



*Special Secretariat for Educational Planning,  
Education of Expatriate Greeks, Intercultural Education  
and Decentralization*

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**Humanitarian Issues and Other Commitments, Session 6, Tuesday, 5 October 2010**

**I. Human rights education**

a) Since the school year 2006-2007, the “**Kallipateira**” project has been put into practice in primary and secondary education in the framework of the programme “Olympic Education”. Its thematic units deal with issues of human rights, diversity and multiculturalism, gender equality in education and in society, facing xenophobia and racism, social solidarity, physical education and the Olympic ideals. The aim of the project is to encourage students to actively participate in thematic mini-projects which are run by the everlasting ideals of the Olympic Games.

b) In the context of the Council of Europe, the Greek Ministry of Education actively participates in the Programme “**Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights**”. In the framework of this programme a network of 50 participating schools has been established, which have already produced through projects material related to human rights, social inclusion and intercultural understanding. In addition, a considerable number of teaching tools has been translated and is available for use to schools.

c) The «**Parliament of Adolescents**» is an educational programme which is organized annually with the cooperation of the Greek Parliament and the Ministries of Education of Greece and Cyprus. Students of all three classes of Senior High Schools of all types can participate in the programme as well as students of Greek Senior High schools abroad and students of the second and third class of Cypriot Senior High schools. The main aims of the programme are:

- the cultivation of a positive attitude towards the value of “participating in communal life”
- the “induction” in the values, rules and practices of democracy.

“Participation in communal life” aims at socializing adolescents with regard to politics so that in the long run they consciously integrate in political and social functions. It is of great importance that adolescents experience the practices of democracy and of social justice so that they eventually become a way of living. To this end, the programme focuses on the continuous exchange of feelings, reflections and experience.

Young people are given the opportunity, in the context of a public and responsible dialogue which continues on a yearly basis, to take down and discuss their opinions and conclusions for contemporary issues as well as to describe their vision for the future.

**d)** Greece has a network of approximately 100 schools participating in the “**Associated Schools Project Network of UNESCO**” (ASPnet). This project is part of the broader UNESCO Programme “Education for All” and supports quality education in actual fact. The ASPnet aims to encourage international cooperation and peace through education, as well as to strengthen the humanitarian, cultural and international dimension of education. At national level, the participating schools are called to materialize projects which are based on four units, one of which is called “Peace and Human Rights”.

**e)** Education for Democratic Citizenship is central to the implementation of the notions of civic freedom, solidarity, intercultural learning and participatory citizenship. Civic Education has always been entrenched within the Greek legislative framework. Therefore, Greek curricula are regularly updated to respond to the new challenges and needs of a rapidly changing society to ensure good practice and concrete results.

Primary and Secondary Education in Greece has set the following objectives:

- to help pupils become free, responsible and democratic citizens;
- to cultivate their creative and critical thinking and to develop a spirit of friendship, cooperation and membership in the school environment and in their personal lives.

Nowadays, the issue of Citizenship Education and its presence in different teaching subjects and school activities appears more vital than ever. Students are encouraged to acknowledge and accept diversity, resolve conflicts without violence, assume responsibility, establish positive/creative (rather than oppressive) relations, and take part in decision-making and collective action. An attempt is also made to adopt teaching models that focus on research, cooperation and action.

Civic education subjects in school curricula are linked with cross-curricular activities and subject-specific themes both in Primary and Secondary education, with emphasis on democratic citizenship, the introduction to law and civic institutions, ancient Greek literature, history of the social sciences, European civilisation, its roots and sociology.

**f)** A “Human Rights Committee” has been established in the Greek Pedagogical Institute. The mission of this Committee is the design and the proposal of measures for the materialization of human rights, and especially of the rights of the child in the educational system. The Committee’s task has been decided to be implemented on the basis of the following pillars:

- 1) Human rights education (training of teachers, design of programmes for all grades, diffusion of human rights principles in the School Curricula etc.)
- 2) Safeguard of the rights of the child in the educational system.

### **Tolerance and non-Discrimination I, Session 7, Wednesday, 6 October 2010**

#### **II. Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti, Particularly in Improving Access to Quality Education**

Measures taken by the Greek Ministry of Education aiming at the improvement of the education provided to this particular social group as well as at its smooth integration in the educational system:

**a)** Ministerial Decision No. Φ4//Γ1/1237/11-9-1996 (Government Gazette 893, Vol. B’) instituted the “itinerant student card”. This card is borne by Roma pupils and enables them to be enrolled in schools without resorting to the formal procedure of intra-school transfer, should they change school during the school year due to relocation.

**b)** Since 2002 Roma families can benefit from an annual allowance of 300 €, which is granted to families with low income for every child enrolled in public school of compulsory education (Common Ministerial Decision -Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Employment and Social Security- No. 2/37645/0020, Government Gazette 90, Vol. A’/17-7-2002). A bill of the Ministry of Education, which has been recently voted by the Greek Parliament and its publication in the Government Gazette is pending, provides that the annual allowance will be granted at the end of each school year, and not at the beginning, upon the presentation of a certification issued by the Head Master that the child

has regularly attended classes throughout the school year. This modification has been made because some families stopped sending their children to school after having received the allowance.

**c)** Circular No. Φ.1.T.Y./1073/117052/Γ1/23-9-2009 of the Ministry of Education entitled “Programmes aiming at the active integration of Repatriated, Foreign and Roma pupils in the Educational System” provides for the operation of countervailing institutions (Reception Classes and Tutorials) for the integration of Roma pupils in school.

**d)** On August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Ministry of Education issued Circular No. Φ.3/960/102679/Γ1 entitled “Enrollment and Attendance of Roma children 2010-2011”. According to it, all Heads of School Units are reminded of their obligation to seek and enroll Roma pupils in Primary Schools and to cooperate with all educational authorities (Regional Directors of Primary and Secondary Education, School Advisors etc.) for overcoming any problems that may arise during enrollment. Moreover, all School Units are called upon trying to provide support in any possible way so that Roma students attend regularly classes and are included in the education process. In the Circular it is made clear that schools also ought to cooperate with other public services, such as local authorities, medical centers, hospitals and welfare state institutions, so that there is a coordinated approach to the inclusive process of Roma students in schooling. Certain directions and information are also given as to how enrolment problems related to lack of vaccination and lack of permanent residence certificate may be resolved. It is also emphasized that the segregation of Roma pupils is contrary to national and international law and to Ministry of Education’s longstanding policy and resolution.

**e)** Programmes for the Integration of Roma children in the educational system:

Since 1997 three Programmes with regard to the Education of Roma children, co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), have been implemented in Greece. The general aim of the Programmes was the enrollment and school-attendance of Roma children, combating early school drop-out rates and smooth integration in the Greek public educational system. The educational interventions comprised of teacher training of those educators who work at schools with Roma population, drafting of materials specific to the needs of Roma pupils, support of the Roma pupils and their families, awareness-raising campaigns against the prevalent stereotypes regarding the Roma population etc.

The implementation of the fourth phase of the Programme, entitled “Education of Roma children”, is starting in the immediate future and will cover the years 2010-2013. Its aim is to enhance the access of Roma children to all classes of compulsory education. The interventions that are going to be implemented consist of: activities inside the classrooms as well as in the communities, collaboration with social workers, psychologists and Roma mediators, training of the whole school community, information and publicity campaigns in order to sensitize the society with regard to stereotypes against Roma pupils etc. The Programme will be implemented in approximately 84 Municipalities all over Greece and it is anticipated that 252 schools and 4.500 pupils each year will benefit, including the Roma students living in the Municipality of Aspropyrgos, with which the European Court of Human Rights dealt in the case *Sabanis and others v. Greece* (decision of 5/6/2008). The special characteristic of the Programme is that it also takes into consideration the circumstances under which Roma pupils live and aims at concerted action between the various Ministries involved as well as local government targeting Roma in order to combat their social exclusion.

In addition, in the context of the Programme “Education of Muslim children in Thrace”, educational interventions targeting Roma Muslim children in the region of Thrace have been implemented from March 2006 until July 2007 whereby more than 1000 Roma children benefited. The Program aimed to combat the double discrimination faced by the Muslim Roma pupils and has been quoted as an example of “best practice”.

f) In the immediate future the launching of the Dosta! campaign in Greece will take place. It is an awareness-raising campaign, developed in the framework of the Council of Europe, which targets mainly the non-Roma population and aims at combating the stereotypes surrounding Roma. The Special Secretary for Intercultural Education in the Ministry of Education took the initiative for the implementation of the campaign in Greece and the coordination of the actions of the various Ministries and entities that deal with Roma issues. The Dosta! campaign will operate in a supplementary and auxiliary way to the “Education of Roma children” Programme.

### **III. National Minorities**

The education of the children of the Muslim minority in Thrace constitutes a matter of high priority in the context of the general national policy for the social and economic integration of the Muslim minority into the contemporary Greek society.

**a)** Special schools in primary education have been operating since 1922 and half of the education program is dedicated to the needs of the Muslim minority in linguistic, cultural and religious matters. Today there are \_\_\_\_ primary minority schools operating in Thrace. Courses are taught in the Greek and Turkish languages as stipulated in Part V of the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 under the heading “Protection of minorities”. The curriculum includes a complete Turkish and Greek language programme. Additionally, the minority pupils follow a foreign language programme, that is, other than Greek and Turkish, after the third grade of primary school. In addition, four private minority high schools, including two Koranic schools, operate in the cities of Xanthi and Komotini, capital cities of the Prefectures of Xanthi and Rodopi respectively, where the Muslim minority is mainly situated. It should be mentioned that the two Koranic schools of Komotini in the Rodopi Prefecture and of Exidos in the Xanthi Prefecture are recognized as equivalent to the standard Religious Studies Lyceums of the country.

**b)** Since the school year 2006-2007, the Turkish language has been introduced on a pilot base into five (5) public schools of secondary education as optional language course.

**c)** There is a special quota of 0.5 per cent for the entrance of Muslim students in Higher Education. Furthermore, a special scholarship has been drafted by the State Scholarship Foundation (IKY) for students from the Muslim minority in Thrace.

**d)** The Greek Ministry of Education also pays particular attention to the improvement of the skills of minority pupils in Greek language. From 1997 until 2008 three phases of the educational Programme entitled «**Education of Muslim children**» and co-funded by the European Union have been applied and have yielded very positive results. The Programme has contributed substantially to the reduction of school drop-out rates regarding Muslim pupils (the school drop-out rate in secondary education -Gymnasium- in 2000 was 65% and by 2006 has been reduced into half), as well as to the increase of participation in secondary education (while only 941 minority pupils attended Gymnasium in school year 1991-1992, their number reached 3.428 in school year 2006-2007; at the same time, the number of minority pupils attending Lyceum has been more than doubled during the six-year period of 2000-2006). In the framework of the Programme new textbooks for the teaching of the

Greek language to students with a different mother tongue were published, training sessions for both Muslim and Christian teachers in modern pedagogical methods were organized, and various other educational interventions took place in order to combat educational exclusion and foster Muslim pupils' school performance.

The implementation of the fourth phase of the Programme, entitled «**Educational Program for the children of Muslim Minority in Thrace**», has already started and it will cover the years 2010-2013. Its general aim is the smooth integration of all school-age children of the Muslim minority in the educational system and in the society. Specifically, the Program is aiming at: 1) supporting the children in order to accomplish systematic improvement of their school performance that will lead to reduction of drop-out rates, as well as enhancing successful school attendance in the Lyceum with the overall aim to reach the national mean and, consequently, increase university attendance, 2) ensuring the acceptance of minority children by the school community, by parents belonging to the majority population and by the entire local society.

For the achievement of the abovementioned goals, large-scale interventions are designed aiming at: 1) enhancing the command of the Greek language while recognizing and respecting the maternal language of the minority pupils, 2) continuing and extending the efforts to reduce all obstacles that obstruct school achievement of the children belonging to the Muslim minority, 3) providing support to the families in order to contribute to the quality education of their children and 4) making use of the materials that have already been produced in the framework of earlier phases of the Program as well as of new technology.

**The main activities of the Programme consist of:**

- Holistic approach based on work with families with school-age children.
- Remedial teaching addressing primary school children attending both the minority and the public primary school.
- Work with pupils both at school and at the level of the community; targeted educational interventions, as well as support to the families, and especially to mothers.
- Continuation and expansion of the Community Centers' (KESPEM) activities, namely the provision of afternoon classes and summer courses, use of new technologies, creative activities, Greek classes for parents, Turkish classes for teachers who teach children belonging to the Muslim minority etc.

- Design and implementation of a pilot project concerning pre-school education and aiming at the smooth familiarization of the children with the institution of education, language development, the Greek language, and support of the mother tongue.
- Special training of both primary and secondary teachers in new didactic and pedagogical methods, teaching Greek as a second language, issues of intercultural education, use of new materials, etc.
- Collaboration with representatives of the local administration, the Muslim minority, and the teachers' community.
- Design of new materials appropriate for pre-school age children visiting nursery school as well as revision, if deemed necessary, of the educational materials that had been produced in the context of the previous phases of the Program.
- Exploration of the demand and supply of the Turkish language, as an optional course, in the public primary and secondary schools of Thrace.
- Research on the school dropout rates of minority pupils from 2002 onwards, as well as research on the rates of academic success and overall adjustment of minority students in the Greek universities (e.g. percentage of students who do not graduate on time, drop-out rates, need for remedial teaching, etc.).
- Publication and awareness-raising campaigns.

#### **IV. Preventing Aggressive Nationalism, Racism and Chauvinism**

a) The Ministry of Education is in the process of redrafting the Curricula of all grades. One of the goals of this reformation is that the new Curricula take into consideration the new multicultural reality of Greek schools and the ethnic and cultural diversity in classes, familiarize the pupils with the notion of «otherness» and implant the respect for different cultures and mother languages. It is a substantial reform of the current educational system that seeks to render the principles of inter-culturalism indivisible element of Greek school. Through this transformation, schools may become a place of mutual respect between pupils with different backgrounds, the educational process will be enriched for the whole school community, diversity will be recognized by everybody as wealth instead of as a threat and, ultimately, the appearance of phenomena of racial violence and xenophobic speech will be prevented at its root.



**b)** The Ministry of Education has issued a new call for the Programme «**Action plan for preventing or/and fighting racism and discrimination of all kinds, for presenting the importance of diversity, as well as for combating violence in schools**». The Programme is co-funded by the European Union and is based on the premise that in order to improve the educational conditions as well as, generally, the living conditions of persons belonging to vulnerable social groups it is of vital importance to combat discrimination through the cultivation of a different culture that perceives diversity positively and prevents phobic and aggressive trends against vulnerable social groups. In the framework of the Programme an Action plan for combating all forms of discrimination and violence in the schools of primary and secondary education will be drafted.

#### **V. Intolerance against Migrants (continuation)**

The Ministry of Education has taken a line of measures in order to vindicate the right of all students in education. The measures aim to meet the problems that are caused, and the challenges that are created, by the increase of cultural variation in the Greek society and the extension of the school population. They correspond to the obligation of Greece, as a modern democratic state, to provide equal opportunities of education and social integration to all citizens.

**a)** In 1996 Greece took its first serious institutional steps towards addressing the issues relating to multicultural classrooms, through the Law 2413/96. The law, entitled "Greek Education abroad, Intercultural Education and other provisions" consists of eleven chapters, one of which refers to the Intercultural Education in Greece. In this chapter, there is a general reference to the aim of Intercultural Education, its content and its organizational structure. More specifically, the legislators propose the establishment of "intercultural education schools". These are to be a new type of school to be attended by mostly repatriated Greeks and foreign students. In the "intercultural education schools", the curriculum of the state school is more flexibly applied, adjusting to the pupils' special needs.

In the domain of Intercultural Education Schools, there are 13 Primary schools and 13 Secondary schools in Greece. The teachers of these schools undergo training in the field of Intercultural Education and are chosen in relation to their competence in teaching Greek as a second or a foreign language.

The main principle governing the Greek educational system is that **it should be provided to all individuals and it should be of equivalent high quality**. There is, therefore, a continuous effort to attract attendance at school and study of all children of school age. The legislative frame of intercultural education has been shaped by the laws 2413/1996 and 2817/2000 and by a line of ministerial decisions, the most important being the Decision Φ10/20/Γ1/708/7-9-1999 for the foundation and operation of reception and support classes for students in need.

**b)** Valuable aid for these students has been offered in years 1998-2004 through the Programme “Education of Immigrants and Repatriated Greeks”, which was co-funded by the EU. Special innovative teaching material (112 books) has been drafted in the frame of this project with a twofold aim:

1. To endorse respect for foreign cultures and civilizations and
2. To enable the students develop their skills in the new teaching environment.

The “Centre for Intercultural Education” of the University of Athens implemented the project with a network of 820 scientists.

In the third phase (2006-2008) the project has been divided into two:

a) “Education of Immigrant and Repatriated Greeks for primary school students”, which was again carried out by the University of Athens and b) “Education of Immigrant and Repatriated Greeks for Secondary school students”, which was carried out by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The fourth phase of the Programme, covering years 2010-2013, has been launched and it aims at fostering the education of immigrant and repatriated Greek students. One of the main goals of the Programme is to enhance the command of the Greek language by the aforementioned students and to boost their self-esteem through the acceptance of their identity and the utilization of the diversity as a source of learning for everyone. To this end, educational interventions will take place that will encourage the opening of the school to the dialogue between different cultures through art (such as music and theatre) and the use of new technologies. The Programme also provides for measures of psychological support, interaction between families and the school community, as well as of cooperation with immigrant communities and NGOs.