



european network against racism

ENAR Shadow Report 2011-2012

ENAR SHADOW REPORT

Racism and related discriminatory practices in Greece

Greek National Co-ordination

Racism is a reality in the lives of many ethnic and religious minorities in the EU. However, the extent and manifestations of this reality are often unknown and undocumented, especially in official data sources, meaning that it can be difficult to analyse the situation and to establish solutions to it.

The ENAR Shadow Reports are produced to fill the gaps in the official and academic data, to offer an alternative to that data and to offer an NGO perspective on the realities of racism in the EU and its Member States. NGO reports are, by their nature, based on many sources of data - official, unofficial, academic and experiential. This allows access to information which, while sometimes not backed up by the rigours of academic standards, provides the vital perspective of those that either are or work directly with those affected by racism. It is this that gives NGO reports their added value, complementing academic and official reporting.

Published by the European Network against Racism (ENAR) in Brussels, March 2013, with the support of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013), the Open Society Foundations, and the ENAR Foundation.

PROGRESS is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields. The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries. For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

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1. Executive summary

Global financial crisis revealed the structural weaknesses of the Greek economy and led the country to one of the worst economic crises in its history. While in the previous reporting period (March 2010 to March 2011)¹ three laws were enacted which marked progress towards the social integration of vulnerable groups and the creation of an immigration policy, these reforms have had little practical impact. Towards the end of the period covered by this report, national elections took priority in Greece and other issues were sidelined.

Special Focus: Islamophobia

Members of Muslim communities in Athens have criticized the absence of a mosque and recognised Muslim clergy in the city. **Recommendations:**

- Creation of official Mosques and recognition of the Muslim clergy
- Recognition of Muslim festivities for legitimate absence from work

Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in employment

Greece lacks a specific integration policy on immigration. Existing measures are fragmented and sometimes contradictory. **Recommendations:**

- Renewal of the residence permit should not depend on employment status.
- The Greek authorities together with the Labour unions should inform the vulnerable groups about their rights and should develop positive measures for businesses that reflect good practices in the employment sector.

Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in education. Recommendations:

- Implement a long-term strategy for better integrating immigrant pupils and university students in education together with civil society and educational bodies.

Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in housing Recommendations:

- The Greek authorities should address the situation of Roma who live in substandard settlements.
- The State and the Municipalities should tackle the issue of housing for the unemployed and homeless in order to avoid the phenomenon of ghettoization in large cities.

Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in health The terrible living and sanitary conditions within the refugee centres or camps have been repeatedly criticised by human rights organisations². **Recommendations:**

¹Shashati, Adla, 'Racism and Discrimination in Greece', ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011, http://www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=15294, accessed 22 July 2012

² Médecins Sans Frontières, 'More than 60 percent of the medical problems faced by detained migrants in Evros, Greece, caused by inhumane living and hygiene conditions', <http://www.msf.org/msf/articles/2011/06/more-than-60-percent-of-the-medical-problems->

- The Ministry of Health, together with civil society groups, should review all legislation and practice regarding access to healthcare for vulnerable groups and propose ways to eliminate whatever discrimination may exist.

Manifestations of racism and related discrimination with access to goods and services in the public and private sector. Recommendations:

- The government must provide education and encourage cooperation between competent authorities and NGOs in order to address discrimination in this field.

Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in the realm of political participation

The Fourth Department of the Hellenic Council of State³ (Symvoulío tis Epikrateias), which is the Supreme Administrative Court of Greece, declared Law 3838/2010 on 'Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation for legal migrant residents and other settings' to be unconstitutional.

Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in the media, including the internet There has been an increase in hate speech, discriminatory practices and racist comments in the media.

Recommendations:

- Raise media awareness about the importance of responsible reporting, and alert media professionals to the dangers of racism and intolerance.
- The authorities must ensure the enforcement of Law 927/1979 in regard to journalists and media who incite racial hatred.

Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in criminal justice

Racist violence and crime: There has been a sharp rise in the racist attacks. The past few months have also seen a rise in anti-Muslim violence. Hate speech: Hate and racist speech is widespread in Greece and is tolerated by a large proportion of Greek society. **Recommendations:**

- Organise mandatory training to educate all those generally involved in the judicial system on the topics of racism, discrimination and international agreements for the protection of human rights.
- Carry out a long-term awareness raising campaign about racist crimes aimed at both the public and vulnerable groups, so as to encourage the latter to report crimes with racist motives.
- Each year, the competent authorities should provide all necessary information about the number and nature of cases reaching the courts, the penalties that were decided and imposed, and any other form of discrimination.

[faced-by-detained-migrants-in-greece-caused-by-inhumane-living-and-hygiene-conditions.cfm](#) , accessed 1 August 2012

³The Hellenic Council of State, www.ste.gr, accessed 26 July 2012

- The government and the police should publicly and unequivocally condemn, at the highest level, instances of racist and xenophobic violence.

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3. Introduction

Global financial crisis revealed the structural weaknesses of the Greek economy and led the country to one of the worst economic crises in its history. Greece is also experiencing a huge social crisis which has affected immigrants as well as Greek citizens.

There were no major legal developments relating to immigration or racism in the period covered by this report (March 2011 – March 2012). During the previous reporting period (March 2010 - March 2011)⁴ three laws were enacted which marked progress towards the social integration of vulnerable groups and the creation of an immigration policy.

- An Action Plan⁵ on Migration Management was developed by the Greek authorities in 2010 in order to address the needs of asylum seekers arriving in Greece in an efficient and coherent manner. Major changes took place regarding the implementation of this Action Plan at legislative level.
- In March 2010 the legal code of the acquisition of Greek citizenship was amended. The new code 'Amending the Code of Greek Citizenship'⁶ contains specific provisions which allow second-generation migrants who were born in Greece or who studied in the country for at least six years, to apply for Greek citizenship. According to Law 3838/2010 'Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation for legal migrant residents and other settings'⁷, long- term residents and holders of the 10 year residence permit were allowed to vote in the municipal elections and stand for most positions, except for mayor and vice mayor.
- Law 3852/2010 'New Architecture of Government and Decentralised Administration -Program Kallikrates'⁸ facilitates increased political representation of migrants through the formation of local integration councils which would act as consultative bodies.

4 Shashati, Adla, 'Racism and Discrimination in Greece', ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011, http://www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=15294, accessed 22 July 2012

5 European Commission Press Release: 'Joint statement by Mr Christos Papoutsis, Minister of Citizen Protection of Greece and Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner in charge of Home Affairs: Greece and the Commission agree to enhance cooperation on reforming the Greek asylum system',

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/450>, accessed 2 August 2012

6 Ministry of Social Affairs, Amendmenton 28/05/2010, number 8 , Ministry of Social Affairs , http://www.ypes.gr/el/Generalsecretariat_PopulationSC/diefthinsi_ithageneias/Egyklio/, accessed 1 August 2012

7 Ministry of Social Affairs, Law 3838/2010 'Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation for legal migrant residents and other settings', http://www.ypes.gr/el/Generalsecretariat_PopulationSC/diefthinsi_ithageneias/nomoi/, accessed 29 July 2012

8 Epitheorisis Ika, Insurance and labour laws, http://www.eaed.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3090%3A-38522010-&catid=239%3A2008&Itemid=286&lang=el , accessed 26 July 2012

Anti-racism NGOs and migrant communities welcomed these developments but expressed concern about possible difficulties regarding their implementation in practice. Their implementation had largely stalled towards the end of the period covered by report as the government focused on elections.

As we have noted in previous shadow reports, recent years have seen a continuous rise of far-right groups with xenophobic and racist opinions. NGOs and other independent organisations have stressed that this rise has resulted in attacks against vulnerable groups, particularly immigrants, refugees and the Jewish community. These concerns do not seem to have been taken seriously by the government.

The rise of the Golden Dawn party is an important example of this trend. In three years, the far-right party has gone from a nonentity to a major political force. Before the elections on 6th May 2012 the Golden Dawn party released a campaign video that proposed, among other things, the reinstatement of capital punishment for drug dealing, a ban of trade unions, as well as several proposals which violate fundamental rules of democracy and human rights⁹. After a campaign punctuated by hate speech, some expected the party would fare no better than it had done in the 2009 (they got 0.29% of the popular vote, which, translates to fewer than 20,000 votes in total). On the 6 May election, Golden Dawn won over 440, 000 votes or 7% (21 seats in parliament).

This shadow report covers the period from March 2011 to March 2012. In chapter 4 we look at the significant developments in Greece during the reporting period. Chapter 5 focuses on Islamophobia. Chapter 6 examines specific problem areas in relation to racism and discrimination in employment, housing, education, health, on criminal justice in relation to policing and ethnic profiling, racist violence and crime, and counter terrorism and the political and legal context for all of the above mentioned fields. Chapter 7 provides a critical assessment of the situation in Greece in regard to the issues raised in this report. Chapter 8 lists examples of good practice by NGOs. Finally, chapter 9 provides the reports' national recommendations.

⁹Ignatidou Sophia, 'A gain for Golden Dawn would be a dark day for Greece', The Guardian (3 May 2012), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/may/03/golden-dawn-dark-day-greece-election>, accessed 2 August 2012

4. Significant developments in the country during the period under review

This section discusses significant developments in Greece during the period from March 2011 to March 2012.

4.1 Changes in regard to the communities most vulnerable to racism or related discrimination in the national context

Due to the financial crisis, the government is focusing on economic matters. As a result, there have been no major legal developments or changes in regard to the communities most vulnerable to racism or related discrimination. As stated in the report of Amnesty International for 2011¹⁰ the serious financial crisis in the country has led to the request of a rescue economic package from the EU, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank. The rescue package was agreed and the Greek Parliament had to adopt severe budget cuts in May 2011. This led to a series of demonstrations before and after the adoption. Of course, these severe cuts have also impacted those communities which are already vulnerable because of racism and related discrimination.

4.2 Changes in legal developments regarding discrimination and equality legislation from the previous year

Anti-racism and anti-discrimination provisions are found in Law 3304/2005 on the 'Implementation of the principle of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation'¹¹. According to the MIPEX Report¹² Greek anti-discrimination law meets the minimum standards required by the EU. However, as reported by Adla Shashati in the previous ENAR shadow report¹³, discrimination based on nationality/citizenship is not explicitly prohibited in law, notwithstanding recommendations made by the Greek Ombudsman in the past. Racial profiling is a serious concern and will be discussed in s6.8.1

4.3 Changes in migration, asylum and integration policies

During the period covered by this shadow report there have been some changes to immigration, asylum and integration policies. The law 'Reorganisation of the licensing system for the residence of aliens in the country in terms of increased safety, regulation of matters of local authorities and other provisions by the Ministry of the Interior'¹⁴ was filed in August 2011.

10 Amnesty International Annual Report 2011 - Greece, 13 May 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dce1568c.html>, accessed 20 July 2012

11 Greek Ombudsman, 'Presentation of Law 3304/2005', <http://new.synigoros.gr/?i=metaxeirisi.el.laws>, accessed 3 August 2012

12 Migrant Integration Policy Index III, February 2011, p.97

13 Shashati, Adla, 'Racism and Discrimination in Greece', ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011, http://www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=15294, accessed 22 July 2012

14 Hellenic Parliament, Law 4018 'Reorganisation of the licensing system for the residence of aliens in the country in terms of increased safety, regulation of matters of local authorities and other provisions by the Ministry of Interior', <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Nomothetiko->

One of the basic reforms provided for by this law is the creation of one-stop services for the immigrants who wish to file or renew their residency permit. NGOs and migrant communities welcome this measure, provided that it is properly implemented.

The Legal Service of the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) achieved a very important outcome in a case before the court of Piraeus in June 2011¹⁵ regarding the duration of detention for asylum seekers. The decision of this court is the first step in the judicial review of detention periods for both asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. Under the current legal framework asylum seekers may be detained for a maximum of 6 months. For those who have applied for asylum but do not carry proper documentation, the maximum detention is 12 months. The court decision invalidates the practice of 'arbitrary' detention. It was held that detention should last only as long as is strictly necessary to process and examine asylum claims and to complete the deportation procedure. These procedures must be developed and carried out with due diligence and checked after the completion of a quarter of the working year of the relevant judicial body. Review every three months helps prevent the unnecessary deprivation of liberty of the asylum seeker or the person without legal documentation.

4.4 Changes in public perceptions, political discourse or attitudes from the previous year in regard to most vulnerable groups

A survey of the Greek media was conducted in 2011¹⁶ by the European programme Mediva, organised by the Robert Schuman Centre and the European University Institute. It found that the Greek media present migrants and refugees in a negative way. Migrants are frequently mentioned in the context of rising criminality. Occasionally, they are presented as victims. The Greek media seem to be more sensitive when it comes to racist attacks abroad, such as the racist murders by Anders Breivik in Norway. In contrast the Greek media are often indifferent to the plight of migrants and other vulnerable groups in Greece. This negative attitude of the Greek media is reflected in public opinion.

During the run-up to the elections, issues relating to immigrants and refugees featured heavily in political discourse. All major political parties played the migration card in their campaigns. Far-right groups took advantage of this situation to increase their popularity and recruit membership around the run-down areas of the city, leading to an explosion of anti-migrant rhetoric and violent attacks against Asian and African migrants.

The situation was very worrying before the elections in May 2012 and the majority of the migrant communities expected the situation to continue after the elections.

[Ergo/Epexergasia-stis-Epitropes?law_id=a652abac-4446-4b8b-a432-d347da5bd0f2](#), accessed 27 July 2012

¹⁵ Greek Council for Refugees, Court decision n. 448/9-6-2011 of the Piraeus court, <http://www.gcr.gr/en/node/578>, accessed 20 July 2012

¹⁶ Mediva, 'Diversity indicators', <http://www.eui.eu/Projects/MEDIVA/MEDIVADiversityIndicators.aspx>, accessed 20 July 2012

On the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Miltos Pavlou, Head of the Institute for Rights Equality & Diversity (i-Red) gave an interview with the ECRE Weekly Bulletin about xenophobia and racially-motivated violence in Greece. He discussed the problems faced by asylum seekers, refugees and migrants due to racism in the country and the increasing resonance of far-right parties with the Greek people. He argued that the failure of the State to take measures to tackle hate speech and racially-motivated violence has meant that the 'situation in Greece is extremely fluid and it's difficult to predict the situation a year from now'¹⁷.

4.5 Developments addressing social aspects, i.e. integration/inclusion of migrants and ethnic and religious minorities, including changes in National Reform Programmes, National Roma Integration Strategies, local action plans, and the involvement of NGOs in this process

The Greek authorities developed an Action Plan on Migration Management last year. As the 2011 FRA report¹⁸ highlights, this plan involves all the main actors, including civil society representatives. The Action Plan¹⁹ provides a structure for addressing the gaps in the Greek system for managing asylum and migration and for the implementation of this plan at a legislative level. In November 2010 a Presidential Decree was adopted introducing important changes to the asylum procedure for a transitional period and assigned an important role to UNHCR. Unfortunately due to the recent political instability (change in government, elections May and June 2012) this plan has yet to be implemented. Instead of following the Action Plan the authorities have decided to construct 30 detention centres on disused military sites.²⁰

On 3 January 2011, the Minister for Citizen Protection, Christos Papoutsis, announced plans to build a 12.5 km fence along its border with Turkey, to prevent undocumented migrants entering the country. According to the Minority Rights Group International Report²¹ 'Greece's administrative court subsequently approved the plans to build a fence, and construction began in February 2012, despite the EU's refusal to fund the project.'

17ECRE, 'ECRE Interview with Miltos Pavlou, Director of the Institute for Rights Equality and Diversity (i-RED)', <http://www.ecre.org/component/content/article/62-interviews/269-ecre-interview-with-miltos-pavlou-director-of-the-institute-for-rights-equality-and-diversity.html>, accessed 20 July 2012

18EU Agency for Fundamental Rights FRA, Coping with a fundamental rights emergency: The situation of persons crossing the Greek land border in an irregular manner, 8/3/2011, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications_per_year/2011/pub_greek-border-situation_en.htm accessed 15 July 2012

19Europa Press Releases, 'Joint statement by Mr Christos Papoutsis, Minister of Citizen Protection of Greece and Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner in charge of Home Affairs: Greece and the Commission agree to enhance cooperation on reforming the Greek asylum system',

20Smith, Helena, 'Greece to open new detention centres for illegal migrants', *Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/29/greece-detention-centres-migrants>, accessed 15 July 2012

21Minority Rights Group International, 'State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2012 - Greece', 28 June 2012, www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4fedb3fe32.html, accessed 15 July 2012.

5. Special focus: Islamophobia

There are no official statistics on religious groups in Greece. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne created an officially recognised 'Muslim minority,' residing in Thrace²². NGOs estimate that between 300,000 and 500,000 Muslims reside in the country and they mostly come from Albania, Afghanistan, Pakistan, North Africa, and South Asia.²³ In the absence of official statistics there is no way to know whether there are differences within the Muslim community. Moreover there is no data which would allow us to compare the position of the Muslims to that of other minority groups.

The Constitution protects religious freedom and this right is generally respected by the government. However, members of the Muslim communities in Athens have criticised the lack of a mosque and official Muslim clergy in the city. They report that Muslims in Athens practice their religion in informal (unregistered) mosques operating in cultural centres. They must travel to Thrace if they wish to participate in an official ceremony e.g. for Islamic marriages and funerals.

NGOs and migrant communities have received a number of complaints of assaults and racist attacks. In spite of this there is no official data recording such attacks.

According to the 2011 Report on International Religious Freedom – Greece:

During the year, unknown assailants launched multiple arson attacks against several informal mosques in downtown Athens. In one such attack in March, five persons were injured. A penal investigation was launched against 'unknown perpetrators' who in November 2010 locked an estimated 40 immigrant worshippers into an informal mosque on Athens' Aghios Panteleimonas square and set it on fire. The worshippers escaped the fire with the help of police, but four persons were injured in ensuing fights between the worshippers and the violent extremists. In March, unknown perpetrators damaged the exterior of the Isalo Mosque (Rodopi prefecture, northern Greece), and in February unknown perpetrators damaged approximately 10 gravestones at the Muslim cemetery in the city of Kommotini in Thrace. In July, unknown perpetrators nailed a pig's head on the wooden door of the historic Hallil Bey mosque in Kavala. While the mosque's structure is preserved as an architectural monument, it is not used for worship and is not open to the public.²⁴

22 United States Department of State, 2011 Report on International Religious Freedom - Greece, 30 July 2012, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/502105bac.html>, accessed 18 August 2012

23 Ibid

24 Ibid

Such allegations by the Muslim communities and reports from NGOs demonstrate that the Muslim community in Greece faces serious problems related to racism and discrimination.

6. Access and full participation in all collective areas of society

This section of the report focuses on discriminatory and racist trends in all collective areas of society, i.e. challenges for some in enjoying full participation and equal access to essential resources, such as employment, education, housing, health, access to goods and services, political participation, media, and criminal justice (including racist violence and crime, and counter-terrorism).

6.1 Racism and related discrimination in employment

6.1.1 Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in employment

The economic crisis has resulted in high unemployment rates. 761,000 people were unemployed in Greece in 2011. Between 2008 and 2011 the unemployment rate increased from 7.6% to 15.2%. According to the 2012 report of the Institute of Labour²⁵, another rise of 17%–18% will occur with actual unemployment rates reaching 22%–23%.

In general, immigrants face higher unemployment rates than Greek citizens. The 2011 report of the Labour Inspectorate Body (SEPE)²⁶ states that, 30% of workers were uninsured. The report revealed that 19,968 workers were uninsured out of a total of 66.615 (29.98%. 40% of uninsured workers were migrants. Most migrants work in unskilled or low-skilled jobs, often in farming, construction and personal services. Immigrants are often involved in undeclared and seasonal work. It is not uncommon for immigrants to receive less than the statutory minimum wage. A large proportion of irregular migrant workers are employed in domestic work. Migrant domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to multiple discrimination; the majority are women, thus they are exposed to gender based discrimination and violence as well as racial discrimination.

Residence permits are linked to employers and to social security stamps. As a result, workers may fall into an irregular status through no fault of their own. A significant number of migrants face difficulties because their employers refuse to pay –or cannot afford –the necessary social insurance contributions which are a prerequisite for the renewal of a residence permit.

Greece lacks a specific integration policy for immigrants. Measures currently in place are fragmented and sometimes contradictory. There are no diversity

²⁵Labour Institute of Greek General Confederation of Labour (INE/GSEE), 'Annual Report on the Greek Economy and Employment' (August 2011), <http://www.inegsee.gr/ereynes-meletes/ekthesh/Ethsia-Ekthesh-2011-H-ellhnikh-oikonomia-kai-h-apasxolhsh.html>, accessed 18 July 2012

²⁶Ministry of Employment and Social Security, SEPE Annual report 2011 (3 April 2012) , p.55, <http://www.ypakp.gr/>, accessed 20 July 2012

management policies in place in either the public or private sectors, nor are there quotas reserving jobs for minority groups. Only members of the Christian Orthodox religion are allowed to abstain from work in order to practice their religion. The feast days of other religions are not officially recognised by employers for the purposes of leave. In recent years, the Greek Forum of Migrants and other NGOs have repeatedly campaigned for the recognition by employers of Muslim festivities, such as Bairam and Ramadan.

According to the newspaper Eleftherotypia²⁷ from 2007 to 2011 there were a total of 155 complaints lodged against those who profit from the strawberry camps in Iliia region. Cases such as the one in the strawberry fields of Vouprasias in Iliia region are very common. In this case three traffickers were arrested because they were exploiting and abusing migrant farm workers. According to the website tvxs²⁸ the traffickers were also accused of abusing minors because one of the workers was a child. The three individuals were charged with establishing a criminal organisation, trafficking workers and minors, illegal possession of firearms and unnecessarily discharging a firearm. The migrant workers returned in their homes in Romania with the help of their embassy.

6.1.2 Facilitating factors or protective measures to combat employment challenges

The Ministry has announced that the social insurance stamps required for a residence permit will be reduced from 200 to 120.²⁹ While this is considered to be a positive change, migrant organisations continue to highlight the need to separate social insurance stamps from the residence permit. Furthermore there are no positive discrimination schemes in place to increase employment rates among vulnerable groups.

27Nodaros Makis, 'The case files for the strawberry fields are a mountain', (28 April 2011), Eleftherotypia, <http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=270934>, accessed 15 July 2012

28 Kontini Katerina, 'Iliia strawberry fields: 3 people in custody for immigrant abuse', (19 April 2011), Tvxs, tvxs.gr/node/58834, accessed 15 July 2012

29To Pontiki newspaper, Reduction of the social security stamps for the renewal of residence permits, To pontiki, <http://www.topontiki.gr/article/14313>, accessed 18 July 2012

6.2 Racism and related discrimination in education

6.2.1 Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in education

There was no specific data available regarding discrimination against the Muslim community in education.

The Roma encounter serious problems relating to educational exclusion and racism. In spite of efforts made in recent years to improve the situation, the education of Roma children is characterized by limited attendance at preschool level, low enrollment in elementary school, late involvement in the educational process and premature termination as well as poor performance compared to the rest of the school population³⁰. According to the NGO Antigone³¹ the Roma drop-out rate is 77%. Eight out of ten Roma children leave school before they have completed elementary education. The State's response has been to separate the Roma children from rest of the school population. On International Roma Day, the Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM)³² publicly highlighted the issue of educational segregation of Roma in substandard schools such as the 12th Elementary School of Aspropyrgos.

The Ministerial Decision 151/41977/V6/6-4- F, signed in April 2011, limits the access to higher education for foreign students. The Greek Ombudsman has been critical of the fact that the decision will affect this year's candidates, since this will cause considerable stress and undermine trust in the Greek state amongst foreign students.³³

6.2.2 Facilitating factors or protective measures to combat education challenges

There have been no public debates on the promotion of intercultural dialogue in schools even though many NGOs that participate in the Greek National Co-ordination of ENAR- such as the Greek Forum of Migrants - stress the importance of addressing this issue together with teachers and other stakeholders in the educational system.

30 Ecoleft, 'Early termination of school attendance of Roma children', question of 4 members of parliament of the Democratic Left party to the Minister of education (7 September 2011), <http://ecoleft.wordpress.com/2011/09/10>, assessed in 20 July 2012

31Theodoridis, Nasos, 'Antigone Information and Documentation Centre -National report 2011' (Athens, Antigone, 2011), <http://www.antigone.gr/en/default.php>, accessed 22 July 2012

32Greek Helsinki Monitor, Press release 'Greece again before European human rights court for Aspropyrgos Roma ghetto school', (7 April 2011), <http://cm.greekhelsinki.gr/index.php?sec=194&cid=3744>, assessed in 20 July 2012

33Greek Ombudsman Letter to the Minister of Education, <http://www.synigoros.gr/resources/epistoli-pros-ypoyrgeio-gia-allodapous-apofitous.pdf>, assessed in 20 July 2012

As concerns Roma children, the Greek Ministry of Education and the Special Secretariat of Intercultural Education are taking steps towards the gradual abolition of schools attended exclusively by Roma pupils through a project entitled '*Education of Roma Children*'.³⁴ This project is implemented by the Centre for Intercultural Education of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The aim of this program is to integrate Roma children in mainstream schools and to meet their needs for transport to and from school in cooperation with the municipalities.

³⁴ National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Center for Intercultural Education, Programme Education of Roma Children, www.keda.gr/roma/, accessed 27 July 2012

6.3 Racism and related discrimination in housing

6.3.1 Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in housing

Vulnerable groups such as migrants, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and the Roma community face many problems in the area of housing. In particular, asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants frequently face homelessness. Many seek shelter in abandoned houses and shops in the centre of Athens. The economic crisis has led to a dramatic increase in homelessness. According to an interview in the Daily Star with Tzanetos Antipas, the president of the NGO Praxis,³⁵ around 13,000 people are homeless in Athens, around 1 500 of whom are unemployed or drug addicts left behind after rehabilitation centres closed due to lack of funds. The majority of the others are undocumented migrants, living in groups of 15 to 20 in dilapidated flats in the city centre. As Moawia Ahmed, coordinator of the Greek Migrant's Forum pointed out in a previous shadow report

*Foreigners in Omonia square are refugees and not illegal immigrants in their majority. The weakness of the legislative framework, the shortage of staff in the political asylum section of the police, the refusal of the government to increase the number of asylum recognition to the average number of member countries of the EU is the real problem. The absence of any kind of caring for these people as declared in the international Geneva convention of 1951 for refugees of which Greece has signed (food and accommodation) drives almost all the refugees within Attica to find by themselves accommodation and find a way to hung on to life.*³⁶

The high concentration of people living in bad conditions in the centre of Athens has been used by the far right in order to portray immigrants in a negative light and as a means of promoting their plans to 'clean' immigrants out of Greek neighbourhoods. This rhetoric has proved popular in parts of central Athens.

It appears that no particular issues relating to housing affect the Muslim community.

³⁵ Daily star, 'Some 13,000 homeless in Athens: charity' (24 May 2012), <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2012/May-24/174528-some-13000-homeless-in-athens-charity.ashx#axzz233GaStJn>, accessed 27 July 2012

³⁶Mardaki Andriana, Samshideen Idrissu 'Racism in Greece', Enar Shadow Report 2008, <http://www.enar-eu.org/Page.asp?docid=19048&langue=EN>, accessed 27 July 2012

6.3.2 Facilitating factors or protective measures to combat housing challenges

Last year's Shadow Report³⁷ stated that an Action Plan on Migration Management had been announced in 2010. In addition, a new law was adopted in January 2011 establishing an asylum service as well as a first reception service. The law also transposes certain aspects of the Directive 2008/115/EC on common standards and procedures for returning illegal immigrants, the 'Return Directive'.³⁸

The implementation of this law would create screening centres throughout the country, where people who have entered the country in an irregular manner would be dealt with through the appropriate procedure or redirected to another body if necessary. By March 2012 no data regarding this centre had been released. Instead of screening centres, the government created detention centers in former military camps where undocumented immigrants will be held until they are deported. The Minister for Citizen Protection, Michalis Chrisohoidis stated at the end of March 'Whoever [illegally] enters the country will be given hospitality and will be immediately asked to return home. Unless they are refugees ... in which case they have a sacred right to asylum.'³⁹

On a positive note, a hostel designed to meet the immediate needs of the homeless of Athens was launched in 2011,⁴⁰ under an agreement between the Ministry of Labour and the Church of Greece. The hostel offers accommodation, food, sanitation, health care and clothing to homeless people regardless of age, sex or ethnicity.

37Shashati Adla, 'Racism and Discrimination in Greece', ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011, http://www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=15294, accessed 22 July 2012

38Directive 2008/115/EC on common standards and procedures for returning illegally staying third-country nationals ('the Return Directive') entered into force on 16 December 2008

39Papadimitriou Yanis, 'Greece proposes immigrant detention centers', Deutsche Welle, <http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,15874169,00.html>, accessed 27 July 2012

40Vima newspaper, 'New hostel for the homeless', 24 April 2011, <http://www.tovima.gr/society/article/?aid=397184>, accessed in 27 July 2012

6.4 Racism and related discrimination in health

6.4.1 Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in health

As Greece is located at the external border of the EU, many migrants and asylum seekers enter the country via Turkey. One of the routes into Greece from Turkey is across the Turkish-Greek border in the Evros Region.

Greek and international human rights organisations have repeatedly criticized the living and sanitary conditions in Greek refugee camps. A report from Médecins Sans Frontières stated that over 60% of health problems faced by detained immigrants in Evros are directly connected to the miserable conditions in which they live.⁴¹ Of the 1,809 patients treated by MSF during December 2010 and March 2011, 1,147 suffered from respiratory infections, musculoskeletal pain, diarrhoea, intestinal disorders, psychological problems and skin diseases. During the first two months of 2011, at least 22 people lost their lives in their efforts to cross the border between Turkey and Greece in Evros region. In 2011, 54,974 undocumented migrants and asylum seekers were apprehended for crossing the border into Greece's Evros region in an irregular manner. During 2011, MSF doctors provided medical treatment to 2,689 migrants at the border police stations and detention facilities of Filakio, Soufli, Tycherio, Feres and Venna. The majority were suffering from respiratory infections, gastrointestinal problems and skin infections due to poor living conditions and overcrowding. Sixteen migrants were treated for frostbite, several of whom were hospitalised.

Immigrants who do not have a valid residence permit are excluded from healthcare, unless they are suffering from a life threatening disease. Many immigrants without valid residence permits are afraid to go to the public hospitals because the relevant social services of the hospital are obliged by law to report them to the authorities. In practice however, the medical staff of public hospitals do provide medical services, irrespective of the residence status of the patient.

There are no particular problems concerning the Muslim communities. Further, ethnic minorities who are settled in Greece do not appear to face any particular discrimination in accessing health care.

41 Médecins Sans Frontières, 'More than 60 percent of the medical problems faced by detained migrants in Evros, Greece, caused by inhumane living and hygiene conditions', <http://www.msf.org/msf/articles/2011/06/more-than-60-percent-of-the-medical-problems-faced-by-detained-migrants-in-greece-caused-by-inhumane-living-and-hygiene-conditions.cfm> , accessed 1 August 2012

6.4.2 Facilitating factors or protective measures to combat health inequalities

Since June 9, 2011 the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (KEELPNO)⁴² has operated an integrated health and protection program for both physical and mental health, in the centre of Athens. They currently have two active Preventive Medicine Mobile Units and they hope to increase this to five by the end of September. The program aims to raise awareness of sexually transmitted diseases among the general population as well as within specific population groups including prostitutes (male and female), migrants and refugees, drug users and victims of trafficking. According to KEELPNO, the program seeks to focus on the health problems of vulnerable populations living on the street who have limited access to the public health system. It also provides a surveillance network to protect this target group, in coordination with other NGOs at district level. It provides the data to record, study and find treatment for the health problems of the population accessed and controlled, especially concerning infectious poverty-related diseases like STDs and HIV / AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and substance abuse⁴³.

Since April 2011, the NGOs 'Doctors of the World' and 'Igoumenitsa for immigrants and their rights' have operated a medical programme in cooperation with the Ministry of Health. A clinic with two doctors, two nurses, a psychologist and social worker is open daily for immigrants who do not have access to the health system. Their records indicate that immigrants suffer from anxiety, psychological pressure, muscular pain and injuries that mainly occur while they are trying to board trucks, which they use as a means of escape from the town of Igoumenitsa. They have also recorded a number of minor fights among immigrants and, one shocking incident, the rape of a 15 year old boy. The lack of shelter, food and water has caused several patients to be diagnosed with diabetes and high blood pressure.⁴⁴

42Hellenic Centre for Disease Control & Prevention, 'Public Health', <http://www.keelpno.gr>, accessed 1 August 2012

43Imerisia newspaper, 'Aids, hepatitis in the center of Athens', <http://www.imerisia.gr/article.asp?catid=26510&subid=2&pubid=111623187>, accessed 1 August 2012

44Eleftherotypia newspaper, 'Harbor of dead end', <http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=268700>, accessed 1 August 2012

6.5 Racism and related discrimination in access to goods and services

6.5.1 Manifestations of racism and related discrimination with access to goods and services in the public and private sector

Mrs. Calliope Lykovardi, the Greek Ombudsman, referring to the Annual Report of the Ombudsman, noted that 'the number of reports-that do not exceed 60 this year- is very small compared with the intensity and magnitude of the problem.'⁴⁵ Referring to the law 3304/2005 on discrimination-which transposes the EU Directive on equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation - she also noted that 'obviously the law 3304 opens the field of opportunity, but the institutional framework is not sufficient alone in order to combat discrimination'⁴⁶

Lack of data and the small number of reports relating to discriminatory practices can give the impression that there is no formal racism or related discrimination regarding access to goods and services in the public and private sector. Informal reports from NGOs and migrant communities that suggest that this is not the case especially for vulnerable groups such as immigrants, refugees and the Roma community. As stated in last year's shadow report⁴⁷ the groups mentioned above face suspicion, maltreatment and on some occasions even violence from state and government employees. Moreover many of the cases reported to the secretariat of the Greek Forum of Migrants (GFM) concern rude behaviour by a public or private employee towards an immigrant. Unfortunately such cases are not generally registered by NGOs because the victims do not wish to make formal statements.

6.5.2 Facilitating factor or protective measures to promote equality in accessing goods and services

The Institutions for the promotion of the Principle of Equal Treatment are:

1. the Greek Ombudsman as an Independent Authority,
2. the Equal Treatment Committee of the Ministry of Justice and
3. the Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour.

Among these three institutions, only the Ombudsman publishes a special annual report on discrimination with relevant data. A number of NGOs, migrant and anti-racism organisations together with the Greek Ombudsman⁴⁸ have highlighted the difficulties that arise when responsibility for the protection

⁴⁵Greek Ombudsman, 'Annual report 2011', <http://www.synigoros.gr/?i=stp.el.annreports>, accessed 29 July 2012

⁴⁶ibid.

⁴⁷Shashati Adla, 'Racism and Discrimination in Greece', ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011, http://www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=15294, accessed 22 July 2012

⁴⁸Greek Ombudsman, Annual Report 2009, p.3, <http://www.synigoros.gr/diakriseis/index.htm> accessed in 26 July 2012

of equal treatment lies in three separate bodies, two of which lack independence. They also stress the need for the other two bodies to become more active. The institution responsible for providing data in the area of discrimination in the access to goods and services in the public and private sector is the Equal Treatment Committee of the Ministry of Justice. This committee's work is to record and monitor violations involving the sale of goods and services. The Equal Treatment Committee has a new president as of 19/11/2011. However, as noted earlier in the report, the committee has yet to produce any data.

6.6 Racism and related discrimination in political participation

6.6.1 Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in the realm of political participation

During 2010-2011, NGOs and migrant communities in Greece were largely positive about the three laws that have led to progress towards the social integration of vulnerable groups and the creation of immigration policy discussed earlier:

- In March 2010 Law 3284/04 'Ratification of the Code of Greek Citizenship' was revised.
- The new code 'Amending the Code of Greek Citizenship'⁴⁹ contains specific provisions that allow second-generation migrants to apply for Greek citizenship.
- Law 3838/2010 on 'Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation for legal migrant residents and other settings'⁵⁰ provides that long term residents and holders of a 10 year residence permit could vote in the municipality elections and stand for some positions, excluding mayor and vice mayor.
- Law 3852/2010 'New Architecture of Government and Decentralised Administration -Program Kallikrates'⁵¹, improves political representation for immigrants through the formation of local integration councils which will act as consultative bodies.

Unfortunately in the period covered by this report Greece seems to have taken a step backwards regarding the political participation of vulnerable groups. The Fourth Department of the Hellenic Council of State⁵² (Symvoulío tis Epikrateias), which is the Supreme Administrative Court of Greece, declared Law 3838/2010 on 'Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation for legal migrant residents and other settings' to be unconstitutional. According to their statement only Greek citizens have the right to 'stand and vote' at the prefectural and municipal elections. In addition, the Fourth Department of the State Council declared the Law 3838/2010 - which provides Greek citizenship to the immigrants residing in our country - to be unconstitutional. The issue has been referred to the plenum of the Supreme Court of Cassation for a final decision.

49Ministry of Social Affairs, Amendmenton 28/05/2010, number 8 , Ministry of Social Affairs , http://www.ypes.gr/el/Generalsecretariat_PopulationSC/diefthinsi_ithageneias/Egyklio/, accessed 26 July 2012

50Ministry of Social Affairs, Law 3838/2010 'Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation for legal migrant residents and other settings', http://www.ypes.gr/el/Generalsecretariat_PopulationSC/diefthinsi_ithageneias/nomoi/, accessed 26 July 2012

51Epitheorisis Ika, Insurance and labor laws, http://www.eaed.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3090%3A-38522010-&catid=239%3A2008&Itemid=286&lang=el, accessed 26 July 2012

52The Hellenic Council of State, www.ste.gr, accessed 26 July 2012

6.6.2 Facilitating factor or protective measures to promote equality in the realm of political participation

There is no evidence that the toolkit from MPG to leverage diversity in parliament and political bodies is being used. Since only Greeks can participate in the elections it seems that the political parties do not seek to promote diversity in the parliament. However, some major political parties have presented migrants and members of the Muslim community as candidates. There is no specific data available regarding political participation of the communities most vulnerable to racism and discrimination in Greece.

There are programmes such as action 4.2/10 'Creation of a collaborative network of representatives of immigrant associations at European level'⁵³ which carry out important work in promoting political participation. This action is co-funded at a rate of 75% by Community Resources and at a rate of 25% by National Resources. It is coordinated by the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), with the participation of the Greek Forum of Migrants. This programme was structured so as to present an efficient model (NGO, institution, etc) for the representation of the migrant population in Greek society, which would provide a model to be adopted by the Greek Forum of Migrants, as well as by immigrant communities/organisations. This would promote joint action and initiatives on issues relating to integration policies such as: access to the job market, family reunification, long-term residence, citizenship, fight against discriminations and increased political participation & representation. The emergence of a Greek Model for the Organisation and Institutional Representation of Immigrants, has resulted from democratic dialogue and impact of on the recent Law 3852/2010 'New Architecture of Government and Decentralised Administration -Program Kallikrates Programme' for the local public administration, 'Immigrant Integration Councils'⁵⁴.

⁵³Migrant network EU- Creation of a collaborative network of representatives of immigrant associations at European level, www.migrantnetwork.eu, accessed 27 July 2012

⁵⁴ Ibid.

6.7 Racism and related discrimination in media

6.7.1 Manifestations of racism and related discrimination in the media, including the internet

According to the report *Freedom of the Press 2011 - Greece*⁵⁵ both public and private media in Greece are largely free from government restrictions. However, public stations tend to report with a pro- government bias. There are several independent newspapers and magazines, including some that are critical of the government. Broadcasting is largely unregulated, and a number of broadcasting stations are unlicensed. This leaves the directors a great deal of freedom to respond to public demand. Recently this has resulted in an increase in racist comments, hate speech and discriminatory practices. Generally, newspaper coverage of issues such as discrimination and social exclusion vary depending on the political orientation of each publication.

Notable far-right publications include newspapers such as 'Stohos'⁵⁶ and 'Eleftheri ora'⁵⁷. Many journalists are prone to xenophobic and discriminatory reporting, often publishing the nationality of suspects of crimes when they are not Greek.

On a number of TV shows presenters introduce and make far-right activists acceptable to the public by inviting them to state their opinion more than once. In contrast, socially excluded groups go largely unrepresented. No real attempt to create a dialogue has been undertaken.

Coverage on the internet and on social media is mixed. There are a number of blogs and websites with racist, xenophobic, far-right, or nationalistic content. According to an article in the Greek Reporter there are more than 800 blogs with highly racist content and right-wing ideology in Greece.⁵⁸ On the other hand there are a number of websites and blogs dedicated to combatting racism and promoting human rights. There are also migrant and refugees community websites such as the Greek Forum of Refugees (<http://refugeegr.blogspot.gr>), Asante magazine (www.asante.gr) and United African Women Organisation (www.africanwomen.gr) where they present their activities, news and related articles that concern immigration.

55Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2011 - Greece*, 16 September 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e7303741a.html>, accessed 27 July

56Stohos newspaper, www.stoxos.gr, accessed 27 July 2012

57Eleftheri ora newspaper, www.elora.gr, accessed 27 July 2012

58Chaini Anastasia '800 Greek Right-Wing Racist Blogs under Supervision', Greek Reporter, 13/06/2011, <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2011/07/31/800-greek-right-wing-racist-blogs-under-supervision/>, accessed 27 July 2012

6.7.2 Facilitating factors or protective measures in the media

The Greek constitution provides for limits to speech which incites fear, violence, and public disharmony, as well as on publications that are obscene, offend religious beliefs, or advocate violent overthrow of the political system. Nonetheless some journalists state that they can say whatever they wish because they believe that constitutional protection of freedom of expression and freedom of the press prevail. After the ECRI's fourth report⁵⁹ the Greek authorities stated that the Greek media have adopted a code of conduct and that the National Radio and Television Council can impose sanctions in cases where racist speech has been published, and has done so since the publication of the previous ECRI's report. On the other hand there are complaints from NGOs and migrant communities that the media in Greece continue to project the immigrants in a negative way and give floor to racist and discriminatory opinions.

⁵⁹ECRI, Report on Greece, (Strasbourg, ECRI, 2009) p.8 & p.20 <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/greece/GRC-CbC-IV-2009-031-ENG.pdf> accessed 27 July 2012.

6.8 Racism and related discrimination in criminal justice

6.8.1 Policing and ethnic profiling⁶⁰

In 2011, as in previous years, the Greek police continued to target immigrants who do not have a residence permit. The majority of those monitored are young men, mostly of Asian origin, primarily from Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq and Afghanistan. These operations typically involve mass arrests even though there may not have been a criminal offence committed. It was claimed that the arrests were necessary to control those who do not have the legal documents required for residency.

According to police data for 2011⁶¹ there were 99,368 arrests of immigrants without papers. The countries of origin of those arrested were; Afghanistan (28,528 arrests), Pakistan (19,975 arrests), Albania (11,733 arrests) and Bangladesh (5,416 arrests).

The Minister of Public Order Michalis Chrisochoidis, announced at the end of March 2012 that in the next few months the government is expected to create three detention centres in each of the nine regions of the country where we will 'host' the immigrants until they are deported⁶².

It appears that foreign nationals may face harsher sentencing than Greek citizens. In his book, *'Aspects of social control in Greece'* Vassilis Karidis, Deputy Ombudsman for Human Rights⁶³ provides some important information regarding drug convictions. 60% of the inmates in the Greek prisons are serving a sentence for drug related offences. According to the author, foreign nationals convicted for drug related offences receive less favourable treatment at sentencing than their Greek counterparts. 50.2% of the convicts are Greek, 70% of whom were convicted with sentences from the lower end of the scale, between 3 months and 6 years, while 60% of non-Greek nationals are punished with penalties of higher scale, ranging from 6 years to life.

6.8.2 Racist violence and crime

Racist violence has escalated during the period covered by this report. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, together with other NGOs and migrant organisations have sent an official letter to the Prime Minister and relevant

60 The Open Society Institute defines 'ethnic profiling' as the 'use of generalisations grounded in ethnicity, race, national origin, or religion - rather than objective evidence or individual behaviour - as the basis for making law enforcement and/or investigative decisions about who has been or may be involved in criminal activity'.

61 Hellenic Police, Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=5071&Itemid=429&lang=, accessed 13 August 2012.

62 Ta Nea newspaper, <http://www.tanea.gr/ellada/article/?aid=4705630>, accessed 13 August 2012.

63 Karidis Vasilis, «Aspects of Social Control in Greece», Athens, A. Sakkoulas, 2010

Ministers, highlighting that foreigners are targeted daily; ‘... criminal attacks occur solely on the basis of skin colour or country of origin’⁶⁴. The letter requests that the relevant authorities to take all necessary measures to bring perpetrators to justice and to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The NGOs Doctors of the World and PRAKSIS organise polyclinics in the centre of Athens. In June 2011 they recorded data from people who sought medical help because they were victims of racist violence.⁶⁵ According to the records of Doctors of the World, during the first half of 2011 approximately 300 immigrants who were victims of assault were hospitalized in their polyclinic. Victims report that the attacks are usually carried out on the road by groups of 5-10 people on motorcycles who wait in ambush at specific areas and attack without warning.

In the period from November 2010 – June 2011 the polyclinic of NGO PRAKSIS recorded 206 incidents of racist violence. Most victims are men aged 25-45. There were 45 assaults against women and children. The most common countries of origin among victims were Bangladesh (56 people) and Afghanistan (45 people). Some victims believed that the attacks are organised by right-wing gangs for whom violence towards immigrants is little more than sport. Some victims reported having been assaulted by police officers but were reluctant to report the crime to the authorities. Most of the victims were undocumented migrants who feared arrest or deportation and those who are legally resident often do not trust the court system to look favorably upon them.⁶⁶

On 19 May 2011, the National Commission of Human Rights (NCHR) adopted a special report⁶⁷ on tackling racist violence in Greece by the Police and the Justice system. They claim that racist violence cannot be dealt with effectively without a complete change in the way that the police handle such cases. Reform is especially important in cases involving police officers. Such cases generally result in an acquittal, if they are investigated at all. This failure to properly investigate complaints contributes to reluctance among victims to report crimes. The police are accused of remaining a neutral observer of the attacks by right-wing groups. At worst, they perpetuate racist violence. The police sometimes refuse to proceed with investigations, even where there is considerable evidence. This sends out a message that such violence is acceptable.

64 UNHCR in Greece, <http://www.unhcr.gr/nea/2011/artikel/1b6e18657428435581b160dd5aa2d57c/ypati-armosteia-na.html>, accessed 13 August 2012.

65 Christos, Zervas, *Eleptherotypia* Newspaper <http://www.enet.gr/?i=issue.el.home&date=12/06/2011&id=283835>, accessed 13 August 2012.

66 Ngo Praksis, www.praksis.gr, accessed 13 August 2012

67 National Commission for Human Rights, Special Report for Racist Violence, Athens 19 May 2011, http://www.nchr.gr/media/gnwmateuseis_eeda/Site_version2/diakriseis/EEDA_RV_tel.pdf, accessed 13 August 2012

In response to allegations of racially motivated crime, the Ministry of Citizen Protection and the Greek Police, replied that 'the administrative examinations performed after the issuance of Circular 4803/22/210- and from 26.06.2006 order, unethical behavior involving police officers against immigrants and other persons belonging to vulnerable groups, has not been confirmed as a racially motivated incident'⁶⁸.

There is no data available on racially motivated crime in the justice system. Neither the Justice Department nor the Greek Courts have shown any great willingness to disaggregate data by crime and the justice system generally treats racially motivated crimes in the same manner as ordinary crimes.

In the last year there were multiple incidents against immigrants of Muslim origin, in their homes and their places of worship⁶⁹. Two examples of such incidents are the following:

- On 9 April 2011 the offices of the Somali community in Athens were vandalized. Members of the Golden Dawn attacked immigrants, caused damage to the building and left their initials on the site.⁷⁰ It was suggested by a member of the Eco Green Party that the attack was sparked by a newspaper report⁷¹.
- On 8 November 2011, early on a Sunday morning in the area of Kallithea, a prayer room for Muslim immigrants of Arab origin was vandalized.⁷² Three teams of 7-8 people each doused the entrance with petrol and set it on fire. Fortunately, the neighbours responded immediately. The perpetrators painted a swastika on the window. The site had also been attacked in May of that year.

6.8.3 Hate speech

Hate and racist speech are widespread in Greece, especially on the internet, and are generally tolerated by Greek society.

68 Antigone NGO, Annual Report 2011, http://www.antigone.gr/en/library/files/reports_on_greece/2011/National%20Report%202011.pdf, accessed 13 August 2012.

69 Since there are no official mosques in Greece, Muslims practice their religion in informal settings. The exception is the region of Thrace, where there is an official Muslim minority

70 REDNotebook, e-mag, <http://www.rnbnet.gr/details.php?id=2385>, accessed 20 August 2012, Eleptherotypia e-news, <http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=268129>, accessed 20 August 2012.

71 ECO GREENS political party, <http://www.ecogreens-gr.org/humanrights>, accessed 20 August 2012.

72 Ethnos newspaper, <http://www.ethnos.gr/article.asp?catid=11424&subid=2&pubid=63026987>, accessed 19 August 2012

Recently a study was undertaken examining political behaviour in specific areas of Athens such as the St Panteleimon area⁷³, where the Golden Dawn party had a good deal of success in the 2009 municipal elections. In April 2011, the team released their initial findings. Professor Vasiliki Georgiadou stated that

The proponents of radical views have a privileged access to the mainstream media, the serious Press. With great ease columnists submit opinions that are non-institutional, non-political. There's a flirtation with extremism, which makes me very sceptical. It is also the negative conjuncture, the economic data are terrible, one segment of the population is facing really hard times. When one has a hard time they seek causes and scapegoats. Many workers in the media, intellectuals and politicians are willing to designate these scapegoats...

The current legislative framework does not clearly prohibit this behaviour. In early 2011, the Ministry of Justice launched a consultation on the enactment of a law entitled 'combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law'⁷⁴. The draft legislation was filed on 12 October 2011 and essentially attempted to implement the European Council Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008⁷⁵. It establishes a general framework for effective legal protection of victims, and imposes heavy fines and prison sentences for offenders.

Acts which are punishable on the basis that they are motivated by racism/xenophobia now include:

- Public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of people defined by reference to race, colour, of genealogical roots, religion or national origin.
- The dissemination by any means of writing, pictures or other material containing expressions of racism.
- Publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivializing crimes of genocide.

On a positive note, the new measures will ensure that prosecution of racist and xenophobic crimes does not depend on a complaint by a victim. Victims of these crimes are often particularly vulnerable and reluctant to initiate proceedings.

6.8.4 Counter terrorism

Measures taken to counter terrorism clearly target immigrants, religious communities and refugees. The media play a significant role by linking the

⁷³University teams of two Greek universities (Panteion and Macedonia University) and two European (Oxford and Sorbonne)

⁷⁴ Ministry of Justice, <http://www.opengov.gr/ministryofjustice/?p=1012>, accessed 20 August 2012.

⁷⁵ Institute for Rights Equality & Diversity, RED Annual Report, p. 61, <http://www.i-red.eu/resources/publications-files/annualreport-2011.pdf>, accessed 20 August 2012.

issues of criminality and terrorism directly with migration. This, combined with the economic crisis and rising unemployment rates, creates an explosive combination which some state actors as well, as the extremists exploit in order to target the weakest social groups. Indeed, some far-right publications such as the newspaper 'Stohos' have openly referred to Muslims and immigrants from Turkey as 'terrorists'.⁷⁶ Islamophobia was not a major issue in Greece until the far-right began to link Islam to terrorism. The attack on the Somali community discussed in s6.8 was prompted by the right-wing press. The newspaper 'Eleutheri Ora', published an article by D. Papageorgiou entitled 'Somali pirates with a mosque in Fylis street' subtitled 'Christianity vs. Islam'.⁷⁷ There he refers to anonymous sources, who confirmed that the Somali are the most dangerous Islamists in the world and that he himself was threatened by them!

References to 'Islamic terrorism' can be found on many extremist blogs, where the authors often write anonymously. A characteristic example is the blog Greek National Pride. An anonymous article, published on February 21, 2011 refers to reports by the Jamestown Foundation, a U.S. think tank, which claim that in Greece there have been Islamic terrorists cells for several years and that some of them are even supported by NGOs.⁷⁸ Similar articles are found in other blogs such as Hellas on the Web⁷⁹ and more.

6.8.5 Facilitating factor or protective measures in criminal justice

The state has faced criticism from civil society actors due to its perceived tolerance of – and possible collusion with far-right groups. It appears this pressure has been effective and that some positive measures may be introduced in the near future. However, for the moment victims of racial crime remain dependent on NGOs and the Ombudsman for support. In addition, the State remains reluctant to record data on racially motivated crimes. A number of NGOs have highlighted the difficulty in monitoring racism and racial discrimination in the absence of official data.⁸⁰

76 Stoxos newspaper, <http://www.stoxos.gr/2011/12/2007.html>, accessed 19 August 2012.

77 Antigone NGO, Annual Report 2011, p. 145, http://www.antigone.gr/en/library/files/reports_on_greece/2011/National%20Report%202011.pdf, accessed 20 August 2012.

78 Greek National Pride blog, <http://national-pride.org/2011/02/21/>, accessed 20 August 2012.

79 Hellas on the Web blog, <http://www.hellasontheweb.org/2009-05-25-15-24-30/2009-07-11-08-19-41/1267-2011-04-06-20-31-20>, accessed 19 August 2012

80 As noted at a workshop organised on 24 and 25 November 2011 the EKKE in collaboration with the Economic and Social Committee of Greece, the INE / GSEE and the network of Local Authorities 'Eyxinos Pontos' available data on discrimination is minimal, and that in the current climate there is a great need to create 'tools' for recording the phenomenon, and monitor it with the help of the stakeholders. The enabling of an effective network among NGOs involved in combating discrimination, seeks the 'Observatory of discrimination in Greece' that has been created as a framework from the National Centre for Social Research and the Institute of Social Policy EKKE. See Observatory on Combating Discrimination, <http://www2.ekke.gr/wrapper.php?go=http://www.gsdb.gr/ocd/news/news.html>, accessed 19 August 2012.

7. Civil society assessment and critique in ensuring protection of fundamental rights

As the economic crisis worsens, it will be society's most vulnerable groups who face the greatest difficulties concerning unemployment, housing, discrimination and poverty. NGOs and the migrant communities in Greece have repeatedly stressed the need for a more coherent and humane immigration policy and increased respect for human rights in Greece. Previous ENAR shadow reports warned that the lack of a concrete immigration policy would lead to a rise of the far right but it appears that state actors paid little attention.

As a result, racist attacks have become common in large cities such as Athens. During the past year, there has been an increase in racist violence incidents against foreigners based on their colour or country of origin. Victims include undocumented migrants, legal migrants who live many years in Greece, asylum seekers and refugees, among them women and children. Racial attacks are also damaging to the community at large as citizens see their lives degraded by violence and fear.

In the absence of a formal and effective system for recording racist violence a Network for Recording Incidents of Racist Violence⁸¹ was set up. The initiative came from the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and the Office of the UN High Commission for Refugees in Greece (UNHCR), and with the participation of a number of non-governmental organisations.⁸²

In June 2011, in newspaper Eleftherotipia⁸³ Doctors of the World director Nikitas Kanakis estimated that 300 victims of racist attacks were treated at the organisation's clinic in Athens in the first half of 2011. During the same period Tzanetos Antipas, the head of NGO Praksis, said that they had treated over 200 victims of racist attacks. The above mentioned network for recording incidents of racist violence recorded only 63 incidents between October and December 2011 in Athens and Patras. Since these cases were not officially reported, the perpetrators will not be brought to justice.

As Human Rights Watch argues in the report 'Hate on the streets':
'Greece has clear obligations under international human rights law to undertake effective measures to prevent racist and xenophobic violence, to investigate and prosecute perpetrators, and should condemn publicly and

81Network for Recording Incidents of Racist Violence, <http://1againstracism.gr>, accessed 19 August 2012

82 These included Aitima, Amnesty International, 'Babel' Day Centre, Doctors of the World, Ecumenical Refugee Programme, Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Forum of Refugees, Greek Helsinki Monitor, Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, Hellenic League for Human Rights, METAdrasi, and PRAKSIS

83Zervas Christos, 'Fear covers the racist attacks', Eleftherotypia newspaper, <http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.ellada&id=283835>

unequivocally such violence. These obligations apply whether the perpetrators of the violence are agents of the state or not.⁸⁴

According to i-RED network 'While the popularity of the far right-wing party, [LAOS](#) (Nationalist Popular Orthodox Rally) is in decline, to some extent as a result of its three-month stint in the interim government of Loukas Papademos, surveys show [Golden Dawn](#), a neo-Nazi organisation, to enter the parliament in the forthcoming legislative elections'⁸⁵

Some of the attacks were carried out by supporters⁸⁶ of the Golden Dawn party, some by members of the Golden Dawn party⁸⁷ and others from other racist groups. While racism is not a recent phenomenon on in Greece, it appears to have found a new lease of life, particularly among the young. Only human rights and anti-racist NGOs appear to be seriously attempting to tackle this trend, with some support from politicians. However, such NGOs are currently facing serious funding difficulties and some may be unable to continue their very important work.

We hope there will be a time when Greek modern society will be free from prejudice and other forms of discrimination but for the moment this seems very idealistic.

⁸⁴Human Rights Watch, Hate on the Streets -Xenophobic Violence in Greece, 10 July 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/07/10/hate-streets-0>, accessed in August 2012

⁸⁵I-RED, Far-right wing groups escalating violence, hate speech and electoral rise, <http://www.red-network.eu/?i=red-network.en.items&id=757>, accessed 19 August 2012

⁸⁶Eight supporters of Golden dawn (Chrysi Avgi) party have attacked 4 Egyptians in Athens in the urban area of Kallithea, <http://www.alyunaniya.com/golden-dawn-chrysi-avgji-attacks-4-egyptians/>, accessed 20 September 2012

⁸⁷Two newly elected MPs from the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party were among six people arrested over an attack on a Pakistani man in Athens, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/02/greek-neo-nazi-golden-dawn>, accessed 20 September 2012

8. Good practices

Example of NGO Good Practice in Employment

Diavatirio: Online magazine for Immigrants

The Greek-Albanian Association of Friendship 'Socrates' is a Non Governmental Organisation which was founded by Greek educators in 1991 with the aim of contributing, through education and culture, to the development of good relations between the two countries.

The main activity on the site <http://diavatirio.net/diavat/news.php> provides useful information about immigrants living and working in Greece, including employment issues and labour rights.

KASAPI HELLAS - Filipino workers organisation

This organisation fights for the rights of the immigrant workers, especially of domestic workers since most of the Filipino population in Greece is employed in domestic work. The organisation also provides counselling to Filipino migrants on social, legal and labour problems.

KASAPI HELLAS is a member of RESPECT Network. They have joined the International Working Group for Domestic Workers (IWG-DW) on its 'International Campaign for the Rights and Recognition of Domestic Workers' (8-HR Campaign). This campaign asserts that domestic work should be covered by the 8-hour work standard, and that 8 essential rights should be recognised and guaranteed equal application for domestic workers.

Moreover, they demand that Greece ratifies the 'International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families' which serves as an instrument to protect fundamental labour rights and equal treatment of migrant domestic workers particularly women migrant domestic workers

<http://www.kasapi.gr>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Education

Antigone – Information and Documentation Centre

The NGO Antigone emphasizes the importance of collecting data and documenting the phenomena of racism and xenophobia. It appeals to the public and scientific institutions to request data relating to its area of interest. In the Education sector they have a library with data which they update regularly and they provide for free to anyone who wishes to use it. Moreover they participate in projects related to education.

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

Minority Groups Research Centre (KEMO)

The Minority Groups Research Centre (KEMO) is a non-profit organisation which was formed in 1996. The members of KEMO are young scientists as well as established academics. KEMO aims at the

multidimensional study of minority groups, minority languages and every form of cultural diversity at a general theoretical level as well as with regard to specific minority groups in Greece. They organise events, conferences and produce reports with issues concerning ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity.

<http://www.kemo.gr/index.php?sec=context>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Housing

NGO PRAKSIS

PRAKSIS is an independent, Non-Governmental Organisation, concerned principally with the creation, application, and implementation of humanitarian and medical action programmes. Target groups include Greek natives, immigrants, asylum seekers/refugees and other socially excluded group, such as drug-addicts, Roma, trafficking victims, homeless, ex-prisoners, street children and individuals with little or no access to health services, psychosocial and legal support. Their activities target Greece as a whole (focusing mainly in the two most populated cities, Athens and Thessalonica). Since 2007 they operate a programme called STEGI C. It is a program for the reception and integration of asylum seekers/refugees through independent yet supervised housing for a specific period of time (from 6 to 9 months). There are seven independent apartments in Attica, with two or three rooms each, which can house asylum seekers in groups of five to six individuals. The programme's main objective is to provide temporary shelter and to facilitate the asylum seekers' application process. Priority is given to families with children, victims of torture and to particularly vulnerable groups, such as single mothers.

<http://www.praksis.gr>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Health

Doctors of the World

The Greek branch of Doctors of the World is implementing the programme HUMA - Health for Undocumented Migrants and Asylum Seekers. The overall objective of the programme is to promote equal access to the health care system for migrants. It is designed to offer them primary health care and information campaigns so that they can defend their rights.

<http://www.mdmgreece.gr>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Access to Goods and Services

SOS Racism – Greece

Maintains an open phone line for receiving complaints and provides free legal advice on discrimination issues. The purpose is to direct anyone interested to the relevant official authority to lodge their complaints. Victims generally did not maintain communication after receiving necessary information so reliable data could not be gathered.

Example of NGO Good Practice in Promoting Political Participation

i-RED Institute for Rights Equality and Diversity

i-RED is a research institute established in 2008 with the aim of creating a completely independent research centre in Greece with a European and international orientation. i-RED attracts the most highly acclaimed and productive scholars and researchers in Greece and Europe on racism, discrimination, intolerance migrants and social minorities' issues.

<http://www.i-red.eu/>

Greek Forum of Migrants

The Greek Forum of Migrants represents more than 30 migrant communities and is the largest immigrant representation body in Greece. The GFM has participated in several State and EU-funded educational programmes dealing with immigration issues and aiming at social empowerment and promotion of the human rights of immigrants living in Greece. In 2010, the GFM organised information meetings for its members regarding the implementation of the new laws for citizenship and voting right. At the moment the GFM is developing a programme funded by Stavros Niarchos Foundation which aims at the social integration of second-generation immigrants, focusing on the critical age of 16-25, but addressing other age groups as well.

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

Example of NGO Good Practice in Media

Television Without Borders – tvxs

The site follows successful television broadcast journalist Kouloglou Stelios and his team. He publishes interesting articles which are a reliable source of information on issues relating to vulnerable groups, issues of discrimination and updates on racist violence.

<http://www.tvxs.gr>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Criminal Justice

Racist Violence Recording Network

The Network was launched in October 2011, on the initiative of the National Commission for Human Rights and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The creation of the Network aims to fill the gap in the absence of a formal and effective system for recording incidents of racist violence, as well as the need for interconnection of the NGOs which, by their own initiative, record incidents of racist violence.

http://www.nchr.gr/category.php?category_id=374

Greek Helsinki Monitor

The Greek Helsinki Monitor specializes in human rights advocacy in Greek and international courts and provides free legal support. In 2011 they published results from relevant court cases as well as a special annual report.

http://cm.greekhelsinki.gr/index.php?sec=192&cid=3779ghm1409_apologismos_2011_greek.doc

Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees

The team consists of lawyers who deal with rights and discrimination against immigrants and refugees. It is involved in matters relating to asylum and cooperates with international NGOs and organisations which condemned the illegal practices carried out by Greece such as returning asylum seekers to their home countries before their asylum application was examined.

<http://omadadikigorwnenglish.blogspot.com/>

9. National recommendations

Special Focus: Muslim Communities

- Creation of official Mosques and recognition of the Muslim clergy
- Recognition of Muslim festivities, such as Bairam and Ramadan for the purposes of leave from work.

Employment

- Renewal of residence permit should not depend on employment status.
- There should be more systematic and intensive cooperation of state, businesses and civil society in the fight against discrimination in employment.
- The Greek authorities together with the Labour unions should raise awareness of rights among vulnerable groups and should consider positive measures for implementing best practices in the employment sector

Education

- Implement a long-term strategy to improve the integration of immigrant pupils and university students in education, together with civil society and educational bodies.

Housing

- The Greek authorities should urgently address the situation of Roma who live in substandard settlements
- The State and the Municipalities should tackle the issue of housing for the unemployed and homeless in order to avoid the phenomenon of ghettoization in large cities.

Health

- The Ministry of Health, together with civil society groups, should review all legislation and practice regarding access to healthcare for vulnerable groups and propose ways to eliminate discrimination.

Access to goods and services

- The government must provide education/ information on issues of anti-discrimination to the competent authorities and encourage cooperation between competent authorities and NGOs in order to address discrimination in this field. The relevant authorities should apply severe penalties to those who refuse immigrants who are trying to access goods and services, especially civil servants.

Criminal justice

- Organise mandatory training to educate judges, prosecutors, judicial employees, prison guards, police and generally all those involved in the judicial system on the subjects of racism, discrimination and information about international agreements for the protection of human rights.
- Carry out a long-term awareness raising campaigns on the topic of racist crimes aimed at both the public and vulnerable groups, so as to encourage the latter to report racially motivated crimes.
- Competent authorities should record all relevant information each year about the number and nature of cases reaching the courts, the penalties imposed, and any other form of discrimination.
- The government and the police should publicly and unequivocally condemn, at the highest level, instances of racist and xenophobic violence.

Media

- To make recommendations to the media emphasising the importance of objectivity and balance in reporting, particularly concerning vulnerable groups.
- The Greek authorities should raise more media awareness of responsible reporting, and alert media professionals to the dangers of racism and intolerance.
- The authorities must ensure the enforcement of Law 927/1979 in regard to journalists and media who incite racial hatred.

Anti-racism and anti-discrimination

- It is necessary to modify the Laws 3304/2005 and 927/1979 to enable NGOs to litigate independently of victims in discrimination cases.

10. Conclusion

There were no significant legislative and policy developments relating to discrimination and racism during the period covered by this report. Despite the enormous political changes in the government, the election period and the huge economic crisis the problems regarding discrimination and racism remain a serious problem. The combination of economic hardship with racism and discrimination had led to serious hardship for some vulnerable members of society.

One serious concern is the continued increase in racist attacks against vulnerable groups and the constant injection of fear by the media, politicians and the extreme right into the public domain. Anti-racism NGOs continue to lobby and to encourage society to view immigrants with more humanity and compassion. On a positive note, migrant communities and other members of the vulnerable groups are forming organisations to vindicate their rights. On the other hand however, anti-racist organisations are becoming more unpopular due to the rise of right-wing discourse. In addition, the economic crisis has left NGOs struggling to fund their activities.

The anti-racist movement, the human rights NGOs and the migrant communities of Greece need, now more than ever, the solidarity of the European anti-Discrimination networks and the European community in the fight against racism and discrimination.

Hope, of course, is still alive. There is still a portion of the Greek society who are doing their best to be humane and help their neighbour, regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation.

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Annex 1: List of abbreviations and terminology

ECRI - European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EctHR - European Court of Human Rights
EKKE - National Institute of Social Policy
GHM - Greek Helsinki Monitor
GFM - Greek Forum of Migrants
GSEE - General Confederation of Social Workers
KELPNO - Hellenic Center for Disease Control & Prevention
KEMO - Minority Groups Research Centre
NGO - Non Governmental Organisation
O.K.E. - Economic and Social Committee
PD - Presidential Decree
SEPE - Labour Inspectorate Body of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security
TVXS -Television without Borders
UNHCR - United Nations High Commission for Refugees

