



***ENAR SHADOW REPORT
2002
RACISM AND THE FIGHT
AGAINST RACISM
IN GREECE***

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Table of content

Table of content	2
General overview	3
1. Asylum seekers	6
Memorandum of Cooperation.....	9
3. Migration.....	15
Education	19
4. Minorities	22
The story of a family.....	22
The village of Echinós	23
5. Projects in peace education	26
The content of the projects.....	26
Conclusions	28

General overview

In 2002 we have dealt with 1) the implementation of new legislation regarding the regularisation of migrants and 2) the new legislation on forms of modern slavery and the illegal trafficking of human beings. We also looked at the new measures, especially in view of the Greek Presidency, to control illegal entry at the borders of Greece, which often resulted however, in the expulsion of refugees who should be treated differently according to the Geneva Convention. **Refugees are often seen as illegal migrants** and treated as such and as Mr. Papaioannou, President of Amnesty International in Greece said, *“When the Afghans were going to Pakistan they were refugees, when getting closer to Europe they became illegal migrants”*.

Greece, as an EU frontier country, experiences the terrible results of the persistent ‘Fortress Europe’ policy, which, playing on the unemployment and other results of the unfortunate and badly co-ordinated internal policies of the European governments, creates scapegoats of refugees and migrants. Greece has recently declared that our borders are closed to all refugees who flee from Iraq because “the numbers we are hosting are beyond our capacity”.

In the opinion of many economists, Europe could benefit a lot from more liberal migration policies. But even if this could be disputed by others, the case of refugees must be seen and treated in a completely different light.

Greece also declares that the numbers of migrants are more than the country can cope with. Any new migrants are not welcome. But even legally resident migrants are not safe. The new (under the new legislation) residence permits are delayed, not issued yet for more than a year, for people who have lived here for many years. The police are over-zealous and only too keen to suspect, to harass and to expel. The migrant is easily suspected and arrested, people report bad treatment and little access exists to legal assistance as it costs a lot and there are no free services available as in other countries. The following example was published in the newspaper *Eleftherotypia* on 8 January 2003: The imam of the Alliance for Support to Muslims “Filotita” was reported as having been jailed, accused of committing a crime, together with a friend, because the police stopped them and found in their car a knife and an axe they had just used to slaughter cattle in the worship space of the rooms used for the religious celebrations of the Alliance members. They had departed, after the ‘Kourbania’ ceremony in which an animal is slaughtered (this one calf fed five hundred people) much in the way the Greek Orthodox slaughter animals at Easter. They were proved innocent in court but the police still led them back to jail and insisted on deporting them. The imam was finally released the next day with the intervention of the Alliance, but his friend, Islam Tziouhourou was not and the police held him for expulsion, although his entry to the country was legal and he was never convicted of any crime.

Obviously the improvement in legislation must be followed by awareness-raising and training for professionals dealing with migrants, especially the police.

The organisations participating in ENAR, as well as all the human rights and anti-racism organisations in Greece, have been monitoring these developments and work to bridge the existing gaps between the needs, life and dignity of migrants and

refugees and the shortcomings of existing legislation as well as the necessary services for the inclusion in society of people who might be targets of racism.

Anti-racism was given a special opportunity, on the other hand, in mainstream education due to the forthcoming Olympics. **The preparation in schools in relation to the Olympics has been addressing human rights issues.** There are more than 100, 000 pupils of migrant origin in the schools and over 65, 000 of them are Albanian¹, 7.9% of the total school population.

Three NGOs, amongst which the European Network of Women representing the values of ENAR, in association with ‘Open Horizons’², provided material and training on human rights /anti-discrimination issues, to a large number of Olympic Education teachers, all over Greece.

The **mass media image of the ‘other’ has slightly improved** over the last year. In general terms, one might say that the racism expressed in previous years has been curbed. The united efforts of many organisations and individuals as well as the awareness-raising exercised by sensitised journalists and media people who have been covering issues concerning minorities, migrants and refugees, without prejudice, has improved the bad situation mentioned in past shadow reports on racism in Greece. The Albanian Forum has been broadcasting on the radio over the last year and the national radio and television have generally offered opportunities for the migrant communities to become a little more visible.

The **Convention on the Future of Europe** has been discussed so far in Greece only within the group of European NGOs and it has not been discussed more widely, due to some other burning issues – such as the Cyprus negotiations and the various issues arising from the arrests of the people accused of membership of the November 17 terrorist group. The European perspective NGOs in Greece held meetings on the Convention and are now presenting the issues more widely. Support was given to them by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ENAR has been represented by ENOW at these meetings and supported the development of the social agenda of the Community.

In general the Greek people are in favour of a federalist Europe with a European Constitution which includes provisions for social justice and welfare and are not in favour of a merely monetary and business European co-operation.

Regarding the non-governmental organisations working with migrants there has been some progress. A new **Forum for Migrants** has been established through the efforts of one of the oldest communities, the Sudanese community, with the Filipino community, ‘Kassapi-Greece’. They have also created a web site.

This is a very important new opportunity for migrants to participate and voice their concerns in the Greek society.

¹ As reported in the book ‘Albanian Migrants in Salonica’, by M. Lyberaki and Loes Labrianidis, 2001

² A Greek NGO which also produced in Greek the Council of Europe publication “European Convention on Human Rights – Starting Points for Teachers”.

The **transposition** and compliance of the laws with **the new Directives** against racism has not been particularly discussed by the organisations, as the urgent need for Greece to create legislation and to upgrade standards is present even without any Directive. Of course, the importance of the existing Directives is not undervalued here, because it can play an instrumental role in the improvement of standards. They were simply not particularly discussed as a strategy, due to the weight of the contradictions of recent legislation for the regularisation of migrants and the problems related to its practical application. **The Parliamentary Committee for Equality and Human Rights, which has recently been established, was contacted on the issue of the Directives**, as well as on the issue of trafficking and new forms of enslavement. The presentations made by ENAR to the committee lasted for two and a half hours and there was an interesting follow-up communication between ENAR and the Parliamentarians who did work on the issue, such as on the questions put to some Ministers by MP Maria Damanaki, member of the Coalition of the Left and Progress Party.

In the summer and autumn the **local authority elections** changed the reality of many local communities and also gave us the opportunity to raise people's awareness during the debates. We also had great success in the election as city councillor in Athens of one of our members, known to ENAR at European level for her contribution in the World Conference Against Racism: **the first black person and the first migrant woman was elected in Greece, Yvette Jarvis**, Vice Chair of the European Women's Network. Yvette, who has been very actively involved in representing anti-racist and human rights issues and in lobbying for improved legislation and improvement of services for migrants, is still working with us, not as an officer but as an ordinary member, heading the volunteers' network against family violence, in co-operation with local authority officers, with a special interest in refugee, minority and migrant women who suffer from multiple victimisation.

1. Asylum seekers

Fortress Europe persists. We know of several desperate people drowning during the year and at least 24 people losing their lives in the cold waters of the Aegean Sea, in December, just before the Greek government assumed the Presidency of the EU. Even in the event that they manage to get into Greece, they are immediately given an administrative deportation order by the police. Even people who have spent many years in prisons as political prisoners and have been tortured are deported without any legal assistance, if the NGOs are not notified to try and do something.

Several cases are reported of refugees or asylum seekers who are treated as illegal migrants, in spite of the fact that there is evidence given by doctors from specialised NGOs of torture they have been subjected to.

The Centre for Treatment of Victims of Torture and Other Forms of Abuse, in Salonica, and Amnesty International are giving us testimonies on that. Just to cite a few of the many cases: a Kurd from Turkey arrested and tortured twice between 1994 and 2000 was refused asylum by the Secretary of the Ministry of Public Order. In addition, there are the cases of an Afghan national of the Hazara tribe, who had been subjected to torture by a Taliban group and arrested by them ten times between 1995 and 2000, and a Kurd from Iraq who was systematically tortured by an opposite group.

Since Greece is a border country with the East, one of the most urgent issues for anti-racist activists and organisations in Greece in the last few years has been the fate of refugees and asylum seekers. The situation has been particularly acute due to the wars in Afghanistan, the conflicts in the Middle East and the attack against Iraq by the Americans and allies.

According to available reports, among the refugees there are many highly educated young people who are taking great risks, spending all their savings or getting into debt, attempting to find refuge in Europe. Their countries are suffering from brain drain while Europe does next to nothing to help develop their talents. On the contrary, Canada and the USA make it possible for them to become full citizens very soon, once accepted as refugees.

On the other hand, during the World Conference Against Racism, the North American countries were criticised by NGOs for accepting migrants and refugees selectively. That is, only the highly educated migrants are accepted, causing even worse brain drain, since only the educated members of families are able to go there to support the rest. One should say though that refugees have no choice but to flee in order to save their lives, so there should be no issue of other criteria than the danger to their lives, if human life still has a value in our European civilisation.

In Greece, on the other hand, lack of experience and prejudice means no distinctions are made. Refugees and economic migrants educated or not, are usually equally unwelcome. In 2001 the number of arrests for crossing frontiers without proper visas reached 6, 864, in 2002, it was 3, 704. The Ministry of Public Order announced the posting of a new force of 500 border control officials, (2,600 total) for an initial period of five years to block the possibilities of entry into the country.

When people are arrested for not possessing the right visas they are kept in jail, even after applying for refugee status, though some police offices simply do not provide them with application forms and just send them away. They can only be visited by relatives and can only be released if they have a residence address. Yet how can they find a lawyer if they cannot go out, how can they find somewhere to live when even NGOs cannot visit them? It is like a forged lottery ticket. As for the relatives, they are usually all back in the individual's country of origin.

A lot of people have drowned over the last year, as in previous years, in the Mediterranean Sea, trying to reach European shores, and the rotting boats carrying these people have been termed 'floating coffins' by the Greek media. When the war in Iraq began, insecurity increased and many people lost their lives while trying to save themselves.

Many were arrested trying to get past the minefields from Istanbul or to reach the Greek shores, most of them not knowing that once arrested they would soon be 'repatriated'. With the present war in Iraq we are not expecting any improvement in the treatment of refugees, as the international Treaties seem to offer excuses to the opposite ends instead of protection.

The majority of refugees are women and children and their fate is often caught up between the European 'Fortress' and the authoritarian regimes and conflicts resulting in risk to their lives in their own countries.

In Greece there has been a special effort to shed light on the fate of refugee women. In 2002, there was an agreement which set some standards for the treatment of women in particular.

Greece was condemned by the report published last summer by the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture for the bad treatment of refugees by the police and for the unrecorded, unauthorised repatriation of groups of people to Turkey, putting many lives in danger. The Greek government responded saying that these were isolated incidents.

The Greek Council for Refugees also spoke of instances of non-observation of the Geneva Convention during the war in Afghanistan, when people who were obvious refugees and whose lives were very much at risk were deported. Some police officers even tried to deport a woman with a twenty-day-old baby. (Newspaper *Eleftherotypia* 5/1/2003).

The policy dictated by the majority of the Conservative parties and adopted by Socialist parties of the European Union (EU) closed the frontiers to the suffering refugees, even when they are victims of a globalisation where EU monetary policy is playing a crucial role. This is more painfully obvious to the countries nearer to the suffering peoples, such as Greece. **The attempt to evaluate human lives as less important when they are not European or American is a danger to the very concept of human life and to human rights.**

The absence of sensitive government policy is usually filled in by organisations such as Doctors of the World, Solidarite and others.

In Lavrio, Attica, there is a centre funded by the government, for refugees including Kurdish, Afghani, Somali and Algerian refugees. It is intended for a total of about 150 persons, but usually hosts twice the number or more. This was started in the 1980s. In a building loaned by the Ministry of Health, in Athens, 'Doctors of the World' accommodate about 100 people, the majority being families with small children. So far it has hosted about 2, 800 people. (*Eleftherotypia*, 5/1/2003)

In Salonica and Northern Greece, there are the Solidarite camps. During June there were about 4,000 refugees in Rodopi, in four government camps and in ad hoc storing sheds converted into refugee camps, near the borders with Turkey, where conditions were extremely poor. Six months later there were about 650, most of them having been repatriated or moved inside the country. (Newspaper *Vima*, 22/12/2002) We do not know the percentages.

It is of great importance to adapt European policy that will support the Geneva Convention and save human lives, refugee lives.

The particular situation of mothers and small children and refugee women from countries where gender is a cause of persecution was discussed at the WCAR by the European Women's Lobby, as well as by the anti-racist organisations. In Greece, in 2002, a Memorandum was signed by the Greek Government, represented by the Secretary for Equality. The Greek organisations are monitoring the implementation of the Memorandum.

Memorandum of Cooperation between the Branch Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece and the Greek General Secretariat for Equality

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Branch Office in Greece, (hereinafter referred to as UNHCR) and the Greek Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation hereby represented by the General Secretariat for Equality (hereinafter referred to as GSE):

- *taking into account their respective mandates and responsibilities, the 1951 Geneva Convention for the Protection of Refugees, the 1967 New York Protocol, the Presidential Decree 61/99 and other relevant Greek legislative provisions on asylum,*
- *recognising that UNHCR has a specific commitment to ensure the protection of women refugees and asylum seekers,*
- *acknowledging that the GSE has a mandate to promote gender equality, and the rights of women in Greece,*

Have agreed to commonly promote the rights of women and girls who have been granted asylum or have sought asylum or have been granted humanitarian status in Greece according to the 1951 Geneva Convention and the P.D. 61/99. This will be implemented during a period of five years as follows:

1. ***UNHCR or its implementing partners will inform the GSE of all cases of refugee women upon arrival, either at the border areas, major cities or in the capital, to ensure the granting of assistance to them through the co-operation of the responsible authorities, in particular for those who are most vulnerable (i.e. pregnant, sick, single heads of family, unaccompanied girls under 18). Time limit: five years.***
2. ***UNHCR or its implementing partners will apprise the Regional Committees of Equality of cases known to it of refugee women who are in detention in main cities, outside the main urban centres and the border areas; GSE will endeavour to contribute with the relevant local and central authorities, including police and health/welfare authorities, to determine that conditions of detention are appropriate, including the provision of food, clothing, health services, sanitary facilities and recreational activities and to contribute to the acceleration of the procedure to grant asylum or humanitarian status to them (in accordance with Greek law). Time limit: five years.***
3. ***UNHCR and GSE will jointly visit facilities where refugee women are usually detained and will submit written recommendations to the Ministry of Public Order and Ministry of Justice for their improvement. Time limit: within a period of one year.***
4. ***GSE and UNHCR will jointly visit reception facilities run or administered by the Greek government, in co-operation with the relevant office in charge, and/or by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), in order to assess the situation of women and girl refugees residing in the aforementioned centres and make relevant recommendations for improvement, if necessary. Time limit: within a period of one year.***
5. ***The GSE will examine, together with the Ministry of Public Order and the Ministry of Interior, the provisions in the legislation necessary to ensure the protection of female victims of trafficking and in co-operation with UNHCR,***

- will strive to safeguard the rights of those of them who wish to apply for asylum, including if based on gender-related persecution. GSE will endeavour to apprise UNHCR and/or its implementing partners, of cases known to concern women victims of trafficking who wish to apply for asylum.*
6. ***NHCR will facilitate the co-operation/contact between the GSE and NGOs implementing social inclusion and vocational training projects in order to exchange ideas and information about the tailoring and adaptation of such training activities to refugee women's needs and to improve their employment prospects; the views of refugee women will be solicited. Time frame: within a period of two years.***
 7. *GSE and UNHCR will organise and implement an awareness campaign for the general public in Greece to promote a better understanding of the needs and problems of refugee women, but also their potential contribution to Greek society. Time frame: within a period of two years.*
 8. *GSE and UNHCR will disseminate to all local government authorities (regional governments, prefectures, municipalities and communities) additional information on refugee women, including UNHCR's guidelines and relevant protection and PI material.*
 9. *GSE will issue, in co-operation with the UNHCR, printed material with appropriate information on women refugees.*
 10. *GSE and UNHCR will organise a two-day seminar for offices involved in refugee matters (Police, Social Welfare, Judicial Officers, Local Authorities, etc), which will include protection, reception and emergency management components. UNHCR and GSE will prepare a proposal for the implementation of the seminar, the relevant budget and, to the extent possible, the GSE will identify the necessary sponsor. Time frame: within a period of one year.*
 11. *UNHCR and the GSE will set up a Task Force on Refugee Women, which will include two designated officers by each. The Task Force will be responsible for the review of the implementation of the present Memorandum. Timeframe: twice a year, during a period of five years, or more often, according to the necessity.*

The present Memorandum will come into force after the completion from Greece's side of the necessary relevant internal procedures.

Athens, 7 March 2002

*For UNHCR
Flor Rojas Rodriguez
Representative*

*for GSE
Efi Bekou
Secretary-General for Equality*

2. Trafficking of Human Beings

One of the issues that we have been working on is the modern forms of enslavement and the trafficking of human beings, which we consider as the most appalling of international crimes. Human beings from countries with economic problems are cheated, kidnapped and treated as chattels for enormous profit. This is not an issue related only to racism but to sexism as well. It is examined here because it constitutes a modern form of slavery which is founded on the depersonalisation of the 'other', whether black, white, woman or child, and people are treated as 'non-persons', as chattels, with all human rights denied to them.

Its victims are mainly women, many of them teenage girls, and children of both genders. This hideous trade that goes on in Greece or through Greece, concerns mainly girls and boys from the countries of Eastern Europe.

There are women who first become victims of deception through advertisements which look completely innocent. They are subsequently sold several times, are terrorised and raped, often blackmailed to believe that their family will be harmed if they do not submit. Their documents are taken away and they end up imprisoned in some place unknown to them. The children are put to beg on the streets of foreign countries or, as is often whispered, their organs are sold or they are promoted to the sex trade like the women. Children are reported to start, for example in Bosnia, with a first sale price of \$300 plus \$150 bonus added for virginity, and they end up with a price tag of thousands of dollars in the European 'markets', after having been sold several times.

Women are testifying to us that they were obliged by their captors to have intercourse with dozens of men every day, as many as sixty or seventy, often without protection, to fetch higher prices, and their slave masters took all the money for "expenses" until their "debt" is paid off. The research conducted under Professor Lazos at Pandion University some time ago showed that every now and then they are moved to different places, sold on again, so that they cannot establish any contact with anyone who might help them. SOMETIMES THEY MAY NOT EVEN KNOW THE NAME OF THE COUNTRY THEY ARE IN. When the police sometimes find them they are deported and there is no way they can testify against their traffickers who are well supported by legal firms, to whom they pay high fees. Finally, this trade which is calculated to bring enormous gains to the traffickers, is linked also to dealing in drugs and firearms, and is ground **for corruption** for public employees, because the bribing of authorities is a relatively minor cost to the international crime involved. This has an indirect effect on the social cohesion and the security of every citizen of every European country, which in our opinion is one more reason that makes it a concern for all of us.

Some police officers are bribed to deport an individual quickly or not to deport them, depending on the interests of the money-making machine of the exploiters. We have referred cases of police corruption to the Internal Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Public Order, a unit founded by the present minister a few years ago, and some of these cases are still awaiting trial. One particular case is of a 23-year-old woman who came to us after having jumped from the second floor of a building. She had been brought back to Greece three times under torture, over the mountains, but could not be

allowed to report the police corruption she had witnessed because her visa had expired.

Our goal is to get a stream of information to the women in the high-risk countries for the **prevention** of the crime. Women and parents must learn to mistrust innocent-looking advertisements (seeking workers, artists or brides, etc.) and to find ways to ensure the safety of the people who seek to emigrate. Therefore the authorities responsible and **the policy makers concerned with immigration policies**, in the more economically developed countries have to find responsible ways of dealing with migrants, so as to prohibit the exploitation of women and children by traffickers and international crime.

The next duty of the countries, including Greece, where women and children are trafficked, is to pass **legislation** that will effectively combat this crime, punishing the traffickers and the users of such services, especially when minors are involved, because users are part of the developing demand for this crime and it is often they who knowingly transmit disease, by demanding not to use protection during intercourse.

It is particularly important **to secure protection for the victims**, including safe accommodation, legal and medical support and psychological assistance **to the women and children**, giving them the option to testify against their tormentors. This is not only a just social remedy but also the only way to secure witnesses against the traffickers. They may be given the option to go back home after they are offered the initial medical care but if they are deported, the traffickers will walk free and usually they recapture the frightened victims and take them back to a different or even the same country.

The legislation which has recently been passed in Greece provides for the non-expulsion and protection of victims, and prosecution of the users of 'services' of minors. But the infrastructure is still missing and the NGOs are waiting for the relevant Presidential Decrees regarding implementation of the law to be passed, in order to act on this issue.

The European Network of Women in Greece has been committed to the elimination of this crime and wants to collaborate with every agency which has the same goal, aiming to raise awareness among policy makers, public authorities, NGOs and the media and also to influence international policies to this end.

There has been promise of funding for the protection of victims and we have submitted applications to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for shelters in Salonica, Ioannina, Athens and Albania on behalf of five Greek organisations and an Albanian one in Tirana. The Greek shelters will cover the needs of victims of different nationalities and the one in Tirana will assist Albanian victims mainly to recover and reintegrate.

Even in the fight against trafficking as proposed in the European inter-ministerial guidelines in The Hague in 1997, the situation of victims is totally avoided. Funds may be allocated for shelters, but for the most part, victims are protected only if they

lodge a complaint against their “illegal” traffickers and they have to prove that they were in a situation of threat and force.

Trafficking is an international crime, requiring international mobilisation of expertise and resources. Also there must be a combination of many different types of expertise in order to take care of the “three Ps”: Prevention, Protection and Prosecution, in Europe and the neighbouring countries and the countries of origin. It is necessary to have the co-operation of national and international institutions and civil society to review roles and responsibilities.

The difficult task of screening the victims has to include representatives of NGOs in the relevant bodies in order to make sure that civil society is participating in ensuring fair treatment especially of the women and minors affected.

We must remember that **international co-operation can assist in overcoming the networks of corruption.**

It is the opinion of the writer of this report that modern forms of slavery as relating to sexual exploitation are presenting a challenge for women and violence issues to be re-examined within the whole agenda of the human rights of women. How can exploitation be seen as a profession and trafficking as a ‘market’? The answer is obviously not in the further harassment of the women but in the destruction of the ‘market’. Sex tourism is a particularly hideous and powerful market where rich “first world” men rape women and children.

The alliance of Greek organisations and concerned citizens against trafficking has been successful this year in its lobbying for better legislation, partly **because trafficking is now known to provide fertile ground for all forms of crime, sales of guns, false documents, blackmail, corruption, drugs, money laundering and corruption of professionals, such as whole legal offices, local authorities and the police.**

The Stability Pact, an organisation consisting of participants from 48 countries and a variety of organisations, could be instrumental in opening the way to combating the trafficking of human beings. Information about developments in the issues that concern stability and legal reform and harmonisation in the countries of Eastern Europe can be found on the website, <http://www.stabilitypact.org>

This has also led to the creation of the new co-operation instrument, SEKI, in which Greece has a particular role to play as the only EU country where the police are co-operating with the Internal Affairs departments for the area of South Eastern Europe.

*An International Approach to Prostitution and Trafficking
By Malka Marcovich, President of MAPP
Movement for the Abolition of Prostitution and Pornography
and all forms of sexual violence and sexist discrimination
International Seminar on Militaries and Gender
25th - 26th November 1999*

Leeds, UK

My paper is on the very difficult issue which concerns the international approach to prostitution and trafficking, and the terrible silence surrounding this specific violence against women, the market in women's bodies for sexual exploitation and which leads to more general questions at the eve of the 21st century:

a.. Do we accept that Europe, pretending to be the cradle of human rights, promotes in the name of peace, consensus, liberty, democracy and economic empowerment, a system which normalises domination, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment?

b.. Do we accept the violation of the universal principles of respect for human dignity, equality and rights, for the satisfaction of one's sexual needs by means of a market system?

c.. Do we accept the revision of vocabulary, turning pimps into corporate executives and prostituted women into "sex workers", both terms signifying a socially recognised position?

d.. Do we accept that victims be silenced?

My paper will be divided into three parts:

I. A brief historical analysis of the sex market and international policy

II. The International Instruments, European and International Bodies

III The current European and International political situation

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Ever since the Beijing Conference of 1995, some of the fundamental principles and concepts worked out during this century have undergone rapid changes. In Beijing, for the first time, the notion of "forced" prostitution was introduced. At The Hague Conference of 1997, the idea of "forced" traffic emerged.

In conclusion, I want to support the New Swedish law that came into effect in January 1999, and criminalises the purchasers of sexual services.

Today the 1949 Convention is in danger. The anti 1949 Convention lobby asks for its suppression, arguing that it is rarely enforced and not widely ratified. Did anybody ever call for the suppression of the Declaration of Human Rights, on the pretext that many countries do not apply it or that certain countries have never ratified it?

In this international, juridical, economic, sociological war, we have reached the time for resistance. Have we come so far in the past century only to accept that women's bodies, human sexuality, become objects of trade and consumption, traded on the stock exchange?

3. Migration

Regarding the regularisation of migrants there is still a lot to be done in order to create a feeling of security for people who have lived and worked in Greece for many, usually more than six, years.

Greece is acting with many reservations, like most EU countries, but also with far less experience and knowledge.

According to the UN the EU will need 150 million migrants by 2025 to cover the birth rate gap and to prevent the reduction of the European workforce. In spite of these hard figures, the xenophobic and racist tendencies are present and are seen especially in racist outbursts among the poorer social groups of society, because of the failures in development policies and the rise in unemployment figures.

Other EU states' policies have been enhancing this. The British government even proposed to send warships to confront boats with illegal migrants in the Mediterranean Sea.

On the other hand the Greek trade unions, especially in the area of construction, have tried to combat the exploitation of migrants. As soon as migrants started working in the construction section competing with Greek workers who claimed much higher wages, union leaders began to campaign for legalisation on migrant workers. In the first round of migrant registration back in 1998, 370,000 migrants applied for work permits, of which 60% were successful. In 2001 a second round of legalisation procedures led to the further registration of 365,000 people who have been given temporary work permits.

A unified EU policy might help solve the problems of the issuing of residence permits, which currently takes more than a year, and improve the position of long-term migrants.

The priorities published regarding a unified policy - in view of the Greek Presidency - in the press, point to certain decisions that need to be taken soon, during the next few months. The matters to be decided at EU level regarding more unified migration policies by 5 June 2003 are the following:

- On asylum legislation
- On minimum standards so as to avoid what some people term 'asylum shopping', when people who need to get permission to stay are confusing asylum with migration.
- The clarification of the terms 'refugee', 'immigrant', 'economic migrant'.
- The procedure for entry of citizens from third countries (unified border control standards, visas, etc.)
- The creation of the EU Border Control Unit (structure, funding, authority)
- The review of the Schengen agreement which was established in 1990 to serve up to 18 states (co-operation, common consulates, database for visa reviews, etc.). The legal basis for SIS II, as it is known, is still absent.
- The duties of the member states towards the people reaching their borders, irrespective of the reasons for which they had to leave their countries.

This list states clearly the fact that micro security and border control are above human solidarity, but also sets some goals for unified policies and for sharing of responsibility.

The Greek government has declared the following positions on these issues:

- There must be a burden sharing regarding the border controls and the assistance that should be given to newcomers.
- The border controls should be done by a new, European body of officials.
- European funding and intelligence for sea control.
- Economic and technical assistance for the development of third countries so as to make development possible and to curb migration. This co-operation must be enforced to include all EU countries.
- The applied persistence of the EU on 'zero migration' over the last twenty years must be examined as it has led to migrants without papers and has not helped at all. One of the arguments in favour of settling the residence permits is the low birth rate and the critical situation in welfare payments.

In Greece the death rate is higher than the birth rate and the index for the birth rate is only 56%. One of the consequences is that the social security welfare policies are in serious trouble. Migration is then seen as essential for Greece but it is met with suspicion due to high unemployment. Therefore studies which prove that migration actually creates jobs – not just unskilled, low paid jobs - are really very important. The newly published book *Migrants in Salonica*, by the economist Andigoni Lyberaki, proves that migrants bring growth and through research concludes also that, in Salonica, the average education of Albanian migrants is higher than that of Greeks. In spite of this, the present migration policy is hostile and Greece is made to play the watchdog of European frontiers. The Greek Presidency has declared as one of its seven priorities the promotion of issues regarding European migration policy, unfortunately with an emphasis on the prevention of illegal migration and little concern for the standards of life and equality of treatment of the migrants within Europe.

A report which was communicated by the Greek government to the European Commission by the Ministry of Employment and OMAS LTD ('Eleftherotypia' newspaper, 30 June, 2002) admits that migration contributed to the entry of Greece into monetary union (with cheap labour), supported the work of women (with cheap child minding and care for elderly people) and contributed to agricultural production and the survival of small enterprises as well as of small tourist business.

The legally resident migrants are estimated to number around one million, 15-20% of the workforce. The report supports the view that there are too many migrants and this leads to the rise of 'black market' labour which now accounts for 35% of Gross National Product. According to this report, the 'black market' labour involving migrants and women, especially young women who now account for 37.7% of the unemployed, with mixed youth unemployment reaching 29.5%, is the result of a failure in policies that should protect the working class from exploitation, forcing the employers to pay insurance. Insurance is particularly important for migrants because without a certain number of stamps they are not given extension of their residence and work permits. As employers are not declaring them and not paying their insurance, they have to pay for the necessary number of stamps themselves out of their slim

wages. But instead of monitoring employees who are voters, the government finds it easier to blame migrants who do not have voting rights. Besides, the black economy has been characterised by many as a 'necessary evil' for the survival of low paid employees or pensioners who need a second job to cope with household expenses, as Greece is an expensive country to live in, with the lowest salaries in Europe.

As described in previous reports of this type in 1999 and 2001, Greece has had to deal with the issues of migration over a very short period of time compared with other EU countries, which had colonies in other continents or had a tradition of immigration. The first generation of migrants were also people from countries with non-existent civil society involvement in social, economic and other policies. The lack of experience of both governmental bodies and the migrants themselves made dialogue for claiming better conditions very problematic. Human rights organisations have played the role of mediators while experience and self-representation is growing.

In 2002 considerable progress was made. The World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) decisions had virtually no impact on government policies but they became known and affected those working in the antiracist movement. The activities of the PEER project (see previous reports) for the empowerment of the participating organisations made it obvious that certain skills were necessary for the progress of the concerned NGOs and that wider and more formal co-operation was essential.

In the book on Albanian Migrants in Salonica, it is stated that research showed that the differences between the first wave of migration and the more recent one are as following. Between 1990 and 1993 the first migrants had worse living conditions, with many people living together in small spaces, now they can rent their own homes and in a very few cases even buy them. 34% of the people change their names slightly or completely, hoping that they will then be able to integrate more easily. 11.2% [??] of the men and 11.8% [??] of the women are in possession of university degrees, almost the same as for Greeks, and 54.9% have completed their secondary education, when the equivalent for Greeks is only 29.4%.

The activities of the anti-racist organisations in Greece have been many and varied. Anti-racist Festivals took place in Athens and in other cities. Seminars and meetings were organised, aimed at helping migrants find out about their rights.

The newly established **Greek Forum of Migrants** is the result of co-ordinated work and efforts by the Sudanese and Philippine communities. Initiated by Ahmet Moavia", of the Sudanese community, it started in September 2002 and now comprises 22 communities. A weekly meeting has been established in a space belonging to the Sudanese community. In the 18 meetings so far there have been briefings by several organisations and institutions. The Forum monitors the issues concerning the laws in Greece and at European level. It celebrated the International Migrants Day with a leaflet which was published in many newspapers. It started a website in English, Greek and Arabic, which can be found at www.migrant.gr

It is currently working on three activities:

1. Empowerment Seminar by the European Network of Women (follow-up to PEER, 2001)
2. Training of its members for the use of the website.
3. Monitoring and recording the problems of migrants.

The Sudanese Community has been restructured and now has formal statutes and books. It has also started a website in Arabic, www.galiat.org. This has solved the communication problems with many members who live in various parts of Greece.

It has also published a book in Greek on the civilisation, customs and ways of the Sudanese people. The book was widely distributed.

Some of the current concerns for migrants in Greece are the following:

- **Access to information and to assistance** is very difficult and migrants often become victims of fraud and harassment. There are no permanent citizens' advice bureaux especially for migrants, with staff speaking different languages and providing the right information on the issues of migrants and procedures.
- The **Health Certificate** is required not once, but **every year**, for the yearly renewal of the permits. This discriminates against migrant workers and means more wages lost in long queues.
- When, after ten years of residence, the migrant is entitled to apply for citizenship, the application must be submitted with a payment of more than €1,450, a sum which is lost to the individual, in the –(frequent) event that the application is rejected.
- The yearly cost for **renewal of both residence and work permits** is very high: €46.70, while in Germany it is €25.
- There are problems with **family reunion**. The law does not include grown-up children, even if they have lived in Greece for a long time, gone to Greek schools and have even forgotten their language. Albanian students make up more than 7% of the total student population. Also, elderly parents who are dependent on the migrants are not allowed to join the family.
- There are problems regarding **religious rights**, as there are no mosques in Athens where large numbers of Muslims, Greek as well as migrants, live. But Muslims remain a tiny minority in a country where 98% of the people claim to be members of the Greek Orthodox Church.

As announced by the Greek Government last October, Athens is to have its first official mosque by the 2004 Olympics. The city is still the only capital city in the European Union without an official place of worship for Muslims, who make up over 100,000 of its inhabitants. The project will be funded by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, responsible for the building of 200 Islamic centres and 1,500 mosques world-wide. Plans for the mosque will include a library, information centre and recreation area. But observant Muslims in Athens already worship unofficially, renting a room or a basement in the city centre for prayer. Over a dozen unofficial mosques exist. Muslims in the city say the location of the mosque under construction, 20 kilometres east of Athens in the suburb of Peania; will make it unusable for most of them. Most of the city's Muslims – largely first-generation immigrants from Albania, Pakistan, India and Afghanistan – live in the central Omonia Square and its network of back streets and in the port of Piraeus. But the Greek Government has defended the decision to build the mosque in Peania.

There are other concerns that the visible presence of a large mosque, even outside the city centre, will cause anti-Muslim feelings in the city. There have also been charges that the mosque is an Olympic showpiece, with its location near the new international

airport. The first calls for a mosque for Athens came from Arab embassies over 25 years ago, but foundered against objections from the Greek Orthodox Church. The Archbishop of Greece, Christodoulos, has since given his support to the building of a mosque, with the proviso that it is not in the city centre. He is not alone in his reservations. In a recent street poll, a local newspaper reported a cool response to the idea of a city-centre mosque. Licensed mosques exist in Thrace and on the islands of Kos and Rhodes.

- There are no **small vendors' permits** available for migrants and this is a particularly difficult issue to solve which needs the good will of the local authorities. Yvette Jarvis, our ENAR colleague, from her new position as member of the City Council has tried to deal with this problem in consultation with the Migrants' Forum and Ahmed Moavia.
- **Learning the Greek language** requires space and teachers, only available for a handful of people when the needs are for many thousands. Local authorities are asked to take some responsibility for this. Also, any publications from authorities, especially the Employment Organisation (OAED), which are also addressed to migrant workers, should take into account this scarcity of language learning possibilities and publicise material translated into other languages, i.e. Albanian, English and Russian.

The feeling of security that migrants need to feel in order to progress is still denied to them, not so much any more because of the legal gaps but because of the small numbers of capable officers and the lack of training and awareness-raising of public employees who need to work with these issues. In short, migrants have a right to complain that they are still seen not as people, but as 'workforce', to be used, their human rights and needs not being taken into consideration.

Education

The writing of material, specifically of a book for the learning of Albanian based on the Greek Year 1 reading book, was the achievement of co-operation and solidarity between Greeks and Albanian volunteers. One Albanian migrant reports:

"Our biggest problem is the lack of communication...The need to communicate in Greek was not considered before we crossed the borders – as the only thing important at the time was to get a job and a roof – but it became evident once we contacted the local people. Our daily contact with the Greeks created the need to develop relations, personal and social, with people who were interested in sharing experiences with us. Some friends and I were lucky in that we came into contact with groups and people who were interested in teaching us Greek, but even importantly, were interested in co-operating with us on certain social and political issues...The lessons we scheduled in co-operation with some Greeks (with whom we certainly did not have the traditional teacher-pupil relationship) gave us the possibility to discuss things on an equal basis and to gain valuable knowledge of the social reality.

We learned that communication and language is better acquired through social relationships, through solidarity ties... From these relationships a special project resulted at a different level: we created a reading book in the Albanian language, based on the Greek Year 1 reading book, which has been used by some teachers in state schools. This came about because we, Greeks and Albanians, realised the

importance of the need of migrants to retain and to improve their mother tongue. This 'experimental' book we published included besides the school texts, some texts referring to migration, through the experience of the students themselves. For example, texts on 'Fear in the street', 'A telephone call to the homeland', 'Low voices on the bus', etc.

Our efforts had some small but important results because they helped in the social integration of even a small number of migrants and also form our proposal for a follow-up”

The Ministry of Education also admitted after a long struggle by the Albanian migrants the importance of their mother tongue³ for the children in schools and has made some concessions in this direction, starting with employing teachers of Russian, which is to be extended to other mother tongues as well, to be taught if more than ten students make a request ('Vima' newspaper, 30 Nov. 2002)

From the point of view of mainstream education and discrimination issues, we should say that there was some teacher training and awareness-raising, related to the Olympic Games in 2004, that helped approach teachers, head teachers and school authorities. The development of 'Olympic Education' into anti-racist and peace education was the result of the integration of the work of NGOs, (Action Aid and ENOW with Open Horizons and the Girl Scouts) with the training of two thousand teachers who are responsible for activities related to the humanitarian values of the Olympic games. These values are: the Olympic Truce which was a tradition for two thousand years, the inclusion of civilisation and environmental values in human relations and the anti-discrimination aspect, the inclusion of all people without prejudice, especially for schoolchildren with special needs, minority and migrant children who should be not just 'included', but valued, like all children, for their different personalities, cultures and abilities.

This new development in education which was unexpectedly adopted – unexpectedly because modern sport is an arena of particularly hard competition – also provided the opportunity to question traditional competitive school practices and to look at more inclusive philosophies and, eventually, also to address the issue of anti-racism, human rights and peace education.

The criticism concerning the Ministry of Education and Religion – the only government in Europe that treats these two issues simultaneously in formal co-operation with the Orthodox Church – still exists, as the school curriculum has a long way to go in the teaching of different cultures and religions. Difference, either of religion or ethnic identity, has been so far, at best, only tolerated and not valued as an asset, among students. Albanian children, especially migrant pupils, are often reported in discussions by teachers as trying to hide their national origin and feeling very insecure about it.

³ An issue on which the Greek government agreed at the Strasbourg European Conference Against Racism, in 2000, in preparation for the WCAR.

New tools are needed for school management and teaching staff, to give them the possibility of coping with a changing school reality and managing conflict in a creative way.

Teachers rely mostly on their own inspiration, lacking new tools in life skills to cope with multicultural education. The Ministry's Department of Intercultural Education is dealing with certain schools but not with the mainstream curriculum.

Therefore, the opportunity offered to our NGOs to become involved, with our existing special experience of out-of-school activities, has been valuable. We have also participated in two conferences on the issues of youth violence and school violence under the auspices of the Council of Europe, one in Budapest and one in Strasbourg. The acquired interactive experience has been written up and will be published.

4. Minorities

Greece recognises one minority: the Muslim minority in Thrace, comprising Turkish-speaking and Slavic-speaking people. The Geneva Convention allowed the Christian Orthodox Greek ethnic minority of Istanbul to remain there after the population exchange (could be seen as ethnic cleansing) of a million and a half Greeks from Asia Minor and hundreds of thousands of Muslims, mostly from Thrace, and Macedonia and some other areas in Greece.

As mentioned in previous reports, other linguistic minorities, such as the Vlachs, the old Albanian-speaking and Slavic-speaking, mostly Christian people, are not recognised formally as minorities, following the nation-building policies, and have been part of the colourful collection of descendants that gives Greece the wonderful richness of traditions and cultures it possesses. They were formally recognised only in the first Constitution of Greece which mentioned ‘all peoples’ living in the territories liberated from the Ottoman Empire.

The Muslim minority has been, as also described in previous reports (1999-2001) the target of discrimination and, although the situation has improved a lot, also following the improved relations between Greece and Turkey, it has still got a long way to go to see that the citizens of the minority enjoy development and participation equal to other Greek citizens. The positive measures (quotas) secured for attendance at universities and the efforts of the main political parties to establish relations with the Muslim minority, are setting examples in the right direction.

At the same time, the discrimination and lack of visibility of the needs of a number of Turkish-speaking Muslims, remains a focus of attention for the human rights organisations. This is true especially of those who were seen as the ‘enemy within’ and whose villages were supervised by the army and their citizens often deprived of their Greek nationality, so as to force them to leave the country. Many of them did. Others stayed in the land of their ancestors and fought for their human rights. We have tried to take a closer look at them again this year with the assistance of members of our network. The new law on migrants allowed some of the Turkish-speaking Muslim minority people who were deprived of their citizenship, caught up between Greek and Turkish hostile relations, to regain their citizenship rights.

The story of a family

...My family, parents and four daughters, were deprived of our Greek nationality for sixteen years (1984-2000). Besides the social exclusion, the deprivation of nationality also created many other problems for us, as for example: 1) the removal of the right to education in state schools, available to all Greek citizens, 2) the stopping of ‘large family assistance’ to my mother as a parent of at least three children, 3) the fines for missing papers, the problems in the running of the shop we owned which my father could no longer operate and which was our source of income for the whole family, 4) the right to free movement within and outside Greece.

After many years of struggle, in autumn 2000 my mother, my two sisters and I regained our Greek nationality. I should emphasise that this was done in the way of naturalisation as for every foreigner, but we were born and have always lived in Greece. One of my grandfathers and one of his brothers had been members of the

Greek Parliament. We were Greeks, had always been and never wish to change that. Think how you would feel or any other law abiding citizen if you were told one day you were not Greek and this lasted for 16 years...

This letter was sent by our friend Aisel to the Minister of Internal Affairs, to complain because her father was still considered an alien, as was her sister. Their case was one of many among the Muslims who speak Turkish in Thrace, who have been forced in this way by previous governments to leave Greece. Aisel (the name means 'showered by moonlight') is now the first woman from her village who became a university student (studying political science). Her younger sister is still without nationality and her father, a tired but kind and good-humoured man, who has a critical heart condition, still has no nationality. Aisel's mother is working hard to earn a living and is deprived of benefits for a large family because her younger daughter still has no nationality.

The village of Echinós

In the summer of 2002 we spent a few days as guests of Aisel's family, in the village of Echinós, interviewing various people to find out about the problems of the village and the potential for development.

The village is on the slope of a lovely mountain, near a resort with hot springs which are neglected but could greatly benefit the future of the area. It is a poor village which has been growing ...vertically, with many-storeyed buildings, due to the land restrictions imposed on the minority by the government. The inhabitants have lived for generations with the army guns visibly turned against them, only allowed to commute within Greece over the last decade. They are some of the few Turkish-speaking people who were allowed to stay in their homes after the Conventions which arranged for the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey after the Balkan Wars of the beginning of the 20th century.

The villagers are all devoted Muslims, cultivate almost exclusively tobacco and oblige the girls to wear the veil, also because it is seen as a form of resistance to the suppression of their identity by the authorities. They have no environmental protection awareness, throw their rubbish in the river which flows along the edge of the village and erect their homes with cement, putting lots of flowers and plants on the terraces.

The primary school, according to bilateral agreements between Greece and Turkey, is teaching the children in the Turkish language and some hours are given to Greek lessons. The children learn their mother tongue inadequately and almost no Greek. **Indifference and lack of skills are combined to keep the children in the darkness of illiteracy, we were told.** We asked a young and very bright boy in the last year of school to perform a simple mathematics exercise, as a game, and he found it beyond his ability. The same boy was only able to communicate with us with his aunt acting as an interpreter, which shows that the Greek lessons had left no mark on his education. One of the teachers who did not want to be seen speaking to us said that the training and university education of the Turkish-speaking teachers was also short and quite inadequate, especially taking into account their difficult task of teaching in a minority school. They said that the head teacher had brought some teachers' books from Turkey to help them on methodology, but was not allowed to use them; they

were supposedly being checked by the Ministry of Education for months, to make sure they contained no propaganda. It was reported to us that the delay was caused by the fact that nobody read Turkish in the Ministry to be able actually to check them (!).

The village is saved from poverty by the men who go to work in the German shipyards. They work hard to send some money back or to get money for their education. There are few of the younger and middle-aged men in the village who have not been in Germany.

The village has a youth centre and an after-school kindergarten, where some female public employees have the ambition to teach some Greek to the children, to help them survive in a Greek-speaking country. There is also a health centre which is quite well-equipped, by Greek standards, and which also services smaller surrounding villages, with general practitioners, a paediatrician and a gynaecologist, **but the interpreting is done by the cleaner who is the only local employee.** The villagers were complaining about the fact that they did not employ any local people, they did not get jobs even as drivers, except for the cleaner who was also acting as an interpreter. Should the health centre not have a proper interpreter?

Knowing from private discussions that there was a need for psychological assistance, especially for some women, we asked if there was a psychologist, but there was not even a visiting one. We also visited the Mayor, as well as the candidate who was his chief opposition for the forthcoming elections, and discussed the development, education and welfare issues of the village. They both welcomed our visit and spent time with us. The opposition won the elections a few months later and we are maintaining our contact, trying to encourage links between the local authority and civil society.

The villagers are very kind and peace-loving people, they are quite religious and there is remarkable solidarity among them. We were told that if someone has their house burnt down, the whole village will raise money to rebuild it.

Civil society struggles with the recognition of ethnic identity. We have, for example, as ENAR Greece, encouraged and discussed the stages for the formation of a youth group, but their demand to be called a 'Turkish' minority is met by the refusal of the government to recognise such a minority name for an NGO. Our hope is that we will at least keep civil society channels of co-operation open until a solution is found by the courts or by the political leadership.

The women of Echinós wear their scarves after the age of twelve, work hard in the tobacco fields and feel unhappy when their men go to Germany. And the men know and admitted that they cannot keep them subdued for ever, but they maintain this attitude not only due to their religious tradition but through being afraid of the majority population robbing them of what they consider their special identity. Our friend Aisel, though she made a recent decision not to wear the veil, does not take it off when she is in the village, although she is well respected for her struggles for human rights.

Our host's family is poor but the government. Through the new legislation on foreign migrants, which apparently applies to them as well, is asking them for **twice the sum of €1,450** to be paid with their application for the restitution of their Greek

nationality. The father must also undergo the humiliation of asking for 'pardon', as if he were a criminal, so as to stand a chance, in spite of all the fines he has been dutifully paying for operating his shop and living without a nationality in Greece. Aisel's family is not the only one suffering from this attitude. There are many more who cannot afford this procedure.

Our question to the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Macedonia and Thrace is how it is possible for the village of Echinós and other similar villages in the area to overcome the feelings of being an oppressed minority if several of the people living there are still deprived of their nationality and citizenship and if education and the environment are not given the necessary special attention, so as to become the bridge for the development and democratic integration of the minority Turkish-speaking villages. In our opinion urgent local action is imperative that will promote human rights and economic/ social progress.

5. Projects in peace education

Education was declared as being a very important aspect in combating prejudice and racism at the World Conference Against Racism, in Durban in 2001⁴.

Greece has a history of recent conflicts but it is now a safe European country where many teachers and educators manage to meet to discuss and to carry out peace and anti-racism education projects. As such projects are not well known at European level, but could be related to the work of many colleagues interested in peace education, there follows a short report on them.

In 2002, ENOW, as an organisation concerned with anti-racist education and solidarity with the educational community world-wide, **we worked on four projects**. The **Ekecheiria**, an international project for the empowerment and training of teachers and young people from twelve communities, including among others Israeli-Palestinian, Kosovan and Belgrade, South African and Cypriot schools, with the intention of preparing the second Youth Festival of Arts and Sport, calling for truce, in 2003.

The WYE project for young Israelis and Palestinians, training for peace, two seminars which took place in 2002 in Greece in a safe space and involving also a safe internet space for communication.

The ICC Human Rights in Education Project, for 45 Greek and Turkish Cypriot teachers.

The development project in the small village of Ekpe in **Togo**.

The content of the projects

We have tried to work not simply at the surface level of behaviours, and even further than the deeper level of universal values; we tried to make it possible to activate the resistance to prejudice, to heal fear, to empathise with the 'other', to enlarge the individual identity, so as to establish common understandings, empathy and critical participation in life.

We worked in the hope that the developed understanding from these projects will also help us locally, in Greece, to do better work with the children of migrant families who currently number more than 86,000 pupils in Greek schools.

We looked at the safety of child development, influenced by

- The relation to his/her body
- The relation to the environment
- The knowledge offered

Therefore, we examined the feeling of security, possibilities for healing through education, the content of school books (what is there and what is missing), the adequacy of the skills of teachers, the image presented of the other, especially the neighbouring peoples on television, the general philosophy and methodology of

⁴ *The World Conference Against Racism uncovered facts and issues which have not been adequately appreciated, in this writer's opinion, and its results were not made public, at least not as much as should have been the case, because of the 11 September 2001 disaster in the United States, the war in Afghanistan, the conflicts in Israel and Palestine and now in Iraq.*

school and out-of-school education and the persisting ethnocentric education. All these issues were questioned and new techniques are sought to repair the damage and to stop further teaching that breeds conflict.

We looked at status and power and tried to give up our own to make our pupils become empowered and more responsible for their active involvement in education.

We looked at the causes of conflict, at personal 'space' and flexible boundaries we should learn to respect.

We tried to teach ourselves to listen to each other and to distinguish needs and wants from what we can ask of the other.

Meanwhile we discovered that some politicians and NGOs are interested in participating in education opposing those who have created so much destruction, pain and hatred in the area and therefore have supported these projects.

Former Minister of Defence, Mr A. Tsohatzopoulos, sent military aircraft to bring the child participants safely to Greece from Israel and Palestine, from Kosovo and Belgrade and from Cyprus. The Minister of Foreign Affairs funded two of the projects. This year the Junior Minister for Education, Ms Eleni Kourkoula, made it possible to mainstream the expertise of human rights and peace education within the context of Olympic Education.

Many educators who have been involved in these projects meet to exchange expertise and have also created websites.

The methodology used is very close to action research, as we seek to exchange a lot of ideas through interactive training, training others and training ourselves. Those of us involved are ready to welcome different approaches in different situations but also to try out adjustments of approaches that inspire us. The non-competitive, co-operative spirit is maintained by the enormous voluntary work which must be put into these projects which are so poorly funded that they do not usually attract the competitive kind of people.

The teachers who participate have a unique chance to learn from difference and to appreciate difference instead of being afraid of it. The Ekecheiria brings together a group of five trainers, a core team of about twenty people, twelve schools in as many communities and many more working around this group, with the youth organisations and youth leaders also playing an important role. The 200 children participating in the first Festival of Arts and Sport, as a means to get to know each other and overcome the obstacle of eight languages, created virtual cities, utopias with the values, banners and methods of their choosing. They were utopias named after ancient Greek towns, (Athens, Sparta, Olympia...) They shared experience in sports of the pentathlon as well as a Peace Marathon, run by several Zulu teenagers, special children, nearly blind, from a wonderful special school in South Africa, who run from Ancient Olympia to Delphi, for peace.

The Intercultural Centre of Cyprus (ICC) training, brought together Greek and Turkish Cypriot teachers for human rights education, meeting the 'others' for the first

time, in the small village of Pyla, the only place accessible to both Cypriot communities. The participants enjoyed the surprise of discovering how similar their concerns and values were, as well as their common high level of commitment to their pupils' future on a peaceful island. It was a particularly difficult project during which refugees from both sides also had a chance to share pain, memories and hopes.

The training of young Israeli and Palestinian people was not only difficult but had repercussions for some of the participants who, upon their return home, were accused of being traitors, especially on the Palestinian side. But all of them want to come back and to bring more friends, maintain communication via e-mail and seem to have a corner in their hearts where the 'other' has a face and a smile and cannot be forgotten.

The project in Togo, Africa, was part of the IRFAM project, which started two years ago from Liège, Belgium, and opened up new paths of international solidarity for us.

The only website currently open to visitors at present is the one created by the ICC in Cyprus. The project continues and will be concluded with a conference at the end of the academic year 2002-2003.

Conclusions

As this report is being written, we are waiting for the Presidential Decrees on Trafficking, so that victims can be protected and the new, more efficient procedures for refugees can be established. We are observing at the same time the Greek Presidency handling the delicate matter of the war in Iraq.

We are more satisfied at the moment with Greek foreign policy and the Presidency issues than we are with developments inside Greece, especially regarding the transposition of the anti-racism Directive which must take place by June 2003.

Refugees are having a difficult time and the international treaties are often bypassed by the simple decision of a police officer. The migrants are very much hindered in their personal progress when they need to renew residence permits and work permits every year, because the delay in the response is around a year, so by the time they get it they must apply for a new one. For example, the migrants who want to set up businesses cannot have private jobs if they do not yet have the residence permit for which they have applied for renewal, but which has been delayed for more than eight months. They are also unable to travel within Europe for business and cannot even go home to see a sick parent. Because of not having a residence permit, they feel like hostages and this is not a situation which makes us proud of the democratic values claimed by Greece.

We are hoping for some progress but are also afraid that things might become worse after the end of the EU Presidency, when the focus on Greece is less and racism will assume its usual tactics again.

We are expecting, on the other hand, that the new Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Equality which showed an interest, especially some of the members, the President, N. Katseli MP and M. Damanaki MP, will function in a way that will make the problems more visible.

We are expecting more assistance from the Ombudsman's office and the reports of this office that include issues related to racism and discrimination.

We are also expecting that a unified European policy will put some pressure on Greece to make faster progress on structures that will support anti-racist approaches and fairer treatment of migrants and refugees, as well as minorities.

The Greek NGOs receive no funding for anti-racism activities so there is no co-funding for grassroots level activists to participate in projects at European level, which makes our work much more difficult. The monitoring of the situation is not our only job, as we also have to do support work for people who are arrested and have no other support than the NGOs because they are first-generation migrants and there are hardly any relatives to assist, relatives who might speak better Greek or know an affordable lawyer. So we do a lot of what is called in Greece 'fire extinguishing' work and we sometimes have little energy left for long-term lobbying. But we are here and the migrant organisations are themselves developing and learning fast, as we see with the newly established Migrants Forum and the website.

If we were to summarise the key problem issues, they would be:

- Faster, cheaper and fair residence permits, recognising long-term migrants.
- Access to services for migrants and retraining of public employees to cope with people of different nationalities.
- Restitution of nationality with no costs, for those Greek citizens who were unfairly deprived of it.
- Transposition of EU legislation, as in every EU country, and implementation of the Race and Employment Directives.
- Presidential decrees for the implementation of the anti-trafficking legislation, so as to make possible the enforcement of the new law.
- Participation and consultation of migrant and human rights organisations in the creation of new legislative tools.

With the forthcoming Olympics, Greece is facing a great opportunity to work for equality, to celebrate and make positive use of diversity and to combat xenophobic feelings. We need to prove to ourselves that Greece can and should treat people the same way we, Greeks, wanted and claimed as our right to be treated, when we had to go to other countries as refugees and migrants, not such a long time ago.

A poem by Mina Konomi-Caushi, the first Albanian woman migrant to publish in Greece a collection of poems on the bitter taste of migration. The collection is in Albanian and in Greek and has the general title 'bitterness' (Pikellimi-Pikra) where fear, hope, pain and dreams are mingled.

To an unknown world

I started on a long way. When would I get there?

Would it be day or would it be night?

I went to sleep to make it feel shorter

When I opened my eyes I was shaken.

Was it a dream world?

Was it a fairy tale?

The unknown streets

Seemed full of colourful balloons

*Running ahead of me, flying.
Behind me they blew up in the darkness.
The lights and the reflections are gone,
The car is hurrying, the road is humming.
The night is leaving me behind,
An unknown country is awaiting me.*

The poems of Mina are for sale (6 euro) and can be found in bookshops in Athens or through ENOW

We are hoping for many more books like this which are speaking to people a language stronger than all the stereotypes and the prejudice.