



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

## **Case Study on Intercultural Policies and Intergroup Relations**

### **Athens**



Authors:

Mihály Szabó

Heinz Fassmann

Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences

Postgasse 7/4/2, A-1010 Vienna

© 2008 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions  
Wyattville Road, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18, Ireland  
Telephone: + 353 1 2043100, Fax: + 353 1 2826456

## Content

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2 Background information on Greece</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations .....	5
2.2 National policy context .....	10
<b>3 Background information on Athens</b> .....	<b>12</b>
3.1 Brief description of the city .....	12
3.2 The city's immigrant population and its characteristics/main groups .....	13
3.3 The city's Muslim population and its characteristics .....	20
<b>4 Local intercultural policies in general</b> .....	<b>21</b>
4.1 General approach and responsibility for relations to ethnic and religious organizations in the city .....	27
4.2 Issues, demands and interests .....	29
4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue .....	31
4.4 Relationships between different ethnic groups in the city .....	35
4.5 Public communication .....	36
4.6 Summary and lessons learnt .....	39
<b>5 Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities</b> .....	<b>40</b>
5.1 Major issues, demands and interests .....	40
5.2 General approaches and policies improving the relations with Muslim groups .....	40
5.3 Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures improving the relations with Muslim groups .....	43
5.4 Public communication .....	44
<b>6 Intergroup relations and radicalisation</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>7 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>8 References</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>9 Contacts and informants</b> .....	<b>50</b>

## Foreword

In the spring of 2006, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the City of Stuttgart and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (hereafter 'the Foundation') came together to form a 'European network of *Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants*' (CLIP). They were subsequently joined by the City of Vienna. The CLIP network, which was officially launched in Dublin in September 2006, brings together 25 large European cities in a joint learning process over several years; the network seeks to support the social and economic integration of migrants, combat social inequalities and discrimination, and to help migrants to preserve their cultural identity. With this joint initiative, the partners involved continue their longstanding work in the field of social inclusion.

European cities and in particular the larger cities with strong economies attract migrants from all over the world. These cities already have considerable experience in integrating a highly diverse and culturally rich immigrant population into the local community. They can use this experience to develop and implement strategies on how best to integrate migrants and ethnic minority groups and encourage their participation in society. However, simultaneously, cities and municipalities often have to pay the price for failed integration processes, although they are not in control of migration flows and have to depend on national legislation in all immigration-related issues. For this reason, cities and municipalities have a genuine interest in following successful local integration practices.

The report aims to present and analyze innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level. It also provides an exchange of experience between cities to help encourage a learning process within the network. Moreover, the analysis assesses the role of companies, social partners, religious organizations, nongovernmental organizations and voluntary organizations at local level in supporting and developing more successful migrant integration policies.

The report also provides an objective assessment of current practices and initiatives in the cities participating in the CLIP network and discusses their transferability. It looks at measures of good practice in the various cities participating in the network, while at the same time it investigates the development of guidelines for good practice to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants into the local community.

We are in particular thankful to Ms. Alexandra Evert-Alverti, Deputy Mayor for Equality and Social Integration of the City of Athens, Ms. Toula Tranaka and Ms. Konstantina Giannouli from the Municipality of Athens, Intercultural Center. Mrs. Yvette Jarvis,, Special Advisor to the Mayor, Mr. Alexander Zavos, President of the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (Ι.ΜΕ.ΠΟ.), Mr. Daniel Esdras, Chief of Nation, International Organization for Migrants (ΔΟΜ). We are grateful for the plenty of information we gathered with their help. We trust that the analyses drawn in this module of the research will support the emerging European policy debate with innovative concepts of integration policy on the

local level.

## 1 Introduction

The topic of this module of CLIP has to do with the phenomena of urban life that are related to the multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-religious structures of urban populations which challenge the ability of municipalities to establish or keep peaceful relations among the different segments of the population. In present day political discourse, relations between different ethnic and religious groups, immigrants and natives predominantly are discussed in terms of “intercultural dialogue” and/or “interreligious dialogue”. The idea is to conceptualize these phenomena as cases of intergroup relations. This conceptualization stands for an abstraction working with the assumption that there are similarities in the relations between quite different “groups”.

Intergroup relations are about ways in which “people in groups perceive, think about, feel about, and act towards people in other groups”. An intergroup relation in this sense means relations between categories and what and how one communicates about these. The images and stereotypes of the categories typically hide the socio-structural and cultural heterogeneity that exists in these groups.

Stereotypes and images in public communication are important, because they influence daily interaction in the city’s life and the relations between real groups. Many people in the urban area do not have direct and regular relations to people of a migration background or to ethnic minorities, but carry images and stereotypes of what these groups would be like in their minds. Newspapers, radio and television stations, communication in organizations or via cultural events are examples of media in which this communication takes place in the urban public.

The stereotypes and images presented are not merely reflecting the local public, but mirror the patterns that exist on a national and partly international level. The “social climate” in a city, conflict or cohesion is much influenced by the public discourse on the images and stereotypes about different groups in the city. The stereotypes create predispositions for trust and distrust, for readiness to interact, to like, to hate, to fear or to be indifferent.

The concept of “group” on which intergroup relations research is based is rather broad. In the CLIP project it includes the city administration, the city council, political parties, churches, labour unions, welfare organizations foundations, local media and anti-immigrant movements among others in the majority society.

On the part of the minorities it includes religious groups and national minorities. Some of the CLIP cities do not yet have much immigration, but have national minorities within their population that originate from the multi-ethnic structure of their country’s population.

This structure is mostly the result of drawing borders when nation states were formed and people different from the majority population were included in the state territory. The drawing of new borders as a result of conflict and wars between states has also produced such national minorities. The identification of conditions, under which relations between groups take on different qualities, makes it possible to arrive at recommendations for the improvement of relations between groups that are based on research. This is what qualifies the intergroup relations approach as an appropriate conceptual foundation for the third CLIP module.

## 2 Background information on Greece

### 2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations

For many centuries, Greece was one of the foremost emigration countries in Europe. Greece was considered until the mid 1980s to be a traditional migrant-sending country. It also used to be a mere transit country for migrants and refugees who intended to settle in other European receiving countries. During the last 18 years, Greece has become within a short period of time a receiving country for migrants. With the collapse of the Eastern European socialism in 1989, the accompanying migration torn by civil conflict and poverty found Greek society experiencing a sudden wave of new people and cultures. Within a short time, Greece's migrant population grew up and has now come to account 10% of the population.

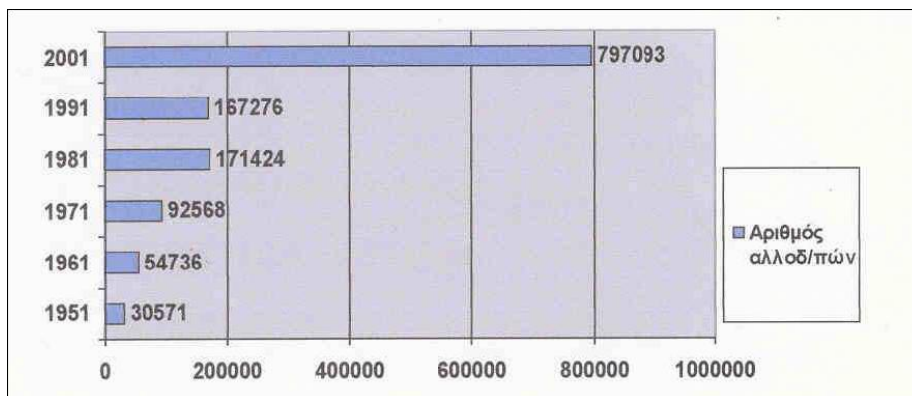
**Table 1: Contribution of natural increase and migration flows to the real increase of the population in Greece (1961–2001)**

Decades	Increase in (net) real population	Natural increase	Migration flows
1961–1970	380,088	839,425	–459,337
1971–1980	971,776	637,368	334,408
1981–1990	519,483	272,441	247,042
1991–2000	679,871	21,617	658,254

Source: [www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt)

In 1997, Greece began to treat the hundreds of thousands of immigrants in a concerted manner, producing legislation legalizing the status of people who had come to the country in search of a better life. Until the first legalization programme, immigrants had no way of obtaining legal status and lived vulnerable to every kind of extortion. Three successive legalization procedures, in 1998, 2001 and 2005, gave them a way out.

**Figure 1: Number of foreign citizens in Greece (Censuses 1951–2001)**



Source: [www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt)

Though the migrants who are present in Greece today came from more than 120 different countries, the bulk of migrants came from the Balkan. According to the 2001 Greek Census, 58% of the approximately 797,093 foreigners residing in Greece were Albanians. Bulgarians formed the second largest foreign community with 5% of the total, followed by Georgians and Romanians, each of which accounted for 3% of the foreign population. Many migrants originate from Eastern Europe (Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Poland), Asia (Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Philippines), the Middle East (Iraq) and Africa (Egypt, Syria, and Nigeria). It should be noted that the gender composition of the migrant population differs remarkably by nationality. While some immigrant nationalities are composed mainly of men (i.e. Bangladesh, Pakistan, India), others are composed of women (i.e. Ukraine, Russian Federation).

The reasons for this evolution were various: the geographical position of Greece, the fact that it was the only EU member State in the Balkan area, and the consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall – this last point had an impact on neighbouring countries as well as on geographically remote ones. All these factors contributed to the influx of a large number of migrants to Greece and created a need for the integration of different ethnical groups within a much shorter period of time than experienced in other European countries, where the relevant transition happened gradually over the course (of) several decades.

For many years available statistical data concerning migrants in Greece were vague; thus it is hard to draw a comparison over time. In the 1980s foreigners constituted 2.5% of the country's total population. According to the 2001 census, foreigners constitute 7% of the total population of the country, though other sources estimate that this percentage reaches 10%.

**Table 2: Immigrant population in Greece (2001 and 2007 compared)**

Country of Origin	Census 2001		Valid Permits October 2007	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	438,036	57.49	303,225	62.97
Bulgaria	35,104	4.60	27,181	5.64
Georgia	22,875	3.00	12,990	2.69
Romania	21,994	2.88	15,884	3.29
USA	18,140	2.38	-	-
Russia	17,535	2.30	10,704	2.22
Cyprus	17,426	2.28	-	-
Ukraine	13,616	1.78	19,005	3.94
UK	13,196	1.73	-	-
Poland	12,831	1.68	-	-
Pakistan	11,130	1.46	12,126	2.51
OTHER	68,385	8.97	32,782	6.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>761,813</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>481,501</b>	<b>100.0</b>

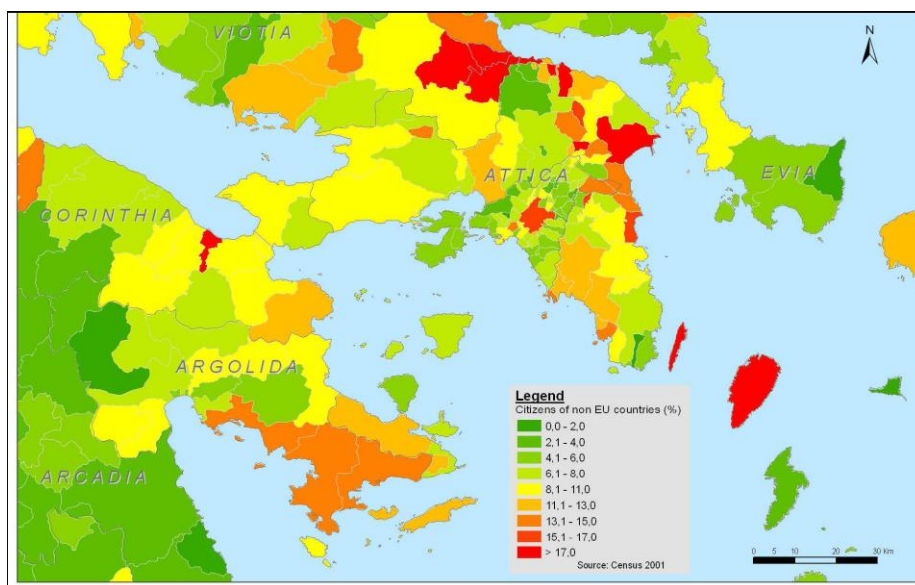
Source: Truriandafyllidou & Marouf (2009).

A particular characteristic of the migration flow to Greece is that over 50% of it is comprised of Albanians (see table 2). This fact makes Greece the only EU country that has a single nationality of migrants exceeding 50% of the total of foreigners in the country. The vast majority of migrants (83%) to Greece originate from former socialist countries of Eastern Europe or from certain countries of the former Soviet Union in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The greatest cluster of migrants is noted in the municipality of Athens with about 20% of the total population (see map 1). Thessaloniki has the second-largest density of immigrant population, with foreigners comprising 7% of the local population. Approximately 80% of migrants to Greece are people in the working age, as compared to the corresponding

figure of 68% for the Greek population. In terms of education there is the tendency towards an incremental increase in the number of foreign pupils (Papademetriou & Cavounidis, 2006).

**Map 1: Non EU nationals to total population in the Department of Attica and environs**



Source: [www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt)

In terms of employment, it is estimated that foreigners work in more than 60 sectors of the Greek economy. This fact markedly demonstrates the degree of penetration of migrants into the Greek economy. Particularly noteworthy is the participation of the migrants in the construction sector (especially as a result of the preparations for the 2004 Olympic Games) and in the hotel and restaurant sector. Additionally foreign workers in the housekeeping sector meanwhile outnumber Greek workers. The main motives for immigration are: dependent employment, family reunification, and self-employment (see table 3).

Concerning the distribution of the migration inflow over the segments of the Greek labour market it is obvious that unskilled workers (39%) and specialized craftsmen (35%) are by far dominating. 16% find a job in the sales & services sector whereas only a very small minority of 1% can be classified as high rank executives (see figure 2).

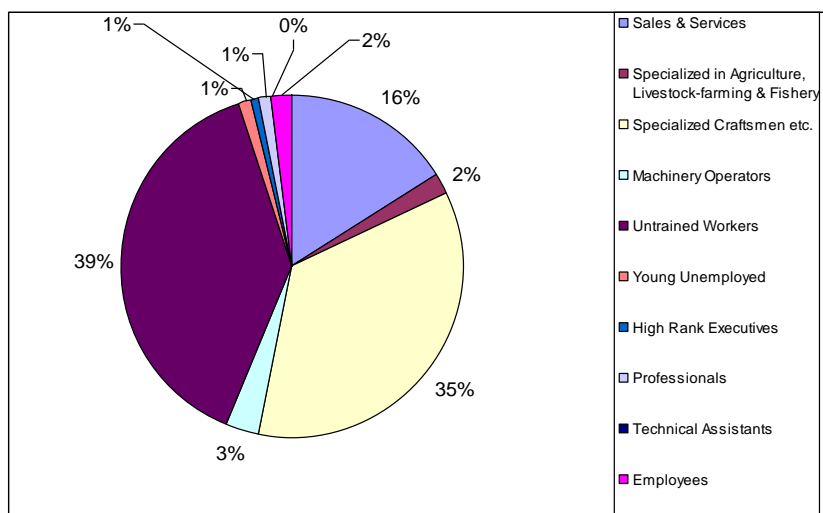


**Table 3: Valid residence permits in Greece per type of residence permit (15.10.2007)**

Type of residence permit	Total	%
Indefinite duration	5	0.0%
Independent for members of third country national's family	5,884	1.2%
Long-term	1	0.0%
Seasonal employment	5,342	1.1%
Salaried employment	283,332	58.8%
Independent economic activity	1,454	0.3%
Other employment	438	0.1%
Employment – company executives	1,447	0.3%
Researchers	35	0.0%
Other	1,888	0.4%
Members of EU citizen's family	6,608	1.4%
Members of EU citizen's family – spouse	45,337	9.4%
Members of Third country national's family	123,790	25.7%
Regularisation according to Law 3386, article 91, paragraph 11	505	0.1%
Regularisation according to Law 3536, article 18, paragraph 4	650	0.1%
Regularisation according to Common Ministerial Decision 11702	529	0.1%
Studies	3,994	0.8%
Studies – other categories	262	0.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>481,501</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: [www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt)

Finally, another element completing the migration picture in Greece is the fact that most of the migrants affirm their desire to stay for an indefinite time in the country, and are willing to integrate into the country's society. This shakes the traditional model of migration to Greece, where migrants were temporary residents attempting to raise a certain amount of capital and ultimately intended to return to their country of origin.

**Figure 2: Immigrant insertion in the Greek labour market**

Source: Truriandafyllidou & Marouf (2009).

## 2.2 National policy context

Following Prokopis Pavlopoulos, the Minister of the Interior “Greece plans and implements its migration policy by focusing on the human – immigrant. Our primary concern is to assure the respect of difference, social cohesion, solidarity and the functioning of society in a way that bridges and does not divide cultures and people, that is why Greece institutes and implements regulations for legal entry and stay and assures for all immigrants required guarantees for them to develop, freely and creatively their personality achieving on one hand their own progress and well-being and on the other hand contributing to the development and prosperity of our Country. Greece, using its highly democratic tradition and fully respecting Human Rights, plans and implements a modern and effective immigration policy by making immigration a factor of cooperation between people(s), peaceful co-existence and mutual growth”.

Migrant integration is a quite new concern for Greek migration policy. The first time that integration was mentioned in an official legislation text was in Law 3386/2005.

In the beginning of the 1990s and after the geopolitical environment changed in Europe, Greece adopted measures regarding the entry, residence, and work of migrants in Law Nr. 1975/1991 that took effect on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1992. These measures were aimed at reducing the numerical disproportion between legal and illegal migrants (Papademetriou/Cavounidis 2006).

Presidential Decrees Nr. 358 and 359/1997 (authorized by art. 16 Law Nr. 2434/1996)

changed the direction of Greek law, encouraging the registration and legalization of illegal migrants. This policy led to the issuance of residence permits for approximately 200,000 of the estimated 600,000 migrants who lived illegally in Greece. With the establishment of relatively simple conditions for registrations, the presidential decrees gave foreigners already residing in Greece the ability to gain legal status and obtain a “White Card” for legal residence. Subsequently, by accruing a minimum amount of contributions to the social insurance system, migrants could obtain a “Green Card”. After the aforementioned policy, the application of the measure of “massive legality controls” in 1999 (...) followed, aiming at the restraint of migration inflows and the return of illegal migrants. However, the measure did not have the expected results (Papademetriou/Cavounidis 2006).

In view of the need to reform the institutional framework to achieve a long-term and realistic migration policy that would facilitate the integration of migrants in Greek society, Law Nr. 2910/2001 was passed. Although it brought a number of improvements, Law 2910/2001 was criticized, therefore the need to reform the institutional framework for migration is still imperative. The introduction of jus soli by Law 3284/2004 of Greek Citizenship Law already demonstrates a step in the right direction (Papademetriou/Cavounidis 2006).

The programmes launched through the Integrated Action Plan will cover the period 2007–2013. They will be funded both by national resources, and by the newly established European Integration Fund. The main objectives are: a) to map the current situation per fields of integration, b) to outline the situation in other European countries and gain from experiences and good practices carried out elsewhere, and c) to define the priorities of the national policy and undertake sustainable measures and actions.

Besides the Integrated Action Plan, which will be the main framework of the integration policy, two other important legislative steps have already been made towards a more egalitarian treatment of migrants:

- a) Law 927/1979 on the “punishment of acts or activities that lead to racial discrimination”, as amended by Law 1419/1984 and Immigration Law 2910/2001 (article 39, paragraph 4) which provides for the possibility of prosecution ex officio by the Public Prosecutor.
- b) Law 3304/2005 on the “Implementation of the principle of equal treatment regardless of race or national origin, religion or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation” that transposed into national legislation the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43EC) and the Employment Framework Directive (2000/78EC). The institutions appointed as special bodies for the promotion of the principle of equal treatment are the Greek Ombudsman and the Department of Equal Opportunities of the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare [www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt).

### 3 Background information on Athens

#### 3.1 Brief description of the city

Athens, the biggest city of the country, is the capital of Greece and of the Region of Attica. The Region of Attica constitutes of the Prefecture of Athens, the Piraeus, Western and Eastern Attica, It is the geographical and political centre of Greece. Attica was first settled in the Neolithic period and has dominated the stage of civilization ever since. Today almost one third of the Greek population lives in Attica, granting the region of Attica the leading role in Modern Greek life. A centre of cultural activity since Classic antiquity, the birthplace of tragedy and philosophy, democracy and athletics, the city of Athens has given birth to the greatest minds of the antiquity.

**Map 2: The Region of Attica**



Source: [http://www.travel-greece.org/athens\\_attica](http://www.travel-greece.org/athens_attica)

The City of Athens comprises seven City District Councils. Each City District is responsible for the management of all local matters and citizens may seek assistance from their City District Council.

The Mayor of the Municipality of Athens is assisted by 10 Deputy Mayors. The number of Deputy Mayors in each municipality is determined by the size of the population. In larger municipalities such as the City of Athens, the number of Deputy Mayors is equivalent to the number of city districts and may, by decision of the City Council, be increased by 3. The Deputy Mayors are majority councillors appointed by the Mayor.

Deputy Mayor Offices:

- attend to the personal correspondence of Deputy Mayors and maintain relevant records.
- schedule the times and days during which Deputy Mayors can receive various Committees, Associations and Citizens.
- maintain Deputy Mayors' database of personal contacts.
- receive document files from competent services which require the signature of Deputy Mayors.

### 3.2 The city's immigrant population and its characteristics/main groups

The source countries sending significant numbers of migrants to Greece are quite diverse. Many migrants originate from Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Russia, Poland, and Ukraine), Asia (the Philippines, India), the Middle East (Iraq, Syria) and Africa (Egypt, Nigeria, and Zaire).

**Table 5: (Immigrant) Population of the City of Athens by citizenship and gender (2006)**

COUNTRY	MEN	FEMALE	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
ALBANIA	22,604	16,772	39,376	41.5
ROMANIA	4,389	2,840	7,229	7.6
BULGARIA	1,997	4,805	6,802	7.2
UKRAINE	1,347	3,990	5,337	5.6
PHILIPPINES	1,141	2,866	4,007	4.2
MOLDAVIA	1,354	2,253	3,607	3.8
EGYPT	2,857	748	3,605	3.8
BANGLADESH	3,379	214	3,593	3.8
GEORGIA	838	2,456	3,294	3.5
SYRIA	2,300	673	2,973	3.1
PAKISTAN	2,521	79	2,600	2.7
NIGERIA	1,337	763	2,100	2.2
CHINA	923	609	1,532	1.6
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>46,987</b>	<b>39,068</b>	<b>86,055</b>	<b>90.6</b>
<b>OTHER COUNTRIES</b>	<b>4,297</b>	<b>4,572</b>	<b>8,869</b>	<b>9.4</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,284</b>	<b>43,640</b>	<b>94,924</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Immigrants' Services Department, Municipality of Athens, 2006

According to census of the last 20 years the native population of the city declined: In 1981, the number of inhabitants was 886,737, in 1991 816,556 and in 2001 745,514. Nowadays, in Athens more than 140,000 migrants are living and working. According to the Immigrants' Services Department, in 2008, 67,211 migrants have applied for a residence permit.

The Immigrants' Services Department Data constitute an important source of information for the characteristics of the city of Athens' immigrants. So, in accordance with this data: 51.43% were from Albania, 6.1% from Ukraine, 5.39% from the Philippines, 4.95% from Egypt and with less percentage, nationalities from Europe, Asia and Africa. Women make up 46% of the total immigrant population. The immigrants in Athens come from 122 different countries (see table 5) (Toula Tranaka, Intercultural Center).

The most important immigrant group in Athens is from Albania. According to the Immigrants' Services Department Report, the Albanian Community represents 51% of all migrants of Athens. 55.6% of them are men. The Albanian population is quite young: 21.3% are less than 14 years old, 36.5% are between 15 and 29 years old and 28.8% are in the age between 30 and 44. When these percentages are compared to the ratio of men, it is clear that it is essentially a labour migration of young single men but also of couples with children.

While some nationalities are composed mainly of men, others are composed mainly of women. Men constitute more than a half of total foreign population in some cases like Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrants more than 90%. In contrast, women constitute 76% of the migrants from the Philippines. The majority of all female immigrants are from Albania (67.2%), 16.5% moved from countries of the ex-Soviet Union, 11.3% from Romania and Bulgaria, and the rest from other countries.

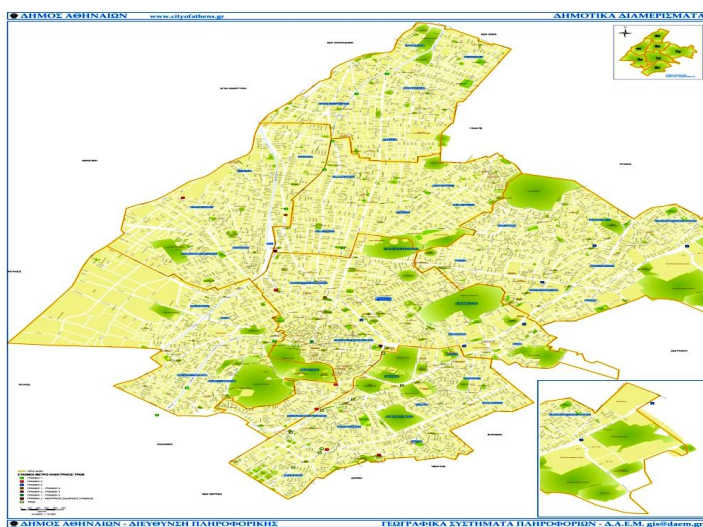
There are important differences concerning women's family status according to their nationality. Specifically, Albanian women are mostly married, more than women coming from the Balkans, also more often than women coming from the ex-Soviet Union, who are less frequently married and more frequently divorced or separated. On the other hand most of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi men are not married. Characteristically, mixed marriage is a common phenomenon among foreign women and 1 out of 10 women in total has been married to a husband of a different nationality than her own. Marriages with Greek men occupy the first place and the differences according to the country of nationality are evident. Maximal frequencies in marriages with Greek men can be observed among women coming from the ex-Soviet Union.

Considering the educational level of all migrant women the Research Centre for Gender Equality states that they have a rather high educational level, as 19.1% of them have completed the 9 year obligatory education, 48.5% the high school while 26.5% passed more than 13 years of school education. The majority of women with higher education

hold a degree in Pedagogical Studies, on Health Science Studies or degrees in Economical and Social Science Studies.

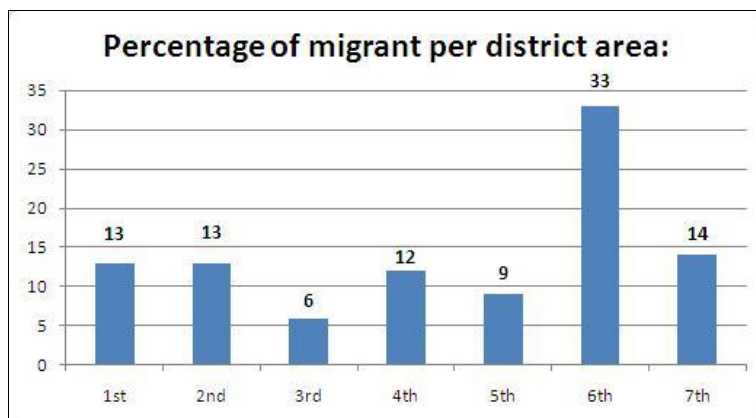
The capital City of Athens is composed of 7 self administrative districts (see map 3).

**Map 3: The City of Athens and its 7 District Areas**



Source: City of Athens, Intercultural Center

Looking at the city as a whole, the phenomenon of extreme ethnic segregation cannot be found though some districts (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>) show clear concentrations of certain ethnic groups (see figure 3). However, such concentration does not represent a typical segregated area known from some Western European cities. As we can see in figure 3, the highest density of immigrants is with 33% in the 6<sup>th</sup> district which is also known as the traditional poor and unpopular district.

**Figure 3: Percentage of migrants per district area**

Source: City of Athens, Intercultural Center

#### *Illegal (irregular) migrants*

The fact that immigration flows occurred in a rather non-regulated way explains to a certain extent the large numbers of illegal migrants residing in Greece. According to the Department of Social Integration of the Ministry of Interior, the total number of residence permit holders in 2004 was 672,584. Divergences with the data from the 2001 Census as far as total numbers and proportion of certain nationalities are concerned can be explained either by recent dynamics in migrant flows or by distinguished levels of access to regularization procedures.

Data from the Ministry of Interior (15.10.2007) show that the number of valid residence permits upon that date were 481,501. This difference in numbers in the relation to data from the 2001 Census can be explained from the fact that serious problems occurred during the process of renewal of residence permits. It is somewhat usual that many migrants fail to keep their resident permits renewed and subsequently they lose their legal status. As much as the types of residence permits are concerned, the one that dominates is the residence permit for salaried employment (58.8%) followed by residence permits for family members that in total reaches 36.5% (Parsanoglou 2008).

A significant characteristic of migration is the question of the "second generation" of migrants. The number of residence permits granted to family members indicates that there is a continuously increasing youth population with migrant background residing in the country.

According to official data from the Institute for the Greek Diaspora Education and Intercultural Studies (IPODE), which is the competent authority affiliated to the Ministry of



Education for consulting and monitoring multicultural/ intercultural education, children without Greek citizenship constituted in 2004 8.3% of the total school population. This number keeps rising on all levels of the education system (see table 6).

**Table 6: Number of pupils in primary and secondary schools (2002–2004)**

Academic year	Greek	Foreigners	%/Total	Total
2002-03	1,332,611	96,899	7.3	1,460,464
2003-04	1,312,313	109,130	8.3	1,449,112
Percentage rate of change				
2002-04	-1.52%	12.62%		-0.78%

Source: Parsanoglou, 2008

## Major migrant groups

### 1. Albanians

One fifth of the Albanian population left the country after the changes during the early 1990s. This fact puts the country internationally on the first place among all countries in transition, because so many citizens emigrated – most of them to Italy and Greece. Greece, on the other side, as a state that accepted numerous Albanians, also stepped at the first place in the EU, being the only country where one immigrant group accounts for more than 50% of the total immigrant population.

Lambrianidis and Lyberaki conducted in 2001 a survey about Albanian immigrants) in Thessaloniki. This study shows that Albanian workers in the second largest city of Greece have moved from unskilled farm work in the early and mid 1990s into construction, small firm employment, and semi-skilled work and transport services. The authors highlight the upward socio-economic mobility of Albanian immigrants who through increased language skills and a better understanding of employment possibilities in Greek society, managed to improve their employment situation and income. It is also worth noting that in the period covered by the research, the first regularization program took place thus enabling immigrant workers to obtain legal status and hence to enjoy insurance benefits. Among the sample studied by Lambrianidis and Lyberaki, 82% declared to hold steady employment and 57% paid social insurance. About one third of the men interviewed worked in construction and one third of the women in house cleaning. Among the women another third were housewives while among men 24% worked in small industries. These findings are confirmed by Hatziprokopiou (2003) who shows that Albanian immigrants in Thessaloniki apart from construction and domestic services are employed in small enterprises (commerce, transportation, hotels and restaurants) and in small and medium-scale manufacturing.

Contrary also to earlier studies (Iosifides & King 1998 in Baldwin-Edwards 2004a), Hatziprokopiou notes that at the time of his interviews, most interviewees had a legal status and social insurance. Lyberaki and Maroukis (2004) (in Baldwin-Edwards 2004a) also show that Albanian women are progressively moving out from unskilled agricultural work and cleaning services to become housewives, if they can afford it.

It should be mentioned that the Albanians are better integrated than other groups in Athens/Greece. They have own schools for their kids, vocational training for the youth and Greek language courses.

## **2. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis**

The influx of Pakistani immigrants started during the 1970s, after a bilateral agreement of Greece and Pakistan, in order to recruit workforce in the shipyards of Skaramangas. During the 1980s the number of Pakistan and Bangladesh nationals residing in Greece grew relatively slowly, though irregularity was already characteristic for large proportions of both communities. Only during the 1990s the numbers of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis augmented significantly. According to the 2001 census the Pakistani community of Greece numbered more than 11,000, 92% of which came to Greece in search of employment. According to the same census 96% of the Pakistanis in Greece are men who work mostly in manufacturing industries but also in the fields of construction and services. Based on data of the Ministry of Interior more than 11,000 Pakistanis resided legally in Greece in April 2008. Interestingly enough about 13,000 Pakistanis were insured by IKA in December 2006 according to data released by this lastly. However, data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) concerning the first trimester of 2006 register over 15,000 people. Nonetheless, a recent study estimates their actual number between 40,000 and 50,000.

Bangladeshis are a more recent immigrant community since they started migrating to Greece after 1991. Based on the data of the last census of the National Statistical Service 94% of about 5,000 migrants from Bangladesh who resided in Greece in 2001 came for the purpose of working and were mostly employed in small shops and restaurants. 97% of them were men.

According to Immigrants' Services Department of Municipality of Athens more than 3,000 Bangladeshis and 2,000 Pakistanis are living in Athens. Most of them are men, a relatively young people and concentrate in specific areas of the city where rent is generally cheaper (Kypseli, Patissia, etc). Data obtained from the Ministry of Interior show that over 3,500 Bangladeshis resided legally in Greece in April 2008. Furthermore, according to data from IKA for December 2006 approximately 3,500 Bangladeshis were insured by this organisation while the average wage of a Bangladeshi worker was 41% lower than that of the average Greek worker. Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants leave their countries mostly for economic reasons but also due to political difficulties (especially in the case of Pakistanis). More of them usually come to Greece without any documents, either by sea (from Turkey) or through the Northern Greek border. Nevertheless, some

Pakistanis and Bangladeshis also enter the country with a tourist visa. Greece is usually not the final destination at first, but many people eventually decide to stay. Access to Pakistani and Bangladeshi co-ethnic networks is essential to be able to find employment in Greece. Moreover, such networks also provide many other useful services: i.e. housing, loans, sending remittances, etc. Pakistani and Bangladeshi associations act as mediator between Greek society and co-nationals by providing assistance in particular matters. Sectors of employment for Pakistanis and Bangladeshi are manufacturing, construction and the service industry (restaurant & catering, shops, hotels, etc). Many also make street-vending in order to have some form of income. Some of them are self-employed shop-owners (i.e. minimarket, calling centers, and restaurants) (see Triandafyllidou, 2009).

### **3. Filipinos**

The Filipinos' are one of the oldest immigrant communities in Greece. Women from the Philippines started migrating to Greece at the end of the 1970s in order to be employed in hotels and hospitals but also to work as maids. There has been an increase of their population after 1991 and their most usual occupation is as domestic workers. There were 6,500 Filipinos registered in the 2001 census. 76% were women. Moreover, 80% of the Filipinos residing in Greece migrated with the purpose of working and 77% of those who came in order to work lived in Greece for more than five years, at the time of the census. According to Immigrants' Services Department Data more than 3,500 Filipinow are living nowadays in Athens. According to data from IKA and data from the Ministry of Interior, there were over 6,500 Filipinos residing legally in Greece in April 2008, although there are estimates that the Filipino community numbers approximately 20,000 people. 4,000 Filipinos were insured by IKA in December 2006.

### **4. Egyptians**

The first immigrants of Islamic faith arrived in the early 1950s from Egypt, and are concentrated in the country's two main urban centres, Athens and Thessaloniki. In Athens more than 3.300 Egyptians are living nowadays. Most of them are concentrated in the 3<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> districts of the City of Athens. Sectors of employment are fishing, construction and industry services (minimarket, café, restaurants, etc).

### **5. Ukrainians and Georgians**

Ukrainians and Georgians are two large immigrant communities in Greece. These two communities have lots of things in common, the fact that stands out most being that they both have the same political past, coming from countries of the formal USSR, a fact that affects their current economic, social and political reality.

The Ukrainian immigrant population is mainly feminine, as the percentage of female immigrants among the whole Ukrainian community is between 72% and 82%. In the case of the Georgians the percentage of female immigration is between 56% and 59%.

The Ukrainians, like many other immigrants groups, are found in the region of Attica while the Georgians have settled down in the region of Macedonia, a fact that can be connected with the majority of the repatriated Greeks from Georgia who live in Macedonia.

For both cases, the reason of immigration was economical. However, for the Georgian case it can be said that poverty is come along with the national collisions. Many Georgians choose Greece to be the country of their destination either because they have Greek descendance or because they already have relatives who have immigrated in Greece. In the Ukrainian case, it can be said that very few report bad conditions in their country and many mention that their reason for migration is the searching for new experiences.

The flow of immigrants from these countries started at the early 1990s after the fall of the USSR. Since then, the amount of the immigrants from these countries has been increasing and according to the latest census of the National Statistical Service of Greece of 2001 around 20,000 Georgians and over 13,000 Ukrainians live in Greece. According to Immigrants' Services Department Data more than 4,000 Ukrainians and 2,400 Georgians are living nowadays in Athens (Triandafyllidou, 2009).

### **3.3 The city's Muslim population and its characteristics**

Regarding the overall size of the Muslim population in the City of Athens it is very difficult to get precise official data because it is not compulsory to provide any information about religious affiliation in the official Census.

There are considerably diverging estimations. The representative of the City Administration supposes that there live about 40,000 Muslim residents in the city. Following Mr. Mazen Shafek Rassas, the President of the Union of Muslims in Greece, which represents thousands of Muslim immigrants in the capital, the number of Muslims is about 100,000 persons. This higher estimation can neither take into account the internal differentiation between Shiites and Sunnites nor their individual intensity of religiosity. Furthermore many of these people merely moved from so-called Muslim countries or countries with a heterogeneous religious structure. This means that nothing can be said about their religious confession. Nevertheless, there are not only official but also some unofficial Muslim organisations.

The demographic structure of the Muslim population and its development is another difficult aspect to state accurately. From the perspective of Mr. Mazen Shafek Rassas, generally speaking, the Muslim community is growing numerically because the fertility is usually higher than among other ethnic minorities. Usually Muslim couples have more than 1 child; this means at least 2 to 3. Among the immigrants of the first generation there is a male dominance. Contrary to this the majority of the newcomers and the converts to Islam are usually women. Most Muslims leave their families at their home countries,

especially Arabs, but there are also families immigrating, and a small percentage of single Muslim women workers and university students of all degrees.

The Muslims moved from all parts of the world. The biggest communities are the Albanians and the Arabs, mostly from Syria and Egypt (Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon), Maghrebiens (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia), Persians and Indonesians. A considerable Bangladeshi and Pakistani community can be found as well, but there are also Muslims from Africa (Nigeria mostly). Many of them came as asylum seekers to Greece and are refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina (during the early 1990s). A significant and partly influential part is the middle-class people of Egyptian, Syrian and other Middle Eastern ancestries. A few hundred Muslims are Greek converts, especially women who are married to Muslim men.

They are represented on all levels of education, from elementary to PhD degrees. Muslim immigrants with bachelor's degree rarely practice their degree subject, but are usually employed as plain workers or technicians. Merchants, traders, importers, entrepreneurs, are the professions with the highest income; the average workers gain about 12,000 Euros per year.

Regarding the City Administration the only organization with religious orientation is the Union of Muslims in Greece, which represents the majority of the unofficial mosques in Athens. The non-members of the association have small praying places and their activities remain for their internal use.

The two greatest religious celebrations *Ramadan* and *Eid/Eid-al-Adha* or also known as feast of sacrifice are gathering thousands of Muslims, and give the immigrants a sense of belonging. Every Friday at the weekly pray except their religious act, they interact with other immigrants, share their anxieties and problems. Other events organized by other organizations, as for the orphans of Palestine or the Pakistani community events strengthen the bonds between the Muslim communities.

#### **4 Local intercultural policies in general**

Ms Alexia Evert-Alverti, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration of the City of Athens, stated: *"Immigration is a very recent reality in Greece and immigration policies is an area of central governmental competency. Through three consecutive legalization procedures, in 1998, 2001 and 2005, the Greek State recognizes the immigration as an indubitable and permanent reality and, in 2005, introduced for the first time a holistic program for the social integration of the third countries citizens. Moreover, the new Municipal and Community Code recognises the competence to draw, apply and participate in programs and activities for the integration of immigrants, refugees, Ethnic Greeks returnees and Roma in the social, economical and political life of the local society."* The city of Athens is the biggest city of the country and with the largest number of immigrants. The Municipal Authority of Athens has been making the choice that the immigration issue is not a

*problem but a reality that can have positive and numerous effects for all the society."*

The City of Athens adopted a framework of philosophy and action for the integration of immigrants and their families who have chosen to live in Athens. This framework is based on two principles:

- Migration is not a "problem" for the City, but a benefit if it is correctly managed.
- In most cases, integration encompasses more than the social aspects (including elements such as equal opportunity, right to citizenship etc).

The City of Athens works in two ways:

- It attempts to approach the migrant on an individual basis but also through the community to which they belong.
- It encourages migrant participation and representation via associations, non-government organisations and agencies with a wider scope. The City of Athens communicates with such institutions in an effort to learn about the problems which migrants have to face and implement policies - within the limits of its jurisdiction - to rectify these.

The slogan is: *"We are creating an Athens in which Greek society ties in harmoniously with immigrant communities, a city where our children speak the same language, the language of understanding and common goals. We are transforming Athens into a global multicultural metropolis. We are developing initiatives that deal with diversity in such a way that it: promotes the idea of cohesion, with respect for the values and achievements which unite citizens regardless of their ethnicity and cultural contribution; guarantees equal rights for immigrants in terms of participation in social, political and economic life; and ensures that all immigrants also consider Athens to be their city so they can respect it and build their future here we aim for the social integration of migrants based on respect for the law and fulfilment of their obligations to the city in which they live".<sup>2</sup>*

*"The City of Athens, through target activities for the social integration of immigrants, promotes the harmonic co-existence of all citizens of Athens (natives and migrants) in the frame of a multicultural society. In this context, the Intercultural Centre of Immigration Services Department of the Municipality of Athens was established and is operational since 2008. It's a place where migrants attend programmes of social integration, such as the acquisition of the Greek language and the possibility to certify the acquired knowledge, Computer skills programmes with certification, etc. The Centre has also the duty to open a dialogue with all the immigrant organizations and associations" said Ms. Alexia Evert Alverti.*

Ms Alexia Evert has the competency of the Intercultural Centre and the Immigration

---

<sup>2</sup> Compare <http://www.cityofathens.gr/en>.

Services Department, which is divided in 3 sections: a) the Administrative section, b) the Archive section and c) the Social Care section. 85 staff members work for the Immigration Services Department and 5 for the newly created Intercultural Center:

- 1) Ms Toulia Tranaka is sociologist and responsible of the Intercultural Center and programs manager.
- 2) Ms Konstantina Giannouli is executive secretary and programs administrative.
- 3) Ms Kalliopi Karra is social worker and programs administrative.
- 4) Ms Despina Bolia is sociologist and programs administrative.
- 5) Mr. Zissis Dimitriou is programs administrative.

The Intercultural Centre's budget for 2008 was 140,000€ and for 2009 325,000 €.

**The Daily service for foreigners of Immigration Services Department** (Director: Ms Pota Roubou)

The Daily Service for Foreigners is the administrative service for the residence permit procedure. This service receives everyday more than 1,000 persons and answers to a similar amount of phone calls. All of them are third country nationals who have difficulties with the Greek language. The City Administration believes that the Agency has been providing satisfactory services. In 2008, the Immigrant Services Department of the City of Athens accepted and served 67,211 persons seeking residence licenses, along with 43,594 requests of general nature. The percentages per nationality were the following: Albanians 51.4%, Ukrainians 6%, Filipinos 5.39%, Egyptians 4.9%.

#### **Services provided by the City of Athens to foreign citizens**

In general, the services provided by the City of Athens to foreign citizens are the following:

- welfare and social service, such as municipal day care centres, Municipal Clinics, the Alimentation Center for Homeless of the City of Athens, the Hostel for Victims of Abuse and Family Violence, the Equality Office, and others;
- cultural and athletic events of the city (events of the Youth and Athletics, volunteering programmes);
- neighbourhood level activities, Football Against Racism in Europe (< FARE>), etc;
- allocation of municipal areas for the support of events, with the cooperation of

inter-state and Non Government Organizations, immigrant communities and embassies;

- multi-language programmes through the AIR 104.4 programme, broadcasting in 13 languages and through the Athens 9.84 radio station. The radio stations participate in information and awareness campaigns;
- the Helpline, 1595.

All migrants have free access to **Municipal Health Clinics**. There are 7 clinics in which migrants are not required to show any documents. As a Primary Healthcare provider, the Municipal Health Clinic network offers all citizens a range of basic healthcare and social welfare services. The City of Athens operates 7 Municipal Health Clinics in 6 of the 7 City Districts in an effort to ensure Primary Healthcare services are accessible to all citizens and in close proximity to their home or workplace

**Photo 1: Municipal Health Clinic**



Source: Mihály Szabó.

Immigrants who reside legally in the country are guaranteed equal access to public health institutions on the same basis as Greek citizens. Médecins du Monde has been running an “Open Polyclinic” in central Athens and in Thessaloniki since 1997 and 2001 respectively, where volunteer doctors, nurses, social workers and psychologists provide



medical care and psychosocial support for free.<sup>3</sup>

In the same way, health services addressed to immigrants are also provided by other NGOs such as **PRAKSIS** mainly in Athens and Thessaloniki. PRAKSIS is an independent, Non Governmental Organisation, aiming principally at the creation, application and implementation of humanitarian and medical action programmes. PRAKSIS offers services to any socially excluded group, which hasn't got access to health services and/or social and legal support. PRAKSIS ensures:

- Free supply of social and medical services. Treatment, prevention, education and health infrastructure;
- The promotion of solidarity and volunteering. Volunteer training in how to combat social and economic exclusion.
- Cooperation with other Non-Governmental Organizations with the objective of establishing a dialogue with the community and government bodies.
- Cooperation with local authorities as well as the creation of Networks, FORA and consortiums dealing with the needs of PRAKSIS and helping to achieve its objectives.
- Collecting and using social and medical data with the aim to promote research on socially vulnerable groups and on social and economic exclusion in general.
- Bearing witness to (and when necessary denouncing) the conditions of social groups at risk and to the corruption or injustice they uncover through their actions by informing Greek and international political, financial, and social organizations; the authorities; Greek and international public opinions.
- The above applies to individuals and groups regardless of skin colour, race, religion, age, nationality, ideology or political beliefs.

Another important Non Governmental Organization is the **Greek Council for Refugees** (ΕΣΠ), which was founded in 1989 and supports refugees and asylum seekers. It is

- the only Greek non-governmental, non profit organization that deals exclusively with people seeking asylum in Greece and are considered refugees,
- registered in the records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity as an organization recognized as especially charitable,
- one of the six Non Governmental Organizations protecting human rights in Greece that are members of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR)

---

<sup>3</sup> Compare [http://www.mdmgreece.gr/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=817&Itemid](http://www.mdmgreece.gr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=817&Itemid).

according to the law regarding the National Commission for Human Rights 2667/98. A member of the Board of Directors of the GCR has been elected as the first vice-chairman of this commission,

- an implementing partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as
- a member of the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), where its president Mrs. Iro Nikolakopoulou-Stephanou has the vice presidency.

It holds a Special Advisory Status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and has been awarded by the President of the Republic, Mr. Karolos Papoulias as an "island of quality" for its longstanding social work.<sup>4</sup> Following the Greek Council for Refugees one of the main issues is that the public sector has no interpreters.

#### *The Shelter for Abused Women:*

The Directorate of Social Welfare, Department of Social Policy and Social Protection operate a **Shelter for Abused Women** which is open to all women. The Shelter has been operating since 1993 and assists women who suffered abuse regardless of the relationship status and may stay at the shelter together with their children. The key problems which are faced by the women can be summarized as follows: financial problems, unemployment, legal support and implementation of the legal framework concerning abuse of women.

In 2008, it has responded to 3,000 calls. The distribution of these requests was as follows: forms of abuse 40%, family problems and relationships issues 30%, social or general information on psychosocial issues 30%. Foreigners represent 1/5 of the total number of women. Female migrants exposed to **domestic violence** can get free assistance from the City of Athens, while destitute migrants can access the municipality's evening **meal provision programme for the homeless**. Social welfare benefits are also accorded to legal foreign workers who pay their social taxes.

#### *Social Support for Refugees and Asylum Applicants*

In December 2007, the City of Athens signed a Cooperation Memorandum with the UNHCR, undertaking the creation and manning of a special service for the social support of refugees and asylum applicants in the centre of Athens. This special service provides, among others, information and consulting support in the fields of employment and accommodation, or acts as the necessary liaison with the respective agencies of the City of Athens, in order to cater for fundamental daily needs, mainly the provision of clothing and food. The City of Athens received 2,435 case folders for refugees and asylum applicants, who have been classified either as active or de-activated folders, or as pending cases, for which the City undertook the provision of further consulting and social

---

<sup>4</sup> Compare <http://www.gcr.gr/en>.

assistance.

### *Social Grocery*

The Homeless Foundation of the Municipality of Athens as part of its mission to deal with the homelessness phenomenon, poverty and social exclusion is working together with a major shopping centre chain on a new initiative for the Greek Society, namely the "Social Grocery". The institution has been introduced in 2007. The "Social Grocery" intends to allow needy families to purchase grocery items with a 90% discount on the retail price. Socially-disadvantaged groups (immigrants included) will, therefore, have access to basic goods two times a week on an eight-hour basis programme.

### **Integrating Foreigners into the local society with the Intercultural Center**

In May 2008, the Intercultural Center of the Migrant Services Department of the City of Athens was created, which through multiple actions and activities is aiming for the integration of third country nationals in local society. The programmes are addressed to every immigrant lawfully residing in the seven municipal districts of the City of Athens.

**Photo 2: Immigrant Services Department of the Municipality of Athens**



Source: City of Athens, Intercultural Centre

**For detailed information about the numerous activities of the Intercultural Center please compare the annex to this report.**

### **4.1 General approach and responsibility for relations to ethnic and religious organizations in the city**

The department which is responsible for relations toward immigrant organizations is the Intercultural Centre of City of Athens' Immigrant Services Department. The centre is new

and still at the beginning, It interacts with the most important associations and cooperates in order to achieve integration activities. The Intercultural Center's philosophy is to collaborate with all immigrants' organizations because they represent the migrant communities and they're a very important factor of integration and intergroup relations in the city. In this way the Intercultural Centre supported multicultural festivals such as the 1st Iberoamerican Festival of Literature in Greece (Festival LEA – Literature in Athens), The Santa Cruz, Festival of the Filipinos, The 1st Puzzle Festival, Weekends of Theatre, etc.

The City of Athens doesn't have elected representatives in the city council which belong to local migrant or ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, in the framework of the migration policy, the Municipal Council of Athens, by the end of December 2008 and after the recommendation of the qualified Deputy-Mayor, Ms Evert- Alverti, took the decision to set up the Immigrant's Council and the Athens Charter for the Integration of Immigrants. The Athens Council will be operational in the course of 2009. This is a consulting instrument, presided by the Mayor of Athens, in which the immigrants enjoy a substantial participation. The immigrant's profile should be as follows: he/she should live legally in the city of Athens for at least 4 years and he/she should have a good knowledge of the Greek language.

The Immigrant's Council shall have 15 members who shall meet at least once per month. The purpose of the Local Immigrant's Council is the recording, bringing to surface and monitoring of the needs and problems of immigrants on a local level, while undertaking initiatives and activities for the integration and participation of immigrants in local city life. The main point is to achieve understanding and to have a constructive dialogue between the citizens of the city, while taking decisions and measures with the purpose of improving and easing the relations between immigrants and the qualified bodies, both on a national and a European level.

Migrant organisations think that this is a very good initiative on the part of the City Administration. It is considered to be a very good platform for bringing together representatives of different ethnic groups of immigrants.

The Immigrant's Council shall undertake the creation of a communication and cooperation network with the qualified bodies of the country, such as the Ministries for the Interior and Foreign Affairs, among others, and shall prepare the content of the Charter for the Integration of Immigrants, which shall have the form of a programme, stating the basic axes on which specific actions shall be implemented for immigrants.

Some immigrant associations are important stakeholders in different areas (e.g. minors' education), having created schools in order to provide additional education in the language of the country of origin. One of the successful examples is that of **KASAPI HELLAS (The Union of Filipino Migrant Workers)**. At its premises in one of the most densely migrant-populated areas of central Athens (Kypseli), Munting Nayon (Little Village) school, which opened its doors in 1994, welcomes more than 100 pupils every

year. The vast majority of the children – toddlers to age 9 – are Filipinos, but there are also a number of children of other ethnic minority groups, and even Greeks.

**Photo 3: “Munting Nayon” (Little Village) school**



Source: Mihály Szabó

## **4.2 Issues, demands and interests**

The problems which immigrants originating from an EU Member State (Romania, Poland or Bulgaria) and immigrants who belong to other ethnic groups (third country nationals) face are completely different. The main issue for the ethnic and religious organizations which don't belong to EU or stay illegally on the territory of Greece is linked with the legalization process. Another important issue is the access to information and the Greek language skills. The majority of them usually spend most of their energy to gain a visa and a work permit, which is the most important issue. This is like still the very beginning when basic issues haven't been solved yet. There are some NGOs counselling in English and also other languages than Greek, but many immigrants don't know about their existence or do not trust them.

Many immigrants, most of whom have resided in Greece for over 5 years, haven't been able to retain a legal status. Since the effects of the world financial crisis, finding a job,

either legal or illegal is another main actual issue.

Also it is worth to remark that family obligations affect and differentiate the observed general tendencies. So the singles and those having less family obligations seem to have more often some free time and in conclusion more initiatives to get into contact with the City Administration and different NGOs focused on the interests and rights of migrants. These facts reflect the conditions of employment and the difficulties faced by the immigrants, either they live with their family and children, or not, so as to fulfil multiple roles and survive in the country of reception.

The research and the information collected from different interview partners showed that these difficulties continue to occupy the first rank among the problems which immigrants face. This is without reference to the time of stay in the country, a fact which constitutes a stopper to the regular integration of this population group.

Mrs. Jarvis, the Special Advisor to the Mayor concerning immigration issues and former city councillor between 2002 and 2006, stated that from the perspective of the immigrants there are two categories: the undocumented illegal immigrants and the legal documented. *"For undocumented immigrants it would be very important to allow them to have a chance in obtaining at least some temporary documents in order to be able to apply for legal papers. As far as documented migrants concerns one of the main problems they have is that of remaining in a legal status. The renewal of the permit is a complicated procedure that takes too long."* (...)

*(...) There are two types of long resident permits: One type which is valid for five years and another one for ten years. The ten years permit, also called indefinite permit, costs as much as the five years permit, about 1,000 Euros but has less advantages such as for example it is only allowed to travel, not to work in the EU (...). The problem is that many immigrants don't know the difference between these two types. The lack of information on the part of immigrant communities is a common issue. (...)*

*(...) For migrants who want to bring their family to Greece the parameters are very strict. He/she has to prove a certain amount of money which is above the lowest income scale. Another huge problem is with the many single men, without family and wife, especially in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community. Many of them left their wives in their home country, which may cause social issues.. (...)*

*(...) An other significant issue is the question of "second generation immigrants" or "immigrant's children" and the difficulties they face as a result of a law that gives no status to such individuals. Second generation immigrants born in Greece do not receive birth certificates. Their parents are given a hospital certificate only. Without a birth certificate, parents have difficulties in including children on their insurance documents and green cards because for that purpose you need a passport or a birth certificate. (...)*

*(...) Children born in Greece at the age of 14 are required to pay 150 euro registration fee as any immigrant does at the beginning or renewal stages of the residence/work permit*

*process. At the age of 18 the children are not longer considered a member of the family, as opposed to EU citizens at age 21 and are required to obtain individual legal status entering the legalization process acquiring residency as any "first timer" would. If they choose to continue their studies they need a passport to register for the exams required.*

*(...) The problems start here as many parents do not travel back to their countries of origin to register Greek births for many reasons (financial, inability caused by restrictions on travel etc). As a result the children have no passport. . (...)*

*(...) Clearly, these problems cannot be deemed as aiding in the attempt to achieve integration of immigrants into Greek society. The purpose they serve can only be deemed dividing, isolating and in fact punishing the persons they are imposed on. Usually 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants feel at home in Greece and their expectations are more or less the same as those of their host country compatriots".<sup>5</sup>*

The competence for migration issues passed from the Ministry of Public Order and the Police to the Ministry of Interior and local authorities (to the prefectures for work permits and to the municipalities for residence permits), since *"foreigners do not constitute a supplementary charge for the Police, but persons and a social group with which the whole society must regulate its relations, through its institutional settings"* (see Parsanoglou 2008). The City of Athens has established a Foreigners Service Centre, located near the city centre, where migrants can get support in relation to several different administrative issues, such as information for the issuing and renewal of residence permits.<sup>6</sup>

Another important aspect is related to the procedure of obtaining the Greek citizenship. A few years ago it was relatively easy to become a Greek citizen. At the present since the new legislation installed in 2005, it turns out to be increasingly more difficult to become a Greek and there are no real parameters as what an applicant really needs to obtain the Greek citizenship.

The new law says that an applicant should prove his/her knowledge of the Greek language and culture. There is no fix rule how long it takes to obtain the citizenship. Ms. Evert-Alverti, Deputy Mayor for Equality and Social Integration, stated that the annual number of successful citizenship applications is only about 1,000 per year.

### **4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue**

Following the information collected from the City Administration through the Common Reporting Scheme (CRS) there are many different migrants' and religious organizations: The two main categories are ethnic (Philippinian, Albanian, Arabic, etc.) and religious

<sup>5</sup> Compare <http://www.yvettejarvis.gr/speeches/immigrants/?lang=en>. This information was also given by Yvette Jarvis during the field visit in Athens, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009 during the meeting with the services and organizations of the Municipality of Athens.

<sup>6</sup> Compare <http://www.cityofathens.gr/en/node/7536>.

(Muslim, etc.) organizations. The city doesn't have yet any formal or informal regular and institutionalized contact with all ethnic and religious organizations but provides a platform through the Intercultural Centre, which has an institutionalized structure for the relations with all ethnic groups. The Intercultural Centre is in communication with the most important associations and works together in order to achieve integration activities. *"For us, it's very important to collaborate with migrants' organization because they represent migrants and they communicate with their community and they're a very important factor of integration and intergroup relation in our city. The Intercultural City of Athens communicates with the above organizations in an effort to learn the problems migrants face and implement policies - within the limits of its jurisdiction - to rectify these. It encourages migrant participation and representation via association, non-government organizations and agencies with a wider scope but the City of Athens doesn't provide direct funding for ethnic or religious organisations"* said Ms. Evert-Alverti.

The cost of integration services in terms of human resources and capital to Government agencies as well as to civil society organisations can be just estimated. A rough indicator of the total cost in terms of capital is provided by the budget foreseen for the implementation of the National Integration Plan **HESTIA**, which is co-financed by European Integration Fund for the Third Country Nationals and the Greek Ministry of Interior:

**Table 7: Costs of implementation of actions to be undertaken within the Integrated Action Plan for the social integration of third country nationals, 2007–2013**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount in €</b>
<b>2007</b>	1,527,626
<b>2008</b>	2,063,575
<b>2009</b>	2,371,000
<b>2010</b>	2,550,000
<b>2011</b>	3,132,000
<b>2012</b>	3,827,000
<b>2013</b>	4,275,000
<b>Total</b>	€19,746,202

Source: [www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt)

From our interviews with the President of the Athens Labour Unions and the Representative of the General Confederation of Workers of Greece we learned that the social partners are not really active enough in intercultural dialogue matters yet. Mr. George Alevizakis, Secretary for Migrants Matters, General Confederation of Workers of Greece let us know that every once a while they do organize some information meetings with migrant workers concerning new laws regarding employment.



Our interview partners informed us that there is some rising consciousness on the side of social partners and their decision makers that intercultural dialogue is an important matter but at the time of the field visit not too many other concrete measures or strategies concerning this topic could be outlined. In the near future it can be expected that this challenge will be picked up by other social partners too.

#### **Good-practices of relations and dialogue in Athens**

Many non-governmental organizations have a lot of experiences about how immigrants in Greece live, and thereby are involved in the policy debate, as well as in the implementation of political measures.

**One of them is “Nostos”,** a very active civil non-profit organization interested in issues related to the coexistence of different cultures in Greece and abroad. It was founded in 1995 by the Southern Greece Federation of Pontian Associations, as a consequence of the immigration of Pontians (people of Greek origin) that moved in large numbers to Greece after leaving the Soviet Union as a result of the great changes that were taking place during the period of the early 90's. The main purpose of Nostos is to fight against social exclusion that repatriates, immigrants and refugees face. It is organizing services and running educational and social activities mainly for the target groups as well as for the local Pontian population.

**Photo 4: Office building of Nostos**



*Source: Mihály Szabó*

The actions of Nostos include:

- The permanent function services for social support, legal support, information and connection of the target groups with the labour market.
- The establishment and implementation of “model” services related to the personal social and psychological support of foreigners, informing people, promoting

occupation and sensitizing the local community and the whole Greek society.

- The development and implementation of educational programmes, mainly for children, as well as for adults: life long education, on the basis of intercultural and anti-racist education
- The examination and documentation of integration problems that repatriates and refugees are experiencing through scientific research, the collection of data, publications and editions.
- Courses on how to search for jobs (newspaper, internet, etc and to apply for a job via phone etc.

Nostos has been participating as the leader or partner in national and international partnerships in several European programmes. It collaborates with the Public Sector such as the Ministry of Labour and the General Secretariat of Emigrant Greeks, universities and research institutes in Greece and Europe, and other NGOs dealing with foreigners.

"Nostos" Organization for Social Integration is funded by the Federation of Pontian Associations of Southern Greece. The office building of this NGO was a donation.

### **Municipal Police**

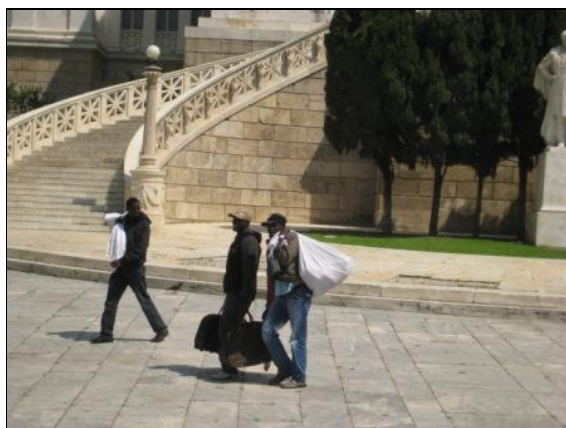
Mr. Nikolaos Karanikolas from the Municipal Police Department of the City of Athens affirmed that the main problem in countries like Greece, because of the geographical position, is that the influx of illegal immigrants has passed beyond measurable scales during recent years. There are many problems handling the situation on the governmental level since most of the immigrants tend to move to Athens. According to the official statistics of Ministry of Interior, in 2007 the Hellenic Police arrested more than 112,000 illegal immigrants. In 2008, this number augmented to 150.000. Most of them came from Turkish coast.

According to Mr. Alexander Zavos, president of the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (I.M.E.Π.O.) *"The problem of illegal immigration becomes very important for Greece the last three years: 80.000 illegal immigrants have passed the border in 2006, 112.000 in 2007 and 150.000 in 2008. Moreover, it is very difficult to find a way to send the illegal immigrants back because in most of the cases is hard to prove where they exactly come from."* Many of them who could actually apply don't even want to do it in Greece, but try to go to a Western European country, because of the so called "Dublin Regulation":

The main interaction with the immigrants is related to illegal commerce. According to law the municipal police are obliged to confiscate illegal goods. Some of the illegal traders are sometimes very territorial and aggressive, especially the ones coming from Africa. Nevertheless the municipal police try to keep a good relation with migrants, not being violent. With some effort and with the help of the local administration *"we managed to get in contact with representatives of different ethnic groups and they were very cooperative, we discussed about many issues, explaining them that the Municipality is trying to find a*

*place for bazaar”.*

**Photo 5: Illegal traders in Athens**



Source: Mihály Szabó

#### **4.4 Relationships between different ethnic groups in the city**

*“We don’t say that in Athens we have tension or conflict between migrant groups. However, Greece has a great problem with the illegal immigration. In 2007, more than 112,000 people came illegally to Greece. In 2008, the number of illegal immigrants is 150,000. Most of them moved to Athens where they are living under very bad and miserable conditions, (...). This situation created ghettos in the heart of historical centre of Athens, and tensions between new migrants and native neighbours. The natives claim about the deterioration of their neighbourhood, their way of life, they are afraid by those people and they feel that there is insecurity in many areas of their town. This problem puts in danger the social cohesion of the city and will create in the near future a real conflict between natives and illegal migrants. The City of Athens collects information and has started dialogue with different parties (natives, NGOs, migrant groups, etc) in order to find solutions for this problem”* said Toula Tranaka from the Intercultural Center.

Organizations like the Greek Council for Refugees (ΕΣΠ), “Praxis”, “Nostos” or the Re-integration Centre for Migrant Workers cooperate with each other and with the Municipality. They cooperate also with other NGOs in the frame of many projects. There are some tensions between established migrants and the newcomers, given also the economical crisis. Most of the NGOs believe that there can’t be the best cooperation between some ethnic groups and the City administration as the communities are not

involved enough, fighting for their issues, interests and activities.

Social scientific research about the relations of immigrant communities and their associations between each other and the major society is till now almost completely absent.

#### 4.5 Public communication

Almost every ethnic group of some size has its own media, mostly a newspaper which is sometimes also available online. The Albanian community for example has six newspapers. Some of the newspapers of different communities are financed by independent private companies, like for e.g. the Romanian newspaper which appears weekly.

Photo 6: Title page of the Albanian daily newspaper “Tribuna”



Source: Mihály Szabó

The immigrant groups don't have their own television or radio station but there are some public radio stations like the National Radio Broadcast (ERA) which hosts a multiethnic radio station (“Philia” or “Friendship”) with programmes in several languages presented by Greek and immigrant broadcasters. A comparable example is that of the *Athens International Radio* (AIR radio), funded and hosted by the Municipality of Athens.

#### Athens International Radio 104.4 FM (“The station that speaks your language!”)

Athens International Radio was set up by the Mayor of Athens Dora Bakoyiannis in the summer of 2004 to cater for the many visitors converging on Athens for the Olympic Games. It began as a three-month project to inform and entertain the thousands of people who found themselves in the city with no knowledge of Greek and it was an instant hit!

The first locally-produced broadcast took place in English on July 5<sup>th</sup>.2004. During the course of that week AIR 104.4 FM also began broadcasting in 11 other languages. Athens International Radio lasted longer than the three months originally intended and, with its mandate strengthened by current Athens Mayor Nikitas Kaklamanis, it operates today as a thriving news outlet, covering Greek, Balkan and European news. With its links to the BBC, RFI and Deutsche Welle, it also covers live events of global interest. Athens International Radio offers cultural, social and sports coverage and regularly interviews with the people at the centre of the news. It has also broken stories which have subsequently made their way into the mainstream of Greek and international media.

Its purposes, however, have gradually changed. Not only is it catering for the needs of visitors to the city but also for those who live here in a permanent capacity. It took on a new mantle beyond the simple telling of news to look at issues closely affecting the immigrant communities in Athens. Great efforts have been made to work closely with the various communities in the city.

In October 2008, the Municipality of Athens in collaboration with the International Radio station was the driving force and host of the **1<sup>st</sup> European Cities Radio Forum** which brought together radio professionals from across Europe. This forum had as its goal the promotion of dialogue and exchange of views on issues related to radio broadcasting, and was the first attempt of forming framework cooperation among radio stations of European cities for making radio evolution more efficient and radio broadcasting a better product. Therefore the forum concluded with the agreement to hold the forum on a yearly basis and the setting up of a consortium, named Euro Radio City, which will serve as the means for radio evolution and promotion of ideas among cities in Europe.

**Photo 7: Athens International Radio**



Source: Mihály Szabó.

In terms of longevity, Athens International Radio is still extremely young. But during five years it has done plenty of high quality work. To do that they call on all of the communities, embassies, NGOs, government officials and sporting and cultural bodies to work with them, hand in hand with the motto: *“We invite you to use us as a resource and as an outlet by keeping us up to date with events and issues that concern the people that you represent. Together we can provide a better service for everyone in Greece”* said Ms. **Athina Korlira**.

AIR now broadcasts in 13 languages: English, French, German, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Albanian, Russian, Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Spanish and Tagalog. Plans are afoot to increase the number of languages.

Athens International Radio broadcasts via live streaming on the internet ([www.air1044fm.gr](http://www.air1044fm.gr)). During the course of 2009, AIR will upgrade the quality of the website to make it a top level news service with access to pod casts and interviews. Athens International Radio is funded by the municipality of Athens, paid for by the people for the people.

Media representatives of the Albanian, Nigerian or Columbian communities affirmed that in the Greek media critical and even explicitly negative and discriminating articles about Muslim immigrants but also the Columbian and African group relating a negative attitude could be few years ago frequently be found. Nowadays the situation improved but there are still some newspapers which continue to reproduce some stereotypes, targeting migrants especially from the Third World.

**Photo 8: Different ethnic representatives at the Town Hall of Athens**



Source: Mihály Szabó

#### 4.6 Summary and lessons learnt

There is definitely an urgent need for a new and clear structured immigration policy in Greece. A problem in the beginning of the process of intercultural dialogue between the city and other immigrant or religious groups is probably also the fact that many ethnic communities have quite different lifestyles and interests and the Greek language for many of them represents a huge barrier in formulating their demands. The fact that the immigrant communities' interests are very different makes the idealistic wish to fight together for common issues more difficult to realize. Usually no integration problems are reported with the second and third generation which mostly grew up in Greece.

One of the main reasons why there is no strong and regularly cooperation yet between the City administration and immigrant associations can be found in the fact that the City has not really many instruments with a lot of experience in solving all the real issues of the immigrant and minority groups. The Intercultural Center, which was created in May 2008, is focused mainly on the demands of legal immigrants. Many NGOs conceive challenging projects and need more money to bring them to a successful end.

If there should be a type of organization in Athens dealing with foreigners, most of the NGOs have the main mission to fight for the rights of immigrants and their acceptance in the Greek society. The general position of the NGOs is to provide social and legal assistance to immigrants and make them more trusted towards the different ethnic groups.

Concerning the interreligious dialogue one has to say that most of the immigrants from

Eastern Europe belong to the Orthodox Church (e.g. Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Moldavians, Georgians, Russians and Romanians) and maintains their own churches and organizations in Athens. The newcomers among the immigrants usually want to be quickly integrated in the church community and in social life. Their children are attending church activities and also religious courses, helping them to learn the Greek but also the mother language for the second generation. *“Under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church the immigrants define the places of worship as an important connection with their countries of origin. Most religious groups even have their own priests sent from their home countries”*, said Veronica Todor, Romanian journalist from Athens International Radio. An official interreligious dialogue between the different Christian Churches is just at the beginning and takes more time to be successfully developed.

## **5 Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities**

### **5.1 Major issues, demands and interests**

The major demands and issues of the Muslim communities is that in Athens no real Mosque exists but only Prayer Houses. Thus, the three major demands of the Muslims are simple as follows: mosques, a cemetery and the legalization of undocumented Muslim migrants. The Hellenic State offered a place for building a Mosque in the central area of Athens, already in 2006 but because of the bureaucratic procedures the problem is still not solved yet. The same situation is with the creation of a Muslim cemetery.

### **5.2 General approaches and policies improving the relations with Muslim groups**

The NGO “Re-integration Centre for Migrant Workers” (KSPM) has implemented an Action under the name “Searching for co-existence places”, with the support of the European Commission and the Hellenic Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, in the frame of the “European Year of Equal Opportunities for All”. This Action lasted 9 months (from 01.04.07 to 31.12.07) and included two types of activities: a field research, and an information campaign. The target group was the Muslim immigrants in the area of Athens.

There were set three main targets:

- a. to identify the discrimination that Muslim immigrants may suffer because of their religious beliefs,
- b. to promote mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims and increase tolerance towards religious diversity,
- c. to ensure active participation of Muslim immigrants in the implementation of the Action.

In order to achieve these targets a number of sensitization and intervention activities had taken place.



Given the fact, in Greece, that there is no serious knowledge, not to speak about a serious bibliography, on the situation of Muslim immigrants, their religious practices, and their relations with the Greek population, they started by doing two things:

- a) A qualitative field research among Imams, Muslim women and Muslim men in order to identify the type of discrimination they feel they are subjected to. The research was conducted through 21 semi-structured interviews.
- b) A mapping of the unofficial places of worship in the frame of the Athens parishes. Given the fact that, in Athens, there are no mosques, Muslim immigrants exercise their religious duties in unofficial places of worship. Interviews with the Imams took place so that to collect detailed information on the characteristics of these places and the profile of the immigrants who frequent them. By the end of this research, 26 such places had been located and described in detail.

**Photo 9: Alsalam Mosque in a Garage**





Source: Mihály Szabó

On the basis of the findings of this research, they planned the following activities:

- a) The creation of a website ([www.kspm.gr](http://www.kspm.gr)) with 73 sections promoting the inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians. At the site, one can find a number of articles aiming to inform the public about the Muslim religion, the religious particularities of Muslim migrants, and their religious practices in Greece. Also, at the same site, they have uploaded 19 maps which show the parishes of the Archbishopric of Athens in which these unofficial places of worship of Muslim migrants are situated. This facilitates the Orthodox priests to come into contact with Imams in their area.
  
- b) The organization of 3 events at a parish level in which parish priests, Imams, Christian and Muslim residents of the area participated all together. In order to organize these events, they followed a particular procedure: First, was organized a meeting between Orthodox priests from the parishes that have a large number of Muslim migrants, in order to inform them about the aim of these events and the benefits from a fruitful co-existence of Christians and Muslims at the local level. Three parishes were selected for the events to take place. The second step was to

choose a broadly accepted Imam, whom they brought into contact with the Orthodox priests of the parish where the event should take place.

- c) The aim was to get to know each other and to discuss the contents of the event. The third step was to organize in details the content and the realization of these events, together with the Orthodox priests, the Imam, members of the parishes and Muslim migrants. The main subject of these events has been the difficulties Muslims meet when they exercise their religious duties. The main speakers in each occasion were the parish priest and the Imam. An average of 70 persons participated at each one of these events. Representatives of the political world, including the leader of the main opposition party, participated at the last meeting.
- d) The production and the dissemination of a sensitization pamphlet addressed to the general public that focuses on the types of discrimination, Muslim migrants suffer from. In this pamphlet, were included extracts from qualitative interviews with Muslim immigrants.
- e) The publication of articles, most of them in the daily press, concerning the action.
- f) The production of radio broadcasts in the Radio of the Greek Orthodox Church, with the participation of Muslim migrants, including an Imam, who spoke about religious duties and rights.
- g) The Presentation of the Action in a one-day workshop for priests (with 70 participants).

The most important result was the encouragement of reciprocal understanding between Christians and Muslims and tolerance towards religious diversity. Through this project the interreligious and intercultural dialogue was actively promoted by having the opportunity to talk about their situation and their interests.

### **5.3 Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures improving the relations with Muslim groups**

The only cooperation with the City is through the Intercultural Center or other actions organized by the Municipality. Mr. Mazen Shafek Rassas, President of the Union of Muslims in Greece said in an interview, that they provide the opportunity for the people to perform their prayers, organize programmes for the fasting period throughout *Ramadan*, do some social welfare activities and are active in the education of children and adults. The main focus is on Koran lessons and the Arabic language.

For the period of the most important holydays, like the *Ramadan* they invited also representatives of the local authority but not only because these dinners are open for everybody. During our field visit the imam emphasized that they invite the municipal staff to further promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue and by this also having the opportunity to talk about their situation and their interests.

#### 5.4 Public communication

The Ministry of Interior, competent for the immigration policy has developed a strategy for public communication and one of the first steps in this direction was to provide brochures with basic information regarding the rights and obligations of immigrants in different languages.

The City of Athens has also developed a strategy for public communication in order to inform in different languages the foreigners citizens on health, cleanliness, environment issues, etc.

The International Organization for Migrants (IOM) issued in 2004 a "Guide for Journalists on Migration Issues", with the scope that the mass media comes to promote topics related to migrants not only in a way that does not generate racism and xenophobia but on the contrary, prevents such phenomena, laying the foundations for a society which respects the differences of others and consequently respects itself.<sup>7</sup>

### 6 Intergroup relations and radicalisation

Concerning the majority population certain trends of a rising Greek nationalism can be observed in some groups. This trend is comparable to similar developments in the Czech Republic, Hungary and other Eastern European countries but it is significantly weaker. Thus, none of the interview partners mentioned any relevant forms of radicalization in the local population or among the approved ethnic minorities.

One has to admit that the African and Muslim communities are still the most stigmatized ethnic groups.

The representative of "PRAKSIS" stated that racism has developed in time but it is hard to generalize. There is an institutional racism on the one hand and on the other a kind of daily racism which is influenced by the media as well.

All in all Muslim illegal immigrants often protested during the last months in Athens mainly claiming for legalisation in Greece. At the end of May about 1,500 protesters, most of them Muslim immigrants demonstrated in front of the Parliament in downtown Athens after an alleged police officer insult to the Koran tearing up some sheets of paper with

---

<sup>7</sup> Information given by Mr. Daniel Esdras, Chief of Nation, International Organization for Migrants.

extracts from the Muslim holy book belonging to an Iraqi migrant during an identity check.<sup>8</sup> The president of the Muslim Union of Greece, Naim Elghandour, said: “We were told by the police we will be given the name of the policeman who did this so we can press charges”.<sup>9</sup>

## 7 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

Whether it has to do with the insurance or the renewal of residence permits or with other administrative issues, migrants in Athens are very often beleaguered by long and expensive procedures. The majority of them usually spend most of their energy to gain a visa and a labour permit, which are the most important issues.

Mr. Alexander Zavos, President of the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute acknowledged: “*What we really need is a Migration law which should decide the Migration Policy in Greece, because we don't have any Migration Policy right now*”. Although the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute has made many proposals for the Parliament to make new laws regarding different conditions for different types of migrants there is not any reaction so far.

One of the main issues of the communities is that the associations do not have enough means to organize their activities. An issue is also the fact that some communities don't even know how to organize a festival, a seminar or a workshop for example. The already established Forum with representatives of all ethnic groups which is supported by the Municipality, offers trainings, seminars and workshops related how to organize different activities but also how is it possible to acquire different funds not only from the city but to also from foundations or the EU. They can't do it alone, like small associations with just a handful of members, but it is possible with this forum. The idea is to bring the organizations together, to work together and not only on the typical issues of a community but on the common issues of all the migrants such as education, job opportunity, and local political participation.

Concerning daily issues which are important and could be solved by working together with the Municipality there is also need for more initiatives from the part of the different ethnic groups. The radio station is an important instrument also in organizing seminars to bring the associations together.

---

<sup>8</sup> For details see [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=CNG.49807af5942cfadc48c67327cbd4e96a.751&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=CNG.49807af5942cfadc48c67327cbd4e96a.751&show_article=1).

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.emportal.rs/en/news/region/89029.html>.

One of the main actions which should be done is to let the immigrants gain access to European Programmes and to run the initiatives for and by themselves, because the immigrants know their demands better than anyone else and should be encouraged by the municipality.

Nevertheless, the main conclusion is that the existence of migrants in Athens doesn't appear as sufficiently reflected in local intercultural policies. There is an urgent requirement for a clear integration policy which is acknowledged by all the NGOs and some institutions dealing with this issue. Some of the activities which support "socially" all types of migrants are not fulfilled by municipal or governmental institutions but taken over by NGOs and organizations of the different ethnic groups.

The Dublin Regulation is another important issue. The EU should also provide more assistance to EU border countries, in how to deal with it. There is money coming from the EU but the management is not good and the target groups do not benefit as much as it should.

There are many insufficiencies not only on the side of the local authorities but also among the ethnic groups and their associations. What is still clearly missing in Athens is that there are not enough associations organized by immigrants themselves which are able to formally represent their own interests within a well organized interethnic dialogue.

The representation of ethnic groups in media is very important. Athens International Radio is a very good example, helping people to integrate in the society and to reduce non-integration costs which can occur if there is nothing similar.

The most important challenge for the municipality is to see things in a long perspective to plan long term policy. If the authorities don't start to deal with this issue correctly now then the problems will be much more complicated to be solved. The idea of diversity, the attitude of the people is one of the major challenges in Greece. Changing the attitude of public employers where they have to exchange on a daily basis with many kinds of issues is crucial for the future development.

## 8 References

ANTIGONI (Mediterranean Migration Observatory) (ed.) (2003): Bibliography on Refugees, immigrants and repatriated Greeks ([http://www.migrantsingreece.org/files/RESOURCE\\_63.pdf](http://www.migrantsingreece.org/files/RESOURCE_63.pdf)).

Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2000): An analytic commentary on the Greek immigration bill, MMO Working Paper No. 1, February 2001, Research Institute of Urban Environment and Human Resources, Panteion University of Athens (<http://www.hri.org/docs/MMO-WP1final.pdf>).

Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2002): Southern European labour markets and immigration: a structural and functional analysis, Working Paper No. 5, Panteion University of Athens: 157-174 ([http://www.mmo.gr/pdf/publications/mmo\\_working\\_papers/MMO\\_WP5.pdf](http://www.mmo.gr/pdf/publications/mmo_working_papers/MMO_WP5.pdf)).

Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2004a): Albanian emigration and the Greek labour market: Economic symbiosis and social ambiguity. *South-East Europe Review* 1: 51-66 ([http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/South\\_East\\_Europe\\_Review\\_2004\\_01\\_baldwin2.pdf](http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/South_East_Europe_Review_2004_01_baldwin2.pdf)).

Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2004b): Statistical Data for immigrants in Greece: An analytical study of the available data, and recommendations for compliance with EU standards, Athens: Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO) – Research Institute of Urban Environment and Human Resources, Panteion University of Athens.

Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2004c): Immigration into Greece, 1990-2003: A Southern European Paradigm? Presentation for Panel: "International Migration: Promoting Management and Integration." [online]. Athens: Mediterranean Migration Observatory. ([www.mmo.gr/pdf/publications/publications\\_by\\_mmo\\_staff/UNECE%20paperV3.pdf](http://www.mmo.gr/pdf/publications/publications_by_mmo_staff/UNECE%20paperV3.pdf)).

Baldwin-Edwards, M. & Rossetos, F. (1999): Greece: the contours of a fragmented policy response, in M. Baldwin-Edwards & J. Arango (eds.): *Immigrants and the Informal Economy in Southern Europe*. London: Frank Cass: 186-204.

Baldwin-Edwards, M. & Safiliou-Rothschild, C. (1999): Immigration and Unemployment in Greece: Perceptions and Realities, *South European Society & Politics*, 4, 3: 206-221.

Cavounidis, J. (2002): Migration in Southern Europe and the case of Greece, in: *International Migration* 40, 1: 45-70.

Chletsos, M. (2001): The increase in the population only due to migrants, Eleftherotypia, "The children of the Diaspora and foreigners are over 5% of pupils", *Syghroni Ekpaidefsi*, 113.

Chletsos, M. et. al. (2005): Economic dimensions of migration. Impact on the agricultural sector. Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO). Athens.

Dimakos, I. & Tasiopoulou, K. (2003): Attitudes Towards Migrants: what do Greek students think about their immigrant classmates? *Intercultural Education* 14, 3: 307-316.

Dimitri, A. et al. (2007): Migrant youth regimes in Greece, in Gavan Titley (ed.): *The Politics of Diversity*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing: 39-55.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AGAINST RACISM AND INTOLERANCE (ed.) (2004): Third Report on Greece [online]. Strasbourg: Council of Europe ([www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)).

Hatziprokopiou, P. (2003): Albanian Immigrants in Thessaloniki, Greece: processes of economic and social incorporation. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 29, 6: 1033-1057.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRANTS (ΔΟΜ) (ed.) (2004): Let's expose the alibis. Guide for Journalists on Migration Issues. Athens.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRANTS (ΔΟΜ) (ed.) (2007a): Guidance & Information, Guide for Victims of Trafficking. Athens.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRANTS (ΔΟΜ) (ed.) (2007b): Trafficking in Human Beings and Greek Mass Media: Guide for Journalists.

Kasimis, C. (2004): Greece: A history of migration ([www.migrationinformation.org](http://www.migrationinformation.org)).

Labrianidis, L. & Lyberaki, A. (2001): Albanian Immigrants in Thessaloniki. Thessaloniki: Paratiritis.

Lazaridis, G. & Poyago-Theotoky, J. (1999): Undocumented Migrants in Greece: Issues of Regularisation. *International Migration*, 37, 4: 715-738.

Levinson, A. (2005): The Regularisation of Unauthorized Migrants: Regularisation programmes in Greece. Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford ([http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/pdfs/Non\\_WP\\_pdfs/Reports\\_and\\_Other\\_Publications/Country%20Case%20Greece.pdf](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/pdfs/Non_WP_pdfs/Reports_and_Other_Publications/Country%20Case%20Greece.pdf)).

Lianos, T., Katseli, L. & A. Sarris (1996): Illegal Immigration and Local Labour Markets: The Case of Northern Greece. *International Migration*, 34, 3: 449-484.

Lykovardi, K. (2002): General Overview of Discrimination in Greece [online]. Geneva: International Organization for Migration ([www.iom.fi/anti-discrimination/pdf/Greece%2011%20January%202003.PDF](http://www.iom.fi/anti-discrimination/pdf/Greece%2011%20January%202003.PDF)).

Lykovardi, K. & Petroula, E. (2003): EU and US Approaches to the Management of Migration: Greece, eds. Jan Niessen et. al. Brussels: Migration Policy Group ([www.migpolgroup.com/uploadstore/Greece.pdf](http://www.migpolgroup.com/uploadstore/Greece.pdf)).

Papantoniou-Frangouli, M. & Levanti, K. M. (2000): *The legalization of aliens in Greece*. *International Migration Review* 34, 13: 950-974.

Parsanoglou, D. (2008): INTI Project: One-Stop Shop: A New Answer for Immigrant. Country Report for Greece ([www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt)).

Papademetriou, D. & Cavounidis, J. (2006): Managing Migration: The Greek, EU and International Contexts, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (I.ME.ΠΟ.), Athens.

Papademetriou, D. & Cavounidis, J. (2007): Capturing the Benefits of Migration in Southeastern Europe, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (I.ME.ΠΟ.), Athens.

Pentzopoulos, D. (2002): The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece. London: Hurst & Co. [2nd impression of 1962 edition].



Reyneri, E. (2001): Migrants' Involvement in Irregular Employment in the Mediterranean Countries of the European Union. Geneva: International Labour Organization. ([www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/download/imp/imp41.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/download/imp/imp41.pdf)).

Rossetos, F. (2003): Regularising undocumented immigrants in Greece: procedures and effects, in: *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, 29, 3: 535-557.

Samokhalov, V. (2004): Greece and Migrants: The Process of Integration. Working Paper. Athens: International Center for Black Sea Studies.

Tonchev, P. (ed.) (2007): Asian Migrants in Greece: Origins, Status and Prospects. Institute of International Economic Relations 7 (<http://www.migrationeducation.org/23.1.html?&rid=67&cHash=a780bf866f>).

Triandafyllidou, A. & Marouf, M. (with collaboration of M. Nikolova) (2009): Immigration towards Greece at the eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: a critical assessment. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), Athens.

Triandafyllidou, A., Broersma, F. & D. Lazarescu (2009): Pakistani and Bangladeshi Migration to Greece: "Chasing the Dream". Athens.

#### Websites:

<http://www.cityofathens.gr/en>

<http://www.migrationeducation.org/>

[http://www.migrationdrc.org/publications/working\\_papers.html](http://www.migrationdrc.org/publications/working_papers.html)

<http://www.migrant.gr/cgi-bin/pages/index.pl?arlang=greek>

<http://www.praksis.gr>

<http://tvradio.ert.gr/radio/index.asp?id=18>

[http://www.athina984fm.gr/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=82&page\\_id=1000](http://www.athina984fm.gr/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=82&page_id=1000)

[http://www.ypepth.gr/en\\_ec\\_page1547.htm](http://www.ypepth.gr/en_ec_page1547.htm)

<http://www.ert.gr/en/>

<http://www.yvettejarvis.gr/speeches/immigrants/?lang=en>

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/114509\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/114509_en.htm)

[http://www.mdmgreece.gr/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=817&Itemid](http://www.mdmgreece.gr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=817&Itemid)

<http://www.socialcenter.gr/>

[http://www.ipode.gr/default.asp?V\\_ITEM\\_ID=904&V\\_LANG\\_ID=6](http://www.ipode.gr/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=904&V_LANG_ID=6)

## 9 Contacts and informants

Ms. **Evert-Alverti Alexandra**, Deputy Mayor for Equality and Social Integration

Ms. **Toula Tranaka**, Responsible of the Intercultural Center, Municipality of Athens,

Ms. **Konstantina Giannouli**, Executive Secretary and Programs Administrative, Intercultural Center, Municipality of Athens

Ms. **Maria Kefalopoulou**, Psychologist at the Office for Equality

Ms. **Georgia Mpouri**, Social worker at the Office for Equality

Ms. **Lola Velona**, Youth and Sports Organization (ONA), Responsible of the Social Matters Dep.

Ms. **Athina Korlira**, Radio Stations (Athens 98.4FM & Athens International Radio 104.4FM)

Ms. **Yvette Jarvis**, "Migrants' Political Rights", Special Advisor to the Mayor, President of the "Black European" NGO

Mr. **Alexander Korkodinos**, Secretary to the Deputy Mayor resp. for the Municipal Police

Mr. **Nikolaos Karanikolas**, Municipal Police Officer

Mr. **Alexander Zavos**, President of the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (I.ME.ΠO.)

Mr. **Daniel Esdras**, Chief of Nation, International Organization for Migrants (ΔOM)

Ms. **Eleni Zenakou**, President of the Research Center for Gender Equality (K.E.Θ.I.)

Mrs. **Haido Riga**, Secretary General for Life-long Learning (Γ.Γ.Δ.Μ), responsible for the educational programme "Ulysses"

Ms. **Stavi Saloufakou**, President of the Center of Athens Labour Unions

Mr. **George Alevizakis**, Secretary for Migrants Matters, General Confederation of Workers of Greece

Mrs. **Sissy Andritsopoulou**, Director of "Nostos", NGO – Job Club

Mr. **Robert Goro**, Editor of the newspaper "Tribuna" in Albanian language

Mr. **Malkit Chand**, Indoeuropean Times (Hindu), Association of Hindu Migrants in Greece

Ms. **Adriana Martinez**, Sol Latino Magazine (Latin American), editor

Mr. **Naim El Ghadour**, "Lihnari" Magazine (Muslim), Union of Muslims in Greece

Ms. **Bardha Mance**, AIR (Athens International Radio), journalist in Albanian language

Ms. **Veronica**, Athens International Radio, journalist in Russian language

Mr. **Joe Valecia**, "Balita", Newspaper of Filipino, Association of Filipinos

Mr. **Antonios Tabako**, Association of Albanian Migrants' Unions

Mr. **Lorenc Koka**, Association of Greek-Albanian partnership

Mr. **Antypas Tzanetos**, President of the NGO "Praksis"

Ms. **Veronica Todor**, AIR (Athens International Radio), responsible for the news in Romanian language

## **ANNEX**

### **Activities and Programs of the Intercultural Center**

#### *1. Greek lessons: "Mommy learns Greek"*

The Intercultural Centre of the Immigrant Services Department of the City of Athens planned and implemented in 2008, in cooperation with the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute, a Greek language teaching program, named "Mommy learns Greek", which is addressed to foreign mothers of children registered in the day-care centers of the City of Athens.

The objectives of the programme are:

- The learning and dissemination of Greek language.
- The effective communication with education professionals and other relative bodies.
- The familiarization with social habits, everyday life and conditions of living.

The innovative aspect of the programme is that it is implemented only in day-care centres of the City, and that the children of the mothers attending the programme are kept busy by specialized educators. Until the end July 2009, 343 mothers had attended the program courses. From the beginning of September 2009 until the end of the year, the program will be co-financed by European Integration Fund for the Third Country Nationals and the Greek Ministry of Interior. During this period, around 800 mothers from Municipality of Athens and from other Municipalities of the Region of Attica will learn Greek.

Also, in cooperation with the Secretariat General on Continuous Learning of the Ministry for Education, the program includes the syllabus required for the certification of Greek language (level A2), allowing the mothers to participate, free of charge, in the state examinations held by the respective body.

#### *2. Computer seminars: "Unlimited Potential"*

The Intercultural Centre of the Immigrant Services Department of the City of Athens, in cooperation with the Hellenic Professional Informatics Society, within the frame of its program "Unlimited Potential" is hosting for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers learning and certification courses for fundamental computer skills, in accordance to the ECDL standard. After completing the first program, 100 participants shall be able to acquire, free of charge, the internationally accredited certificate of ECDL. The purpose of the programme is for the beneficiaries to acquire skills that shall improve their position in the labour market, while also contributing to their integration into society.

### 3. *1<sup>st</sup> Intercultural Day of Entrepreneurship*

Within the framework of the Global Week of Entrepreneurship, the Intercultural Centre of the Immigrant Services Department of the City of Athens held in November 2008, in "Melina" Cultural Center, an innovative event, attended by 250 immigrants who provided valid information in regards to making business.

The main objectives of the event was to provide information to immigrants interested in developing business actions, to encourage direct dialogue and the exchange of views and experiences between businesspersons, businesses, bodies and immigrants, to present good entrepreneurship practices and standards between the immigrant citizens and to integrate in the productive procedure and society.

**Photo A1: Intercultural day of entrepreneurship**



Source: City of Athens, Intercultural Centre

The commitment of the Youth General Secretariat, announced during this one-day conference regarding the creation of two Offices for Intercultural Entrepreneurship in the City of Athens was regarded as very important. In addition, during the event, the creation of a special prize for immigrants, within the context of the annual awards of Athens

Chamber of Commerce and Industry was announced, as well as the expansion of the cooperation of the Chamber with the Intercultural Center of the City of Athens, with the purpose of providing better information to immigrants on issues of entrepreneurship.

#### *4. Participation in Greek Scouts "Responsible Little Citizens"*

The program of Scouting aims to extra-school education, the formation of moral fiber and the creation of a team spirit culture. The City of Athens undertakes the integration to Scouts of 500 children of foreign families, living in the City of Athens. The duration of the program shall be five years.

#### *5. Information on health issues*

The Intercultural Centre of the Immigrant Services Department of the City of Athens, in collaboration with the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (H.C.D.C.P.) organized two campaigns to inform and sensitize the immigrant residing in Athens for the New Type of Influenza A

(H1N1) and for hepatitis Type B. Furthermore, the Intercultural Centre in collaboration with the Office for Equality will collaborate with the Hospital "Alexandra" to provide experts such as psychologist and social worker to immigrant women who arrive at the hospital.

#### *6. Participation of the City of Athens in international networks*

The City of Athens participates for the first time as a member in two of the most important European city networks, Clip and Eurocities, which aim to the exchange of experiences and good practices, between European cities on the integration of immigrants.

#### *7. Weekends of Theatre*

The City of Athens Immigrant Services Department's Intercultural Centre, in collaboration with the Argo Art Organisation, staged two weekends of theatre (April 25-26 and May 2-3 2009) for Athens' immigrant children. Two theatre companies which specialize in theatre for children, Albania's National Theater of Children and Bulgaria's Theater PAN, presented performances in their native languages. This initiative was directed at children of the second generation, who often know little of their mother tongue or culture,

#### *8. Puzzle Festival*

From 19-21 June 2009, a new artistic festival took place in the "Meeting Place of East and West" of "Aggelon Vima". More than 50 artists from 17 different countries from all over the world, all of them immigrants that live in Athens, were being introduced in the wider audience.

#### *9. Lea Festival: Iberoamerican Festival*

The City of Athens Immigrant Services Department's Intercultural Centre, the Cultural Magazine Sol Latino, the Institute for Intercultural Development, The Institute of Migration Policy, and The Greek-Colombian Association organized the 1<sup>o</sup> Iberoamerican Festival of Literature in Greece, (Festival LEA – Literature in Athens) in «*Technopolis*» from 24 till 27 June, 2009. The activities geared towards public of all ages who had the opportunity to get to know the richness of the Latin American, Portuguese, and Spanish authors. Many other activities took place such as concerts, fiestas, documentaries, exhibitions and many more.

10. *Christmas fair for the children of foreign families*

The Intercultural Center of the Immigrant Services Department held in the Sporting Stadium a large Christmas Fair for children of foreign families.