

RAXEN BULLETIN

1. THE “POLITICAL HEADLINES”

1. The alleged sexual abuse and rape of a 16 year old Bulgarian girl in the Greek periphery (Amarynthos - Evia island) by 5 of her classmates has been at the focus of the electronic and printed media elaborating the phenomena of nationalist and sexist racism against immigrants and women. Most operators, including the Greek Ombudsman for the Rights of the Children and the National Council for Radio and Television, have criticised the scale of publicity that this instant has received, and the violation of children's rights by the media. A considerable amount of the investigation material and confidential documents have been aired, creating an explosive climate of tension in public discourse and in the aforementioned geographic area of rural Greece. The Greek Ombudsman launched an ex officio investigation on the way the various operators dealt with the event. Civil society organisations and leftist activists protested against social racism. At one of those protests, in the town where the event took place, they clashed with the locals. The President of the Republic and major political actors, such as the foreign minister and the opposition political parties PASOK and SYN have strongly condemned racism and discrimination against aliens and women.

2. The president of the Pakistani community Javed Aslam has been arrested upon request for extradition by the Pakistani state for the crime of smuggling immigrants. Supported by many civil society organisations, he accused the Greek government of acting vindictively for the denunciation made by Pakistani communities' of the Pakistani abductions during the Olympic Games 2004. Mr Aslam was set free on bail by the Athens Court awaiting for the completion of the official request for extradition by the Pakistani government.

2. UPDATE ON LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

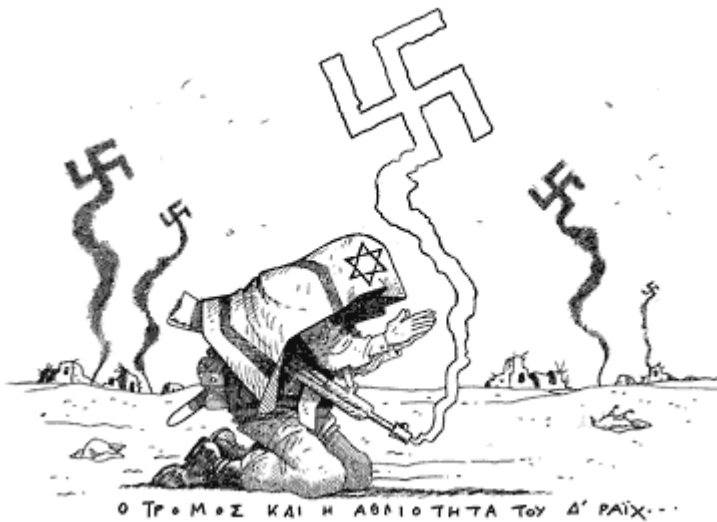
No major legal development took place in regard to the anti-discrimination legislation in the timeframe of 27 Oct – 24 Nov 2006 in Greece.

However, the law on the new mosque was passed by the parliament with a unanimous approval in principle of the law and despite disagreements of the opposition parties concerning some provisions. Much criticism was addressed especially regarding the provisions about the administration of the mosque by Christian orthodox public officers and the designation of the imam by the Minister of Education and Religions upon their recommendation. (in.gr news agency, 07.11.2006)

3. RESEARCH

A survey by the Panteion University – Faculty of Psychology - on the values and attitudes of higher secondary education pupils performed in 2005 and 2006 in Greece has reported strong xenophobic stances and opinions. The survey conducted by the Laboratory of Social and Experimental Psychology is based on a structured multiple choice questionnaire submitted to a ‘selected sample’ of 2218 pupils of Athens, Thessaloniki, urban and semi-urban and rural cities and towns. According to findings of this research, the majority of secondary education Greek students disagree that the number of foreign residents should grow (70%), and agree that the number of aliens in Greece should be contained and limited (57,6%).

A report on anti-Semitism during the recent Lebanon conflict has been published by the European Jewish Congress. In the chapter regarding Greece, the report focuses on Anti-Semitic discourse, especially by Greek politicians, the archbishop, the electronic media and the newspapers (among other countries) (Ilan Moss, Anti-Semitic Incidents and Discourse in Europe During the Israel-Hezbollah War). Much of the criticism is exercised against the ‘un-balanced condemnation of Israel’, and the frequently met comparison of the modern Israel state to the 3rd Reich. The following cartoon published in the major national newspaper ‘Eleftherotipia’ is included in the report (*The caption reads "Fear and Misery in the Fourth Reich"*)



4. ANNEX

1. An alleged sexual abuse and rape of a 16 year old Bulgarian girl by 5 of her classmates inside a school occupied by the students in protest to the Ministry of Education in the Greek periphery (Amarynthos village - Evia island) is under investigation by the police and judicial authorities. The incident received massive attention by national media, leading to indiscretions and violations of children's rights. It has nevertheless caused a widespread antiracist discourse and much relevant concern in the public sphere.

2. According to an e-mail sent to the EUMC, a reporter of the state radio network ERA Sport Vasilis Papanicolaou made racist comments during a live sports show. The comments were directed against the goalkeeper of Panathinaikos' F.C. soccer team - Pierre Embede - person of an African origin (Cameroon). Allegedly, while talking on air about the goalkeeper, the reporter imitated monkey sounds and made other insulting remarks. On a national state radio during a live broadcast, he stated: "If bananas get cheaper I will take him to my team, for the time being they are still expensive". After receiving a number of complaints by the listeners, he apologised for his remarks.

Major upcoming events

1. The 5th National Round Table of the RAXEN NFP 'ANTIGONE' (www.antigone.gr) will take place in Athens on December 13th, 2006. The theme of the conference is 'Discrimination against vulnerable social groups regarding education and housing in Greece' and will deal with specific issues of discrimination against ethnic, religious and social minorities, as well as with positive measures taken by the state in the areas of education and housing. As it happens every year, government representatives and public officials will have the chance to discuss in public with more than 200 stakeholders consisted of academic experts, Greek NGOs and migrant and minority organisations.

2..The Research Center for Minority Groups (KEMO) is organizing its 10 year anniversary conference about immigrants and minorities issues. www.kemo.gr More than 60 major researchers and scholars will participate presenting research papers at the three day conference which is entitled: *Interdisciplinary approaches of minority and migration phenomena: the Greek post cold-war conjuncture*. (15-17 December 2006, Athens).