

1. THE “POLITICAL HEADLINES”

The Lebanon war marked the return of the discussion on anti-Semitism into the public debate. Very few extreme right-wing political actors voiced anti-Semitic reactions through the media (see list of incidents below). However, the issue that gained much space and heated exchange of view in public debate has been the criticism against Israel military action and the crossing of its boundaries towards anti-Semitism. Many illustrious academics have protested against the easy anti-Semitism denouncement of whoever criticizes Israel state policy and against the ‘abuse of history’ through the unnecessary evocation of Holocaust towards a ‘terrorism of anti-Semitism accusations’. On the other hand, some critics of Israel’s military attack compared the Lebanon humanitarian catastrophe to the Holocaust and ethnic cleansing, causing the Israeli Athens Embassy’s protest through a letter to the major newspaper Eleftherotipia.

While in Patras (Riganokampos- Peloponnesus) and Chania (Crete) Roma housing causes tensions and court disputes (cfr. list of incidents below), the Ministry of Interior Affairs issued a decision according to which loans will be provided by municipalities under more favourable terms.

The European Court for Human Rights through its decision in the *Agga v. Greece* case condemned Greece for violation of art. 9 of the ECHR. Agga in 1990 was chosen to be the Mufti of Xanthi by the Muslims of that district. When the Greek State appointed another mufti, Agga refused to step down and after criminal prosecution he was found guilty of having usurped the functions of a minister of a known religion. The Court of Cassation rejected his appeals.

The Strasbourg Court found that it had not been shown that the Agga’s conviction was justified in the circumstances of the case by a pressing social need or for the protection of public order under Article 9 § 2 of the Convention. The Court considered that the finding of a violation of Article 9 constituted in itself adequate just satisfaction and awarded the applicant 1,620 euros (EUR) in respect of the first case and EUR 1,380 in respect of the second case for costs and expenses.

2. UPDATE ON LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

No significant developments concerning legislation.

3. RESEARCH

No major national reports on racism/xenophobia

4. ANNEX

1. Unofficial list of racist violence incidents and cases

Racist violence

According a politician of the Greek Communist Party, candidate for mayor of Athens, the city municipality police officers have allegedly mistreated in public a barefoot immigrant in the central square of Omonia and intimidated citizens protesting for such behavior.

Antisemitism

1. The weekly newspaper "Alpha Ena", voice of the biggest extreme right wing political party "LAOS" published a crude anti-Semitic declaration of Mr. Mylonopoulos, an extreme right wing member of the ballot of the official Athens municipal candidate with New Democracy Nikitas Kaklamanis, saying that " if you wash the Jew, you'll waste your soap. If we give them a little more time they'll break Hitler's record, in numbers of victims we mean. In brutality they've surpassed him."

Roma evictions

1. Personnel of the Inter-municipal Enterprise for Solid Waste of Chania have demolished the dwellings where 40 roma lived in the area of Kladissos on 19 of July.

2. On July the Municipality of Patras supported by the local police demolished the habitations of thirteen (Greek or Albanian) Roma families of the Makrigianni quarter of Patras. The demolished dwellings belonged to persons that were away from Patras, engaged in seasonal work. In all instances, the Municipality of Patras advanced the argument that no eviction of Roma took place but that it merely "cleaned" the area from "deserted" houses, after first "acquiring the consent" of other Roma living there, but apparently not the consent of the Roma who owned the demolished houses and who were not there at the time of the eviction.

3. Major upcoming events

- The municipal elections are going to take place in October 2006. A lot of discussion is dedicated also to the need to extend the voting rights to immigrants that will hold the Long term residence status for the next elections of year 2010.

- The European Network of Ombudsman for the Children (ENOC) Annual conference will take place in Athens in late September, as the Greek Ombudsman is presiding the network for 2006. A central issue is the common public statement of ENOC members about the treatment of unaccompanied minors and best practices. (www.synigoros.gr)