



ΣΥΝΟΡΙΑΚΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΧΗ ΔΕΛΤΑ - ΡΟΔΟΠΗ
BORDER REGION DELTA-RHODOPI

Language Bridges Papers

Report on the linguistic situation in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

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LANGUAGE BRIDGES

a Sub-theme Working Group of the Interreg IIIC project

Change on Borders

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Abstract

Multilingualism in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace: Aims and Perspectives in the framework of the European Union

Around 230 languages and dialects are spoken in the contemporary European Union of the 25 Member States, whereas its 11 official languages have increased to 21. This complex mosaic, resulting from dramatic population rearrangements through time, has been more or less definitely shaped after the World War II and constitutes nowadays a preservable cultural heritage.

Overcoming painful historical experiences, Europe proceeds towards its political integration, based on the principles of tolerance and respect of human rights. In parallel, being a powerful pole of socio-economic development in the international scene, the EU is challenged to synthesize in the optimum way its capacities, benefiting from its people's variability.

Given its multilingualism the European Union tries to apply effective solutions, which should balance between:

- a) the efficiency of inter-communication, which is served by the use of the widely spread languages (quantitative communication indispensable for its broad economic, commercial, scientific, educational etc. collaborations) and
- b) the precision of intra-communication among its populations (qualitative, in depth communication), which presupposes the preservation of the less spoken languages with respect to the culture of their users.

In this framework, the less used languages are vectors of especial cultural traits, which enrich the collective experience, facilitate the intra-communication among smaller groups and function as language bridges between peoples and cultures, with all the consequent socio-economic benefits.

Greece reveals noticeable linguistic homogeneity in comparison to other Member States. Nevertheless, the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace has been an exception, being multicultural and multilingual since the outset of the contemporary Greek State.

However, for many years, the different priorities and the centralised government of Greece influenced negatively the socio-economic progress of the area. Despite this fact, the integration of Greece in the EU, shaped a new developmental environment in favour of the Region, transforming its

weak points (population heterogeneity, multilingualism, geographical position etc.) in clear developmental advantages.

The long-lasting peaceful coexistence of the various population groups in the area, constitutes a fruitful background for initiatives with multiple tasks. Among them, a) the upgrading of the social role of the populations, b) the support of linguistic pluralism, c) the development of cross-border collaborations and d) the faster approach to the European ideal, should be in priority pursued. Both the inhabitants of the Region and those of the neighbouring countries, who expect their inclusion in the European family, constitute target groups for the proposed initiatives.

However, the achievement of the aforementioned objectives is not an easy task. Several inequalities on economic, social educational etc. level are still present within and between the population groups, inhibiting their overall development. A detailed documentation of the present conditions, a long range planning and a broad adoption of effective measures in many inter-related fields are necessary in order to improve the today's situation.

Since the language(s) life long learning is a cornerstone towards the achievement of the aforementioned objectives, the BORDER REGION DELTA RHODOPI expects that its participation to the LABS project will contribute to:

- the establishment of closer links between the partner Regions
- the exchange of experiences among the partners
- the adoption of good practices properly modified
- the motivation of the relevant local bodies
- the construction of innovative developmental models, compatible to the local conditions.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The present text is a draft survey of the multilingual landscape in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (North-Eastern Greece) as it has been shaped under various historical and socio-economic circumstances. It reflects the population composition and describes the multi-cultural life style in the area.

The survey has been based on:

- a) the study of various European and national sources concerning regional and minority languages,
- b) a series of interviews and discussions with key-persons from local authorities, scientific and cultural associations, representatives of educational policies etc.
- c) the long lasting personal experience of the authors, who are active in the educational field more than twenty years, continuously living in this area.

However, it constitutes a rather qualitative approach, since the limited time available makes impossible the collection and elaboration of respective quantitative data, which in many cases are missing anyway. An effort to collect all the available data is in process, in order to integrate them by the completion of the project.

Due to the extensive and complex character of such a study, priority has been given in the less spoken minority languages (Turkish, Pomak and Roma), whereas the immigrant languages present in the area are drafty described. Special and sign languages have not been considered as well.

The present paper is the contribution of the Region in the relevant debate of the LABS network, in order to be used as the basis for the expected feedback from the other partners.

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Key words

Region Eastern Macedonia Thrace - multilingualism -less spoken languages -development- European Union.

Table of contents

1.	Legal Framework, Historical and Social Aspects	8
1.1.a.	General Description of Population and Linguistic Groups.Territorial Distribution of the Languages	8
1.1.b.	General Comments on the multilingualism of the Region	11
1.2.	Historical facts of linguistic importance	12
1.2.a.	Concept	12
1.2.b.	Historical Background - The Formation of the Linguistic Mosaic of the Region	13
	After the World War I	13
	The Interwar period	14
	The Second World War - Bulgarian Occupation	15
	The post-war period	16
	The case of Pomaks	16
	The decades 1950 -1960: socio-economic developments	18
	From the return of democracy to Greece (1974) until today	18
1.3.	Legal framework: recent developments and outlook.	20
1.3.1.	General legislative framework	20
1.3.2.	Legislation protecting Religious and Educational Freedom	20
1.3.3.	Legislation on Cross-Cultural Education	22
1.4.	Status of languages	23
1.5.	Language, religion and social integration	25
1.5.a.	Theoretical approach	25
1.5.b.	Social integration under the local conditions	25
1.6.	For each language: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats (SWOT Analysis)	29
1.7.	Cases of best practice	32
2.	Language use and Language awareness	32
2.1.	Language as a component of identity. Language attitudes, representations & prestige.	32
2.1.a.	Theoretical aspects	32
2.1.b.	European Identity for European Citizens	33
2.1.c.	Language attitudes, representations and prestige at local level	34
2.2.	Sociolinguistic differences between (and within) languages: language use in oral and written, public and private domains	35
2.3	Transmission of language from parents to children	36
2.4.	Cases of best practice	37
3.	Media, literature and other forms of Cultural expression	38
4.	Languages in Education and training	39
4.1.	The structure of the Education System in Greece	39
4.2	Cross-Cultural Education	40
4.3.	Minority education	41
4.4.	Vocational training	43
4.5.	Adult Education	43
4.6.	The education of Russian speaking migrants	43
4.7	Foreign Languages	44
4.8.	Teaching in and of the language - Teacher training	44
4.8.a.	Teaching in Turkish	44
4.8.b.	Teacher Training	44
4.9.	Language resources available for the (minor) languages	45
4.10.	Cases of best practice	46
5.	Language in cross-border co-operation	47
5.1.	Role of the languages in cross-border cooperation and economic development	47
5.2.	Cases of best practice	47
6.	Outlook and desiderata	49
7.	Bibliography	50
8.	ANNEX I - The treaty of Lausanne - Articles	55

1. Legal Framework, Historical and Social Aspects

1.1. General Description of Population and Linguistic Groups.



1.1.a. Territorial Distribution of the Languages

According to the current administrative division of Greece in 13 Regions, the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace occupies the North-eastern part of Greece, bordering on Bulgaria in the North (Rhodopi mountain range) and Turkey in the East (river Evros).

It includes 5 Prefectures, presenting the following population outline, according to the latest census of 2001:

Eastern Macedonia:

Prefecture of **Drama**: 103.975 inhabitants

Prefecture of **Kavala**: (including the island of Thassos 145.054 inhabitants)

Thrace

Prefecture of **Xanthi**: 101.856 inhabitants

Prefecture of **Rhodopi**: 110.828 inhabitants

Prefecture of **Evros** (including the island of Samothrace): 149.354 inhabitants

The geographical landscape and the transportation network result in a high population density, evidenced mainly in the capitals of the Prefectures (Kavala, Drama, Xanthi, Komotini, Alexandroupolis), in smaller towns (Eleftheroupolis, Krinides, Stavroupolis, Sapes, Didimotichon, Soufli, Orestiada, Chora Samothrakis, Limenas Thassou), as well as in various plain villages. In the mountainous areas one encounters smaller villages and settlements of farmers and stockbreeders.

Most of the Greek (Greek speaking - Christian orthodox) populations, spatially distributed all over the Region, are mainly descendants of refugees from Asia Minor, Kappadokia, Pontos and Anatoliki Romylia (now Southern Bulgaria), who had moved here during the migration period of 1920-24. Few among them are considered as natives (in the sense that their ancestors have been settled in the area and have been continuously living here since the Ottoman Empire era (inhabiting Maronia, Strymni, Kosmion, Thassos, Komotini, Xanthi etc.)

Some people trace their family roots back to Crete or Peloponnesus, being off springs of civil servants who moved here in order to support the administration of the newly acquired Greek territories, after 1920. Others, like the Sarakatsans, who were practicing nomadism until fairly recently but have permanently settled in various villages during the last 5 decades, originated mainly from Epirus. Vlachs, (Valachians, Aromouni, or Vlachoi) also from Epirus, migrated to this area within the 18th-19th centuries, being merchants, silver technicians or skilful stone craftsmen.¹ Several Vlach communities are distributed in the region, in villages around Drama (i.e. Prosotsani), Kavala (i.e. Chrisoupolis), Xanthi, Komotini, Soufli, Alexandroupolis.

Thus, the survival of dialects and idioms (in parallel to the general use of modern Greek), and the preservation of characteristic names and accents, indicative of each one's places of origin, is a phenomenon that can be legitimately explained.²

The Muslim Minority, consists of 35% Pomaks (of Pomak origin), 15% Roma (of Roma origin) and 50% Ottomans of various origin, residents in the area of Thrace. In 1922 the Muslim Minority was estimated at 86000 individuals, whereas the 1991 census numbers 98000. Adding to this figure the Muslim Greek citizens that live permanently abroad (mainly in Germany and the Pays Bas) as economic migrants, the minority approximates in population size the number of 105.000 persons. In Thrace, as a whole, the ratio of Christian/Muslim population is 2/1.

¹ Whereas historical and genetic data suggest a common origin of Vlachs and Sarakatsans (from mountainous Epirus), it is interesting that the later speak exclusively Greek, while Vlachs speak also a latin idiom (like the Ladin speaking population of South Tyrol), preserved since the Roman Empire times.

² Refugees from Eastern Thrace, for instance, preserve many first names, which reflect their agricultural society, like Peristera (=pigeon), Lafina (=female deer), Zoumboulia (=harebell), Triantafyllia (=Rose), Lemonia (=Lemon tree), Garyfallia (=Carnation plant) etc. People from Pontos use names like Simela (from the ancient Semeli).

The Pomaks³ (approximately 35.000) are settled mainly in the mountainous areas of the Rhodopi and Xanthi Prefectures (Villages: Myki, Thermes, Echinis, Satres, Smynthi, Kotyli, Organi, Kechros), with a few in the Prefecture of Evros. However, many of them move south in the recent years, namely to the towns of Komotini and Xanthi or in large villages like Iasmos, as well as in Athens, for professional and social reasons.

Being natives of the mountainous Rhodopi area, Pomaks have been divided between the Greek and the Bulgarian State after the definite fixation of the borders. Thus, kindred families live on both sides of the borders.

Pomaks are nowadays Muslims, having been gradually islamized during the 18th Century, under the pressure of the Ottoman Empire.

The Pomak language, a Slavic idiom with no written form, closer to Bulgarian with elements of Greek and Turkish, is preserved due to its continuous use within the population group.

The Turkish speaking people (Tourkophoni)⁴, are descendants of the populations who were exempt from the mandatory exchange of population, which preceded the Treaty of Lausanne. They live in plain villages scattered across the Prefectures of Rhodopi and Xanthi, some of which consisting of exclusively Muslim inhabitants (Arriana, Doukato,) and others of mixed (Muslim-Christian) ones (like Sapes, Iasmos, Asomatos, Sostis etc). A large number of these people lives also in Komotini and Xanthi.

In the area of Eulalo (Xanthi), few African Blacks (Negros) are living. They are Muslims, off springs of the servants (slaves) of the big landowners during the Ottoman times.

Concerning the population Roma or Gypsies (Tsiganoi), the following distribution pattern has been recorded: about 9000 in the area of Xanthi (villages Dekarcho, Eulalo, Drosero, Kimmeria, etc), about 8500-9000 in the area of Rhodopi (Ifestos and various other villages) and approximately 6000 in the area of Evros (Zeginis 1994).

³ Pomaks are a mountainous native population, whose presence in the mountainous Rhodopi has been recorded since the ancient times. Being endogamous due to their geographical isolation, they reveal distinct physical traits in comparison to other local populations. Given the historical rearrangements of the geographical borders, Pomaks have been distributed among the neighbouring countries several times. In addition, because of various type cultural interactions in Balkans through time, the issue of their origin is still rather unclear. Benefiting from this fuzzy situation, Bulgaria claims that Pomaks are islamized Bulgarians, whereas Turkey considers them as Slavic-speaking Turks. Obviously, such nationalistic claims are meaningless in the framework of European Union, within which natives deserve equal opportunities regardless their ancestral roots, or their spatial distribution.

⁴ Considering the mélange of the Balkan populations in the Ottoman Empire, claims of the direct "Turkish origin" of Muslims are questionable and politically charged.

The elder Roma are settled in permanent settlements while the younger ones migrate seasonally all over Greece, engaged in different occupations, mainly as merchants or seasonal agricultural workers (e.g. fruit or cotton collection in Thessaly). Most of them are Muslims. However, there are villages like Aratos (near Komotini) where Christian Orthodox - Greek speaking Gypsies are living. Their grandparents moved here from Eastern Thrace (now part of Turkey), following the migration wave of the Greeks at that time.

An Armenian community (Christian Orthodox followers of the old Julian calendar-also speaking Greek), comprising approximately 1500 people today, is spatially distributed in the Prefectures of Kavala, Drama, Xanthi, Rodopi and Evros. They preserve their language and religion, which pass from parents to children, officiating in their churches located in the aforementioned towns⁵. Today, the Armenian Church and the cultural associations of the community are responsible for the language preservation.

The entire Jewish Community of the area was eliminated during the Bulgarian occupation (1941-1944), since, following the Nazi orders all Jews were transferred to concentration camps. Thus the long-lasting presence of Jews in Thrace came to an end.

The linguistic mosaic of the Region has been enriched by the settlement of Greek populations from the Black Sea (Pontos) areas, after the collapse of the former USSR. These people, spatially distributed in various Republics of the Black Sea region, were forced by political instability and economic repression in their countries to migrate to Greece. Thrace was one of the reception centres for these migrants. Many of them have settled permanently mainly in Sapes and Komotini, establishing their own houses with support by the Greek State, whereas others moved towards the large cities (Athens and Thessaloniki) in search of a better future. They speak Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian as well as the dialect of Pontos (an idiom closer to ancient than to modern Greek).⁶

1.1.b. General Comments on the multilingualism of the Region

⁵ Armenians were settled in Northern Greece since the Byzantine times by Byzantine emperors of Armenian origin. Several Armenians came here early in the 20th century, being victims of prosecutions. After the 2nd world war almost the 2/3s of the Armenian community immigrated to various countries (USA, Canada, France, USSR etc.). People of diaspora, Armenians keep strong links among their communities all over the world and preserve their language and tradition. This behaviour however does not prevent their creative integration in the countries they live.

The Armenians who stay in Greece, successfully operate as business men, enjoying in general a high socio-economic level. While fully integrated in Greek society, they have not lost their cultural identity and of course they do not think that the latter is threatened. Their cultural associations are very active and despite the fact that the last Armenian school in Didimotichon was closed in 1945 due to lack of pupils, they preserve their language and cultural continuity.

⁶ According to available data from the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace 200.000 individuals (of Greek origin) from the Black Sea area (Pontos) have been settled in Greece.

Obviously the North-eastern part of Greece has been profoundly multicultural and consequently multilingual since the beginnings of the 20th Century, certainly after the final definition of the current state borders.

Recently, after 1970, the whole Greek State has become a State of reception for economic migrants and refugees from all over the World. As expected, they are mostly gathered in the big cities due to favorable conditions regarding employment. The Greek State, trying to facilitate their smooth integration in their new environment has taken a series of proper measures, among which the establishment of multicultural schools.

However, the issue of multilingualism in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace differs essentially from that in the rest of Greece, for two fundamental reasons: a) it emerges from a different historical and socio-economic background and b) its political dimension is strongly present, since any evolution in language(s) use and educational models is directly related to the international changes through time, the political re-arrangements in SE Europe during the last two centuries and the bilateral relationships between Border Countries (GR-BU, GR-TR).

The Greek Republic, a full member of the European Union since 1981 and a rapidly developing one, constitutes the geographical field between “East” and “West”, where models concerning the co-existence of Europe as a whole with its external neighbours are challenged.

Consequently, cross border collaborations in the fields of education, economic exchanges and developmental strategies, enhanced also through the development of “language bridges”, become particularly important in the context of ongoing challenges within the wider European framework.

1.2. Historical facts of linguistic importance

1.2.a. Concept

The effort of the EU to preserve the less spoken languages in its territory as a precious cultural heritage is being reflected: a) in the production and broad dissemination of relevant official texts⁷ b) in the promotion of multilingualism among European citizens⁸ and c) in the financial support provided to several organizations⁹ for collecting and elaborating linguistic data, made available to anyone interested.

⁷ e.g. Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: Action Plan 2004-2006

⁸ Programs for Education and Training, the European Year of Languages (2001) etc.

⁹ (EBLUL, EUROLANG, MERCATOR, EUROMOSAIC etc.)

Nonetheless, the available data often derive from fragmental, sometimes incomplete and partly influenced (or biased) information, with no historical documentation. At any rate, a serious study of the relevant historical and socio-economic context is indispensable in order to avoid misinterpretations and false conclusions.

Especially in areas like Thrace, which have repeatedly constituted the subject of competition between border countries in the past within the context of international policies, a thorough consideration of all aspects of linguistic matters is of great importance. The use of language issues as opportunities for nationalistic claims, although harmful for the European coherence and continuity, was not an uncommon phenomenon in the past.

It is expected that the present collective effort of the “LABS” project will contribute in broadening our knowledge about the linguistic landscape in various cross-border Regions that play a dynamic role within Europe; a continent that gradually and laboriously proceeds towards its integration, trying to balance between its constituent states, the need of (any kind of) minorities’ rights protection within them and the elevation of a strong, coherent socio-economic entity besides other geopolitical poles of the globalisation era.

1.2.b. Historical Background: The Formation of the Linguistic Mosaic

After the World War I

After the fall of East Roman Empire, Turkish language began to spread across the Balkans and during the 500 years of Ottoman occupation of the region of Thrace, many population groups, also Bulgarian speaking, resettled to this geographical part. The contemporary official multilingual situation in Thrace originated in the Treaty of Lausanne.

The Ottoman Empire totally collapsed by the end of the 1st World war. As a result of fundamental changes in Turkey brought about by the uprising of Kemal Ataturk, the Treaty was signed on July 25th 1923, revising the Treaty of Sevres (1920), which, in the mean time, had become ineffective.

The bilateral Greek-Turkish agreements, signed in January 1923, stipulated the compulsory exchange of populations between the two countries. Two groups were exempt from the exchange obligation: the Greek-orthodox community of Constantinople (now Istanbul), Imvros and Tenedos on the one side and the Muslims of Thrace on the other.

The aforementioned populations remained at their inhabitation places, on the basis of two main principles:

A) the principle of reciprocity (articles 37-45 of Lausanne Treaty)¹⁰, and

¹⁰ See annex I

B) the principle of numerical balance of the exempt populations.

Turkey was engaged to respect religion freedom and language use of the Greek citizens settled in Turkey as well as of the Christian-orthodox Turkish citizens of Constantinople, regardless of their ethnicity. Similarly, Greece should respect the rights and freedoms of the Muslim Greek citizens of Thrace.

However, the Lausanne Treaty does not mention the uncontested variability of the Muslim minority, which consists of three different population groups, according to the spoken language.¹¹

As far as the numerical balance of populations is concerned, during the Lauzanne negotiations, Turkey demanded the diminishing of Greeks in its State based on the estimations of 1922, according to which 150.000 Greeks were living in Constantinople in comparison to the 86.000 Muslims of Thrace.¹²

A great migration wave followed: Turkish speaking Muslims, living in Northern Greece were sent to Turkey, whereas Greek populations from Asia Minor, Kappadokia, Pontos (Black Sea), Eastern Thrace etc. were displaced in Greece.

In the meantime, a similar population exchange between Greeks living in Southern Bulgaria (at that time known as Eastern Romylia) and Bulgarians living in Northern Greece, based on bilateral agreements of the two countries, had been completed by 1924.

Thus, the ethnologic profile of Thrace by the end of the troubled decade 1912-1923 (Balkan wars, World War I, Asia Minor catastrophe) took shape under the pressure of massive migrations resulting from *de facto* situations albeit unprecedented circumstances. The census of 1928 gives a percentage of 66,15% Christians and 33,85% Muslims.¹³ According to the census of 1991 the total population of Thrace is 338.005 inhabitants, of which 105.000, or 31% are Muslims.

The Interwar period

During this period peaceful coexistence was stabilized. Christians dealt mainly with commercial and enterprising activities (partly because of their previous experience and partly because very few held titles to adequate landed property), and also tried to improve the educational status of their children.

¹¹ Since then the policy of Turkey tries to promote the argument that the Muslim Minority of Thrace is Turkish minority, thus integrating all three linguistic groups into a concept of one nation. Such views have been successfully promoted in various European organizations (e.g. in texts present in MERCATOR data bases one can find the expression ...Muslim (actually Turkish) minority.....)

¹² Between 1912 and 1923 about 1.500.000 Greeks and 500.000 Turks migrated reciprocally.

At the same time Muslims persisted in their traditional ways in agriculture, characterized by the old-fashioned structures of the Ottoman era (large landed property- *cifliks* - cultivated by poor serfs, or small scale individual lots). The tendency for higher education among the Muslims was low, since their everyday life did not make it necessary. The Arabic alphabet was still in use, the innovations in the newborn secular state of Turkey did not touch the Minority, which remained poorly educated and strongly influenced by its Islamic tradition.

Armenians and Jews also lived in parallel within their cultural frameworks.

Thus, the variable sub-societies of Thrace, tired from the long lasting war adventures, proceeded together in a spirit of mutual tolerance. In the mean time, the Greek government, despite its economic deficiency, tried its best to ameliorate the administrative structures and the situation of the refugees.¹⁴

The Second World War - Bulgarian Occupation

In 1941, Greece came under German occupation. However, the district east of the Strymon River, passed under the administration of Bulgarians. (with the exception of Evros, which remains under German authorities).¹⁵

This period (1941-44) is one of the most “traumatic” in historical terms for Thrace, due to the violent “Bulgarisation” effort. The public administration belonged to Bulgarians, the Bulgarian language was imposed on every communication with the authorities and on inscriptions in Churches and streets, while all Greek schools were shut down in order to be replaced by Bulgarian ones, Greek Bishops and intellectuals were expelled to the German-occupied Greece.

It is in this period that the whole Jewish community was arrested by the Bulgarian army and transferred massively to concentration camps, to become victims of the holocaust.

The immeasurable catastrophes of lives and infrastructure left an indelible mark in the history of the Region and crucially inhibited its subsequent development.

After the end of the war, a painful civil war ensued in Greece, (1945-1949) ending with the victory of the national forces. The winners began a violent “ideological cleaning” campaign, which compelled Greek leftists -directly or indirectly- to leave the area. Many politically active Greek citizens (both Christians and Muslims) having taken part in the civil war on the side of

¹⁴ Echo of this parallel coexistence is the fact that various neighborhoods in Komotini even today carry the indicative names of that époque Armenio (the Armenian Neighborhood), Kavakliotika (the refugees from Kavakli - Eastern Romylia), Machalas (Muslim areas), Prosfygika - Neighborhood of migrants from Eastern Thrace) etc.

Communists abandoned Greece altogether, in a new large scale migration wave towards various countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The post-war period

By the end of the Civil war, a new scene has taken shape in the area. The World had already been split into two spheres of influence. Within this new framework of international detente, the Bulgarian external policy abandons its expansionist plans of the past, announcing its new policy since the 1950s.¹⁶

In 1952, both Greece and Turkey became members of NATO. It was the “cold-war era”, and the North borders of Greece constituted actually a border between the Communistic and the Liberal world. Thus, the communication of Greece with its Northern neighbors was interrupted whereas, on the contrary, an improvement of Greek-Turkish relationships was encouraged.

Under NATO’s umbrella, these relationships were of great importance for the cohesion of the alliance, and Greece was “strongly recommended” to satisfy a series of Turkish demands. In this period, a) the term “Turkish” was adopted to define various minority organizations, b) the Latin script was generally accepted, gradually replacing the Arabic alphabet c) the intense contradiction between “old-Muslims” and “neo-Turks” was downgraded. All these steps, as well as the provision of special bi-lingual education (in Turkish and Greek) addressed to all Muslim children regardless their mother tongue, lead to an imposed “homogenization” of the Muslim minority and constituted the basis of the current claims of Turkey, referring to the “Turkish minority”.^{17, 18}

The case of Pomaks

In the cold-war era, the natives of mountainous Rhodopi, namely the Pomaks, were split in both sides of the Greek-Boulgarian borders and became a population buffer-zone dividing the Western alliance (NATO) from the Warsaw Pact.

¹⁶ Latter on, in a series of high level bilateral meetings between Karamanlis and Zivkof since 1975, this peaceful policy was definitely guaranteed. Zivkof declared : “Bulgaria has no territorial claims towards any Balkan country, including neighboring Greece”

¹⁷ The friendly attitude of Greece, however, did not prevent the Turkish side to attack brutally the Greek-orthodox community of Constantinople (Istanbul), repeatedly violating (1955, 1964) all the international treaties. As a result, the flourishing community of the 150.000 members, enumerates today just 2500 individuals (mostly elderly) - see “Denying human rights & Ethnic Identity: The Greeks of Turkey” - A Helsinki Watch report by HRW / 1992.

¹⁸ On the basis of this unfortunate handling of Greek foreign policy, the Turkish Governments to this day try to establish internationally the claim that the Muslim minority of Thrace is homogenous and “Turkish”.

The communication between the two worlds was interrupted due to the establishment of the so called “supervised area”, a zone of 10 km wide in both sides of the Rhodopi mountain range crest.¹⁹

The Pomaks of the Greek side were able of course to move all over Greece. However, it was not possible for any other Greek citizen to approach the Pomak area, unless supplied with a special permission from the authorities.

During all this period, the Pomaks in Greece were a closed agricultural society, strongly endogamous, due to geographical and cultural barriers. They have preserved their language and religion, which in many villages deviates from orthodox Islam (sects of Alevites and Kitzilbash).

In the post-war period, the Greek State developed rapidly but in rather “erroneous” patterns (over-centralisation of activities and power in the big cities, high degree of bureaucracy etc.) Its attitude towards Pomaks was rather indifferent. Indeed the Greek state was equally indifferent towards distant Thrace as a whole. Despite all these, the Pomaks’ feelings for Greece were not negative. At any rate, their underdeveloped agricultural society did not differ significantly from that in the rest of Thrace. Moreover, they were aware of the pressures experienced by their relatives in the Communistic Bulgaria, and they kept the collective memory of the humiliations they suffered by the Ottoman Empire.²⁰

Nevertheless, given their Muslim Religion, the provision of a Turkish speaking education and their isolation from socio-economic developments, several Pomaks were attracted to an alternative, Turkish cultural identity. This tendency was enhanced by the “underground” interference of nationalistic groups constantly supported by the Turkish consulate of Komotini.

In addition, the Greek dictatorship government (1967-1974) practiced various forms of pressures against the Muslim minority, a policy which led to its gathering under the protective armful of “Mother Country”. Turkey took the opportunity to proclaim itself as protector of Minority Rights, insisting in the characterization “Turkish minority” and arbitrarily ignoring the ethnic differentiations.

As a result of the inertia of the Greek State to face this situation, the terms *Muslim* and *Turkish minority* are equally (or alternatively) used in various

¹⁹ After the return of democracy to Greece in 1974, the status of the “supervised zone” has weakened and was finally abrogated in 1989.

²⁰ Pomaks of Bulgaria, living under the Communist regime, under which Religion was systematically downgraded and ethnic differentiations were artificially hidden, suffered various pressures, in order to incorporate themselves in the new era, or migrate to Turkey. Such imposed measures were a) their compulsory re-establishment (inselvane) within the country and b) the process of “re-birth” - vuzroditelen protses - (i.e. the alternation of their names from Arabo-islamic to Slav-Christianic). The latter was intensified in mid '70s until late '80s. Turkish sources estimate that in 1989 about 300.000 Bulgarian “Turks” migrated to Turkey. (Central Europe Review CER -ce-review.org).

international *fora*, with no regard to the real situation. This tautology is far from being politically “neutral”.

The decades 1950 -1960: socio-economic developments

This was a period of important developments for Greece as well as internationally. The Greek State updated its structures, which remained however highly centralized. Political parties continued to interfere with the administration and foreign factors continued to influence the Greek politics, whereas the traumas of the recent past (occupation, civil war) had not healed completely.

Nonetheless, the positive developments in the rest of Greece took time to reach Thrace, which remained marginal and economically underdeveloped. Despite this fact, the parallel coexistence of the population groups remained normal, with friendly mutual relationships, at a slow pace of its own, even at times of Greek-Turkish tension, which were mainly caused by the Cyprus problem. It is indicative that during the ‘50s many young Christians from Thrace preferred the Universities of Turkey, because of the easy access, their knowledge of language and the low studies cost as well as because of the good personal relationships with Turkish families.

In the early ‘60s, the lack of professional opportunities led a part of the active population to the solution of economic migration mainly towards Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Australia. This migration movement concerned equally both Christians and Muslims from Thrace. The size of the migration explains the observed effect, that while the census data for the whole Greece show a slight demographic increase, the population in Thrace slightly decreases. An evident trace of the migration event is also the fact that today many elder habitants are able to communicate sufficiently in German despite their low-level education.

From the return of democracy to Greece (1974) until today

The dramatic fall of the seven years dictatorship, (1967-1974) followed by the restoration of Greek democracy, actually signaled the return of Greece to the status of a legitimate European partner.

The continuous steps of social and economic progress have had their direct positive impact in Northeastern Greece. The developmental scene in Thrace, which is recognized as a key locus for the development of the broader area, has changed dramatically after the full integration of Greece in the European Union.

Yet, after the geopolitical changes of 1989, the geographical position of the Region becomes of major importance. Other obvious advantages as well, like its rich natural environment²¹ and its wealth of multiculturalism, are

²¹ The forest of Rodopi in Drama, the Nestos and Evros Delta, the Dadia forest in Evros are areas of international environmental interest, protected by the Treaty of Ramsar.

appreciated as a fruitful background for the adoption of adequate developmental measures.

Among them the following are worth to be mentioned:

- The Administrative renewal including a) the establishment of Regional authorities in Komotini, b) the extension of the responsibilities of the local authorities c) the adoption of special legislative framework favouring the economic development of the Region.
- The establishment and the expansion of Democritus University of Thrace.
- The establishment of the Higher Technological Institute of Kavala.
- The improvement of the road network (Egnatia highway), with prospect for vertical road axes directly connecting the Region with Bulgaria and the Balkans).
- The improvement of air transportation.
- The creation of Industrial zones near all the main towns, supported by specially designed state funding.
- The land redistribution and modernization of cultivations.
- The pipeline of natural gas as an alternative source of cheap energy.
- The new border check-point at Ormenion (Northern Evros, a key point between the three countries).
- The establishment of a European INFO-POINT - directly delivering all the information on EU issues.

As far as the Minority is concerned, it equally participates in this developmental process, being represented in all levels of national and local authorities (parliament, prefectures, municipalities, commercial and industrial chambers, cultural associations etc.)

However, in spite of the ascending process of the recent decades, there are a lot to be done in order to approach the mean European standards for all people. In education, economy, new technologies affiliation, entrepreneurship and other fields, one could notice a fast variety of inequalities, both within and among populations. Their origins can be traced in historical facts and social classifications, which gradually lose their importance for the every day life in a prosperous environment.

Particular care on behalf of the Greek State is required for the improvement of the socio-economic status of the smaller population groups, namely Pomaks and Roma, in order to reach the mean European standards they deserve.

1.3. Legal framework: recent developments and outlook.

The legislation referring to the use of language is drafted bellow²²:

1.3.1. General framework:

The Treaty of Lausanne (1923)

It refers to the protection of minorities' rights (particularly mentioning religious freedom and education) in Turkey and reciprocally in Greece.

It should be mentioned that the original text is addressed towards the Turkish part, (Chapter III, articles 37-44). Article 45 refers to the obligation of Greece for reciprocity, clearly mentioning the Muslim minority of Thrace.

The term "Muslim" describes more precisely the situation, since Islam faith is the only common trait of the population groups under consideration, which differ in terms of language, tradition and biological structure. Armenian and Jewish Communities of Greece are not mentioned in the Treaty.

The Greek Constitution Article 13

1. Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil rights and liberties does not depend on the individual's religious beliefs.
2. All known religions shall be free and their rites of worship shall be performed unhindered and under the protection of the law. The practice of rites of worship is not allowed to offend public order or the good usages. Proselytism is prohibited.
3. The ministers of all known religions shall be subject to the same supervision by the State and to the same obligations toward it.
4. No person shall be exempt from discharging his obligations to the State or may refuse to comply with the laws by reason of his religious convictions.
5. No oath shall be imposed or administered except as specified by law and in the form determined by law.

1.3.2. Legislation protecting Religious and Educational Freedom:

The religious Freedom of Muslims is assured by the recognition of the right to establish and run schools integrating the teaching of Islamic religion. Issues related to the establishment and laws referring to private and foreign educational institutes regulate the running of Muslim schools.

²² The English translation of the Greek legislative texts is not an official one, however it sticks with the spirit of the law

Law 4862 / 7.1.1931

Article 9: (About foreign schools)...any individual enjoying full civil and political rights is allowed to establish a school regardless of his/her religious belief.

Article 6: ... Greek schools, either public or private, are forbidden to teach Christian-Orthodox lessons to heterodox pupils. They also should not bring the heterodox pupils in Orthodox Church ceremonies.²³

Decision of the State Law Committee no 538 / 1968 :Heterodox pupils are allowed to be absent from all their lessons once a week (the particular day considered in their dogma as the day for pray and rest).

Decision of the Ministry of Education no 149251 / 28.11.1957 : (about the curriculum of Muslim schools)....The School should teach the pupils that Islamic religion is based on moral principles and should communicate them the faith to God and the compliance to man's order.

Law no 694 / 13.9.1977 (On Minority Schools of the Muslim Minority in Western Thrace)²⁴. This is the main legislative framework, regulating all details on the establishment and function of minority schools.

Law no 2691 / 1998: The Minority ecclesiastical (religious) schools are recognized as equivalent to the rest ecclesiastic schools of Greece.

King's enactment no 31 / 22-1-1969²⁵ (on the establishment-in October 1968- of the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki,)²⁶

Law 3241 / 1991 (affirmative action on the admission of Muslim secondary school graduates in Greek universities at 0,5% of the total number of students eligible for higher education).

1991 Greek Government reaffirms the principles of “isonomia” (i.e. equality before the Law) and “isopoliteia” (i.e. equality of civil rights) in the relation between Christians and Muslims.

Law 2341 / 1995 on the education of Muslim Minority (various regulations related to functionality of minority schools i.e. teachers placements, educational material etc.)

Ministerial Decision no 2/152 / 22.5.1996 / 31.5.1996 (regulations about the registration of pupils in the Lower Secondary Education Minority Schools - Meionotika Gymnasia)

²³ A similar regulation was in function by the law 4397 of 1929 (art. 5 par. 2)

²⁴ the full text is available both in Greek and English in MERCATOR data bases

²⁵ at that time the official status of the Greek State was “Kingdom of Greece”

²⁶ This Academy, providing bilingual higher education, is addressed exclusively to Minority students who are engaged after their graduation as teachers in Minority Schools.

1.3.3. Legislation on Cross-Cultural Education

Law 2413/ 17.6.1996 (on Cross-Cultural Education: aims, content, organization, personnel etc.)

Law 2817 / 14.3.2000 (Issues concerning Greek education abroad and Minority education).

Ministerial Decision no 11 / 18.3.1996 (Establishment of administrative unit in the Ministry of Education dealing with the coordination of Educational design, Cross-cultural education etc).

Law 2525/1997 (on the establishment of all-day schools).

Ministerial Decision no 708/28.9.1999 (on Cross-cultural education, establishment and function of reception classes and supporting units).

1.4. Status of languages.

The official language in Greece is Modern Greek²⁷ (also official language of the European Union).

Turkish is officially recognized as a regional minority language of the Muslim minority in Thrace, protected by special legislation frameworks and accordingly enjoying educational facilities. It is used in Courts and Mosques. (The Arabic language is also used in Mosques for the reading of the Koran, as well as in minority ecclesiastical schools).

Turkish speaking civil servants are employed by the Greek administration in order to facilitate the every day communication with Muslims.

Newspapers and journals (in Turkish or bilingual) are published daily or weekly. All Turkish newspapers are available, regularly imported from Turkey. Turkish speaking radio-stations offer daily emissions, with songs, political comments and advertisements. Through satellite transmission, all Turkish TV programs are received. The Turkish language is taught in the bilingual minority schools covering 50% of the weekly curriculum (with the second language being Greek and the third English), as well as in many private language schools (frondistiria).

The Pomak and the Roma languages have no official status; they are spoken within the respective communities. Whereas the Pomak language keeps alive, younger Gypsies, following the bilingual GR-TR education gradually abandon the language of their parents, preferring Turkish language in everyday life. The local Roma community seems indifferent to preserve its language, gradually adopting Turkish in their every day life. To that respect they differ essentially from the other Roma communities all over Greece, which use Roma and Greek.

Among the immigrant languages present in Greece, Russian, Ukrainian and Bulgarian are mostly present in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The educational problems of these immigrants are confronted in two cross-cultural schools established in the area (Sapes and Iasmos).

A daily Greek newspaper (Paratiritis tis Thrakis) integrates translation of its material in Russian and Turkish languages. A Russian satellite TV Channel provides 24 hours daily emissions. Russian speaking migrants from Pontos are employed by the local authorities in order to facilitate the communication between administration and migrants.

It should be mentioned that, especially nowadays, despite the linguistic homogeneity envisaged in Greek society as a whole, a lot of less spoken languages are present, mainly in the big cities. About 10% of the total contemporary estimated population of Greece belongs to various ethnic groups and nationalities. This recent development, caused by the reception of economic and political migrants from all over the world, is handled with

²⁷ For information on the Greek Language evolution see <http://www.greek-language.com>

great concern by the Greek Government, which tends to pay particular attention to the cross-cultural education during the recent years. Printed media (journals and newspapers) in all languages are edited by different migrant communities in Athens, and are potentially available in our area as well.

1.5. Language, religion and social integration.

1.5.a. Theoretical approach

From the very beginning of human societies, both “language” (as a shared communication code) and “religion” (as a common body of beliefs, dogmas, symbols and rituals) have served as structural elements for their coherence. Both of them, underpinning the ideal of “us” against “the others”, became the background for the collective self-determination of population groups.

The need for absolute determination of any group members seems to have deep roots in prehistoric societies. From an anthropological point of view, defining the populations’ limits is a matter of survival, given the restricted availability of energy sources in their tough natural environments. However, the atavism of groups to retain their cohesion appears equally in contemporary societies, although there is a gradual change of the grouping criteria in the context of the globalization era.

Overall, language and religion, separately or combined influence the construction of collective “identity” and contribute to the positive or negative integration of various population groups in an overlapping social structure.

Long-living languages, like the Greek, continue serving as major factors of the distinct cultural identity of their users all over the world, without the latter being particularly worried for their successful integration in the various countries.

Universally used languages, like English, today’s “*lingua franca*”, (or like Greek and Latin in antiquity) fail to generate feelings of a unified identity. However, in terms of effectiveness they are extremely useful in broadening communication within wide cosmopolitan frameworks.

Religious preferences on the other hand, when linked with linguistic homogeneity, enhance the collective consciousness, facilitating the social integration within a group.

In other cases, different religious beliefs in a linguistically homogenous group could cause a societal mismatching. (e.g. in the case of Northern Ireland) Vice versa, a unified religious umbrella could cover broad social formations, in spite of linguistic differences (i.e. Islam, Christianity, Buddhism etc.)

Nowadays, Science and Technology (two fields developing their own specialized languages), become increasingly crucial factors of social development in comparison to religion. Therefore, social integration in our complex high-tech societies demands familiarization on both scientific and technological terms, leaving for language and religion a secondary role.

Since innovations and global changes affect regional societies in delay, the latter often remain engaged in out-of-date patterns. Within their

microcosm, persistence exclusively on language and religion, both deserving protection, could prohibit the aggregate integration of all groups.

The partners of the present project come together from different historical and socio-economic backgrounds. They have to face their local conditions within different legal frameworks, different attitudes and traditions. However, they meet at a common point. They all wish to improve in their regions the overall social development, benefiting from the promotion of multilingualism. To that respect, the key objectives hierarchically presented should be: **quality in education for all, updated training in new technologies, language preservation, multilingualism encouragement, and religious freedom.**

1.5.b. Social integration under the local conditions

Referring in particular to the role of language and religion in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, it should be noted that strong correlations among them are present in both Christian and Muslim communities.

The Greek-Orthodox Church, has functioned through time as a major component of the Greek cohesion. The Church is present in all expressions of everyday-life, it is prosperous and politically powerful.²⁸

The school life is influenced by the orthodox beliefs, the weekly curriculum in primary and secondary schools foresees 2 hours for religion lessons and many holidays are linked to the Christian-orthodox celebrations. However, this status concerns exclusively the pupils who declare their Christian orthodox identity. The absolute freedom of all heterodox children to follow their own beliefs is protected by law and the performance of their religious duties is facilitated.

Despite of the strong interrelationship between State and Church in Greece, the later does not interfere in civic issues, which are regulated by the Greek legislation.

On the contrary, according to the Muslim religion, several civil disputes at law are committed to the Moufti²⁹(the religious leader) jurisdiction. According to the (still in function) Greek Law no 2340 of 1920, the religious leaders (Mouftis) are authorized to perform judicial activities related to civic matters as for instance marriages and divorces, children surveillance, share of properties and heritages. The primary decisions of Muftis are *a posteriori* ratified by the Greek Civic Court.

Being Muslims, the Pomaks and Roma, although not particularly religious, were lead to follow this procedure for their relevant civic adjustments.

²⁸ The Greek Church reacted strongly to the recent decision of the Greek State to remove the reference on religion from the new identity cards. The Ministry of Education in Greece is actually Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The request for an open public discussion on the segregation between State and Church, is not encouraged at the moment.

²⁹ The official status of Muftis is the same as that of the Orthodox priests (they are civil servants and their salaries are paid by the Greek state).

Of course all Muslims have the alternative to follow the Greek Civic Code, but this is not a common practice up to now.

The Muslim minority in Thrace is much more strongly adhered to the religious tradition than the people in Turkey, which has become a more secular State, approaching gradually the western patterns³⁰. (The Kemalic reform in Turkey was actually accepted in delay by the Muslims in Greece.)

Several social behaviours, concerning mainly the status of women in Islamic societies, are apparent in Thrace, like for instance:

- a. The appearance of Muslim women (especially in Komotini and the neighbour Muslim villages), who are still dressed in a long black cover similar to the Iranian “tsador”, also covering totally their hair with a black or white “ferege”³¹. This uniform look is used nowadays only by the elder women, whereas the younger have replaced it by a “lighter” appearance: a long coat covering the internal dress (even in summer) and a colourful kerchief covering the head.
- b. The characteristic architecture of Muslim houses (still present in many villages), with high walls surrounding the house court and small windows facing the main streets, also reflects the traditional exclusion of women from social life.
- c. Women were not encouraged to go to school and many girls entering puberty were forbidden to go to gymnasium, being also obliged to cover their head and pushed to early marriage.

As expected, the situation is not the same in all minority families. The higher the economic level, the more advanced (or westernised) the life style and the better the female’s position is. Hopefully, as time passes by, the situation of Muslim girls is gradually improving. More and more girls nowadays are better educated; they enter the professional field and enjoy personal freedoms.

Another point indicative of the influence of the Muslim religion in the social behaviour concerns the attitudes of Muslims towards the Banking system. Actually they avoid it. According to Islam beliefs, acquiring interest from one’s money is considered a sin. Thus many Muslims (especially in the villages) used to treasure up their money instead of opening Bank accounts. When Greece entered in the EURO-zone, extreme cases of Muslims, who brought to the Bank bags filled with Greek banknotes to be exchanged into Euros, have been reported.

Anyway, religion has played an important role in the regression of the Muslim society, being opposed to any modernization tendencies. Yet, it is

³⁰ It is indicative that the number of Mosques in Western Thrace is higher than in any Turkish region of the same size.

³¹ According to the tradition any man outside the family should not see a woman’s hair. Even when visiting medical doctors, Muslim women keep their heads covered. Girls are obliged to cover their heads when they enter puberty.

interesting to note that this strict obedience to the Islamic tradition has been encouraged both by the Minority Religious leaders and the Turkish Consulate, although Turkey itself was turning to a secular state.

The Roma society on the other hand, displays several social attitudes clearly deviating from the Muslim tradition. (Pork meat and alcohol consumption, liberality in sexual behaviour, loose family links etc.). It is a marginal society, with low living level, bad education and low degree of socialization). These negative social traits, for which Roma are not exclusively responsible, create a kind of tribal cohesion, helping them to survive as a minority within the Muslim minority.

As far as the Pomaks are concerned, their main cohesion factors are the sense of ethnicity and at a second rate the Muslim religion. (Which, as mentioned before, in many cases deviates from the orthodox Islam).

Pomaks (at least men) could be characterized as a “progressive” population group. Many of them have left their area in order to work in Southern Greece as craftsmen, industrial workers or sailors in big tankers. They easily adopt the modern life style of the host places and they transfer new life patterns to their villages, upon their return.

It has been already stretched that the profound life-style differences between the communities, arising from their different cultural backgrounds, have never been causes of conflict, since they were used in co-existence within the context of a multicultural society. Thus, the model of various small communities, more or less internally coherent due to language and religion, which live peacefully in **parallel**, describes in the best way the social situation in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. There is continuous everyday communication among groups, common participation in religious ceremonies, commercial collaboration, friendly personal or family relationships, but no marriages among Muslims and Christians.

However, this is only a draft picture. Within the main population groups an interesting cultural variability, related to the particular tradition of each subgroup and indicative of its origin, can still be observed.³² Socio-economic differences, related to economic classification are present within all linguistic groups.

³² Within the Greek-speaking orthodox populations cultural barriers, in some cases even within the same village, were present until recently. For example, in Xylagani (Rhodopi Prefecture) where refugees from three different origins were settled (one from Eastern Trace and two from Eastern Romylia) three discrete casts live together avoiding marriages between them since the '50s. The so called “Greek natives” of Komotini, feeling members of a higher social class, preferred to keep some distances from the refugees. Migrant groups themselves, Kapadokes, Pontioi, Sarakatsans etc. very rare consorted each other.

Accordingly, within the Muslim minority there is a social grading related to the ethnic origin (Turks, Pomaks, Roma, Negros), to the economic status (big land owners or small size farmers), to the version of Islamic faith (orthodox or sectarian), as well as to the political affiliations (closer to Neo-Turks of or to traditional Paleo-Ottoman).

Armenians and Jews as well keep in parallel to the rest population groups their internal coherence.

1.6. For each language: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis)

Some of the main traits of the lesser-spoken languages of the area are drafted bellow, in alphabetical order:

Armenian			
Stengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Long-lasting History</p> <p>Great dispersion</p> <p>Strong links among Armenian communities internationally</p> <p>Language sources availability</p>	<p>Small size of local communities</p> <p>Armenian schools are established in Athens</p>	<p>To pool funds from EU in order to preserve Armenian Language in the area, as a less spoken one.</p>	<p>No threats.</p> <p>Armenian is not a language at risk, considering</p> <p>a) its broad use in various countries and</p> <p>b) the wish of the community to preserve its language.</p> <p>However, members of the Armenian Community in Komotini, worry about the diminishing interest of the younger to learn their language.</p>

Bulgarian			
Stengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The vicinity with BG</p> <p>The expressed willing of many Bulgarian Institutions to develop cultural collaborations with relevant bodies in the Region.</p> <p>The impotence of Bulgarian language in cross-border economic collaborations</p>	<p>The occasional character of the stay of the Bulgarian speaking individuals. (seasonal or short term workers)</p>	<p>To improve the cross-cultural collaboration through various EU programs. (INTERREG, SOCRATES, LDV, YOUTH, CULTURE)</p>	<p>No threats.</p>

Greek			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Long-lasting History and language continuity</p> <p>Great dispersion</p> <p>Presence of Greek words in the background of many EU languages</p> <p>Use of Greek in scientific terminology</p> <p>Official language within Greece</p> <p>Official EU language</p>	<p>Complicated grammar and syntax</p>	<p>To promote Greek culture through language learning as a value <i>per se</i> for the contemporary societies.</p> <p>To support Greek language learning in the Greek communities all over the world.</p>	<p>Not obvious threats.</p> <p>The intensive use of English in INTERNET communication as well as the adoption of English expressions by the younger generation, should be mentioned, as progressive intervention of the Anglo-Saxon culture, potentially threatening any special cultural traits.</p>

Pomak			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Long-lasting history</p> <p>Vicinity with Pomaks in Bulgaria</p> <p>Resemblance with Slavic Languages</p>	<p>No written form</p> <p>No linguistic documentation</p> <p>No reliable language sources</p> <p>Bilingual Turkish-Greek education offered to Pomak children</p>	<p>To promote linguistic research, educational models and teaching material, in order to encourage Pomak community to preserve its linguistic uniqueness</p> <p>** It is very important that any relevant activity should start from initiatives deriving from the Pomak community itself, or anyway be in concordance to the community's choices</p>	<p>Pomak language faces the threat of elimination under the local circumstances.</p> <p>Urgent action needed</p>

Roma			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Long-lasting History</p> <p>Great dispersion</p> <p>Wish of Roma communities to maintain their linguistic and cultural traditions</p>	<p>Small size of local communities</p> <p>Weak links between the local Roma population and the International Roma Associations.</p> <p>No access to international sources relevant to Roma language.</p> <p>Low socio-economic status of Roma in Greece</p> <p>Bilingual Turkish-Greek education offered to Roma children</p>	<p>To pool funds from EU in order to preserve Roma Language in the area, as a less spoken one.</p> <p>To promote the communication of the local Roma communities with relevant associations in the EU</p>	<p>Roma language is gradually abandoned by the local Roma in favour of Turkish.</p> <p>However this is a local phenomenon</p>

Turkish			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Vicinity to Turkey</p> <p>Special Educational status</p> <p>Availability of Educational sources</p> <p>Media available</p>	<p>Recently established official form, lack of historical continuity</p>	<p>To enhance cultural collaboration with TR</p>	<p>No treats at local or international level</p>

Valachian			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Long lasting existence</p> <p>Language used for communication among Vlachs in Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, FYROM</p>	<p>Oral Language.</p> <p>Spontaneous efforts for documentation had pure results</p>	<p>To promote language learning and documentation, in the framework of cultural heritage preservation.</p>	<p>The language is alive within communities since centuries, therefore there is no obvious threat to vanish, especially within the EU framework.</p>

1.7. Cases of Best practice

This is a short real story indicating the kind of relationships among population groups in the past: Three old ladies (a Jew, a Muslim and a Christian one), being friends during their youth met recently in Komotini, in order to recall their painful memories of the past. During the Bulgarian occupation the Muslim family protected the Jew, who succeeded to escape to the USA, saving her life. She left her property in Komotini, asking the Greek family to take care of it. Indeed, her property was protected and after 50 years the Jew lady came back to sell it. Human links were able to overcome the tough historical circumstances. The meeting of the old friends was, as expected, a very touching one. (Persons involved in this case are alive and could witness it).

2. Language use and Language awareness

2.1. Language as a component of identity. Language attitudes, representations and prestige.

2.1.a.Theoretical aspects

The role of language as a crucial component of a population's "identity" is omnipresent in any discussion concerning minorities. Language is not just a mean of communication within a group but an invisible border among groups as well.

J. Fishman (1968b, 1972c) supports the idea that, according to the degree of coherence offering to its users, a language could be characterized as **ethnic** or **national** respectively.^{33 34}

Any language (dominant or minority, regional or immigrant language) could under certain circumstances function as a tool for the development of ethnic or national (or even nationalistic) identity. Moreover, in the same historical period, the same language could function in different places as ethnic or national respectively.

³³ We could refer consequently in **multinational States** (like the model of the future European Union) or **multiethnic Nations** (like the former USSR or USA).

³⁴ According to Fishman (Fishman, 1972C:3) **nationalities** are ideologically neutral entities, developing over primary self-determinations and coherence links of local character. A **Nationality** is a social group perceiving itself as different but not within a narrow geographical frame. An **ethnic group** is actually like nationality except that it is a level of socio-cultural shaping simpler, smaller, more particularistic and more localistic. However, socio-linguists often use these two terms alternatively.

A second important point of this approach is that **ethnicity** does not always correspond to the presence or absence of political expression as well as of geographical autonomy. In contrast a **Nation** is a political-geographical unit under the control of a particular ethnicity. (Fishman, 1972C:5).

For Ethnicity, the language has to accomplish two main roles: to serve an effective administration (facilitating the communication between the State and its citizens) and to provide sufficient education. Thus, a certain language (or languages) must be selected as a governing or educational tool. To that respect the optimum choice is the language that better satisfies the demands, at the lower cost.

However, regarding Nationalism, the role of language is more subtle. Together with religion, tradition and history, language becomes a link with “the glorious past”, “authenticity” and other abstractive ideals, thus structuring a “contrastive self identification” (Fishman) or “unifying separatist functions” (Garvin and Mathiot 1956). The members of the group, even the bi-lingual ones, feel linked to other groups speaking their mother tongue, distinguishing themselves from other language speakers.³⁵ Given the symbolic importance of language in the development of Nationalism, we have perhaps an indicator to assume if a certain socio-cultural group behaves as an “ethnic” or a “nationalistic” one.^{36 37}

The unquestionable fact that language as well as religion is a short- duration (in terms of evolutionary time) cultural trait, changing through time under various environmental pressures, is obviously disregarded in nationalistic theories.

2.1.b. European identity for European Citizens

Within the aforementioned context the official languages of the European Union constitute tools of effective communication rather than means of imposing the dominant cultures upon the Minorities, living within the geographical borders of the National States. In contrast, several minority groups, even when enjoying a high socio-economic level of life, persist exclusively on their particular linguistic traits, thus setting their boundaries against the supposed threats of their assimilation.

³⁵ An extreme example of imposition of a newly designed language serving the cohesion of a new-established Nation, is the Language Revolution (*Dil Devrimi*) of Kemal Atatürk. It began officially in May 1928 (with the introduction of the Latin alphabet for the Turkish language) and was complete on January 1, 1929 - the day it became illegal in the new Turkish Republic to use the centuries-old-standard Arabo Persian calligraphic-style alphabet. And on *that* day, the link with Turkey's Ottoman-Arabic-Asian-Islamic past was altered drastically and irrevocably, forever. (<http://www2.egenet.com.tr/mastersj/turkish-lang-history.htm>)

³⁶ Fishman (1972C:62): “Nationalisms consciously undertake to produce self-consciously modern, authentic and unifying standard languages, which are to be consciously employed and conscientiously espoused, where previously there existed only regional and social varieties, unconsciously employed and unemotionally abandoned”. Fishman speaks earlier in another article (1968d:6) about the language “as a symbol of contra national ethnic-cultural identification on the part of smaller groups who, resisting from fusion into the larger nationality, develop a localized nationality consciousness of their own”:

³⁷ Assumingly the degree of preservation and defense of a certain discrete language could be, from a socio-linguistic point of view, a useful indicator of the promotion of nationalism against ethnicity.

The European Union has made serious efforts so far to record, document and preserve its multilingualism³⁸ through the financial support of relevant organizations, paying special attention to the regional and minority languages. The primary objective was to record the linguistic mosaic of Europe in order to protect its cultural heritage. Equally important, especially in cross border regions, is the economic dimension of multilingualism, as a factor for extension of commercial activities and trans-national entrepreneurship.³⁹

Nowadays, the issue of the “European Identity” is emerging. It seems that the pattern of multiple and complementary (or overlapping) identities fits better to our multicultural entity. All Europeans might have a European, a National, an Ethnic and moreover a cultural, a religious, a linguistic etc. identity. From this point of view the key person is the European citizen and the ultimate legislative basis concerns all kinds of human rights. In spite of the (expected) inertia of the European micro-societies to adopt this model, it seems that this is the only viable model in order to achieve the indispensable functional coherence, without losing our precious variability.

This model of European integration (avoiding assimilation) requires systematic efforts, refusal of persisting stereotypes, viable compromises and high cost.

This is the aspect of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, which tries to benefit from all related European Programs, in order to promote the European ideals in the area.

2.1.c. Language attitudes, representations and prestige at local level

In the contemporary multilingual landscape of the Region, as it is expected, the prestige, the attitudes and the representations of each language are different, due to the historical reasons, previously analyzed.

The Greek language enjoys a high prestige, due to its long-lasting history, constituting a basic element for high-standard education all over the world. Nowadays, Modern Greek is the official language of the Greek State, appreciated mainly for its functionality under the local circumstances.

³⁸ Final Report: Ex post Evaluation of Activities in the field of Regional and Minority Languages 1998-2002 (delivered to the EC by INTERART, June 2004)

³⁹ Obviously the EU did not plan to encourage “linguistic fundamentalism” even though the latter cannot be always avoided. Being aware of this threat and foreseeing the intensification of the linguistic Babel created by the enhanced waves of economic migrants, the EU uses in its recent texts differentiated and particularly clear expressions: “The mainstream of European Education, training and culture programs are already accessible to speakers of all languages, weather “official” languages or regional languages, minority languages, languages spoken by migrant communities, or sign languages.....”.....In the long term all relevant Community programs and the Structural funds should include more support for linguistic diversity, for regional and minority languages inter alia, if specific action is appropriate....

Among the other languages present in the area, Turkish is the only one recognized as a minority language, thus enjoying special educational measures. It is broadly represented in mass media, in the courts and in the communication between citizens and local authorities. However, many minority members complain that their language (meaning exclusively Turkish) is not properly treated by the Greek state.

The Pomak language faces various types of problems since it is mother tongue of a numerous population group but it is not taught at schools. It is an oral language, lacking reliable linguistic documentation. Some arbitrary attempts to promote its written form have started by individuals but they largely ended with poor results. It is considered that the Cyrillic alphabet is the most proper one for the written form of the Pomak language, due to similarities of the latter language with Bulgarian. However, this is an issue for linguists to deal with.

The language of the Roma is in a worse situation, given the general low level of education of the Gypsies families, their influence by the Turkish speaking minority and their few contacts with the Roma communities all over Europe.

Thus, both the Pomak and Roma languages need particular attention from the Greek State, since their support until now can be considered far from sufficient.

The Armenian language is preserved within the community, in spite of the lack of Armenian schools. It is not present in the everyday life since Armenian children, registering in the public schools speak perfect Greek. The Armenians of the area keep their strong connections with the Armenian communities in Athens and abroad and they do not feel that their culture is endangered living in Greece.

The migrants from the former USSR, use mainly Russian, Ukrainian and the Pontos Greek dialect. They make strong efforts to acquire proficiency in Modern Greek, supported through the creation of the two cross-cultural schools in Thrace. Bilingual persons, especially employed by the local authorities, facilitate their communication with the administration. Since they are permanently established in the area (due to the important financial support of the Greek state) and since they acquire the Greek citizenship, they try to integrate themselves in the Greek life-style.

2.2. Sociolinguistic differences between (and within) languages: language use in oral and written, public and private domains.

A sufficient analysis of the sociolinguistic differences concerning the less spoken languages in the region, is out of the limits of the present survey, since it needs systematic sociolinguistic research by specialists. However, some key points could be stretched:

- ▶ all languages are freely used in public, but only Greek and Turkish enjoy official status as official and minority languages respectively.
- ▶ efforts are made by Turkish speaking extremists to promote Turkish as an exclusive trait of national identity, to be attributed to the entire Muslim minority.
- ▶ each linguistic group has a particular appreciation for its own language, (or even dialect, or special accent), which is used in private domains. The Roma, however, think in general that their language does not deserve attention, because they equalize the low respect of their society with a low language value. Thus they have no problem to adopt Turkish instead of their mother tongue, assuming perhaps that this attitude will upgrade them in the hierarchy of the minority.
- ▶ Pomaks on the other hand, hesitated to request a more open use of their language, being afraid of various treats deriving from the Turkish-speaking nationalists. Thus, even today, their demands for language promotion are very soft.

Within the linguistic groups, (regardless the language) special expressions (more or less sophisticated, slang, mixed with English etc.) are always present. Through these, the social, the economic or the educational profile of the users can be easily displayed.

2.3. Transmission of language from parents to children.

It is the mother tongue that basically structures the development of the children linguistic abilities and their sense of identity. Given the parallel (without mixed marriages) co-existence of Muslims and Christians, children are mostly monolingual in the first years of their growth.

In many cases, however, one of the parents (usually the father who used to be worker or student in a foreign country - mainly Germany - speaks Greek or Turkish, whereas the other her (his) mother tongue. In these families children are bilingual, noted that the degree of language acquisition depends primarily upon the mother tongue and secondarily upon the time that both parents dedicate to their children or upon the cultural environment within the family.

Many children in families from the former USSR are also early bilingual, since parents in these families have different ethnic origins. Very often one of the parents speaks Greek (especially the Pontos dialect).

It has been proved that early bilingualism affects positively the brain development, enhancing the biological predisposition for easy adaptation in new linguistic environments. Thus, as many educators in the Region witness it, Minority children whose families are open to the use of Greek language (Greek speaking TV, newspapers or everyday communication), reveal higher school performances, regardless the type of school they follow.

2.4. Cases of best practice.

Sibel X. is a successful Muslim woman both professionally and socially. She runs, with her Christian partner a private language school (where English, Turkish and German are taught). She is elected member of the Prefecture's Committee of Rhodopi. Being aware of the value of multilingualism, (she was born in Germany where her parents were working for years), she consciously brought up her daughter bilingually, using both Turkish and Greek at home and registering the child in a public nursery school in order to facilitate her integration to the Greek speaking children. As a result, the daughter, now at the age of 8, who follows the bi-lingual curriculum of the primary minority school, has no difficulty to use any of the languages, whereas she learns also English very easily at the same time.

Many minority families, mainly those of the middle and upper social class, follow this practice today, since they are aware of the importance to acquire a proficiency in the official language for professional reasons.

3. Media, literature and other forms of Cultural expression

The situation of Minority media has been described before (see status of Languages).

Several publications in the less spoken languages are available. (11 daily or weekly newspapers in Turkish, 3 in Pomak, 1 in Greek, Turkish and Russian, 3 monthly Journals in Turkish and 1 monthly Journal in Turkish and Greek).

There are also 7 Radio Stations with emissions exclusively in Turkish. All Turkish TV channels are accessible and all daily Turkish newspapers are available in relevant kiosks.

There are facilities established for the satellite transmission of a Russian TV Channel, addressed to the Russian speaking groups.

Internet sites (newsletters, electronic journals etc.) bilingual GR-TR, trilingual GR,TR, EN are available. Recently, several sites developed by Pomaks are on line, with information about their tradition, poetry and music.

Additionally several cultural expressions of particular interest are worth mentioning.

A) Courban Bairam: Bairam is one of the most appreciated Muslim ceremonies. During the Bairam, and after a long period of fasting, Muslims “sacrifice” a young animal (sheep or cow), cook it in public and offer meals with boiled meat and pilaf to all people (Muslims or not). Special candies are offered as well. Wishes are exchanged between Muslims and Christians in the occasion of Bairam, as it is done vice-versa during Christmas and Easter.

B) Muslim boys circumcision: This is an open ceremony, very important for the Muslim families (the analogy in Christianity is the Baptizing ceremony). The male child is exceptionally dressed (often with a Prince uniform), a specialist circumcises him and afterwards a great party takes place in which all family friends (regardless their religion) are invited.

C) Two places in the mountainous Rhodopi, one in Xanthi (Loutra Thermon meaning hot springs in Thermes) and another in Evros (place Hilia), are known as very ancient sanctuaries of archaic (perhaps Orphic) ceremonies. An echo of the ancient traditions is still alive, preserved within the folklore tradition of the Pomaks. Once a year, a festival is organized in both places, with songs, dances, ritual food and wrestling competitions. Whereas the festival of Thermes keeps its original character, the one of Hilia has been gradually influenced by the Turkish propaganda, thus turning into a dull fair, which has lost the mystic spirit of the ancient ceremonies.

D) Wedding ceremonies (of both Christians and Muslims) are open to both communities. None of the communities has prejudices against participating in such joyful events. Wedding presents are offered to the young couple and broad receptions follow the religious event.

4. Languages in Education and training

4.1. The structure of the Education System in Greece

Education in Greece is compulsory for all children between 6-15 years old; namely, the compulsory stage includes **Primary** (*Dimotiko*) and **Lower Secondary** (*Gymnasio*) Education. The school life of the students, however, can start from the age of 2.5 years (pre-school education) in institutions (private and public) called "*Vrefonipiakoi Paidikoi Stathmoi*" (creches). In some *Vrefonipiakoi Stathmoi* there are also *Nipiaka Tmimata* (nursery classes), which operate along with the *Nipiagogeia* (kinder gardens). Attendance at Primary Education (*Dimotiko*) lasts for six years and children are admitted at the age of 6. Along with the regular kinder gardens (*Nipiagogeia*) and the *Dimotika*, all-day primary schools are in operation, with an extended timetable and an enriched course program.

Post-compulsory Secondary Education, according to the reform of 1997, consists of two school types: *Eniaia Lykeia* (Unified Upper Secondary Schools) and the Technical Vocational Educational Schools (*TEE*). The duration of studies in *Eniaia Lykeia* (EL) is three years and in the Technical Vocational Educational Schools (*TEE*) two years (a' level) or three years (b' level). Mutual student transfer from one type of school to the other is possible.

Along with the mainstream schools of Primary and Secondary Education, Special *Nipagogeia* (kindergardens), *Dimotika*, *Gymnasia*, *Lykeia* and upper secondary classes are in operation, which admit students with special educational needs. **Musical, Ecclesiastical and Physical Education** *Gymnasia* and *Lykeia* are also in operation.

Post-compulsory Secondary Education also includes the **Vocational Training Institutes** (*IEK*), which provide a formal but unclassified level of education. These Institutes are not classified as a discrete educational level, because they accept both *Gymnasio* (lower secondary school) and *Lykeio* (upper secondary school) graduates according to the relevant specializations they provide.

Public higher education is divided into **Universities** and **Technological Education Institutes** (*TEI*). Students are admitted to these Institutes according to their performance at national level examinations taking place at the second and third year of *Lykeio*.⁴⁰ Additionally, students can be

⁴⁰ The exams of the second lyceum year are going to be cancelled according to the recently announced reform of the Ministry of Education.

admitted to the **Hellenic Open University** upon the completion of the 22nd year of age by drawing lots.

Formal education is characterized by the fixed length of study, the possibility of repetition and the award of a formal school-leaving certificate, which stands as the official documentation.

As a consequence of the classification of the education institutions, a title (school-leaving certificate, degree etc.) is compulsory for students after the completion of each education level in order to continue to the next.

It should be outlined that the above description offers a general overview of the educational system with its main aspects being supervised by the Ministry of Education and forming the major part of it. However, a broader analysis shows that the totality of the education services provided in Greece, form a much more complex, multilevel and differentiated infrastructure. Moreover, many other educational services, classified or unclassified, are provided in the formal education system, either in co-operation with it or completely independently. A detailed description of the Greek Education System is offered in EURYBASE, the EURYDICE database of the European Education Systems.

4.2 Cross-Cultural Education

It was back in 1996 that the Ministry for National Education and Religious Matters led the foundations for a system designed to meet the educational needs of social groups with a particular social, cultural or religious identity. The Ministry adopted cross-cultural education - a new form of education in Greece, as part of this policy.

The aim of cross-curriculum education is to set up and run primary and secondary classes that provide education to young people with a specific educational, social or cultural identity.

In cross-cultural schools, the standard curriculum is adapted to meet the specific educational, social or cultural needs of the students attending them. A total of 26 cross-cultural schools have been set up throughout Greece since 1996. These schools, which will continue to increase in number, guarantee equal opportunities to every student in the country, while the cutting-edge approaches to teaching and learning utilized in these schools have a positive knock-on effect on the Greek educational system as a whole.

1. Of the 26 schools, 13 are primary schools, while there are 9 junior high schools and 4 senior high schools.
2. A school can only be described as cross-cultural when repatriated Greek and/or foreign students account for at least 45% of the total student body.
3. The educators in these schools receive special training and are selected on the basis of their knowledge on the subject of cross-cultural education and teaching Greek as a second or foreign language.

4.3. Minority Education

4.3.a Primary education

A total of 232 Minority primary schools are functioning in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (76 in Pomak villages, 113 in Turkish speaking, 37 in villages with mixed population, and 6 in Roma areas). Teaching is performed in both languages (Greek and Turkish), 50 % each. (339 Greek speaking and 340 Turkish speaking teachers are employed for the needs of the bilingual curriculum, plus 48 teachers of English). Pupils are taught from 28 hours per week (in the first class) up to 35 hours per week in the three last classes of the primary school.

Regardless of the linguistic group to which they belong the Muslim pupils are taught the Turkish as a first language, the Greek as second language and English as a foreign language.

Under this scheme, part of the Muslim minority, namely the Pomaks and the Gypsies face difficulties when following the minority schools because they are obliged at an early age to be taught in Turkish, plus Greek, plus English, (plus Arab, for the Koran teaching), whereas they use a different to the Turkish mother tongue within the family environment during childhood. This situation results in a total confusion for the children, who develop negative feelings towards the school and very often abandon it. Children from families of low economic level and especially girls are affected from this situation, since their families take them back from school at an early stage, considering that education is not necessary for women.

Thus, the main problem of the aforementioned population groups is not that their language is not recognized as “official” by the Greek State (despite the fact that their population size could justify such a request). Anyway they can freely use their language in the inter-community communication and edit and deliver printed material. Their problem is that, due to the imposed multilingualism, in combination with the low educational status of their families, they cannot acquire a sufficient general education, thus losing their opportunities for personal development.

4.3.b. Secondary education (from 13 to 18 years)

Although not foreseen in the Lausanne Treaty, there are two minority lower secondary schools (Gymnasium), two upper secondary schools (Lyceums) and two Ecclesiastic (religious) secondary schools with bilingual curriculum.

In general however, the strictly bilingual curriculum in combination with the extended use of Turkish language within the Turkish speaking families, blocks pupils from acquiring proficiency in Greek.

Muslim children have the option to follow the public secondary schools (Gymnasium and Lyceum), in which the curriculum is offered in Greek, with second language English and third language (alternatively but compulsory) French or German.

In this case there are provisions designed to facilitate the introduction of Muslim pupils to the educational environment. (e.g. lower grades in Greek language are needed for them in order to pass the class).

Being aware that the sufficient knowledge of the State's official language is a crucial factor for a successful personal and professional life, many Muslim families (mainly from the middle and upper social classes) prefer to register their children in the public schools. According to recent data of the Prefectures of Rhodopi and Xanthi the portion of Muslim pupils registered in the Lower Secondary Schools (Gymnasia) is approximately 1:3. Hopefully, the participation of Muslim girls is gradually increasing in the recent years.

Many educators witness that a) when Greek language is present in the family environment in parallel to the mother tongue and b) when Muslim children create relationships with Christian, the school performance of the former is much better.

4.3.c. Higher education

Lyceum graduates aiming to register in Higher Education Institutes should take the special Panhellenic exams, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education, which is responsible also for the quality and the quantity of the subjects asked. The exams are particularly demanding for the applicants and result to the entry of a certain number of students per faculty (*numerus clausus*). In spite of the high degree of unemployment - especially for University graduates - in Greece, there is a strong demand for tertiary studies and many Greek Lyceum graduates register to various Universities abroad. (UK,DE,IT,FR)

Being aware of the weakness of Muslim graduates to pass the pan-hellenic exams, the Greek state introduced in the early 90's affirmative action type policies, which secure their entry in the Greek Universities all over the country. (0,5% of the places of each Department, are offered to the Muslim applicants, who may enter the University with lower performances).

Benefiting from these measures, many Muslim Lyseum graduates, who previously used to go to Turkish Universities, nowadays prefer to register in Higher Education Institutes of Greece.⁴¹ More than 1000 young scientists have graduated from Greek Universities since the first application of the affirmative action.

As a result, the number of Muslim scientists (Physicians, Lawyers, Architects, Engineers etc.) with successful careers is steadily increasing.

⁴¹ Higher Education in Greece is public. The students do not pay registration fees and most of them are provided with full board accommodation in the students' hostels

4.4. Vocational training

The issue of vocational training in Greece is somehow complex, since both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour are involved in it with overlapping responsibilities. Two central bodies, namely the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK) and the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) offer training alternatives. Several institutes of vocational training of both organisations are in function in all main towns of the Region, open of course both to Muslims and Christians.

OEEK (Ministry of Education) supervises:

- a) the public Vocational Training Institutes (IEK)
- b) the private Vocational Training Institutes (IIEK)
- c) the Pan-hellenic examinations for the acquisition of the Vocational Training Certificate. This certificate provides access both to the labour market and to the higher education (TEI).

Nowadays, there are 6 IEK in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Drama, Kavala, Xanthi, Komotini, Alexandroupolis, Dydimotychon).

The studies duration is 2 training years (4 semesters)

OAED (Ministry of labour) supervises a series of alternative public vocational training institutions (many of them offer special programmes for less favoured social groups), as well as several private Centres of Vocational training.

4.5. Adult education

In the contemporary Greek educational policy, the issues of adult education and lifelong learning are considered of major importance. The new established “second chance schools” attract many individuals who, for various reasons have abandoned the educational system at an early stage. After a two years study period the adult student acquires a certificate equivalent to the degree of the lower secondary school (gymnasiun), which provides better chances to the labour market. Several Muslim women follow the offered courses at a regular basis in such schools established in Komotini and Xanthi. This is a very promising indication that they have started to surpass their traditional isolation.

In addition, the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace runs several EU programmes which offer basic language skills, special vocational training and professional consultancy to marginal social groups, (among them Roma and Muslim women).

4.6. The education of Russian speaking migrants

Repatriated Russian speaking migrants also face the problem of adaptation in the school system, although in a smaller degree, since several families knew the Greek language, even if they used Russian. The new generation of

their children, born and grown up in Greece, achieve better performance at school.

Since 1993 the Greek State finances in all schools the organisation of “supporting classes” for additional language teaching.

Recently, the institution of the “all-day school” has been introduced in order to offer, among others, complementary support to bilingual pupils.

4.7. Foreign Languages

There is a high demand for proficiency acquisition in foreign languages in our Region, as well as all over Greece.

Thus, in addition to the official educational curricula, pupils take private lessons of English, German, French, Italian or Spanish, or follow courses in private language schools (in which Turkish is also offered).

Several foreign educational institutions have established departments all over Greece (British Council, Goethe Institute, Institute Français, etc) offering language learning and certification, in the legal framework of private and foreign schools).

This parallel education costs a lot to the family budget, but results to the fact that most of the younger people are able to communicate in a foreign language, thus prepared to follow university studies abroad. Again, this tendency is related to the socio-economic status of the family, either Christian or Muslim.

4.8. Teaching in and of the language, teacher training.

4.8.a. Teaching in Turkish

Since the provision of teaching in a minority language concerns exclusively Turkish, bilingual teachers perform teaching in this language. They are either Muslim graduates of the Special Pedagogic Academy of Thessaloniki, or Turk citizens especially invited from Turkey, in the framework of the relevant bilateral educational agreements. Muslims who study in the pedagogical Departments of Greek Universities will be employed in minority schools upon their graduation.

Teaching of Turkish language is offered in private language schools (frontistiria) specialized in foreign language teaching.

4.8.b. Teacher Training

Teachers of all disciplines in public schools follow a short intensive special training course upon their employment, in respective educational centres (PEK).

The Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki is especially addressed to Muslim teachers since 1968. Efforts are made to upgrade the status of studies implementing an enriched curriculum and offering to the graduates the opportunity to continue their studies in any University Pedagogic Department.

Recently, the Ministry of Education finances teachers of all levels who wish to learn Turkish. The project has been accepted with enthusiasm and all the available places have been covered.

The Educational consultants of each Region organise periodically short-term seminars in order to train teachers in the latest developments of educational models. Special attention is given to the teaching of science, since terminology is an additional difficulty for Muslim pupils.

4.9. Language resources available for the (minor) languages: general (standard orthography, grammars, dictionaries, textbooks) as well as electronic (e-dictionaries, spelling checker).

All kinds of the aforementioned resources are available for the Turkish language. However, the relevant material for the other two minor languages (Pomak and Roma) is very poor. The problem could be solved after a systematic linguistic research, followed by the respective language documentation and the preparation of proper educational means.

4.10. Cases of best practice.

- a) In order to improve the Greek language skills of Muslim students the Greek State implemented a special programme called “Education of Muslim children”, which was set under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and was co-ordinated by the University of Athens. Among its (successfully accomplished) activities was the teacher training and the production of special educational material in printed and electronic form, used to support complementary teaching of Language, Geography, Mathematics and Natural Sciences in Minority pupils. Two consultancy centres with bilingual personnel were established in Komotini and Xanthi. Their role was to bring closer parents and teachers, to guide the Muslim families on educational issues, to provide psychological support and professional guidance to the less favoured pupils and to co-ordinate the provision of supplementary lessons to them.

The Minority initially faced the programme, which was implemented at voluntarily basis, with reserve. However, upon its completion it has been positively evaluated from all sides, as one of the most effective actions for the improvement of the educational status of minority children. One of its collateral outcomes is the shift of various negative stereotypes still present among many Muslims, like the unjustifiable fear of their cultural assimilation.

b) The 4th Gymnasium of Komotini is established in a neighborhood where all main population groups live together. As a result, among the approximately 300 pupils registered in the school, 30% are Muslims, 20% are migrants from the former USSR, and the rest Greeks. Although it is not nominated as a multicultural school, it undertakes pioneer initiatives in the European context.

The school has participated in a series of EU educational programmes (Comenius, Lingua et al. Projects), since many years. Through various projects pupils (of all groups) supervised by their tutors have visited Italy (twice), Spain, France, Turkey Bulgaria and Cyprus. Vice versa, the families of the pupils have hosted children from the aforementioned countries. These exchanges helped children, who experienced the co-existence with other cultures, to broaden their horizons.

5. Languages and cross-border co-operation

5.1 Role of the languages in cross-border cooperation and economic development

Many perspectives for cross-border co-operation challenge the potential of the Region. However, given the uniqueness and the sensitivity of its natural environment, the regional authorities are oriented to soft developmental activities instead of heavy industrial ones.⁴² Thus actions related to tourism, commerce, education and culture are in priority favoured.

The Region, as part of the European Union, could lead and co-ordinate various types of common projects benefiting from EU programs and funds. Being aware of the proper timing, all neighbouring sides encourage meetings of local authorities, commercial chambers, businessmen and academics, in order to enhance mutual links and proceed with common plans. These have resulted to some draft ideas of common actions, which could be easily materialized, after detailed planning. (See below some of the successful cases)

Overcoming obstacles, however, related to the economic imbalance and the variety of national legislations across the borders, is a prerequisite.

In any case, language(s) is the key-issue for further development. Up to now, English is mostly used in the intra communication among the potential partners, however, when the discussions proceed to a higher level, the use of local languages is necessary and translators are invited.

There is a real need to train multilingual personnel, with special managerial qualifications in international environments. The creation of a “pool of experts” from all population groups, ready to support cross-border collaborations according to the contemporary policies, seems to be a promising practice.

5.2. Cases of best practice

a) **PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS IN THE ACADEMIC FIELD:** In summer 2003, the Democritus University of Thrace (Laboratory of Anthropology) in collaboration with the International Democritus Foundation and the NGO W.E.C.A.R.E., organized a meeting of academics from Greece Bulgaria and Turkey, in order to promote cross border networking. A follow up workshop took place in July 2003, during which detailed information on all European Programs of common interest was offered. (SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI, 6th FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME, INTERREG, TEMPUS, YOUTH, etc.). Both meetings showed the worm interest of the participants to put the keystones of collaboration, i.e. to promote the linguistic abilities

⁴² A proposal for the establishment of a cold-mining industry has been repeatedly rejected, due to the threat of extended pollution.

of the partners. Thus a concrete proposal for the establishment of intensive summer school teaching Greek, Bulgarian and Turkish to academic staff and advanced students from the three countries, has been elaborated. It is ready to be applied upon the provision of the relevant (considerably low) funds.

b) Since 2001, a local NGO, (TASTELAND or HORIO GEFSEON in Greek), has been activated towards the promotion of culinary tourism. The initial idea was based on the fact that the various population groups in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace have preserved their particular nutritional traditions, and several religious rituals related to food. Thus two transnational symposia were organized on the topic, followed by a Balkan Food Festival with 500 participants from all Balkan Countries. This initiative was appreciated by the Ministers of Tourism (in their unofficial meeting in Athens during the EU Greek presidency in May 2003) who declared their common wish to promote culinary tourism in the Balkans, giving to Thrace a coordinating role.

c) a similar festival is organized annually by a cultural enterprise in Kavala (named COSMOPOLIS), which aims to bring together traditions of different countries through various cultural expressions.

d) The annual commercial fair THRAKI is organized in the industrial area of Komotini, where exhibitors and businessmen from all over the Balkans have the opportunity to meet and discuss future collaborations.

e) Many municipalities across borders have established several “networks of cities”, thus keeping continuously open communication channels.

It should be mentioned however, that all the aforementioned initiatives (and many others), in spite of the enthusiasm and the success of the initial steps, face many difficulties in their continuity. It is obvious that a more coordinated and systematic action is needed from all parts, in order to achieve the desired efficiency. Again, language bridges are very important to that respect.

6. Outlook and desiderata. Perspectives of linguistic development

Considering that any type of collaboration and common socio-economic development is based upon advanced educational backgrounds and cosmopolitan culture, both related to multilingualism, we propose:

- 1) A broad **campaign on the value of multilingualism** and the EU frameworks and funding opportunities for language learning, especially addressed to the minority schools.
- 2) A follow up realization of **educational exchanges** (including both pupils and tutors) under the umbrella of COMENIUS, LINGUA, LDV and YOUTH programs.
- 3) A series of **study visits** through which language teachers, educational managers and executive personnel (especially from minor population groups) should travel to EURAC or other partner institutions.
- 4) Establishment of **virtual co-operation** through new technologies among pupils of small isolated villages of the partner regions. (video-conferences, elaboration of common essays, electronic photo libraries etc.)
- 5) Establishment of a **tri-lingual (BG-GR-TR) intensive summer school**, which will train every year advanced students and personnel from neighboring institutions.
- 6) Elaboration of a common research program aiming to promote the **linguistic documentation** of Pomak language as well as to produce proper educational material in printed and electronic form.
- 7) Organization of a regular (perhaps annual) **youth festival** dedicated to literature, poetry and other cultural expressions of minor groups.

Several actors should be involved in the realization of the above proposals. (local authorities, education administratives, universities, cultural associations, private enterprises, etc. Consequently, the promotion of the aforementioned objectives, requires the creation of a local coordination unit, responsible for: a) international communication, b) collection and elaboration of useful information c) preparation of funding applications d) strategy planning and consultancy e) coordination and surveillance of the decided activities.

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ANNEX I

THE TREATY OF LAUSANNE (ART. 37-45)

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES.

ARTICLE 37.

Turkey undertakes that the stipulations contained in Articles 38 to 44 shall be recognised as fundamental laws, and that no law, no regulation, nor official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation, nor official action prevail over them.

ARTICLE 38.

The Turkish Government undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion.

All inhabitants of Turkey shall be entitled to free exercise, whether in public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, the observance of which shall not be incompatible with public order and good morals.

Non-Moslem minorities will enjoy full freedom of movement and of emigration, subject to the measures applied, on the whole or on part of the territory, to all Turkish nationals, and which may be taken by the Turkish Government for national defence, or for the maintenance of public order.

ARTICLE 39.

Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities will enjoy the same civil and political rights as Moslems.

All the inhabitants of Turkey, without distinction of religion, shall be equal before the law.

Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Turkish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employments, functions and honours, or the exercise of professions and industries.

No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings.

Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own language before the Courts.

ARTICLE 40.

Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as other Turkish nationals. In particular, they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.

ARTICLE 41.

As regards public instruction, the Turkish Government will grant in those towns and districts, where a considerable proportion of non-Moslem nationals are resident, adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Turkish nationals through the medium of their own language. This provision will not prevent the Turkish Government from making the teaching of the Turkish language obligatory in the said schools.

In towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in the enjoyment and application of the sums which may be provided out of public funds under the State, municipal or other budgets for educational, religious, or charitable purposes.

The sums in question shall be paid to the qualified representatives of the establishments and institutions concerned.

ARTICLE 42 .

The Turkish Government undertakes to take, as regards non-Moslem minorities, in so far as concerns their family law or personal status, measures permitting the settlement of these questions in accordance with the customs of those minorities.

These measures will be elaborated by special Commissions composed of representatives of the Turkish Government and of representatives of each of the minorities concerned in equal number. In case of divergence, the Turkish Government and the Council of the League of Nations will appoint in agreement an umpire chosen from amongst European lawyers.

The Turkish Government undertakes to grant full protection to the churches, synagogues, cemeteries, and other religious establishments of the above-mentioned minorities. All facilities and authorisation will be granted to the pious foundations, and to the religious and charitable institutions of the said minorities at present existing in Turkey, and the Turkish Government will not refuse, for the formation of new religious and charitable institutions, any of the necessary facilities which are guaranteed to other private institutions of that nature.

ARTICLE 43 .

Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities shall not be compelled to perform any act which constitutes a violation of their faith or religious observances, and shall not be placed under any disability by reason of their refusal to attend Courts of Law or to perform any legal business on their weekly day of rest.

This provision, however, shall not exempt such Turkish nationals from such obligations as shall be imposed upon all other Turkish nationals for the preservation of public order.

ARTICLE 44 .

Turkey agrees that, in so far as the preceding Articles of this Section affect non-Moslem nationals of Turkey, these provisions constitute obligations of international concern and shall be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations. They shall not be modified without the assent of the majority of the Council of the League of Nations. The British Empire, France, Italy and Japan hereby agree not to withhold their assent to any modification in these Articles which is in due form assented to by a majority of the Council of the League of Nations.

Turkey agrees that any Member of the Council of the League of Nations shall have the right to bring to the attention of the Council any infraction or danger of infraction of any of these obligations, and that the Council may thereupon take such action and give such directions as it may deem proper and effective in the circumstances.

Turkey further agrees that any difference of opinion as to questions of law or of fact arising out of these Articles between the Turkish Government and any one of the other Signatory Powers or any other Power, a member of the Council of the League of Nations, shall be held to be a dispute of an international character under Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Turkish Government hereby consents that any such dispute shall, if the other party thereto demands, be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The decision of the Permanent Court shall be final and shall have the same force and effect as an award under Article 13 of the Covenant.

ARTICLE 45 .

The rights conferred by the provisions of the present Section on the non-Moslem minorities of Turkey will be similarly conferred by Greece on the Moslem minority in her territory.

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