guaranteed by the Nice Charter of Fundamental Rights

“ANTIGONE” was invited as a key stakeholder in a special scientific public meeting organised by ELIAMEP, which is one of the most respectable think tanks in Greece.

F) 31 March 2006 :

“ANTIGONE” started participating in an official process launched by the Migration Policy Institute aiming at the foundation of a body of NGOs with a consultative status regarding the best possible strategies of migration policy.

G) 7 April 2006 :

“ANTIGONE” was invited to offer its expertise to the Special Committee on Migration of the Greek Parliament. The Director of ANTIGONE submitted before the Committee proposals on the improvement of the current framework against discrimination and answered to various questions of the Deputies for more than three hours.

H) 30 May 2006 :

After an official request from the Greek “Social and Economic Committee” in the framework of its obligation to offer an opinion to the government, “ANTIGONE” submitted analytical proposals concerning a possible improvement of the anti-discriminatory legislation in Greece.

I) 30 June, 1 July, 2 July :

“ANTIGONE” participated in the popular Antiracist Festival of Athens and distributed all recent EUMC publications at its stand.

K) Other EU Projects :

Applications for new EU Projects concerning the field of discrimination, which in the long run would ameliorate its interaction with the civil society were accepted in 2006, thus “ANTIGONE” started implementing the following:

- INTI Preparatory Actions 2005¹⁰: “Immigration, asylum and borders’.
- Grundtvig 2 “Learning Partnerships” : Socrates Programme, Education and Culture¹¹ .

Furthermore, “ANTIGONE” continued to participate in the Project “Pre-Qualification of Migrant Nurses for Work in the Healthcare Sector”¹²

Finally, “ANTIGONE” has also submitted applications and is waiting for approval of various EU projects that would strengthen even further its scientific capacities such as :

- “Invest” : its overall objective is to promote better economic integration of migrants and refugees through improvement of their access to banking and credit services¹³.

¹⁰ Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion : Project “Integration of Female Migrant Domestic Workers: Strategies for Employment and Civic Participation”, DG Justice Freedom and Security, Direction B

¹¹ Project title: “echanges d’ experiences et de pratiques dans les maisons de retraite en Europe”

¹² This Project (under the Leonardo Da Vinci scheme) consists in producing reports and a curriculum that would help improving the integration of migrant women of this specific sector into the labor market.

- Youth Programme – Action 5.1.2 , Support measures with Partner Countries, DG EAC No 47/05, project: “A Common World – Sharing best practices on intercultural education”.
- Youth Program, Action 1 , Multilateral exchange : “Young People Active in Civil Society”.

L) National Round Tables :

Every December, “ANTIGONE” keeps organising an annual National Round Table in which government representatives and public officials have the chance to discuss in public with academics, NGOs and migrant and minority organisations. As usually, fervent preparations for the 5th annual Round Table have started since early autumn.

3) Problems in data collection.

A) In crucial areas the policy of Greece on data collection did not change: there are no criminal justice data or police data on racist violence and crime and there are no sources of official statistical data available regarding racism and discrimination in housing or statistics on Roma and religious groups.

B) The only practical problem that “ANTIGONE” faced in data collection concerned delays in being provided with written answers by the Committee of Equal Treatment of the Ministry of Justice, due to its lack of even basic infrastructure. However, repeated contacts and requests from “ANTIGONE” led to a timely provision of the relevant material (which verified the non existence of data).

¹³ especially access to credit for economic activities and for such personal uses as higher education for their children etc