



Greece

“Feeding in” and “Feeding out”, and Integrating Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

A Study of National Policies

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Summary

The NRP 2005-2008 Implementation Report 2006 recognizes that the proceeds of growth were not being evenly distributed across regions and social groups, given that the high economic growth that Greece has exhibited over the last decade has not led to a considerable growth in jobs, neither to a serious diminishing trend in poverty rates, nor to a visible convergence among regions/prefectures.

The whole effort aiming at ensuring regional and social cohesion is reflected in the Report by listing a number of measures and actions, 33 in total. Eighteen (18) of them are related to the further development of agriculture, tourism, land and sea transportation and the expansion of broadband infrastructure in remote regions with the view to facilitate regional cohesion. The other 15 measures/actions are intended to enhance and promote social cohesion. The latter are merely a simple duplication of some of the measures and actions included in the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008 without having been accompanied however by an in depth analysis regarding their impact on employment and income situation of vulnerable groups. Given this, it is hard to make an assessment of the relationship between the envisaged social cohesion measures and actions and the Lisbon Strategy objectives, and in particular the employment targets.

Moreover, out of the 15 main social cohesion initiatives presented, only four appear to be under current implementation, while the rest are either under consultation or still have the status of simple propositions. Among the measures presented are a number of specific institutional bodies which have either been or are foreseen to be established, to deal with policy areas such as social protection, family and demography, persons with disabilities, immigrants, etc. So, their results/impacts on vulnerable groups can neither be massive nor visible in the short run, while their articulation and networking under an overall policy and strategy for social cohesion is not so apparent. In addition, specification of the way and the extent that each of the presented initiatives is expected to contribute to the objectives of the various Guidelines, is clearly missing.

Further to the above, the arrangements and initiatives presented are short of addressing all challenges identified in the NRSSPSI. No initiatives are being presented in the Report for reforming the pension system as well as the unemployment benefits system, neither for ensuring a "safety net" for all groups experiencing poverty, whereas a number of other challenges, such as strengthening of life-long learning especially for vulnerable groups, improving governance in the social policy related areas, reform of the health and care system, etc., are only partly or inadequately addressed.

As to the likely impact of the Greek NRP on Social Inclusion policies and objectives, no links are evident between economic growth and social inclusion. No reference is made, in particular, as to the possible impact of the economic growth on jobless households, working poor, income distribution, etc. It seems that, by and large, the NRP pays attention to the objective of achieving high economic growth, while the distribution of its gains is left to the existing mechanisms and procedures, which are not adequate enough to immediately facilitating the participation of certain socio-economic groups in the gains of the economic growth. A sound articulation of social policy objectives and, thus, of social policy initiatives in the macroeconomic policies, tax policies and, in general, development policies, is therefore urgently needed.

1. Feeding in analysis

- *Stakeholders' involvement/consultation in the Lisbon National Reform Programme (NRP)*

As stated in the Implementation Report, its preparation was the subject of an extensive dialogue, involving the competent Government Departments, the Social Partners, the Regions and NGO's. Note should be made of the fact that representatives of some of these stakeholders are members of the Standing Lisbon Committee which has been established in Greece.

However, the Report does not make clear whether this dialogue took place mainly within the abovementioned Committee or whether there has been a wider process of dialogue and consultation outside the boundaries of this Committee. Besides, it does not specify which of the competent Government Departments have been actively involved, neither the actual coordination and reporting procedure which has been in place in this regard. Moreover, no information is there as to the actual involvement and contribution of the Regions and NGO's, and in particular, of any social inclusion relevant stakeholders or whether and how their views have been taken on board in drafting the Report.

On the other hand, credit should be given to the fact that the Implementation Report was presented and discussed at the Greek Parliament's Standing Committee of Economic and European Affairs. Furthermore, a Lisbon Observatory has been established by the Greek Economic and Social Committee in order to assess the implementation of the NRP 2005-2008 and the progress achieved in relation to the targets set. The Observatory's first assessment is expected to be published soon.

- *Social Inclusion /Social Protection challenges*

It would be hard to maintain that the Implementation Report makes any explicit reference to the process followed for the preparation of the Greek National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion. It is by far evident that interaction between the two processes has been merely confined to a technical exercise, in the sense that the Implementation Report contains, by and large, a short presentation of the main institutional arrangements and initiatives presented in the NRSSPSI 2006-2008, while, as stated in the Report, details are to be found in the Social Protection and Social Inclusion Report. In other words, it is a repetition of the main initiatives taken or intended to be taken in certain social policy areas crucial to social cohesion. But although reference is made, taking the form of a statement, to the main priorities and challenges identified in the NRSSPSI, the arrangements and initiatives presented are short of addressing all challenges, let alone the fact that they appear not to form part of a social cohesion strategy.

In particular, no initiatives are being presented in the Implementation Report in the direction to reforming the pension system as well as the unemployment benefits system, neither to ensuring a "safety net" for all groups experiencing poverty. Moreover, a number of other challenges, such as strengthening of life-long learning, especially for vulnerable groups, improving governance in the social policy related areas, reforming the health and care system, etc., are either partly or not adequately addressed. Besides, there are certain labour market features and problems (e.g. informal versus formal labour market, increasing immigration flows, strong inter-regional disparities, etc), which undoubtedly have an impact on

social cohesion, but which are not dealt with extensively by any of the initiatives presented in the Report.

In particular, as stated in the Greek NRP 2005-2008, the Government aims at ensuring the long-term sustainability of the social security system, the health system and public finances by implementing a policy mix geared towards increasing the labour market participation and the employment rate. Yet, and although the Government has explicitly recognized the need for a pensions reform so as to ensure the long-term viability of the social security system, especially in view of the rising financing needs as a result of demographic ageing, no steps have been made, thus far, towards this direction. A process of a public consultation has just begun and it is expected to be completed by 2008. So, the reorganization of the social security system remains a major challenge which is left to be tackled in the future. It should be stressed, however, that in spite the fact that pensions provision is by far the major determinant of poverty reduction to the non-working age families, the cumulative effect of the system has been grossly adjust, maintaining inequalities in the distribution of pensions.

As to the health care policies pursued over recent years in Greece, one needs to point out that since 1997, a number of legal arrangements have been made aiming at tackling the main weaknesses of the Greek Health System, namely: the deficiency of primary care, the inefficient operation of public hospitals and the excessive expenditure on pharmaceuticals. Yet, almost ten years later, these weaknesses remain as valid as before and no real progress has been made to tackle them. And of course, similar is the situation with regard to the social care system.

Overall, it may be said that the links between the NRP 2005-2008 and the NRSSPSI 2006-2008 are not properly developed and, certainly, short of facilitating a move towards a more "inclusive economy and society". For, in order for such an objective to be achieved, it is of utmost importance that macroeconomic policies, tax policies and, in general, development policies, entail a sound articulation of social policy objectives and, thus, of social policy initiatives. Yet, in the case of Greece, social policy action appears, thus far, short of being articulated in the wider economic policy interventions as these are presented in the Greek NRP.

2. Feeding out analysis

It is generally accepted that the high economic growth rates that Greece has been experiencing over recent years, have not been accompanied by the desirable employment growth rates, which, although have begun to be positive, remain at low levels, especially for young people and women. That is, the number of new jobs which are added to the employment stock every year appears not to have a strong impact on reducing the unemployment rate, which, although it follows a slow diminishing trend over the last three years, it continues to remain at high levels. However, due to the lack of proper statistical data, it is hard to assess the extent to which the employment gains have benefited the socio-economic groups at particular risk of poverty and social exclusion such as jobless households, the very long-term unemployed, single parents, large families, young people, immigrants, minorities, roma and disabled persons, etc.

Nevertheless, available official and unofficial data regarding the unemployment situation of the abovementioned socio-economic population groups, show that these groups continue to be confronted with very high unemployment rates. It seems, therefore, that these groups have not been much

benefited by the high economic growth and it is questionable, in spite the positive perspectives of future economic growth, whether this situation will change considerably in the coming years.

The existence of a high rate of working poor¹ underlines the fact that a number of people moving into employment could still be at risk of poverty. In these cases, the contribution of wages, tax exemptions and in work and family benefits are not enough for ensuring a dignified standard of living. Moreover, it is well documented that the contribution of social protection allowances and benefits to the reduction of poverty rates ranges between two and three percentage points, which is mainly due to either the low level of these financial aid or to the mistargeting of the respective interventions. In addition, the benefits of tax exemptions do not affect persons and families with low incomes, given that they are not eligible for tax declaration submission every year. This, in turn, suggests that there exists a rather “permanent inability” of the vulnerable social groups to benefit from the gains of the economic growth. And this is reflected in the fact that Greece continues to exhibit a high level of income inequality, measured either by Gini coefficient or by the ratio S20/80, remaining one of the most unequal income distribution among the EU-15 Member-States.

The situation of low or no participation at all of the vulnerable groups in the gains of the economic growth in Greece, in terms of both employment and income, can be attributed mainly to the absence of proper distribution and redistribution mechanisms in favour of these groups. In other words, it is questionable whether the willingness to apply the principle of equal opportunities for all, as this has been explicitly stated in the NRP, can be the only sufficient and necessary condition for the improvement of vulnerable groups’ standards of living. For, unless this principle is translated into concrete action, it is hardly possible to have an impact on alleviating poverty and social exclusion in Greece.

As regards the question of how the NRP is likely to have an impact on Social Inclusion policies and objectives, the answer is rather simple. The NRP does not analyse the channels linking economic growth with social inclusion and vice versa. Moreover, no reference is made as to the possible impact of the economic growth on jobless households, working poor, income distribution, etc. It seems that, by and large, the Greek NRP pays attention to the objective of achieving high economic growth, while the distribution of its gains is left to the existing mechanisms and procedures. The latter, however, are not appropriately adapted so as to immediately facilitating the participation of certain socio-economic groups in the gains of the economic growth.

Overall, it may be argued that the guiding principle which pervades the NRP 2005-2008 is the so-called “spill-over effect”. This implies that there are strong expectations that the gains from economic growth will spread out to the whole population. From a theoretical point of view, this holds true. But, in reality, this does not come always true, especially in situations where no appropriate mechanisms and channels have been established to ensure that all population groups are linked with economic growth. And in the case of Greece, these mechanisms and channels are still missing.

It is thus of utmost importance that efforts are concentrated on relating or even embodying social policy action to the wider economic policy interventions so as to strengthen the delivery of growth and jobs to all members of vulnerable groups. This, in turn, is expected to narrow differentials and lead to greater equality of access to resources and opportunities.

¹ In 2001, the working poor rate was 13 percent in Greece and 7 percent in EU-15: European Commission, 2006, Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2005 compendium, latest update: 09/01/2006, p.67.

3. Analysis of the integrated guidelines

It should be stated right from the outset that the Greek NRP Implementation Report 2006 does not provide a list of measures and actions for social cohesion presented under the various integrated guidelines. So, any effort to classify the measures and actions per guideline may not be totally accurate. Once again, it should be pointed out that the social cohesion measures and actions presented in the abovementioned Report are a duplication of some of the measures which have been presented in the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008. Yet, the measures are not followed by a systematic analysis on their impact on the socioeconomic situation of vulnerable groups or on achieving the targets set by the Lisbon Strategy.

GL 14 To create a more competitive business environment and encourage private initiative through better regulation.

The relevant section of the NRP Implementation Report 2006, namely "Structural Reforms in the Product Markets" and, in particular, "Business Environment" does not make any reference to an awareness of corporate social responsibility of business and no measures are proposed in order to increase the low entrepreneurial social responsibility.

GL 17 Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.

The described employment policy measures and actions in the NRP, are not specified in terms of quantitative targets and resources devoted to them at the regional level. So, it is not possible to assess the impact of these measures and actions on ameliorating the existing high interregional inequalities in terms of employment rates, unemployment rates, poverty rates and income distribution. At a first glance, no direct and immediate improvement in interregional inequalities should be expected in the near future, given that no new massive and separate employment policies are foreseen at regional level.

Nevertheless, particular emphasis is placed by the Report on promoting employment reflected in the wide range of measures and actions which are currently under implementation, being heavily relying upon ESF's financial support. A continuation of effort is being also observed to improving the mechanisms for monitoring labour market changes and trends, which are still not sufficient. Yet, it should be emphasized, once again, that no major policy initiatives have been presented, such as "make work pay" schemes or "welfare to work" schemes, which are underpinned by an active inclusion approach, i.e. combining benefits and labour market activation. Moreover, very limited action appears to have been taken to establishing credible and homogenous evaluation mechanisms and procedures of the various employment measures currently under implementation.

Finally, it is considered necessary to point out that there is a limited identification of the potential new sources of employment. No plans are presented for the exploitation of job creation potential of new activities such as those in the Social Economy sector, which, apart from covering unsatisfied needs of the market, could facilitate the reintegration into the labour market of persons facing serious difficulties in the open labour market.

GL 18 Promoting a lifecycle approach to work.

A number of measures and actions can be identified in the NRP, which fall under GL 18. These measures and actions are:

- Actions concerning the reinforcement of the institution of family and social cohesion: Family support (parents leave), strengthening gender equality, combating domestic violence.
- The establishment of a National Council for Social Protection.
- Social care policies: development of open/ residential social care programs for disabled, elderly and families at risk.

Only one out of the three abovementioned measures and actions are currently under implementation, while the rest are either proposed measures and actions or “ready” to be implemented in the sense that the relevant law has already been adopted. Such a procedure, however, takes normally a lot of time before implementation can begin.

As regards the links between the abovementioned measures and actions and the labour market, these are not explicitly stated by the Implementation Report. Moreover, a number of questions should be raised as to how combating domestic violence and the intended establishment of the National Council for Social Protection can each contribute to the achievement of the employment objectives of the Lisbon Strategy.

The reconciliation of work and family life is expected to be promoted by the new legislation on parental leave, while the provision of services regarding the care of dependent family members are still very limited. For example, “in recent years, particular attention has been paid to the question of childcare in relation to the reconciliation of family and working life for women. In fact, as grandmothers became less available to provide unpaid childcare (more of them are in paid work or most of the time they live quite far away), childcare remains a core problem for working mothers. The number of public kindergartens is still not enough and the scheduled operation of primary schools does not correspond to parents’ working hours. The recent results of the Fertility and Family Survey (FFS) for Greece indicate that only 3% of children under three years of age are catered for by nursery school, while for children aged 3–6 this percentage is 70%. In fact, grandparents remain the main source of childcare provision, in particular for working parents (46.4% of the childcare for children under three years old with two working parents is the responsibility of grandparents. Generally, the burden-sharing of men and women becomes a major aspect of gender roles, not only in terms of policy (i.e., an increase in the use of parental leave for men) but also in terms of more 'cultural' changes (i.e. the acceptance of the idea that childcare is not exclusively a mother's affair)”².

GL 19 Ensuring inclusive labour markets.

The measures and actions which appear to fall under this guideline are the following:

- Strengthening the institution of family: income benefits to families with three children, point system for employment access, special programs for unemployed women.
- National Observatory for Persons with Disability.
- Comprehensive Action Program for Immigrants.

² Bagavos, Ch., 2004, General Monitoring Report 2004 Greece, archived at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/eoss/downloads/gm_o4_Greece.pdf

- Social Integration Policies: Development of 100 social integration units by local communities, development of antipoverty policies for socially excluded persons.
- Promoting social integration of immigrant women.
- Support measures for the unemployed: Increase in unemployment benefits, Social Solidarity Fund.

Only two of the abovementioned measures are active: the increase of unemployment benefits and social integration of immigrant women. The rest of the measures and actions are: three "bureaucratic" bodies under establishment or under political consultation, two newly introduced measures / actions without sufficient impacts on vulnerable groups and two measures which are under political consultation.

In this respect, the promotion of an inclusive labour market seems to be the clear objective of only two measures and actions: a point system for access to employment for parents with three children and certain specific programmes for unemployed women. Some of the remaining measures could also contribute to some extent to the promotion of an inclusive labour market, while some other seem to have low relevance with such an objective. For example, it is not quite clearly explained how the establishment of the National Observatory of Disabled Persons and the Comprehensive Action Program for Immigrants are going to serve the objective of an inclusive labour market. In short it may be said that neither all vulnerable groups are identified in the abovementioned measures and actions nor the pathways to employment are clearly defined.

As regards the eradication of poverty it does not seem to be a specific objective, given that the generally described objective, namely "the development of anti-poverty policies for socially excluded persons" does not specify any quantitative and qualitative targets neither any precise actions and thus no serious effort against social exclusion is visible. Similarly, the recently announced increase of the amount of the unemployment benefit does not seem adequate to contribute to a decrease of the high poverty rates of unemployed persons. Besides, even with this increase, the unemployment benefit, which is to reach 440 euros per month by 2008 (13,5 euros per day), it remains still lower than the amount provisioned by Law no. 2224 of 1994, which states that the unemployment benefit should represent 66% of the minimum wage. Moreover, it should also be pointed out that the duration of the provision of the unemployment benefits does not exceed twelve months, while a significant part of employees (self-employed persons) are not eligible to receive this benefit. Finally, one needs to be cautious as regards the proposal for the establishment of a Social Solidarity Fund, which is to provide financial aid to redundant workers taking the form of an early retirement pension. For, there is a risk that it may contribute to an increase of early retirement rather than to the strengthening of employment rates of persons near retirement age.

In addition to the above measures and in relation to the inclusion of immigrants, an interministerial project Management Team was set up (under Law No 3386/2005) to draw up a comprehensive action programme for the inclusion of immigrants, which is currently under political consultation.

GL 21 Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners.

The measures and actions which appear to fall under this guideline are the following:

- Reinforcing vulnerable groups: financial assistance for the elderly and tax relief for those on low incomes.

It is well documented that the up to now tax reforms and especially the lowering of tax rates have benefited business, while the lowering of direct taxes to persons have a disproportional impact on persons with low incomes through the increase of indirect taxes on consumption of goods and

services. Moreover, tax relief does not affect low income persons or families whose yearly incomes are not taxable.

The contribution of state fiscal transfers to persons/ families towards the reduction of poverty rates remains still limited, showing an inefficient social protection system or a social protection system in need of a deep renovation in terms of quantitative objectives and proper design, monitoring and evaluation. Such measures /actions are not visible in the Implementation Report 2006 of the Greek NRP 2005-2008, so it could be concluded that in the near future the contribution of the Social Protection System on the reduction of poverty rates will continue to be as insignificant as in the past. Moreover, it is doubtful if measures and actions provided in the NRP under GL 21 can diminish the high rates of the working poor.

Finally, it should be pointed out that no reference is made as regards the combination between employment flexibility and security and no measures are referred in relation to the achievement of the flexicurity objective.

GLs 23-24 Expand and improve investment in human capital, adapt education and training systems.

The measures and actions which appear to fall under this guideline are the following:

- Improve access of persons with disabilities to educational schemes.
- System for early and systematic detection of students with learning difficulties and speech impediments.
- Integration of students with cultural and language differences in the educational system.

Only the latter measure is active during 2006 and it is scheduled to be continued through to 2007. The other two measures are already under way in the framework of the O.P. "Education and Initial Vocational Training". Moreover, the relevant chapter of the Implementation Report includes a few actions aiming at increasing the competence of the Educational Regional Administrative Bodies and at introducing quality assessment schemes at all levels of education. Yet, and although these actions are welcomed, actions for increasing human capital investment and thus public spending on education are clearly missing.

As regards the total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, Greece continues to invest less than the EU-25 average³. The perspective of a considerable increase of this expenditure is not visible in the near future. Moreover, the low total public expenditure devoted to education and training has led to lower participation rates in education and training for people aged 25-64 years old in Greece compared to the EU-25⁴.

In relation to the above, it should be noted that in the NRP 2005-2008 a target was set for an increase of public spending on education. This was set to reach 5% of the Greek GDP by 2008. Yet, no reference is made in the Implementation Report as to whether progress has been made towards reaching this target or whether this target still holds valid.

³ For example, in 2002 Greece devoted 4 % of GDP on education in relation to 5,2 % of EU-25: European Commission, 2006, Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2005 compendium, latest update:09/01/2006, p.91.

⁴ In 2005, the participation rate in education and training for people 25-64 years old was 1,8 percentage in Greece compared to 10,8 percentage in EU-25: European Commission, 2006, Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2005 compendium, latest update:09/01/2006, p.95.

Turning into examining the vocational education and training system as a whole, it may be said that the correspondence between the directions of education and training offered and the real needs of the economy is not apparent. No relationship seems to have developed so far between the evolution of the employment and requirements in education and training capacities. Besides, there is still a lack of an integrated accreditation system for the skills and the competences acquired in the various initial and continuous vocational educational and training schemes. Moreover, and in spite certain relevant institutional arrangements which have been under way over recent years, the functioning of an integrated system of life-long learning linking formal and informal (initial and continuous) vocational education and training schemes, is still pending in Greece. In short, and in spite the large scale implementation of various vocational training schemes since the mid '90s, heavily co-financed by the ESF, there is a persisting lack of a coordinated, cohesive and clear-cut vocational training policy and strategy in Greece. What is more, however, is that given the absence of a specific monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, it is difficult to track their impact to date on the labour market and the economy at large.

Early school leaving rates exhibit a steady diminishing trend in Greece during the time period 1999-2005 and are lower than the respective average rates of EU-25⁵. The point is however, that the enrollment rates of children coming from vulnerable groups (e.g. disabled children, religious and cultural minorities, immigrants) are not clearly identified. In this respect, it is not possible to confirm the degree of access of all children to the educational system. Needless to say that the existing inequality of opportunity in the public school system is a critical determinant of falling into poverty and experiencing social exclusion. Tackling the problem of early school leaving, it requires the design of an integrated policy initiative that would cover both primary and secondary compulsory education, entailing an on going preventive approach which is certainly missing in Greece.

SPECIFIC THEMATIC CHAPTER: INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN GREECE

a. Introduction

As it has been widely noted in recent literature, Greece, once a traditional emigration country, has become during the last fifteen years a destination country for a large number of immigrants⁶. Data reveal that until the mid-1980s, the immigration flows to Greece were kept very limited⁷, while the positive migratory balance observed in the 1970s was largely due to the return of large numbers of Greek migrants from Germany and other industrialized countries of northeastern Europe⁸. Towards the end of the 1980s and especially since the beginning of the 1990s⁹, Greece began to experience a noteworthy inflow of migrants from countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The latter was mainly due to the sociopolitical changes that were taken place in the former Soviet Union and its former allies as

⁵ In 1999 the percentage of 18-24 years olds having achieved lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) or less and not attending Further education or training was 18,6 % for Greece and 20,5 % for EU-15, while the numbers for 2005 were 13,3 % and 16,9% respectively: European Commission, 2006, Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2005 compendium, latest update:09/01/2006, p.94.

⁶ Cavounidis J., 2002, 2003, 2006, Tzortzopoulou M, 2002, Karadinos D., 2003, Kanellopoulos et al, 2005.

⁷ According to the data presented in Table 1-Appendix 1, in 1951 there were 30.000 non-nationals living in Greece, while their number in 1981 had gone up to 176.000 persons and it seems to have remained stable over the decade of '80s.

⁸ Approximately 625.000 Greek migrants returned to Greece during the time period 1971-1985 (Tzortzopoulou M., 2002, p. 45)

⁹ According to the data of Table 1, Appendix 1,

well as in Albania. The heavier inflow of immigrants into Greece was observed from Albania during the period 1991-1993¹⁰.

In short, during the last fifteen years Greece has witnessed an intensification of movement of migrants into the country, the vast majority of which came from former communist countries. Along with these developments, large numbers of Kurds and Afghans fleeing from persecution and the continuation of traditional flows from Asian and African countries have all contributed to the swelling of migration¹¹. Nevertheless, the dominance of a single source country, namely Albania, is noticeable.

The total number of non-nationals in Greece was almost 900 thousand people in 2004, while, in addition, an approximate number ranging between 200-400 thousand persons is estimated to be those who are not declared living under the status of illegal residency¹². The proportion of non-national population in Greece ranges between 8% to 10% of the total population and this proportion increases the labour force by between 5% and 10%¹³. As regards the origin of immigrants, *"91% of immigrants have emigrated from a relatively limited number of countries, notably Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Pakistan, Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, India, Egypt and Philippines"*¹⁴. Among the countries of origin, Albania dominates the picture, as 57.5% of those legal immigrants living in Greece were Albanian nationals in 2001¹⁵.

A sizable part of the flows of immigrants from former Soviet Union and Albania was comprised of people of Greek origin and foreign nationality. *"Approximately 250.000 persons entered Greece over the period 1985 until to date: 150.000 Pontians from countries such as Georgia (76.061), Kazakhstan (31.410), Russia (22.826)"*¹⁶ and *100.000*¹⁷ persons of Greek origin from Albania". The repatriated Greeks are provided with special social policy measures like linguistic and professional training programs¹⁸ aiming at their smooth economic and social inclusion to the contemporary Greek society. But this is not the case for all immigrants of Greek origin given that the Greek State is more helpful for repatriated Greeks from ex USSR and less for immigrants of Greek origin coming from Southern Albania.

"Today the legal framework is represented mainly by the Law n.2790/2000 entitled *"Settlement (or re-establishment/rehabilitation) of repatriated homogenous from ex USSR"* (as completed also by provisions included in the L.2910/2001 on immigration). Instead, only in the late 90s (1998) the Greek State defined, on a long-term and not temporary basis, the *"conditions, duration and procedure for providing right of stay and work to Albanian citizens of Greek origin"* (Common Ministerial Decision n.4000/3/10/1998). The discrimination between the two categories of immigrants with Greek origin (homogenous) is present even in the order of legislative text and in the title. The term 'homogenous' is not conceded to Greek Albanians in the title, while this legal status is exclusively connected to blood parentage and not to 'Greek conscience' (as instead goes for the 'homecoming' from ex USSR).

The Greek Ombudsman in a report on migration law¹⁹ describes clearly and criticizes the differentiated treatment of the two homogenous groups for what concerns the different prerequisites and procedures for applying and obtaining the Greek citizenship²⁰.

¹⁰ Cavounidis J., 2003, p.119.

¹¹ Tzortzopoulou M., 2002, p. 46.

¹² Kanellopoulos C., et al, 2005.

¹³ OECD, 2005.

¹⁴ Karadinos D., 2003.

¹⁵ Eurostat, 2006, p.2

¹⁶ Karadinos D., 2003 a, pp. 1.

¹⁷ Estimation: Cavounidis J., 2002, pp. 47.

¹⁸ For example: General Secretariat for Greeks abroad, 2006.

¹⁹ The Greek Ombudsman, 2005, pp. 11-12.

²⁰ This quotation is extracted from: Pavlou M., 2006, p.5.

"In terms of the legal status of illegal immigrants²¹, two programmes of regularisation have taken place in 1998 and 2001. Both these programmes imposed a heavy burden on administrative authorities and immigrants²² due to the huge number of applications, especially in large cities, and the complex bureaucratic procedure.

The new Law 3386/2005 and its recent revisions aim at a more flexible regularisation procedure, but their results are not visible as yet. Nevertheless, these programmes ameliorated the living conditions of illegal immigrants and they provided information regarding the extent of the phenomenon, as well as the profile of illegal immigrants. Also, the programmes paved the way for the drastic decrease of expulsions and reduced the size of illegal employment. On the other hand, it is true that Greece has not yet developed both a long-term and viable immigration policy or a permanent formal admission system of immigrants²³.

As regards the most vulnerable part of immigrants, that is refugees/ asylum seekers their number has fluctuated widely from 1.640 persons applied for protection in 1996 to 5.664 in 2002²⁴, depending on international developments and especially the situation in countries like Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran. That is why the inflow of asylum seekers has been steadily increasing during the time period 1996-2002²⁵. Applicants from the above mentioned countries account for approximately 85% of all asylum seekers in Greece²⁶. It is estimated that the majority of refugees/ asylum seekers live in the greater Athens area, while a number of them settle in refugees' encampments²⁷ living under low habilitation conditions.

Applying for granting the Convention status is a very difficult task due to heavy bureaucratic procedures and significant delays in examining of applications²⁸ resulting to ever diminishing positive results. The number of asylum seekers who were provided with the Convention status was 160 persons in 1996 and only 36 in 2002²⁹. The Greek State's reaction on the asylum seekers applications has been commented by the Greek Ombudsman which focused its attention on either the inability of the administration to ensure unhindered access to asylum procedures or the selective reception and examination of asylum requests by the Athens Aliens' Department, without clear and objective criteria.³⁰

As far as the ethnic minorities are concerned, these are been formally given the status of "religious" minority groups rather than "ethnic" minority groups. The Greek State identifies and recognizes only the "Muslim minority" of eastern Macedonia and Thrace (north-eastern end of Greece) which is protected by the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty³¹. For years now, the main weight of public policy measures and actions concerning the "ethnic" minorities has been given exclusively to the "Muslim community". Officially, in accordance to legislation and the inexistence of the principle of self identification there are not any ethnic minorities in Greece. But the traditional large racial minorities groups in Greece have

²¹ Note that up to 1998 the vast majority of immigrants were clandestine.

²² The cost of getting all necessary documents and the fees are still very high for immigrants who participate in regularisation programs besides the provisions of Law 3386/2005 to reduce the whole financial burden of the procedure.

²³ This paragraph is heavily based upon: Kanellopoulos C., et al, 2005, pp. 6.

²⁴ See Table 2, Annex 1.

²⁵ See Table 3, Annex 1.

Moreover, in 2003 there were 8180 asylum seekers applications and 9050 in 2005: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

²⁶ Karadinos D., 2003 a, pp. 5

²⁷ Tzortzopoulou M., 2002, pp.46.

²⁸ European Network Against Racism, 2006, pp.3.

²⁹ See Table 1, Annex 1.

³⁰ The Greek Ombudsman, 2005, Annual Report, 2005, Summary, p.11.

³¹ Ktistakis I., Sitaropoulos N., 2006, pp.1.

been those of Turkish origin, Pomaks (place of origin is Bulgaria) and Roma. Official records exist only with regard to the "Muslim minority" which consists of people with Turkish origin, Pomaks and some Roma³² and accounts for 100 thousand persons, (of those 45 thousands are Pomaks)³³. Unofficial estimates for Roma refer to a number of 250 thousand persons³⁴.

To date, the Greek State has not yet accepted the fact that Greece has become a "*de facto multiracial*"³⁵ and multicultural society. And this despite the fact that traditional minorities have been living in Greece for centuries, while over the last twenty years there has been a continues inflow of large numbers of legal and illegal immigrants, particularly from neighboring Balkan and Eastern European countries. As OECD describes the situation, "*as recently as 20 years ago, Greece was a particularly homogeneous country demographically and culturally, with over 98 per cent of the population either Greek-born or the children of returning emigrants, and most of them belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church. This has changed drastically with the inflow in the 1980s and 1990s of large numbers of mostly non-Greek speaking (and not belonging to Greek Orthodox Church)*"³⁶ immigrants³⁷.

b. General background information on the situation of immigrants and ethnic minorities.

It should be stated right from the outset that in Greece there is inadequate knowledge about the size, composition and employment situation of immigrants and less so of Roma and the "ethnic" minorities. Especially as regards immigrants, a large number of them remain under an "illegal" status and, thus, they are not included in the relevant statistical data series. Regarding the main "ethnic" minorities which are being given the "status" of a "religious" group, there is adequate knowledge, though not easily available, in the sense that these data are hardly exposed in official series of publications.

The results of a recent study on the living conditions and especially economic inequality and poverty of immigrants in comparison to those of Greek population reveal that the living conditions of immigrants are worst than the respective ones of domestic population, while poverty rates of immigrants are higher than the poverty rates of Greek population (26,1 per cent in comparison to 21,2 per cent in 2003- data based upon EU-SILC 2003). The contribution of immigrants poverty in the increase of national poverty is rather non-important given that it accounts for only 0,2 per cent³⁸.

Although the Greek Constitution has expressly proscribed racial discrimination through article 5.2.a that reads as follows: "*All persons living within Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life, honour and liberty irrespective of nationality, race or language and of religious or political beliefs. Exceptions shall be permitted only in cases provided for by international law*"³⁹, immigrants seem to face ever rising discrimination as the years go by. "In 1998-1999 the complaints by alien immigrants, especially those subject to regularization or detention, to the Human Rights Department of the Greek Ombudsman constituted 25 % of the complaints' total. In 2000-2002 the relevant percentage exceeded 31%⁴⁰", while in 2005 climbed to 47.3 % encompassing complains about legality of entrance and residence of aliens.⁴¹

³² Markou K. , 2005, pp. 146.

³³ Markou K., 2005, pp. 147.

³⁴ Ktistakis I., Sitaropoulos N., 2006, pp.1.

³⁵ Ibid, pp.1.

³⁶ Our addition.

³⁷ OECD, 2004, pp.143.

³⁸ Zografakis S., Mitraskos Th., 2005, pp.143.

³⁹ Extracted from: Ktistakis I., Sitaropoulos N., 2006, pp.2.

⁴⁰ Ktistakis I., Sitaropoulos N., 2006, pp.1.

⁴¹ The Greek Ombudsman, 2005.

As regards the socio-economic situation of Muslim minority and Roma in Greece, besides the improvement made by measures and programmes launched in favour of them during the last ten or more years⁴², it is well documented that they continue to achieve low educational qualifications, they are employed as manual workers and they acquire low incomes. In general, the abovementioned minorities' standard of living lags behind the respective national average due to the negative or neutral behaviour of Greek State against them for decades⁴³. That is even today, the majority of Roma who live in Greece and besides the fact that the majority of them are Greek citizens, are not provided with official documents like card identities or other useful documents for them or for their children. This situation excludes them from the mainstreaming society and no doubt they are confronted with severe problems in their contact with public authorities and especially with the public health system, education and police⁴⁴. Also, the Muslim minority is confronted with State's resistance to providing them with special support in order to be included in contemporary society preserving their special cultural characteristics.

c. Employment issues

It is well documented and easily explainable that immigrants present a stronger work attitude in comparison to domestic population due both to their high need for acquiring life necessities and to *"the existence of a substantial informal sector with latent demand for low-paid labour allowed illegal immigrants to find jobs in large numbers"*⁴⁵. In Greece, persons with foreign nationality present lower unemployment rates and higher employment rates in comparison to domestic population. For example, during the second quarter of 2005, the unemployment rate of immigrants was 8,3 % versus 9,6 % for the domestic population, while the employment rates were 71,7 % and 60,0% respectively⁴⁶. Given the strong immigrants' engagement in the labour market and the low salaries they receive, immigration has reduced the economic cost of production resulting to higher employment rates of domestic population and increasing output and profitability in a number of sectors⁴⁷. It has been well documented that immigrants work in jobs that Greeks do not like⁴⁸, while they contribute to the substitution of family labour either in family enterprises or in the care of dependents⁴⁹.

According to data from a study on the economic and social integration of immigrants in Greece⁵⁰, *"the vast majority of immigrants work in manual occupations. Manual jobs are, however, strongly differentiated according to gender and nationality. Thus 34% of all immigrants (44% of men and 1 % of women) are employed in building and other construction works. Some 26 % of all immigrants (80% of women and 9 % of men) are employed as providers of personal services and cleaners, while 18 % of all immigrants (22% of men and 6 % of women are employed as blue- and white-collar workers in heavy and light industry and as operators of means of transport. Around 9 % work as employees and salespeople, and only 3 % as scientists, artists and technologists. The especially low percentage of immigrants employed in scientific and technological jobs noted by the study contrasts with the percentage of immigrants with substantial educational qualifications. Around 22% of immigrants hold secondary qualifications or university-level degrees, and 45 % of the immigrants examined by the study*

⁴² Such measures and programmes can be finding in successive NAPIncl reports of Greece. For example see Annex 1.

⁴³ Detailed analysis of the exclusion of Muslim minority and Roma due to State behaviour can be finding in: Markou K., 2005, pp 147-151.

⁴⁴ European Network Against Racism, 2006, pp. 3.

⁴⁵ OECD, 2005, pp.2.

⁴⁶ National Statistical Service of Greece,

⁴⁷ OECD, 2005, pp.2.

⁴⁸ Lianos T., Sarris A., Kasteli L., 1996.

⁴⁹ Cavounidis J., 2006, pp.655.

⁵⁰ Cavounidis J., et al.,2003.

*had attended a technical school. Thus it would appear that employment in Greece exploits only a small part of the substantial educational and vocational qualifications of many immigrants*⁵¹.

It is worth noting that up to now, there are no any policy measures for the official recognition of the educational qualifications of immigrants resulting to a considerable waste of human resources harming both Greece and immigrants themselves. Even when they succeed in finding jobs in the formal labour market, more often than not there is important mismatch between their qualifications and the type of jobs they eventually get. By and large, they are offered low pay and precarious forms of employment which means that many of them later fall back into poverty and unemployment or "clandestine" employment.

As regards the employment situation of illegal immigrants, it must be noted that they can not find a normal job because they lack the official documents necessary for their hiring and thus *"illegal immigrants are generally employed in sectors displaying informal activity and unskilled labour-intensity: construction, small scale or "informal" business (garment), house maintenance and repairs, agriculture, housekeeping and child or elderly care, tourism, catering and street selling"*⁵². The main development in the area of legislative protection of immigrants is the passing of 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"*. Through this law, the two relevant EC Directives⁵³ are incorporated in the Greek Law. The serious delay in the incorporation of the above mentioned EU Directives into the Greek legislation and its recent coming in force do not permit for definitive conclusions in relation to its results. The Greek Ombudsman⁵⁴ made recently some preliminary observations in relation to serious interpretive difficulties connected with the very broad and unclear regulatory content of the EU provisions incorporated into the Greek law and the hesitation of Greek Parliament to resolve these interpretation difficulties⁵⁵.

To date⁵⁶, the programmes and policy measures aiming at the labour market integration of immigrants and minorities have not been tailored in relation to specific need of each subgroup. In this context, immigrants and members of minorities are regarded as vulnerable groups and in this respect there are not any particular measures to facilitate the integration in the labour market of immigrant women or immigrants with disabilities or young immigrants and young people from minorities living in poor neighbourhoods.

The only exception to the above are the measures taken for the Roma population, who are being provided with special support through the implementation of an Integrated Action Plan in order to be engaged in salaried jobs or to be entrepreneurs. During 2002-2004, 160 Roma persons benefited from

⁵¹ Text extracted from: European Industrial Relations Observatory, 2004, pp.1-2.

⁵² Kanellopoulos C., et al., 2005, pp. 7.

⁵³ 1) Directive 2000/43EC concerning "the implementation of the principle of the equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin in the areas of occupation and employment, participation in unions and professional organizations, as well as in education, in social allowances and in access to the allocation and provision of goods and services which are provided to the public".

2) Directive 2000/78EC "for the combating of discrimination due to religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation". Extracted from: The Greek Ombudsman, 2006, pp.2

⁵⁴ According to L. 3304/2005, the Greek Ombudsman constitutes the specialised body for the promotion of the principle of equal treatment or in other words to monitor the implementation of the respective Law.

⁵⁵ The Greek Ombudsman, 2006, pp. 15.

⁵⁶ A newly announced Integrated Action Programme in favour of immigrants, immigrants of second generation and asylum seekers, aims at the successive integration of them in Greek society through: a) the certificated knowledge of Greek language, b) the attendance of introductive lessons concerning history, culture and the way of life of Greek society, c) the integration in the Greek labour market and d) the active engagement in social life. Ministry of Interior and Public Administration, 2005, Articles: 65 and 66 of Law 3386/ 2005.

the co-financed programmes concerning the creation of New Jobs and another 51 persons benefited from the programme concerning the provision of subsidies for new entrepreneurs⁵⁷.

d. Education and training issues

The main intervention of the Greek State in the field of education and training of adult legal immigrants is the provision of small scale co-financed programmes for Greek language learning⁵⁸.

Nevertheless, acknowledgement should be made of the fact that all school age children of legal or illegal⁵⁹ immigrants have the right to attend Greek schools of all grades having legislatively the same rights and obligations as the Greek pupils and students⁶⁰. The total number of foreign pupils from 44 thousand persons in 1996 increased to 119 thousand persons in 2003⁶¹ and 108 thousand pupils in 2005-2006 school years⁶². It was back to 1996 when the responsible Ministry⁶³ laid the foundations of a system designed to meet the educational needs of social groups with a particular social, cultural or religious identity: Roma children, repatriated Greeks' children and children of residents with foreign nationality. The Ministry adopted cross-cultural education - a new form of education in Greece- as part of this policy. The aim of cross-curriculum education is to set up and run primary and secondary classes that provide education to young people with a specific educational, social or cultural identity. In cross-cultural schools, the standard curriculum is adapted to meet the specific educational, social or cultural needs of the students attending them⁶⁴.

In order to tackle the problem of Greek language ignorance for the above mentioned children, special measures have been implemented like special insertion classes and additional language lessons since 1994. In 2005-2006, 500 insertion classes and 700 language lessons took place in schools all over Greece⁶⁵.

As regards the education of Greek Muslim children, 135 minority schools are in operation in the prefecture of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (North-Eastern Greece). Due to the bilingual (Greek-Turkish) character of these schools and the scarce supportive services for the minority pupils, a range of problems remain unsolved: low enrolment rates especially for Muslim minority girls, low educational achievement, high dropout rates and very limited entrance of these pupils into the Greek tertiary education. It is apparent that the small numbers of Muslim pupils who want to continue their studies in the University prefer to attend Universities in Turkey⁶⁶.

In general, no special measures have been foreseen for the underachievement and early school leaving of minority and foreign pupils. They can attend lessons of supportive teaching as Greek pupils and that's all. In this respect, in spite the efforts that have been taken in order to offer the same educational opportunities to children coming from minorities or foreign nationality parents as the domestic children,

⁵⁷ See Box 1, Appendix 1.

⁵⁸ See Box 1, Appendix 1.

⁵⁹ Kanellopoulos C., et al, 2005, pp. 7.

⁶⁰ See Law 3386/2005, Article 72.

⁶¹ Kanellopoulos C., et al, 2005, pp. 7. Also, Law 3386/2005, Article 72.

⁶² Delihtanasi M., 2006, pp. 22.

⁶³ Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs.

⁶⁴ Up to now, 26 cross-cultural schools are in function. 13 of them are primary schools, 9 are junior high schools and 4 are senior high schools. A school is characterised as a cross-cultural one when at least 45% of pupils are Roma, repatriated and/or foreign students. The teachers of these schools have been trained in multicultural matters: http://www.ypepth.gr/en_ec_page1547.htm

⁶⁵ Information gathered from: <http://www.ypepth.gr>

⁶⁶ Markou K., 2005.

these measures seem to be of a limited coverage and not accompanied with integrated supportive measures designed in meeting the special needs of every socio-economic group.

e. Housing and related issues

Immigrants and members of the Greek Muslim minority are not provided with any special treatment in the area of housing. Repatriated Greeks from ex USSR and Roma are endowed with some housing benefits, either material or financial⁶⁷. More specifically, repatriated Greeks can be granted with: subsidised housing loans, rent allowances and financial subsidies for transporting household articles. Roma are offered apartments and prefabricated houses and subsidised housing loans.

All the above mentioned efforts seem to be not enough since a great number of repatriated Greeks and Roma still live in houses of low standards, while a number of Roma people are sheltered in handy made encampments in various cities suburbs all over Greece. No doubt that housing conditions in these encampments are of very low quality with obvious health risks for people who live there.

As regards refugees/ asylum seekers, in 2004, there were ten sheltered housing structures run by NGOs and by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity with a total capacity of about 4.500 persons, aiming at facilitating and assimilating them into the Greek society.

f. Social services

As regards legal immigrants and Greek Muslims, no special measures to improve their access to social services can be identified. Illegal immigrants are not entitled to any social services with the exception of emergency and child medical treatment. Various laws⁶⁸ provisions stiff penalties for all those public and private agencies, which provide their services to immigrants who do not produce the required travel and entry documents.

Roma population is the only minority which is offered some facilities in order to improve their access to social services and especially to health services. More specifically, in the framework of the Integrated Action Programme for Roma, some measures have been foreseen such as: visits of mobile health units aiming at the vaccination of children and the medical examinations of all people living to some encampments⁶⁹, while planning has been made for the establishment of 37 health and social service centres in areas where there are organised Roma Camps. These centres will provide Roma population with prevention services, basic primary health and social care.

g. Target groups issues

To date, there are not any specific measures to facilitate the integration of either immigrant women or other vulnerable groups like immigrants with disabilities and mental health problems. Moreover, there are not any measures aiming at tackling the problem of multiple exclusion faced by young immigrants and young people from ethnic minorities living in poor neighbourhoods. The socio-economic situation and the needs of the above mentioned vulnerable groups have not been given any special attention in policy making and design of concrete measures.

⁶⁷ More Details can be found in: Box 1, Appendix 1.

⁶⁸ L. 2900/2001 and L. 3386/2005

⁶⁹ See Box 1, Appendix 1.

The only exceptions are: 1) women and children who are victims of trafficking. Law 3386/2005 foresees the ability of these persons to acquire by exception residence permission under certain circumstances. 2) Unaccompanied children entering Greece. Their deportation is prohibited under the provisions of L.3386/2005. 3) Pregnant immigrants. Their deportation can take place six months after the birth of their child (L. 3386/2005).

h. Information, communication and culture issues

According to Greek constitution and a number of various laws, every person living in the country is free to exercise his/her religious duties. However, religion is a matter of discrimination not only in every day life but in professional life too. In this respect, the construction/establishment of temples of various immigrants' religions is confronting with huge public administration obstacles and opposition either from the Greek Orthodox Church or local communities.

In order to ameliorate discriminatory behaviour of Greek residents, Law No 3304/2005 in Article 16 foresees juridical punishment for every one who violates the principle of equal treatment.

To date, immigrants and minorities are not visible enough either through the Media since no one of them broadcasts programmes in any other language except the Greek language or because public administration-except of Banks- rarely provides official documentation in immigrants' languages. Moreover, the majority of the Greek media often highlights the negative behaviour of some immigrants. As regards the preservation of cultural values of immigrants and minorities, there are no any special measures in order to address the issue. Immigrants and minorities are left to preserve their cultural heritage by their own means.

i. Emigration

As it was stated in the introduction of the paper, Greece has been exhibited with a strong inflow of returning Greeks mainly from: USA and Western Europe, ex USSR States and Albania during the last twenty years. The socio-economic integration of all these people with different experiences and attitudes is still an open matter besides the efforts which have been invested on it. A lot of problems are still apparent, such as: low notion of the language, serious delays in the certification of the former occupational experience, low housing amenities, low educational attainment of the young generation and so forth. In this respect, an integrated inclusive policy designed across the special features and needs of various sub-groups of repatriated Greeks seems to be a matter of high priority.

j. Conclusions

Greece has only recently been faced with immigration and emigration and in this respect, it still lacks a comprehensive and cohesive immigration policy, in spite the fact that integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities has been the objective of successive NAPs incl. Up to date, more efforts are gathered in the development of legislative basis of socio-economic integration of immigrants and minorities and the improvement of public administration capacity, rather than on action measures. The first and most astonishing issue is the serious gaps in our knowledge regarding the accurate magnitude and socio-economic characteristics of immigrants and minorities. It must be understandable by policy makers that the designing of policy is better to be based on hard data and rather than on estimations. Of course, the

newly established Hellenic Migration Policy Institute⁷⁰ is expected to fill the gap in knowledge regarding immigrants, but it can not fill the gaps in knowledge regarding Roma and socio-economic sub-groups which consisting the group of Greek Muslims.

Interventions in the area of social inclusion of immigrants and minorities seem to be of a limited coverage either in terms of the magnitude of population participating in them or in terms of impact on the socio-economic situation of immigrants and minorities. For example, the implementation of the Integrated Action Programme in favour of Roma seems to be unable to resolve problems for all Roma. So, policy makers are still confronted with challenges like low housing and environmental conditions, low educational attainment of Roma children, administrative matters and so forth. Moreover, the implemented educational programmes for Greek Muslims and Roma seem to have limited success given that a few persons of these minorities can attend and graduate from Greek Universities. Moreover, some aspects related to education of immigrants of second generation and minorities have to be investigated in order to acquire a clear picture of their educational attainment and their situation in comparison to domestic children. For example, enrolment rates especially for girls of Roma and Muslim minority and drop-out rates for second generation immigrants and minorities' children.

A common feature shared by immigrants and minorities is the fact that the majority of them are engaged to labour market either as manual workers or in free entry and low income economic sectors such as agriculture and street selling. The relative percentages of members of immigrants and minorities working as white collar clerks and in highly specialised jobs, lack considerably behind the relevant percentages of domestic population. In this respect the principle of equal opportunities in the labour market for all people is still a matter of being expected. No doubt that the achievement of Lisbon Employment Strategy objectives and especially that of raising employment rates outs to take into account the increase of employment rates of female immigrants and members of minorities, given that the employment rates of certain groups (prime age male groups) of domestic population are already higher than the above mentioned objectives.

The two regularisation programmes which took place some years ago were not able to regularise all immigrants and that is why an important number of them still reside under the fragile status of the illegal immigrant. Moreover, in no way these programmes by their own could be considered either as inclusive policy for immigrants or as a comprehensive and consistent immigration policy. A number of additional policies such as strengthening of administrative capacity, rising of awareness on immigration issues, certification of former educational and professional dexterities of immigrants, supportive services in accordance to special needs of each sub-group and so forth, should be implemented in order to increase the benefits for the immigrants and the country as a whole.

To sum up, it may be said that, in general, as far as immigrants in Greece are concerned, and although over the last six or seven years efforts by the State have been on the increase, the action taken, thus far, for their integration into the Greek society is rather limited. It is implemented in a rather fragmented manner and certainly is not underpinned by a clearly defined integrated strategy. The lack of such an approach applies to a lesser extend to repatriates, refugees and "ethnic" minorities. With regard to the employment situation of immigrants, they are faced with great difficulties in getting proper jobs in the formal labour market that, in turn, leads them to finding "clandestine" employment in the "hidden" economy sector, which is oversized in Greece.

⁷⁰ L. 3304/2005.

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Appendix

Table 1: Non-Greek Nationals, 1951-2004.

Year	Number
1951	30.000
1961	55.000
1971	84.000
1981	176.000
1991	150.000
2001	796.713
2004	891.000

Sources: 1951-1991: Tzoropoulou M., 2002, The position of immigrants in Greece, *The Social Portrait of Greece 2001*, National Centre for Social Research, Athens, pp. 45-59.
 2001: NSSG, Population Census, 2001 (provisional data).
 2004: Eurostat, 2006, Non-national populations in the EU Member States, *Statistics in focus*, 8/2006, Table 1, pp.2.

Table 2: Number of asylum applications and their results: 1996-2002

Year	Number of asylum applications	Number of Convention statuses granted	Number of residence permits granted or renewed for humanitarian reasons
1996	1.640	160	-
1997	4.380	130	-
1998	2.953	156	386
1999	1.528	146	407
2000	3.083	222	175
2001	5.499	147	233
2002	5.664	36	111

Source: Ministry of Public Order, found at: <http://www.ecre.org/conditions/2003/greece.shtml#statistics>

Table 3: Asylum applicants during the year-main origin: 1993-2002.

Origin/ Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Iraq	359	433	621	1.033	3.808	2.166	906	1.334	1.972	2.567
Afghanistan	5	10	6	17	34	202	116	446	1.459	1.238
Iran	25	101	127	185	139	94	74	135	212	411
Pakistan	15	2	2	-	5	1	21	141	252	250
Turkey	276	591	424	284	172	308	195	591	800	211
Total*	680	1.137	1.180	1.519	4.158	2.771	1.312	2.657	4.695	4.677

* Our calculations

Source: 2002 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, found at: http://www.antigone.gr/statistics/asylum_seekers_in_greece.html

BOX 1: Implementation of Policy measures for Immigrants, Repatriated, Refugees/ Asylum seekers, Muslim minority and Roma: 2003-2005⁷¹

"Immigrants form another vulnerable group. The importance of the immigrant phenomenon to Greece is apparent in the following findings of a recent study held on behalf of the Institute for Immigrant Policy. Based on available data, 10.3% of Greece's population, that is, roughly 1.15 million people are immigrants (including people of Greek ancestry and citizens of EU Member States). 68% of the permits issued to foreigners, were issued for dependent work, roughly 12 % were for reuniting with family members and 12% for independent economic activity.

As it has been ascertained by relevant studies, several weaknesses became apparent during the application of Law 2910/2001, both because of legal gaps and ambiguities as well as administrative problems (shortcomings in planning and coordination, organisation, staffing and training). In addition, the inadequate or deficient information immigrants received and the excessive charges for the acquisition of the required documentation had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the legal framework for the legalisation of immigrants. Therefore, in order to remove the above-mentioned dysfunctions, simplify the procedures that immigrants face, and fully harmonise with Community law, an integrated restructuring of the institutional framework for immigrants is being promoted. Its objective is to serve both our own national interests, and the interests of citizens of third countries desiring access to our country's job market.

The most important innovations of the new law submitted to parliament concerns: **(i)** the effort to legalise illegal immigrants; **(ii)** the consolidation of work and residence permits; and **(iii)** simplification of the renewal process for residence permits; and **(iv)** the normal assimilation of foreigners in Greek society through the implementation of the Integrated

Research on the immigrant phenomenon is the basic mission of the Institute for Immigrant Policy (IMEPO). The IMEPO is a Private Entity. It entered into operation in March 2003 and is subject to the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization. Its objective is to create a database on the statistical recording and understanding of the flow of immigrants. In the immediate future, and after permission has been obtained from the Authority for the Protection of Personal Data, an invitation to tender will be announced for the creation of a database that will record all data in the possession of Ministries involved with the matter of immigrants residing in our country. Additionally, five relevant scientific research and specialized studies have taken place on immigrant issues to date.

Learning the Greek language

The Ministry of Employment and Social Protection implements a training programme for **repatriates, refugees and immigrants, aiming to teach them the Greek language**. In this programme breakthrough policies are applied to adapt the teaching of the Greek language to the special needs of unemployed persons belonging to these vulnerable groups. The particularities of these unemployed persons become evident through the personalized approach implemented in the Employment Promotion Centres (KPA) of the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), by specialised counsellors working in conjunction with the training programmes implementation authorities. The programme's most important element is the **qualified certification of the trainees' knowledge**. After having successfully completed the programme, beneficiaries take part in special examinations held by qualified certification bodies and acquire a certification of adequate "Greek knowledge" (level B).

⁷¹ Ministry of EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, 2005, NAP incl, 2003-2005, PP. 28-29

The project is implemented within the framework of the “Employment and Vocational Training” Operational Programme and is co-funded by the Ministry for Employment and the European Social Fund. The programmes’ implementation is assigned to the Vocational Training Centres (KEK) following an invitation to tender by the Ministry for Employment. The KEK’s undertaking to implement the programmes, inform the Employment Promotion Centres of their area, which in turn offer these programmes to the registered unemployed among the target groups, whose needs have been documented. At the same time, each person’s unemployment card is updated before and after the programme’s completion.

The programme’s success is measured by the “effect index” determined in the Operational Programme which regards the percentage of trainees who have acquired the Greek knowledge certificate, since those who benefit from the programme overcome the first factor of social exclusion and exclusion from the job market, which is lacking knowledge of the Greek language. In addition to this, it is possible to continue monitoring the beneficiaries and to evaluate the programme, regarding its positive effects on a secondary level, through the automated system of KPAs (unemployment cards). The latter displays the possible advancement of those persons to further vocational training, or, possibly, to programmes leading to employment. The successful employment of these persons can be followed through the automated systems of the National Certification Centre. The first cycle of the project has already been completed (budget **€21.9 million**), with the implementation of **332** training programmes, in which **6,709 persons** have participated (2,434 immigrants, 3,996 repatriates and 279 refugees). The examinations results have been satisfactory, given that **78%** of the participants acquired the Greek knowledge certificate.

Additionally, special actions are being implemented for the social assimilation of **repatriates**, among which, providing them shelter is one the most important. With respect to the grant of subsidised housing loans: the foreseen number of 35,000 applications by beneficiaries has already been covered in the country’s appropriate regions, the loan agreements have been signed for the approved loans, and nearly 90% of the respective amounts have been disbursed. Regarding the rent allowance: **6,390** beneficiaries have received rent allowance between 2003 and May 2005. Additionally, the implementation of Integrated Programmes for the support of repatriates will be funded through the ‘THISEAS’ programme from 2005 hence. Within the framework of the European Fund for Refugees: **5** structures implemented by NGOs to welcome and assimilate **refugees and asylum seekers** operated in 2003. That figure rose to **6** in 2004. The number of people who benefited from the services offered was **8,300** in 2003 and **4,059** in 2004. An additional **4** centres with a total capacity of **520** persons are operating within the framework of actions monitored and fully funded by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity with NGO implementation agencies. The capacity of the hospitality structures has increased in recent years and this has resulted in Greece being able to confront to a large degree the housing problems of asylum seekers.

The Greek **Roma** people are an integral part of the Greek population. Due to their particular living conditions and problems, they are treated as a “socially vulnerable group”. The Integrated Action Plan – for which responsibility rests with the Inter-Ministerial Committee coordinated by Minister of the Interior – gathers all the interventions proposed and implemented by various agencies, organises them and classifies them along two axes. The first axis gives priority to infrastructure and housing, while the second one plans the actions for the services offered.

Within the framework of the first axis, 187 permanent residences, 1,674 prefabricated homes, and 40 halls were provided between 1997-2004. 242 prefabricated buildings were provided during 2003 and approval was granted in 2004 to provide 158 prefabricated buildings. The housing of Roma and the improvement of their quality of life in Municipal Government Organisations with particularly severe problems has moved forward during the last few months. Regarding the issuance of housing loans to Roma, from the beginning of the programme to the present 15,933 applications have been submitted through municipalities throughout the country and 5,111 loans have been approved. Of these, 4,051 applications were approved in 2003 and 1,060 in 2004.

Within the framework of the second axis, (i) to *promote the health and social inclusion* of Roma, between July of 2004 and March, 2005, mobile units have visited 15 Roma encampments, 2,580 vaccines were issued to 1,114 children, and there were 18 referrals of incidents that required health service or social intervention. €176,000 were spent for the action of the mobile units from the State budget. At the same time, between 18/3/2003 and 12/2/2004, 22,150 vaccines were issued to 5,174 children. 471 gynecological examinations were also provided. Additionally, the establishment of a total of **37 health and social services centres** in areas where there are organised Roma camps has been planned (ROP, 3rd CSF) within the framework of building more stable institutions promoting health. These centres provide services for prevention, basic primary health and primary social care, and social inclusion. (ii) With respect to *education*, the second phase of the project for the '**Admission of Roma children in school**' has been completed. A more detailed report appears in Objective 1.2, Section D, p. 22. (iii) In the promotion of *employment* within the context of OP "Employment and Vocational Training", 1,183 Roma benefited from the first cycle of Accompanying Support Services between 2001-2003. 160 Roma benefited from the subsidised programmes for the creation of New Jobs during 2002-2004, while 51 benefited from the subsidised programmes for New Entrepreneurs.

The integrated intervention for people with particular cultural and religious issues (Roma and Greek Muslims) will be launched soon and will concern a total of 1,880 persons (iv) Special mass sports programmes are being launched that are directed, among others, toward Roma, in cooperation with their agencies (v) In the arts (culture), training programmes (visual arts, music) are being developed in spaces where target group populations congregate. It is estimated that actions of this kind have benefited **4,500** persons.

Coordination and procedural problems came up between co-responsible Ministries concerning the operation of Health and Social Services Centres, the provision of pre-fabricated housing, the allotment of land by the Municipalities for their installation, connecting already built prefabricated structures with water, sewerage and power networks, as well as the unwillingness of Municipalities to submit technical bulletins for admission into the programme. The Inter- Ministerial Committee convened in April 2005 to discuss the second phase of the Integrated Action Plan's implementation. The Committee was primarily concerned with the matter of coordination and cooperation between co-responsible agencies for the implementation of separate actions.

Box 2: Policy measures for Immigrants, Repatriated, Refugees/ Asylum seekers, Muslim minority and Roma: 2005-2006⁷²

Immigrants - Refugees

Immigrants are estimated to make up 10.3% of the country's population today and their social integration is one of the most important matters of social policy. The issue of immigrants' social integration is a very complicated one, since immigrants are dissimilar from a national and cultural aspect, plus they are scattered all around the country, a fact that renders difficult a general political approach to this problem.

1. The new law passed in Parliament promotes the legalization of immigrants, foresees a simplification of procedures required for the former and for the renewal of their residence permits, as well as new measures for their smooth integration in Greek society. Special importance is given to the creation of an adequate administrative structure, which will be able to cope with the needs of the great number of immigrants living in this country. Specifically, this bill will be the legal framework regarding legal immigration and will contain procedures:
 - i. able to cope immediately with the changing needs of the local as well as the immigrant workforce inside the labour market,
 - ii. Flexible in order to attract third country citizens, who will be willing to invest in this country,
 - iii. Simple and in contact with the mobility of special categories of workers-citizens of third countries and
 - iv. Facilitating the smooth integration and adaptation of economic immigrants in the Greek society.

Additionally, the same law mentions the implementation of the **Integrated Action Programme** for the gradual adaptation and inclusion of third country citizens that live legally in the country, in collaboration with the competent ministries and agencies.

2. Regarding **refugees** who are asylum seekers, the top priority is the improvement of facilities at the Lavrio Refugee Centre, as well as the reinforcement of the centre for unaccompanied minors – asylum seekers, in Anoyia, Crete.

Roma

1. Reform of administrative structures aimed at issues of Greek Roma and upgrade of the services provided, with special attention to a). the increase in percentage of children attending elementary school and the limitation of school leavers of Roma origin, and b) learning the Greek language in order to improve employment opportunities.
2. Integration of the programme supporting and improving the quality of life of Greek Roma people.
3. In the framework of the Integrated Action Programme for Roma people, there will be a continuance and extension of the actions to defend and promote health and psychosocial support of this group, as well as establishing special criteria in order to secure their health.

⁷² Ministry of EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, 2005, NAP incl.