

Komotini Municipality Action Plan for Enterprise Development for Migrants and Ethnic Minorities

Proposal: Creation of the [Local Employment & Entrepreneurship Office](#)

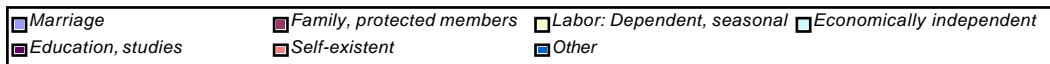
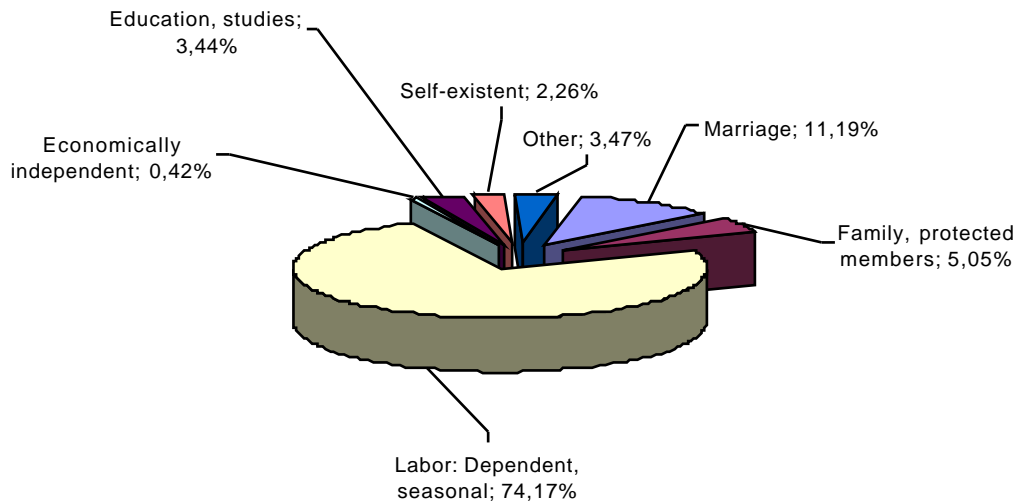
During the last years in the municipality of Komotini and as the manpower coming from non-EU countries increases, the need of the social inclusion emerges as one of the top issues preoccupying the local government.

The current status of labor market and human resources of the persons among the target groups (re-settlers, migrants, Roma population and muslim population) in the wider urban area of Komotini has the following characteristics: There is a large percentage of unemployment among the target groups as well as a low level of entrepreneurship. The majority of these people present lack of communication skills, meaning that they cannot communicate in the Greek language, and as a result they face serious problems in adjusting to the social environment. All these, end to a vicious cycle with them having a low esteem and not promoting neither their skills nor their entrepreneurship.

Apart from the facts that could be seen as their responsibility, there are several issues in the view of the Greek state that could be worked out. The lack of knowledge of the mechanisms promoting entrepreneurship and making approachable public services and institutions is a question for the Greek state. Also, the fact that many people are registered as non-qualified due to the non-equivalent diplomas they purchased in their countries of origin is an obstacle in their possible professional activities.

From the picture below one can realize the importance of labor in the migrant groups. The unemployment rate in the region is 11% and from the records of the Greek Manpower Organization it is clear the attempt to offer vocational skills to the target groups and give motives in order for them to create their own business.

Migration reasons



The new reality formed in the international arena concerning the issues of raising the employment, increasing the social inclusion and confronting the issues of social exclusion related to sensitive social groups (refugees, immigrants, minorities, re-settlers etc- Lisbon Strategy) in accordance with the National Strategic Framework 2007-2013: «Enlargement of development capability of the country, maintenance of the economic growth rate, increase of productivity in higher than the E.U. average for the vitalizing of the employment, realization of convergence and improvement of the quality of living without any exclusions, constitute the legislative framework into which Komotini's Action Plan is standing.

In Greece, only since 2007 municipalities have undertaken a more active social role and take more initiatives to implement social policies instead of the previous centralized-governmental mode of proceeding with such issues.

Based on an already existing network from a program called Local Employment Initiatives and after public consultation, the potential stakeholders together with the local government have concluded to the initiative of the Local Employment & Entrepreneurship Office. Due to the fact that the network was tried during the last four years giving tangible results, its active participation

in social inclusion and its contribution in enterprise development for migrants and ethnic minorities is feasible and will try to fill in the gaps of previous measures and policies developed in the area based on the good practices and the registered ones that did not work out. Among the stakeholders are:

Municipality of Komotini, Rodopi Development S.A., Labour-employment center of Komotini, Confederation of Professionals and Handcraftsmen of Rodopi Region, Union of Special Child Care of Rodopi Region ' Agioi Theodoroi, Lawyers' Union of Rodopi Region, Union of People with Special Needs ' Perpato', Municipal Agency of Cultural Development of Komotini, Municipal Development Agency of Komotini, Municipal Organization of Youth and Athletics, Demokritus University of Thrace Department of International Economic Relationships and Development, Technical Chamber of Greece Regional Department of Thrace, Industrial Chamber of Komotini, Economic Chamber of Thrace, Cultural union of People of Black Sea of Komotini and Region ' O Eyxinos Pontos', Union of women from 'Stratona' .

The methodology in order to conclude to the proposed action plan was the following:

1. Concentration of researches done during the last 5 years
2. Best practices in the region and in the EU
3. Consultation with local stakeholders
4. Meetings with the MA of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace Region

The overall aim will be for the Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office to be the conjunction ring between the Local policy for the increase of employment in the wider sense (including self-employment-entrepreneurship) and the needs of the local economy. Thus, the reinforcement of the local development and social cohesion in the Municipality of Komotini will be succeeded through the improvement and the increase of employment of sensitive social groups and the integration on the labour force and the local society. The general idea is not to create a new structure dedicated to the disadvantaged groups but include policies and measures that will allow them to be incorporated.

This Office will be an active structure for:

- ü Data collection
- ü connection with all possible stakeholders
- ü involvement of local community

In particular, the main objectives of the Action Plan will be:

- ü The confrontation of the imbalances and the inequalities regarding the accessibility of the sensitive social groups to the labor market through the increase of employability and the promotion of equal opportunities
- ü The creation of a quota system for the demand and supply of labor force
- ü The provision of consulting services to women in order to increase their share in the labor market
- ü The exploitation of the human capital of the Municipality
- ü The creation of an innovative employment support model for the Local Authority

The services of the office will be provided to 4 levels:

- ✓ Unemployed people
- ✓ Enterprises
- ✓ Local stakeholders
- ✓ Public

In general the key activities to be undertaken by the office are the following:

- Ø Development of an evaluation system
- Ø Creation of a regional network among the local authorities that had implemented Local Employment Initiatives in 2000-2006
- Ø Designing of a Web-Site with information about the activities of the office
- Ø Creation of a database with the occupational profiles of the trained persons and their occupational evolution after their consultation (after 18 months)
- Ø Organization of a Dialogue Forum between the local stakeholders, the SMEs and the people who benefit from the office

With regard to the unemployed people the objectives of the office will focus on the systematic recording and follow up of the unemployed and their promotion to action and energies which will enforce their integration to the labor market. In particular, some optional activities will be the following:

- Ø Cooperation with all the appropriate institutions (Ministry of Employment & Social Insurance, Greek Manpower Employment Organization, etc) for recording qualitative and quantitative data regarding the unemployment level in the Municipality of Komotini
- Ø Connection with other employment policies that have been undertaken by other institutions in order to enrich the Bank of Information and the database of the unemployed people that were profited by the office.
- Ø Planning of required actions for the promotion of employment such as advisory activities and training
- Ø Mediation with collaborative enterprises which guarantee full time or part time employment
- Ø Organization of events for the sensitization of the unemployed people about the activities of the office to reduce the unemployment level

With regard to the enterprises, the objective of the office is to systematically record and monitor the needs of the local economy in terms of work places. In particular, some optional activities will be the following:

- Ø Cooperation with all the appropriate institutions (Chambers, Associations, etc) in order to enter up qualitative and quantitative data regarding the needs in human resources in the Municipality of Komotini
- Ø Connection with other employment policies that have been implemented locally in order to enrich the Bank of Information and the database of the enterprises that were profited by the office.
- Ø Provision of motivations to the enterprises in order to participate in the activities of the office
- Ø Promotion of the unemployed in places of work

Ø Organization of events for the sensitization of the enterprises about the activities of the office

Under this perspective the office will function as a structure that will connect the local needs in human resources according to the labor supply

Complementarity with the R.O.P. of Macedonia – Thrace 2007-2013 (ERDF)

The creation and some of the activities of the Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office can be funded under the following priority axes of the Regional Operational Program to the respective codes:

Priority Axis 2: Digital Convergence and Entrepreneurship

- ✓ Code 14: Services and applications for SMEs (e-commerce, education and training, networking, etc)
- ✓ Code 8: Other investments for enterprises (creation of new enterprises from special categories of the population)

Priority Axis 3: Sustainable Development and Quality of Life

- ✓ Code 69: Measures for the improvement of woman's accessibility and evolution in the labour market, in order to reduce discriminations in the labour market and to harmonise the work and private life, through facilitations of services for children care and care of the depended persons.
- ✓ Code 79: Other social infrastructures (for the support of sensitive social groups)

Complementarity with the O.P. Human Resources – Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (ESF)

In addition, the activities of the local office can be funded from the Operational Program Human Resources through the following categories of intervention:

- ✓ Code 64: Development of special services for the employment, education - training and support services for the development of prevention systems to deal with the structural and economic changes and the future needs regarding the work places and the qualifications
- ✓ Code 66: Implementation of preventive measures in the labor market
- ✓ Code 70: Special activities in order to increase the share of migrants in the labor market and consequently increase by the same time their social integration
- ✓ Code 80: Promotion of cooperation, agreements and initiatives through the networking of national, regional and local authorities / institutions / associations
- ✓ Code 81: Mechanisms for the improvement of best practices, planning, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level – creation of alertness in the implementation of policies and programs

Complementarity with the O. P. Digital Convergence – Ministry of Economy (ERDF)

Last but not least, some of the activities and technology equipment of the local office can be funded from the Operational Program Digital Convergence through the following categories of intervention:

- ✓ Code 10: Infrastructure of Telecommunications (included broadband networks)
- ✓ Code 11: Technologies of information technology and telecommunications (access, prevention of danger, research, innovation, electronic content)
- ✓ Code 12: Technologies of information technology and telecommunications (TEN-ICT)
- ✓ Code 13: Services and applications for the citizens (e-health, e-governance, e-learning, e-integration)

Added Value

- ✓ The added value of the proposed intervention is the synergy of national, regional and local stakeholders / institutions in implementing employment policies, monitoring and evaluating the labor market.
- ✓ In addition, the proposed action will integrate all the necessary information and services for the sensitive social groups (including migrants) in order to support their smooth social integration into the labor market.

Estimated Funding: 400.000,00 Euros

For Technology Infrastructure and Equipment the Action Plan is eligible under ERDF funding through the Operational Program of Macedonia – Thrace and the OP Digital Convergence (Ministry of Economy)

The services of the Local Employment and Enterprise Office (networking, training courses, social care, quota system, monitoring of the labor market, consulting services, etc) can be funded under the ESF through the Operational Program of Human Resources

In particular, an optional allocation of financial resources could be the following:

- Ø 200.000 Euros from the OP Human Resources / ESF (Codes 64, 66, 70, 80 and 81)
- Ø 150.000 Euros from the Regional Operational Program Macedonia – Thrace / ERDF (Codes 14, 69 and 79)
- Ø 50.000 Euros from the OP Digital Convergence / ERDF (Codes 10, 11, 12 and 13)

Komotini Municipality Action Plan for
Active Inclusion Measures for Labour Market Access

Title: Creation of the [Local Employment & Entrepreneurship Office](#)

(Part II)

1. Problem Analysis

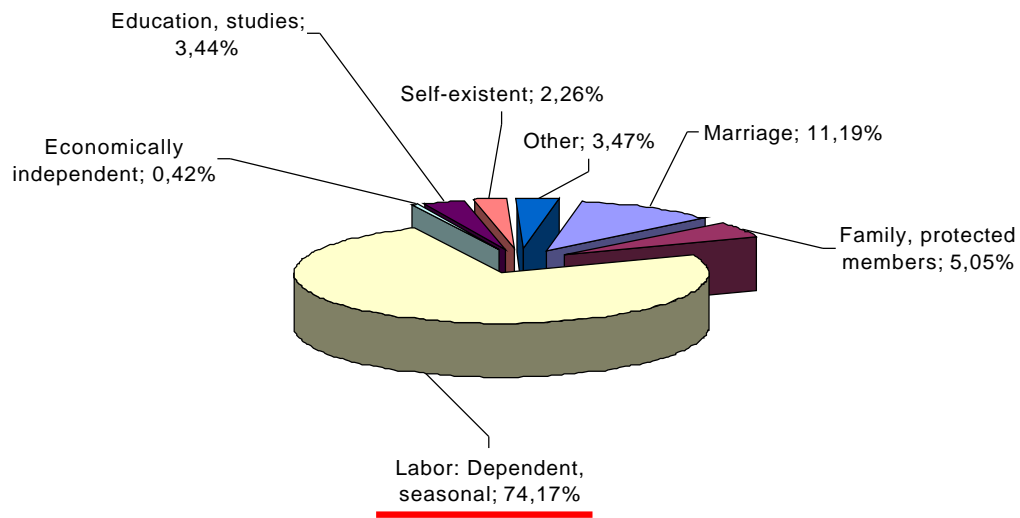
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Judging from the local mapping, as seen in the picture below, one can realize the importance of labour in the migrant groups. The unemployment rate in the region is 11% and is almost equally shared between men and women.

Until recently, the Greek Manpower Organization was the only entity who dealt with the problems of employment and active inclusion in the labor market in the area. This organization however is very centralized and bureaucratic.

Migration reasons



■ Marriage	■ Family, protected members	■ Labor: Dependent, seasonal	■ Economically independent
■ Education, studies	■ Self-existent	■ Other	

Apart from the issues that could be worked out in the view of the Greek state, there exist several sectors which permit interference of the local governance and could lead to tangible results. In Greece, only since 2007 municipalities have undertaken a more active social role and take more initiatives to implement social policies instead of the previous centralized-governmental mode of proceeding with such issues.

The new reality formed in the international arena concerning the issues of raising the employment, increasing the social inclusion and confronting the issues of social exclusion related to sensitive social groups (refugees, immigrants, minorities, re-settlers etc- Lisbon Strategy) in accordance with the National Strategic Framework 2007-2013: «Enlargement of development capability of the country, maintenance of the economic growth rate, increase of productivity in higher than the E.U. average for the vitalizing of the employment, realization of convergence and improvement of the quality of living without any exclusions, constitute the legislative framework into which Komotini's Action Plan is standing.

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Komotini municipality, on the other hand, had a previous similar experience; the Program 'Integrated Support System for the long-run incorporation of Re-settlers from ex-Soviet Union Republics and other Special Social Groups in the labour market' (2004-2007), despite the success it had, it stopped providing any service and the local office closed after the end of funding.

2. Overall aim

The overall aim will be for the Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office to be the conjunction ring between the Local policy for the increase of employment in the wider sense (including self-employment-entrepreneurship) and the needs of the local economy. Thus, the reinforcement of the local development and social cohesion in

the Municipality of Komotini will be succeeded through the improvement and the increase of employment of sensitive social groups and the integration on the labour force and the local society. The general idea is not to create a new structure dedicated to the disadvantaged groups but include policies and measures that will allow them to be incorporated.

3. Specific objectives

Given all the above, the objective of the present Action Plan is to create a structure that will work according to the private criteria and will be effective, sustainable and flexible. The goal will be to stop depending on EU or national funding as the basic asset, after the initial boost, and adopt the characteristics of the market with cost accounting and 'selling' of the services in a reciprocal –social fairly- way.

To accomplish this objective, the municipality will train the personnel in order to accommodate the needs separately:



Client-facing work

Advice, guidance and assessment as well as support with health issues, drug and alcohol counseling, training activity and housing assistance among others.



Employer-facing work

Vacancy sourcing, human resource planning, detailed analysis of job roles and person specifications, matching clients to jobs, sifting applicants, interview assistance and testing.

4. Main Target Groups

Re-settlers, migrants, Roma population and muslim population continue to be the main target groups. At this stage, though, the Action Plan focuses on the local employers, the companies, the industries and the associations through the specialized personnel in order to sensitize and approach them.

5. Activities to be undertaken

With regard to the local employers, the objective of the office is to systematically record and monitor the needs of the local economy in terms of work places. In particular, some optional activities will be the following:

- Cooperation with all the appropriate institutions (Chambers, Associations, etc) in order to enter up qualitative and quantitative data regarding the needs in human resources in the Municipality of Komotini
- Connection with other employment policies that have been implemented locally in order to enrich the Bank of Information and the database of the enterprises that were profited by the office
- Provision of motivations to the enterprises in order to participate in the activities of the office
- Organization of events for the sensitization of the enterprises about the activities of the office

Under this perspective the office will function as a structure that will connect the local needs in human resources according to the labor supply.

6. Methodology

For the successful implementation of the present Action Plan, the actions to be undertaken are divided in three piers:

- a. Personnel training
 - Vocational training from experts in the field
 - On-line coaching
- b. Local Field Research
 - Face-to-face interviews • Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office registration
 - Old researches
 - Address to local chambers (extensive database)

c. Local Dissemination

- Material production for the target groups of the project (MILE)
- TV and radio spots – local campaign
- Press conferences
- Info pack to the interested parties
- Posters in the central square and municipal buildings

d. Follow up

- To be done in collaboration with the observatory
- Meetings and phone calls
- Questionnaires to be statistically worked out

7. Complementarity with other interventions

Complementarity with the R.O.P. of Macedonia – Thrace 2007-2013 (ERDF)

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- Priority Axis 3: Sustainable Development and Quality of Life
- Code 69: Measures for the improvement of woman's accessibility and evolution in the labour market, in order to reduce discriminations in the labour market and to harmonise the work and private life, through facilitations of services for children care and care of the depended persons.
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8. Added Value

- The added value of the proposed intervention is the synergy of national, regional and local stakeholders/institutions in implementing employment policies, monitoring and evaluating the labor market.
- In addition, the proposed action will integrate all the necessary information and services for the sensitive social groups (including migrants) in order to support their smooth social integration into the labor market.
- Substantial social profile for the city

9. Equal Opportunities

Women for the project will not be a special target group. However, under the Priority Axis 3 of the Regional Operational Program Macedonia – Thrace 2007-2013: Sustainable Development and Quality of Life (Code 69), it will take 'Measures for the improvement of woman's accessibility and evolution in the labour market, in order to reduce discriminations in the labour market and to harmonise the work and private life, through facilitations of services for children care and care of the depended persons'.

10. Innovative Character

Some of the projects implemented in the last period were the following.

- Integrated Support System for the long-run incorporation of Re-settlers from ex-Soviet Union Republics and other Special Social Groups in the labour market, Komotini, ESF, 2004-2007
- Prefecture of Evros elaborated the Project: Desmos-Equality, beneficiaries: Unemployed, peoples posing cultural, linguistically, religious alterations, refugees, migrants. The partnership is constituted by: Development Agency of Alexandroupolis, Christian Youth Union "Euxini Poli", Center for the information and support of the socially isolated people.
- Establishment of Information center for the migrants and the refugees: "Ifestos". The partnership of the project is constituted of: Development Agency of Xanthi,

Commercial and Industrial Chamber of Xanthi, Greek Branch of the International Organization for the Migrants, Greek Manpower Employment Organization.

- Just The Job
- A good practice guide for organisations providing job brokerage services, written by Tank Consulting Ltd. September 2004
- Case study of the Building Futures job matching project

The innovative character is based on the texture of the intervention which is complex and multilevel as well as on the attempt to formally connect all the related institutions and organizations in working for the same cause with the local authorities.

11. Estimated Funding: 400.000,00 Euros

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The services of the Local Employment and Enterprise Office (networking, training courses, social care, quota system, monitoring of the labor market, consulting services, etc) can be funded under the ESF through the Operational Program of Human Resources

In particular, an optional allocation of financial resources could be the following:

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The Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office will be a new structure which will be however based on the work already done by the Social Services of the city,

the Observatory and its very useful indicators that will be adjusted to the needs of the Office, and the data and studies already existing from the chambers and the institutions working in this field.

An integrated proposal will be submitted for funding after the conclusion of the Fast Track Project.

12. Timetable for implementation

Phase	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Opening Calls for Proposals					
Preparation and Submission of Proposals					
Approval of Proposals					
Implementation of the Action Plan					
Pilot Operation					

Komotini Municipality

Action Plan for
Intercultural Dialogue and Access to education,
health and housing

Title: Creation of the [Local Employment & Entrepreneurship Office](#)

Access to services

(Part III)

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1. Introduction

In the general framework of MILE project, the City of Komotini has concluded in the creation of a Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office. Intercultural Dialogue and access to education, health and housing as a part of MILE project was treated as a direction this entity should have in order for both the institutions and the local community to adjust to the new reality and for the sensitive groups (migrants, re-settlers, Roma and Muslims) to be included by improving their knowledge and skills.

Access to services and empowerment of the institutional role of the state in integration will lead to the purpose of the municipality, the maximum possible inclusion without however losing the intercultural elements that make this region of Greece particular and special.

In fact, the main objectives of this third part of the project, aimed at two different peers:

- On the one hand, training of the employees of the key services and mediators/ facilitators for a better access of these groups to the services and;
- On the other hand, creation of a multicultural library and enabling of a moving library to arrive at the edges of the municipality where people face basic problems and education is considered as luxury.

It is worth mentioning that the future office will be located in the same building where the Urban Observatory, the Info point Europe Direct and the so-called 'Wall boxes of Youth Employment' are located too. As a result, all these -relevant among them- entities will form an information point for the citizens and a meeting place where people can get information, internet access.

For the present Action Plan, the City of Komotini, the Managing Authority of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the municipal service of Komotini and the Municipal library have collaborated.

2. Problem Analysis

Apart from the issues that could be worked out in the view of the Greek state, there exist several sectors which permit interference of the local governance and could lead to tangible results. In Greece, only since 2007 municipalities have undertaken a more active social role and take more initiatives to implement social policies instead of the previous centralized-governmental mode of proceeding with such issues.

The new reality formed in the international arena concerning the issues of raising the employment, increasing the social inclusion and confronting the issues of social exclusion related to sensitive social groups (refugees, immigrants, minorities, re-settlers etc- Lisbon Strategy) in accordance with the National Strategic Framework 2007-2013: «Enlargement of development capability of the country, maintenance of the economic growth rate, increase of productivity in higher than the E.U. average for the vitalizing of the employment, realization of convergence and improvement of the quality of living without any exclusions, constitute the legislative framework into which Komotini's Action Plan is standing.

The city of Komotini has always been the historical product of a complex co-function of geopolitical, ethnic, economic, social and cultural factors. The existing status has as follows below:

2.1. Immigrants & Re-settlers

In recent years Greece has become a host country for economic immigrants. According to available data, approximately 10 % of Greece's population is immigrants. Foreign workers in Greece, despite their lower unemployment rates compared to the general population (8.1% in the second quarter of 2005 compared to 9.6% of the general population, source: National Statistics Service – Labour Force Research) are mainly employed manually as unskilled workers and this impacts greatly on both

their working conditions and their wages. Immigrant women in particular work mainly in the so called female professions, such as caring for the elderly and as domestic aids. Frequently they are employed in atypical forms of work and this reinforces discrimination.

In addition to employment, the Hellenic state is called upon to successfully tackle challenges pertaining to appropriate planning and lifting of existing barriers to secure a full and fair access to the products and services in the sectors of education, health, housing and culture for third country nationals, as well as to guarantee public services capability to cope with increasing immigrant policy requirements and provide sufficient information concerning rights and obligations to the interested parties.

Similarly, the respect of cultural specificities and the acceptance of their difference and potential divergence from the dominant cultural principles constitute major requirements for a smooth and equal inclusion of immigrants in the Hellenic society.

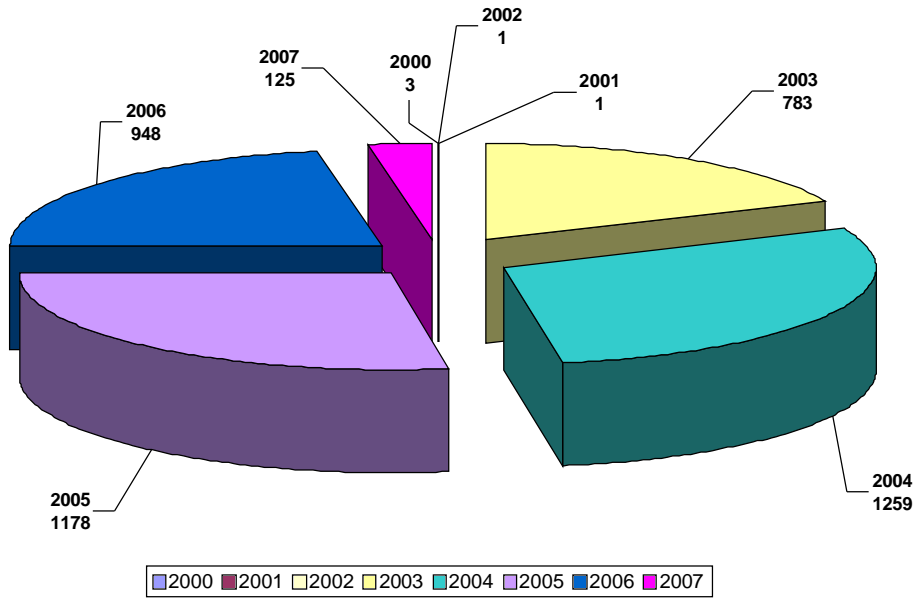
2.1.1. Migration in Komotini

The region met with numerous population movements taking place sequentially through centuries. In the last 8 years Rodopi region has received about 4,300 immigrants (apart from re-settlers) which represent 8,11% of the total population.

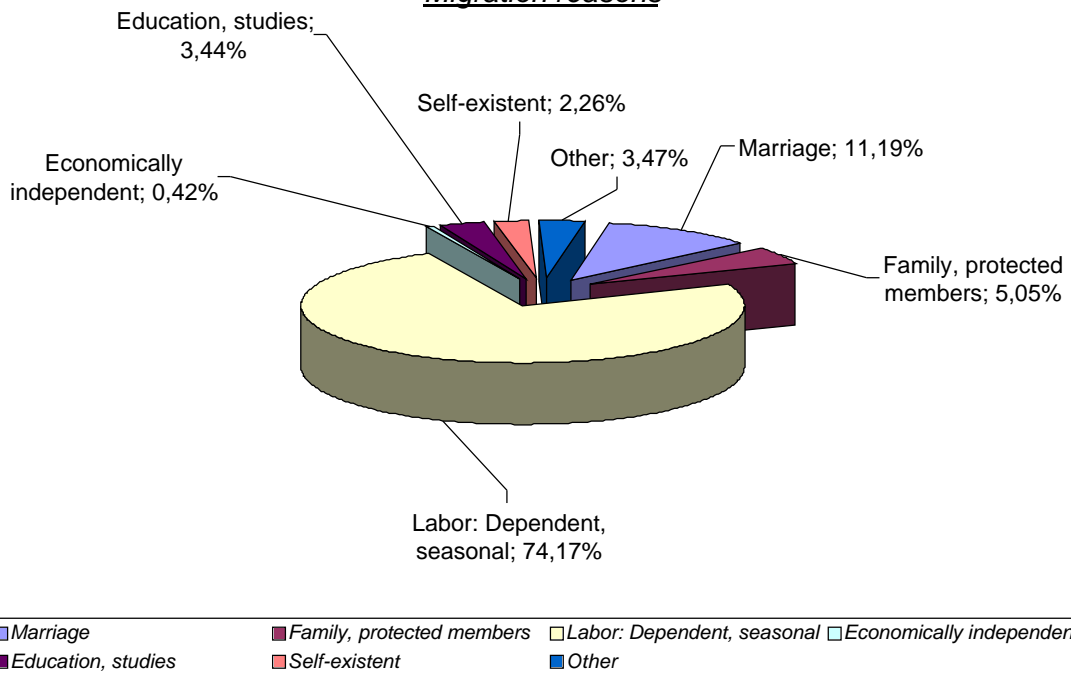
The last significant emigration of population was the one of the re-settlers from ex-Soviet Union Republics, during the last 15 years. More than six thousand people were received in the home country where large projects for their adjustment took place.

The following pictures show the present situation in migration in the limited area of the municipality.

Number of Incoming Immigrants



Migration reasons





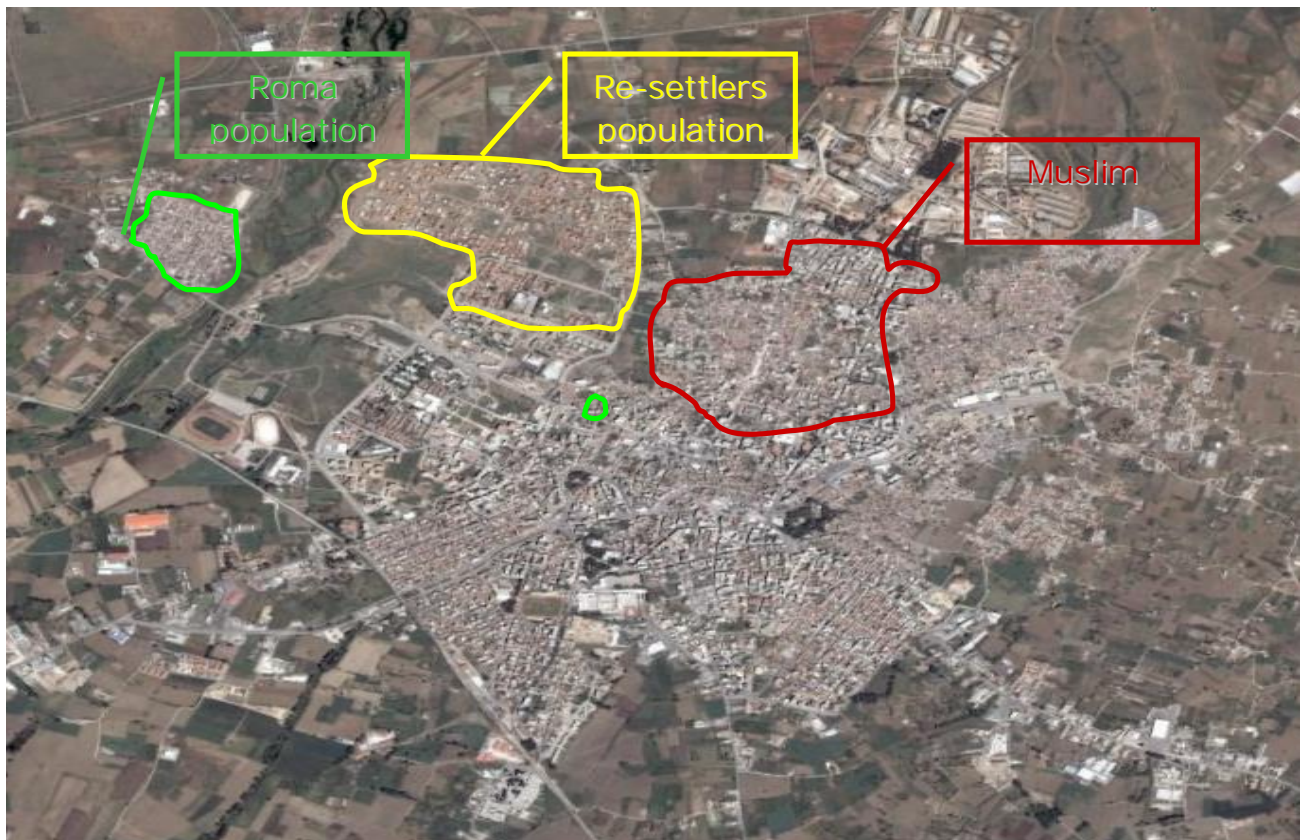
2.2. Roma

The problems which the so called "Roma" face are well known but they are mostly considered as inevitable consequences of their specificities. Numerous representatives of this population group encounter great barriers in accessing basic goods and services, which are taken for granted for most of us. Gipsies' participation in the formal labour market is not adequate and frequently their average income is much lower compared to the norm.

Furthermore, many live in deteriorated dwellings under adverse living conditions with no access to quality education and vocational training.

The frequently observed intolerance vis-à-vis gipsies due to the stereotype perceptions that their cultural feature diverge and clash with the so called dominant cultural principles, constitutes an additional risk factor for rejection and possible exclusion. These prejudices and discrimination pervade, often latently, many aspects of our everyday lives thus reinforcing gipsies' exclusion in multiple ways.

In the city of Komotini there is a decent number of Roma people as it shows in the picture below with characteristics that reach the profile of an excluded group on the one hand that participates though in several activities locally on the other hand such as local open markets and agriculture. They do not have the nomad profile of other times.



2.3. Gender & Religion

There are considerable improvements in the Hellenic society with regard to gender equality.

Since the beginning of the 80s, when the first relevant legislative measures have been introduced in the field of civil and work relations, laws have been enforced smoothly despite reservations expressed at the time about a potential conflict with the so called "Hellenic social reality".

This fact, combined to the development of proactive employment policies, has considerably contributed to improving this "social reality" by upgrading women's position in politics and society and by enabling them to enter the labour market on an equal footing with men.

Nevertheless, women continue facing poverty and exclusion risk from the labour market more frequently. Despite a steady increase in women's employment rates, the latter are still lagging far behind compared to men (74.2% for men compared to 46.1 % for women in 2005, source: Eurostat, EU-LFS). Furthermore, women's unemployment rates (13.4% in the second quarter of 2006), despite a significant decrease, continue to be more than double that of men (5.6% in the second quarter of 2006, source: National Statistics Service – Labour Force Research).

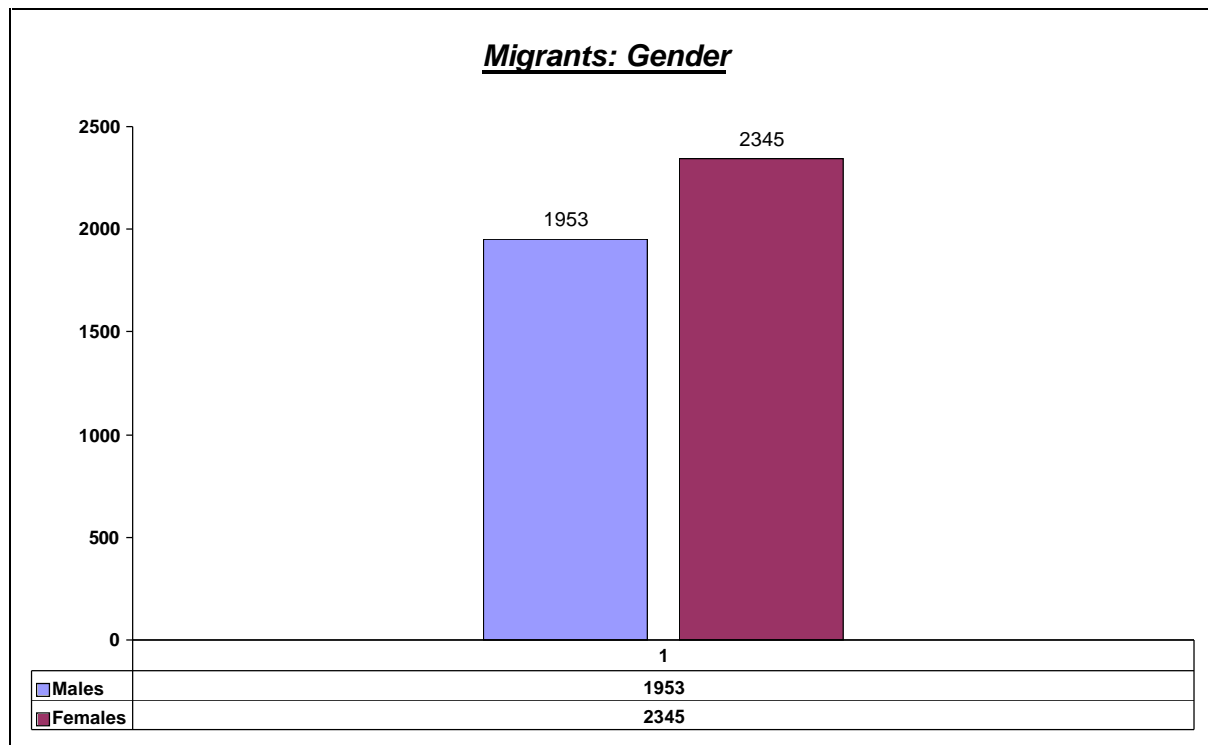
Our main priority is to reinforce women's employment by means of personal and professional life conciliation actions aiming at a balanced participation of genders in both personal and family obligations and in the labour market.

Religion, as all other beliefs, plays a major role in self-determination and in the making up of a person's identity. Therefore, respect and recognition of "difference" and the protection against discrimination is a universal right.

It is a generally accepted fact that individuals and groups with different religious or other beliefs are discriminated upon and this frequently results in their inability to access products, services and employment on an equal footing with the general population.

Equality before the law and protection of all persons from unlawful discrimination constitutes an inalienable and fundamental right. Personal choices relating to sexuality and gender should not become causes of distinctive behaviour, injure personality and dignity and deprive people of their rights such as the right to employment.

In Komotini there is a significant part of Muslim women who are far from working with this phenomenon being more intense in the villages distant from the center.



2.4. The competences with regard to Health Care

In the absence of regularisation measures until 1998, exclusion from formal access to the National Health System was a de facto situation resulting directly from the migrants' legal status. Legalisation is a recent development for the majority of migrants and, even so, the share of those without insurance is high enough, at about 40-50 per cent, as recent empirical studies reveal. Lack of insurance means that migrants themselves have to pay in full for medical treatment, which is clearly too costly for most. Current trends, however, reveal a gradual improvement in the position of immigrants, as increasingly more acquire legal status and find regular employment, thus securing legal access to the National Health System: by early 2000, nearly 213,000 immigrants were

registered with the three main Greek Social Security Funds, thus guarantying access to health services for themselves and their families.

However since 2004 (last regularisation law: 3386) no new opportunity for regularisation has existed. That means that in Greece, an unknown but constantly increasing number of aliens who enter the country illegally, stay without papers and do not have any chance of access to social care. Nevertheless, during the period previous to the regularisation campaign, there was space for access to basic welfare services. Despite the lack of relevant provisions, many migrants have been able to benefit from certain public services, due to specific legal provisions but mostly due to gaps in the practical implementation of the policy framework. Informal practices and support from social networks have also played a positive role. There are many examples of unofficial help from both doctors and administrative staff at public hospitals or even in the private sector.

Various additional strategies have been observed. Some found out about, applied and have been eligible for special welfare programmes (Pronoia) which offer access to health services and other benefits for low-income people. Obviously, this is not a viable choice, as it does not apply to everyone (only immigrants of ethnic Greek origin are eligible). A rather common practice among undocumented migrants for accessing public hospitals was the use of emergency services: recent unpublished research shows that the share of foreign patients using the emergency services in a major Thessaloniki hospital was as high as 58.8 per cent among those insured and reached 88 per cent among those without insurance. This strategy was so widespread that the 2000 Circular provided for special (border) police units to patrol public hospitals, after medical and administrative staff objected to informing the authorities about undocumented patients.

There are no signs of systematic discrimination or exclusion, and cases of maltreatment by doctors or hospital staff should be considered as rather

rare and isolated events. Such events do exist, however. Research by Psimmenos and Kasimati (2003) points to the problems of extending health services to newcomers at a period of welfare transition, with persistent national identity considerations by health care officers and practitioners who see immigrants as a 'threat' to the existing structures. More importantly, barriers to access appear to be bureaucracy, overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure and other chronic problems of the Greek health system, which affect negatively the quality of the services provided. Finally, a lack of relevant information or of access to information, due to language difficulties, for example, limits immigrants' knowledge of procedures and excludes them from the use of certain benefits and rights to which they might be entitled. Communication barriers seem to be important, not only regarding access to health as such, but mostly in respect to information, negotiation and communication with health care administrators and providers.

2.5. The competences with regard to Education

Some particularities of the Greek welfare and integration system should also be taken into consideration. Up to 2005 – 2007, integration was only addressed through a mainstreaming approach: migrants were entitled, as Greek nationals, to benefits in social security and health services if they fulfilled the same conditions.

The education system is accessible to foreign pupils, even those with parents illegally established in Greece, but with limited measures towards the adaptation and support for those pupils: legislative initiatives have been adopted to foster access to education, to some extent even for illegal migrants.

To be more specific, compulsory (primary and high school) education is in Greece an obligation for minors till 16th year of age. Law 2416/96 sets the framework for the unobstructed access of migrant minors to

education through the provision of appropriate personnel and services, the access to appropriate educational schemes (Greek language lessons, supportive teaching, integration classes, cross-cultural schools). Specific legislation provisions facilitate the enrolment in school of foreign minors (in case of incomplete documentation of the parents, required under general provisions) and a procedure of determining the educational level of the new pupils is also provided. The legislative framework includes also measures for the prohibition of school dropping and the encouragement of further education (positive exclusion measures towards a “favourable” treatment of pupils with no Greek nationality during the first years of schooling and – until recently – “favourable” access to university education).

When registered and legally employed, migrants face together with nationals the existing shortcomings in all aspects of Greek social policy. The lack of family and personal supporting “environment” (the so called Mediterranean Model were family, personal and social networks supplement in many respects the public services support, which in many cases is not enough) could, in the case of migrants, be only replaced by some assistance from co - nationals.

In the sphere of governance, immigration management and integration policy are mainly issues pertaining to the central state authorities. Despite that, competence fragmentation amongst diverse ministries without coordination system fully capable to monitor the allocation of the expenditures and the setting of priorities makes the adaptation of a cross-cutting relevant public policy rather difficult.

High hierarchy, administrative centralism, structural weaknesses in local and regional level, limited activation of the non - governmental actors remain ever key issues, towards the fulfilment of the integration objectives, such as transfer of information, the perception and evaluation

of the reality on the ground and concluding to a well – addressed funding of all relevant activities.

The need for a holistic approach in all aspects of integration was one issue that the recent legislation tried to deal with, starting a serious attempt of addressing the situation of Greece as host country of migrants.

Aiming to safeguard access to fundamental rights and civil services, to prevent social exclusion and to reinforce the participation of migrants in the labour market, measures have been initiated recently in Greece by multilateral administrative structures. Despite the absence of tradition and experience, in relation to other European countries, actors of the civil society have actively intervened, especially in the major cities (Athens, Thessaloniki) where the majority of the migrant population lives, filling in several areas the shortcomings of the State services, enabling access to civil services, providing information, language courses and reception facilities.

As for most recent positives developments: the harmonisation of national legislation to the Directive for family reunification (P.D. 131/2006), the application of the Presidential Degree Nr. 150/2006 (long term resident Directive) leading, through the provided language and basic principles (history – civilization) courses, to a five – years residence permit. Finally, the intention to associate the long term residence permit with a voting right (participation to municipal and regional elections).

The question remains – given the competence fragmentation and the diversity of priorities: the coordination of integration measures into a cross – cutting policy.

According to the a/m described Greek circumstances, the federal model of Spain with the extensive powers pertaining to the autonomous regions cannot be emulated. Despite the development of regionalisation in the last years and the granting of competences to local and regional levels,

these latter are still administrative weak and in some cases lacking the adequate human resources to administer integration. Given that both these levels have no power of raising taxes directly and are dependent upon the State for financing, means that in Greece integration efforts should originate mostly from Athens. Also, the lack of the Spanish tradition in a significant participation of the civil society means that the State cannot delegate significant integration tasks.

Nevertheless, the "Support Fund" sets a good road – model for the Greek reality, clarifying essentials necessities of integration policy.

Area of significant value for Greece is the precise and accurate registration of the needs and the consequent allocation of funding. Such breakdown may allow overcoming the significant overlapping and the fragmentation of competences between services.

Evaluating the areas of action included in the Fund, we feel that, for us at least, a clarification of the term and contents of the "reception" post and the apportionment of funding (if any) within this specific area would be of assistance. What exactly does Spain include under this heading and which actions are eligible for funding thereupon? It would be of interest to us in particular regarding the above-mentioned lack – until recently – of any effort to reinforce the migrants' access to Greek society and public services. Providing specific care to vulnerable cases, through the reception funding raises the issue of the extent, the characteristics and the permanence of the funded services, taking into account the fact that in Greece these areas of support could require the intervention of several public services.

Given that the integration objectives have a long term perspective and that they bear fruit in the long run, it is imperative that integration actions are allowed to develop for a much longer period than a couple of years of a legislative period. It is also important to allow inter party agreement on the integration purposes and objectives, so as to avoid a

complete modification of the rules of the game following a governmental change (In the model under discussion agreement between different levels of government).

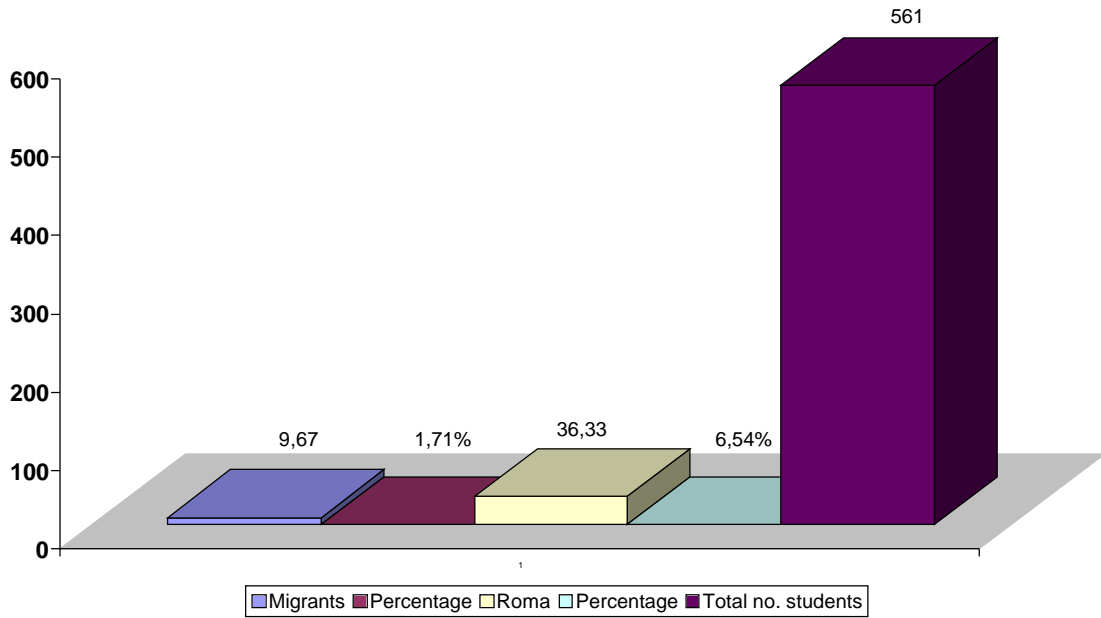
The contribution of the immigrants in the shaping up of the programme is related to the actual knowledge of the situation and the needs the whole integration policy attempts to fulfil.

Acknowledgment of the reality, precise determined purposes and realistic approach of the objectives combined with pre – designed involvement of all actors (public and privates) lead further to the better exploitation of all available funding resources, implicated in a long term national strategy.

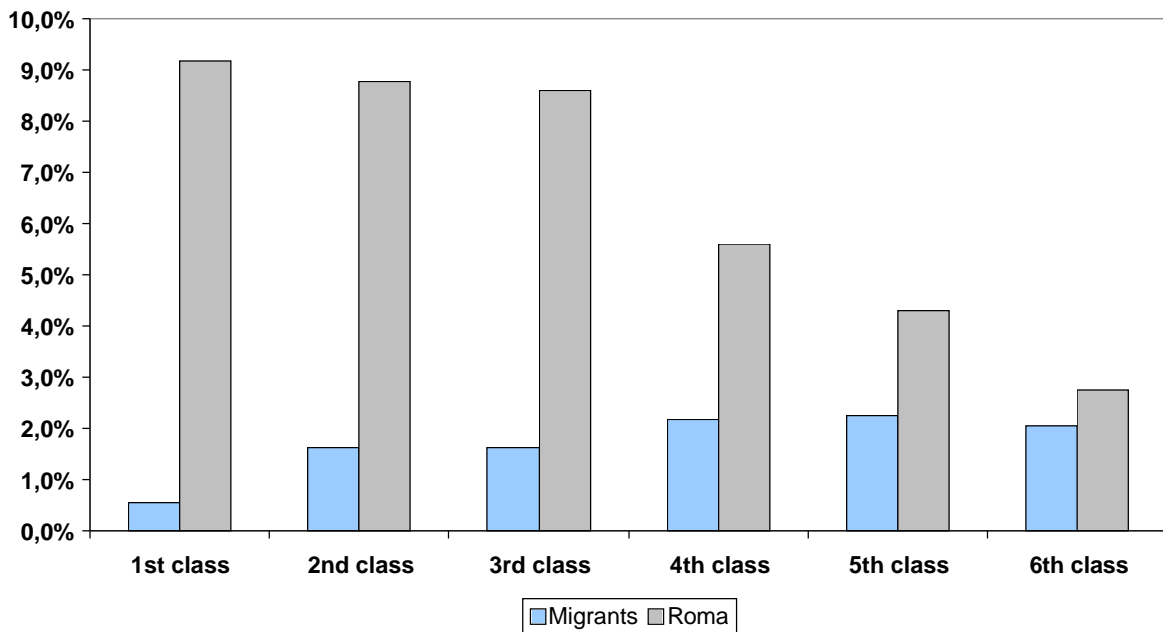
The further examination of the model under discussion is certain to provide a useful practical and “on the field” evaluated example within the negotiation of all above topics Greek integration policy has yet to encounter.

In Komotini there are functioning as in the whole country schools of ‘second-chance’, reinforcing teaching after the ordinary hours and courses in Greek language. However there is no significant follow up of early school leavers and educational possibilities. The pictures following present the present status in the elementary schools in 2007.

Average number of students in elementary school (2007)



Percentage in the preliminary schools (2007)



2.6. The competences with regard to Housing

In Komotini, there is no organized office for housing of migrants, only real estate businesses exist and offer services in general. However there have been two serious attempts-programs in this field:

a. Rehabilitation of repatriated emigrants in the EKTENEPOL residential area

This measure includes projects and actions for the strategic site-specific rehabilitation of re-settlers. The operation foresaw integration of the public space at critical sites in the neighbourhood. It referred to 5000m² of municipal land located in the centre of the area which would be used by repatriated Greek emigrants. The plan was to lay out the land in a web of public spaces, which would unify the neighbouring public facilities (Church of Agios Kosmas Aitolos, Elementary School No. 11 and local commercial centre) for the purpose of developing a cohesive centre of social life for the area. The interventions provided for include the creation of green spaces, a playground and a walking and recreation area. The space would also be provided with the appropriate urban equipment (pavements, plantings, seats, public lighting, etc.). The aim was to create an adequately equipped, aesthetically excellent public space that will enhance residents' quality of life, boost their sense of security and help develop a community spirit among the young inhabitants, improve the town's overall functionality and help reduce phenomena of spatial isolation and marginalisation of vulnerable population groups.

Free land sites were given to repatriated Greeks and preferential loans in collaboration with the Banks leading to thousands of beneficiaries.

b. Relocation of the Roma Community to a new residential area

It is an in-process procedure still but there is an effort to move the Roma community in to a new residential area in the city following almost the same pattern of the re-settlers and improving the living conditions and the city's profile as well.

3. Overall aim

The overall aim of the Action Plan is for the Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office to be the conjunction ring between the Local policy for the increase of employment in the wider sense (including self-employment-entrepreneurship) and the needs of the local economy. Thus, the reinforcement of the local development and social cohesion in the Municipality of Komotini will be succeeded through the improvement and the increase of employment of sensitive social groups and the integration on the labour force and the local society. The general idea is not to create a new structure dedicated to the disadvantaged groups but include policies and measures that will allow them to be incorporated. The initial idea of Komotini's municipality was the creation of an Employment and Entrepreneurship Office.

In order for the partner (Komotini) to be consistent with its initial intention, the proposed idea will try to integrate some actions to this Office and also improve existing services to have a larger impact and combined intervention for a more effective solution.

Thus, the L.E.E.O. will provide assistance to its members and the public, information and assistance with health related issues. Besides, from the previous action plans the Office will function as an entity which will provide administrative and bureaucratic issues for the disadvantaged groups and courses on Greek language and civic subjects.

As far as education is concerned, the idea is to build a cooperation of the municipal social service (which is very active in the Roma regions of Komotini) and the Directions of primary and secondary education-the local schools that is- in order to track facilitators and use them for the implementation of the social policy.

In conclusion, the last action will be the improvement of the municipal library into a multicultural library which will have books and media to act in both socializing the target groups and making their culture more familiar to the local society.

4. Specific objectives

Our main objective is to provide the target groups with skills in order for them to be part of the local community and integrate to the social and political life. The access to key services and intercultural dialogue is basic element for this process and thus the idea is expanded in more than one direction.

The Action Plan will focus in two main peers:

TRAINING & MULTICULTURAL LIBRARY

Also, the present Action Plan aims to a structure that will work according to the private criteria and will be effective, sustainable and flexible. The goal will be to stop depending on EU or national funding as the basic asset, after the initial boost, and adopt the characteristics of the market with cost accounting and 'selling' of the services in a reciprocal- social fairly- way.

5. Main Target Groups

Re-settlers, migrants, Roma population and muslim population continue to be the main target groups. At this stage, though, the Action Plan

focuses also on the sensitization and training of the Office employers, workers in key services (education & health) facilitators & potential facilitators and the enhancement of the municipal library and its functions.

6. Activities to be undertaken

TRAINING

- a. Employees of the Office: on migration issues and how to deal with disadvantaged groups, ensure equal opportunities
- b. Workers of education and health services: Intercultural training in order to make them more inclusive
- c. Facilitators and potential facilitators: training in basic civic subjects and the bureaucratic reality, the existing services and the citizen's rights in Greek language

In Komotini, the local government initiated a system of facilitators for the settlements of the municipality and especially for the distant ones and those where people do not speak fluent Greek language. The facilitators are citizens of the settlements who work as 'transactors' without any payment for the certificates and bureaucratic issues. The system was launched for the first time two years ago and it works very well. People, especially those in villages are organized for the common good.

Possibly, the same people could be 'employed' to bring information and disseminate the novelties. The same system is used also by the social service to reach Roma people in their neighbourhoods. There are facilitators which bring the social services into the houses and work as a bridge for the social service to provide health services.

This training will be followed also by:

- Memorandum of Cooperation among the 'Office', the education services (Directions of first & second-level schools) and the health services (hospital, medical centers and medical associations).
- Short guide on "How to do..." including in brief the subjects covered on the trainings in all the locally spoken languages.
- Short guide about the Greek educational system, the benefits disadvantaged groups and minorities have in entering higher education (percentage) and the directions one can follow depending on the profession desired (technical or scientific).

MULTICULTURAL LIBRARY

A multicultural library with books of many languages is a means for celebrating cultural diversity. In an intercultural perspective it is necessary not to essentialise cultures and traditions. For this reason, the effort will be to promote exchanges and appreciate multilingualism and cultural creativity for all citizens.

The municipal library owns a very important and rather innovative tool. It is a van that works as a mobile library- full with 1000 books that can move in every corner and distant place of the municipality and provide people with knowledge and the feeling that they are part of the society- that we include them etc. In these days this tool is rather scorned and inactive.

As a result the idea is to combine the presence of the social services in the Roma areas, the villages with Muslim population and the re-settlers areas and bring them close to the Greek literature and make projections of classic movies. On the other hand inaugurate weeks devoted to a

specific country, culture, foreign poet in the library and thus tying up all into a concrete intercultural intervention.

The steps are concentrated as follows:

- a. Enhancement of the municipal library and the mobile library: more foreign books and classic Greek literature translations, video and audio media in order for the intercultural library to take place.
- b. Organization of international weeks in the municipal library devoted in different countries and cultures
- c. Visits of the mobile library to the most distant and socially isolated areas of the municipality followed by film projections, book reading, book lending, games with children etc.

A signature of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Municipal Library and the Municipal Social Service for combined actions in the deprived areas will be substantial for the structural binding of the above actions.

7. Methodology

For the successful implementation of the present Action Plan, the actions to be undertaken are divided in three piers:

- a. Personnel training
 - Vocational training from experts in the field
 - On-line coaching
- b. Local Field Research

- Face-to-face interviews • Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office registration
- Old researches
- Address to local chambers (extensive database)

c. Local Dissemination

- Material production for the target groups of the project (MILE)
- TV and radio spots – local campaign
- Press conferences
- Info pack to the interested parties
- Posters in the central square and municipal buildings

d. Follow up

- To be done in collaboration with the observatory
- Meetings and phone calls
- Questionnaires to be statistically worked out

8. Complementarity with other interventions

Complementarity with the R.O.P. of Macedonia – Thrace 2007-2013 (ERDF)

The creation and some of the activities of the Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office can be funded under the following priority axes of the Regional Operational Program to the respective codes:

Priority Axis 2: Digital Convergence and Entrepreneurship

- Code 14: Services and applications for SMEs (e-commerce, education and training, networking, etc)
- Code 8: Other investments for enterprises (creation of new enterprises from special categories of the population)
- Priority Axis 3: Sustainable Development and Quality of Life

- Code 69: Measures for the improvement of woman's accessibility and evolution in the labour market, in order to reduce discriminations in the labour market and to harmonise the work and private life, through facilitations of services for children care and care of the depended persons.
- Code 79: Other social infrastructures (for the support of sensitive social groups)

Complementarity with the O.P. Human Resources – Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (ESF)

In addition, the activities of the local office can be funded from the Operational Program Human Resources through the following categories of intervention:

- Code 64: Development of special services for the employment, education - training and support services for the development of prevention systems to deal with the structural and economic changes and the future needs regarding the work places and the qualifications
- Code 66: Implementation of preventive measures in the labor market
- Code 70: Special activities in order to increase the share of migrants in the labor market and consequently increase by the same time their social integration
- Code 80: Promotion of cooperation, agreements and initiatives through the networking of national, regional and local authorities / institutions / associations
- Code 81: Mechanisms for the improvement of best practices, planning, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level – creation of alertness in the implementation of policies and programs

Complementarity with the O. P. Digital Convergence – Ministry of Economy (ERDF)

Last but not least, some of the activities and technology equipment of the local office can be funded from the Operational Program Digital Convergence through the following categories of intervention:

- Code 10: Infrastructure of Telecommunications (included broadband networks)
- Code 11: Technologies of information technology and telecommunications (access, prevention of danger, research, innovation, electronic content)
- Code 12: Technologies of information technology and telecommunications (TEN-ICT)
- Code 13: Services and applications for the citizens (e-health, e-governance, e-learning, e-integration)

9. Added Value

- The added value of the proposed intervention is the synergy of national, regional and local stakeholders/institutions in implementing employment policies, monitoring and evaluating the labour market.
- In addition, the proposed action will integrate all the necessary information and services for the sensitive social groups (including migrants) in order to support their smooth social integration into the labour market.
- Substantial social profile for the city

10. Equal Opportunities

Women for the project will not be a special target group. However, under the Priority Axis 3 of the Regional Operational Program Macedonia – Thrace 2007-2013: Sustainable Development and Quality of Life (Code 69), it will take 'Measures for the improvement of woman's accessibility and evolution in the labour market, in order to reduce discriminations in the labour market and to harmonize the work and private life, through facilitations of services for children care and care of the depended persons'.

11. Innovative Character

Some of the projects implemented in the last period were the following.

- Integrated Support System for the long-run incorporation of Re-settlers from ex- Soviet Union Republics and other Special Social Groups in the labour market, Komotini, ESF, 2004-2007
- Prefecture of Evros elaborated the Project: Desmos-Equality, beneficiaries: Unemployed, peoples posing cultural, linguistically, religious alterations, refugees, migrants. The partnership is constituted by: Development Agency of Alexandroupolis, Christian Youth Union "Euxini Poli", Center for the information and support of the socially isolated people.
- Establishment of Information center for the migrants and the refugees: "Ifestos". The partnership of the project is constituted of: Development Agency of Xanthi, Commercial and Industrial Chamber of Xanthi, Greek Branch of the International Organization for the Migrants, Greek Manpower Employment Organization.
- Just The Job
- A good practice guide for organisations providing job brokerage services, written by Tank Consulting Ltd. September 2004

- Case study of the Building Futures job matching project

The innovative character is based on the texture of the intervention which is complex and multilevel as well as on the attempt to formally connect all the related institutions and organizations in working for the same cause with the local authorities.

12. Estimated Funding: 400.000,00 Euros

For Technology Infrastructure and Equipment the Action Plan is eligible under ERDF funding through the Operational Program of Macedonia – Thrace and the OP Digital Convergence (Ministry of Economy)

The services of the Local Employment and Enterprise Office (networking, training courses, social care, quota system, monitoring of the labor market, consulting services, etc) can be funded under the ESF through the Operational Program of Human Resources

The Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Office will be a new structure which will be however based on the work already done by the Social Services of the city, the Observatory and its very useful indicators that will be adjusted to the needs of the Office, and the data and studies already existing from the chambers and the institutions working in this field.

An integrated proposal will be submitted for funding after the conclusion of the Fast Track Project. However, the Region has applied for being assigned a significant part of the ESF to be managed locally. Komotini's LEEO has been incorporated to the planning.