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# THIRD THEMATIC WORKSHOP REPORT

Title: “Mass Media and Diversity: Representations, Best Practices and Policy Suggestions”

Athens, 15 & 16 January 2007

Hellenic Management Association (E.E.D.E.)  
Conference Hall  
200 Ionias Avenue and Iakovaton str.  
111 44 Athens, Greece



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Monday, 15 January 2007

➤ Opening speech: **Jenny Papavassiliou**, Transnational Activities Co-ordinator of DP XENIOS DIAS, Vocational Training Centre Eyklidis, Project Managing Organization:

The speaker opened the proceedings of the workshop, by illustrating in brief the reasons which had led to the selection of the specific thematic of the workshop and by describing in a few words the -so far- implemented transnational activities. The speaker also referred to the exact context of the workshop, in reference and in connection to the previous one, which had been held in Paris, last September, and rationalized the intent of the TCA to keep up working in the field of Mass Media . The speaker made also an attempt to connect the thematic of the workshop with the ultimate goal of all Equal Projects, which is to achieve horizontal and vertical mainstreaming. Furthermore, Mrs Papavassiliou pointed out the necessity and utility of the suggestions and comments to be processed and edited in order to reach the ultimate activity of the TCA, that is to say the Conclusive seminar in Brussels. At the end of her speech, Mrs Papavassiliou gave a brief general overview of the current Mass Media sector and its role under the prospect of multi- culturalism in Greece, in terms of an introduction to the thematic of the workshop, as far as the Greek case is concerned.

➤ “Media Control Institutions and immigration matters “ :**Mavromoustakou Ivi**, - Political Scientist- Center of Political Research and Documentation, Center of Human Rights of the Department of Political Sciences of the University of Crete, Greece

The speaker described at first the origin of the Independent Institutions and Authorities, with references in Greece and France, starting from the ‘80s and then. The identity of these institutions is mostly controlling and regulatory and their origin comes from the international and European experience. Their nature consists of a total of characteristics, guarantees, duties that prove them to be effective and fair. In Greece, these independent authorities, granted with high duties appointed by the Parliament itself, are mainly the following: the Greek Ombudsman, the National Radio and TV council, the Hellenic Data Protection Authority, the Supreme Council for Personnel selection and the Hellenic Authority for the Information and Communication Security and Privacy. Afterwards, Mrs Mavromoustakou illustrated the main role of these authorities and of the Greek Ombudsman, especially, towards the protection of human rights, in reference to the role of the Ombudsman of the Republic in France. Finally, Mrs Mavromoustakou referred to the categorization of the decisions and presented some case studies of the National Radio and TV council

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regarding human rights and discriminations, giving some examples. The speech concluded with the stress to enforce the role and rights of these authorities, in order to become more efficient and protective towards human rights as a whole.

⇒ “Positive Action: a European scope for the integration of the ethnic-racial components of the EU”: **Edouard Pellet**, Representative of Integration and Diversity, France Televisions Holding, France

Mr Pellet presented the *Positive Action Plan for Integration* (PAPI) and the Equal *Pluriel-Media* Project that are carried out within France Televisions Holding (public TV channels) and put them in their context: they were implemented as a result of the observation of non-representation of the multiethnic composition of the French society, in the media field in general.

He first specified the legislative rules that go with the taking into account of this multiethnic composition of the society: at the European level, he mentioned the Directive L184 of July 2000 that had been transposed to French law with 6 laws from 2001 to 2006.

The PAPI has been implemented for 3 years by France Televisions in order to restore equality within the holding and a position of Representative for Diversity and Integration was created.

The Plan is based on 3 main directions:

- Programme content: the objective is to ensure the physical presence of the French diversity;
- Human Resources: 3 axes are concerned: access to promotion, access to training (through partnerships with journalism schools as Science Po’s one and scholarships for unprivileged students) and access to employment through negotiations with journalist unions;
- Ethic and policy (meetings among medias professionals in order to think about this matter and try to find concrete solutions)

The Equal *Pluriel-Media* project is included in the PAPI and aims at increasing awareness, mobilizing and training of employees and managers in the media field in order to improve the taking into account of the diversity.

⇒ “The paradigm of the threatening foreigner”: **Francesca Paci**, Journalist of “La Stampa”, Italy

Mrs Paci focused on the following matters by stressing that the key of the problem should not be focused on the general “immigration” concept transmitted to readers and tv users by mass media. Instead we’d rather have to discuss on how the mass media speak on the single migrant, the single man or woman coming from another country, the real person living close to us.



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The main question should be: are the mass media a mere megaphone of already existing fears of diversity or insidious hidden persuader? Where does the public opinion come from and how is it shaped? Up to which extent do the media influence their audience?

According to the recent classification list by the sociologist Renato Mannheimer on the trust of the Italians in the institutions, the journalists of newspapers are penultimate and TV journalists are antepenultimate. The Church is first and magistracy second.

Immigrants are usually represented as victims or as tormentors. Any editorial staff has a dichotomic (white or black) view of immigrants. If you try to make your ideas clear on Islam in Italy by reading the main newspaper you will only find two types of opinions: alarmism or minimization.

Usually the way to represent immigrants is stereotyped according to the ideological or religious orientation of the mast-head.

Journalists deal with a certain topic mainly because much attention is dedicated by the public opinion to that topic. The problem is that such attention is transmitted as a distorted point of view to the media.

The Observatory of the ethnic media of Ethnocommunication is the main Italian media network specialised in intercultural communication and marketing. According to its data in Italy there was an unbelievable increase in the production of intercultural programmes in 2005: 172 radio programmes, 20 tv programmes and 29 newspapers for foreigners.

The radio is the media offering the largest amount of ethnic programmes.

As for newspapers 26 are monthly, 2 weekly and 1 is a fortnightly publication.

All these newspapers are published in the foreign language, in particular in Spanish (7 newspapers), English (3) and Portuguese (3), Chinese, Albanian, Ukrainian and Romanian (2).

As a conclusion Mrs Paci stressed that information, such as citizenship, and policy, is a right and that rights are not the objectives of integration, they are the means towards integration, and information is a right.

⇒ “Stances and views of the Greek society towards immigrants” : Ioannis Eystathopoulos , Representative of VPRC SA, National Partner of DP XENIOS DIAS, Greece

Mr Eystathopoulos presented the results of a pan-hellenic quantitative research that was conducted in terms of the national activities of the DP Xenios Dias and its Project (Activity 6). After illustrating the general objectives of the research, which are mainly to define whether the greek society is xenophobic, and if so, to define furthermore the reasons leading to these attitudes, and, if possible to extract some useful conclusions or policy suggestions in order to eliminate these attitudes, Mr Eystathopoulos presented some theoretical aspects that tend to be supported among experts, regarding the immigration phenomenon. Afterwards he made an attempt to illustrate some terms regarding the object and the work hypothesis of the research and started to



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present the data of the quantitative research: The research took place through phone interviews among adult population, in November 2006. The main thematic were 6: immigrants' visibility, contact /tolerance towards immigrants, stances towards immigrants, attitudes towards immigrants' rights, requirements for hellenic nationality acquisition, stances towards immigration. The general conclusions of the research were that, according to the questioned population, the limit of immigrants influx has been already reached, the contribution of immigrants in greek economy is present, the increase of unemployment is attributed to immigrants (56%), over 50% believe that immigrants do not threaten greek language and greek civilization, 65% believe that the criminality increase is also attributed to immigrants, 83% believe that the immigrants' presence in schools is positive, 90% of the questioned is positive in granting to immigrants the same education and health conditions as Greeks, 77% believe that immigrants are entitled to have their own churches in Greece, but only 52% believe that the possibility of the construction of a mosque in Athens is positive. As for the preconditions for acquiring the Greek nationality, 88% believe that the knowledge of the Greek language is essential, 87% believe that long stay in Greece is essential, 80% believe that they should work for over 5 years in Greece. Lastly, 55% suppose that the immigrants' presence is a sort of positive for the future of the country, whilst 37% believe the opposite.

↗ "the website [www.romamultiethnica.it](http://www.romamultiethnica.it): a project of intercultural communication" :Gabriella Sanna, Web manager of [www.romamultiethnica.it](http://www.romamultiethnica.it), Italy

The website [www.romamultiethnica.it](http://www.romamultiethnica.it) derives from 10-years-long working activities of the Department for Interculture of the Institution Libraries of the Municipality of Rome, made up of a network of 35 public libraries providing a free book and videos lending service and free internet connection, in addition to many other cultural activities.

The Department has coordinated all the intercultural events implemented by the networked libraries: seminars, meetings with cultural counsellors, actions for creating new library services, guidance programmes, etc.

Such activities have inspired the implementation of a network of relations among the responsible of libraries, university teachers, experts and cultural mediators, editors, translators, Italian and foreign journalists and simple citizens interested into the many cultural activities. As a result of the network actions two guides were implemented in 1997 and 2002 with the title "La città invisibile" (the invisible city) and "Roma multi-ethnica" (multiethnic Rome). The updated 2000 version of the guide "Multiethnic Rome" provided the contents for the website [www.romamultiethnica.it](http://www.romamultiethnica.it) implemented in 2002 and still on-line.

The website does not intend to be a guide on social services for the immigrants, rather on the activities mainly implemented by the immigrants in favour and for the advantage of the city.



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The intent is to transmit a new image of immigrants that is no more linked to stereotypes and emphasises all positive contributions and the richness of cultural values offered by the immigrants for the benefit of the Italian society.

The innovative element of this website is its original focus is that on the contrary of usual websites providing information especially on legislation, services and job search, it is not a website only for immigrants. It is for all people, both foreign and Italian, interested to the real knowledge of the immigrants, its lifestyle, outlook and desire to meet the other as an ordinary person.

The website intends to be a sort of intercultural bridge among the people with different habits, religions, uses and customs.

The contents and structure of the website was designed to stress the fact that immigrant's life has nowadays changed the habits and concepts of the Italians by influencing them with their different habits.

The key factor of the website that enabled to avoid the risk to transmit stereotyped images of immigrants was the editorial staff, a group entirely made up of foreigners and migrants.

Ms. Gabriella Sanna concluded her speech illustrating the structure of the website.



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⇒ *‘Are the Mass Media able to change the life of immigrants in Greece?’*

**Moawia Ahmet**, Member of Immigrants Forum in Greece, Journalist

Moawia Ahmet, who has spoken mainly as a journalist, had tried to illustrate the main experiences that an immigrant, member of an immigrant association, has, with regard to the effects of the Mass Media upon his life, not only in connection to the represented area but to the society, as well.

The two main issues are the following: the first is how the Mass Media refer to immigrants and show them in the public opinion, and the second one is how the Mass Media could contribute to the normalization of the integration procedure of immigrants within the society, by providing the necessary information for a person who enters a different society for the first time, in order to be able to adjust himself to the new environment.

Regarding the first matter immigrants agree that the attitude of the Mass Media towards themselves is negative. Stereotypes, like the immigrant whore or the connection between immigrants and criminality and unemployment, real estate advertisements in the newspapers such as “foreigners are excluded” obstruct the creation of trust and confidence relations between immigrants and the greek society.

Nevertheless, there are several journalists and directors who are making efforts within the past years to create more friendly relationships.

Apart from these people, since 2004, 3 journalists of different origin work in the greek Mass Media. The immigrants should therefore grab these opportunities and instead of criticizing they should play a more dynamic role in order to make things change in a positive way.

In order to justify this view, Mr Moawia illustrated some positive activities in the field of the promotion of cultural diversity in the Mass Media sector. These are the following: The first is a committee that is effective in terms of the European program: “campaign against discriminations”, with the aim to select in a national level a journalist for the journalism award of the year. This initiative is considered a very positive one, but not a very widely known one, according to Mr Moawia, as a member of this Committee who was able to read lots of texts written by Greek journalists.

Another positive step that has been taken, was in terms of another Equal project (during the first round), which consisted of an implementation of a magazine named METIKOS (the ancient Greek term for migrant) in co- operation with the Athens News Agency, a public body. The acceptance of this magazine, which, was finally edited in 5 issues (instead of the initial planning for 4) in Greek language was very wide and enthusiastic among the Greek public. The innovative element had been that the journalists and writers were immigrants, themselves, so the Immigrants Forum is at the time being reconsidering of re- editing the magazine.

Another good practice that took place during the 2<sup>nd</sup> legalization programme for foreigners, in 2001, was a 32- pages booklet inserted in the newspaper Sunday Eleftherotypia, in many languages, explaining to migrants the legalization procedures and other concerned matters. In spite of the thousands of booklets, they all



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disappeared in the same day, so the newspaper had to publish the booklet again. Finally, the administration of the newspaper organized an event stressing the success of that initiative. Although this example shows exactly the necessity of information for migrants, no further steps were made to this direction, apart from some other booklets (issued by the same newspaper) that were not purchased, due to the fact that the language was Greek. So, this situation had led to the creation of immigrant Press (newspapers).

Regarding electronic Press, according to official data, and in comparison to Greek nationals, immigrants tend to watch TV so frequently, as Greeks do, but also tend to visit the website also with the same frequency as Greeks, disappointing those who support the opinion that immigrants do not visit websites. So, the Immigrants Forum in Greece has just started to operate the first multi-lingual portal in 7 languages, whilst there is another Internet portal which publishes information regarding migrants. Needless to say that websites and mailing –lists are the main tool for communication among NGO's.

Lastly, Mr Moawia had mentioned an interesting initiative that the Immigrants Forum in Greece had undertaken on 18/12/2006, and consisted of the implementation of a small duration radio shows in 15 radio stations, which had managed to address to half a million people within a day.

The speech had been concluded with the observation that all these initiatives is an indication of “movement” within the Mass Media sector and immigrants. The remaining question is, whether, finally, these steps would lead to the integration of immigrants.

↪ *Migrations and the training of journalist students”*: - **Jean Claude Lescure**, Director of the School of Journalism of the Institute of Political Sciences of Paris (Science Po Paris), France

Within the Journalism School of Sciences Po, training of the journalist students (they are about 40 per year) lasts 2 years (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years)

Mr Lescure considered that the journalism trainers can not teach journalists and mediators without giving them the means to comprehend the issue of “Alterity” as well as the question of the fear that is linked to ignorance and misunderstanding. It is then crucial to teach them about the immigration matters and stakes.

Several measures were taken at Sciences Po's School of Journalism:

- Composition of the students: approximately 25% of the students are immigrant or are coming from unprivileged areas and 30% are foreigners (from Europe, Mediterranean countries or others continents) or have studied abroad. Some of them are political refugees. The point of view of a migrant or a foreigner on a “French” event gives analyses different from the “French” ones and enriches them.
- Teachers: each year, several teachers come to give courses on migrations. So the students are confronted to different writing techniques, different ways of



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thinking... They are also taught by immigrant journalists as Rachid Arhab or Vincent Nguyen who know the immigration matter from the inside.

- Training and courses: some courses are given in foreign languages and students are sent during 6 month in editorial offices abroad. Courses are given for instance about migrations in France since the 60's, about migrations and integration in France and in the United States and about migration laws...
- Students get a practical experience when they have to make a report in the suburbs. They make contact with local associations and inhabitants as well as journalists (Swiss journalists from “Bondy Blog” for example) and local radios (Radio “Droit de Cité”...) which are settled in those places. These contacts will allow them to carry out a good coverage of the events or festivals occurring in those areas.
- Partnerships with companies were established in order to welcome students coming from an unprivileged area or immigrant students and to give them training partly in the school and partly in the workplace. Partnerships currently exist with:
  - ➔ France Televisions holding: 3 students per year are given a scholarship for a two-year-period. The awarding criteria are: being in a discriminated social situation or living in a discriminated geographical area (there are no ethnical or religious criteria). Students do an internship at France Televisions alternately with the school training. After obtaining their diploma, they are offered a 6-month-work contract in the holding
  - ➔ Prisma Presse Group: same programme and same awarding criteria but for only one student.

The awareness of the companies started to be raised but there is some resistance coming from the journalist unions. One of the priorities for 2007 is to increase the partnerships with companies.

⇒ “The stereotype of Eastern women in the Italian mass culture: past origin and actual situation”: **Marina Sorina**, Writer, Italy

Marina Sorina is the author of a very interesting book entitled “Voglio un marito italiano” (I want an Italian husband) telling the story of an Ukrainian girl, Svetlana, migrating to Italy, a country seen as fabulous and offering better standards of life. The background period dates back to the Nineties, while Svetlana’s story represents the story of many migrants deciding to leave their countries to escape from poorness and dream of a better life. The difficulties and problems encountered by the main character illustrate the hard pathway towards happiness hopes. Svetlana incurs into red tape loops, job hunting difficulties, risks to take to prostitution or yield to criminality opportunities. Fortunately Svetlana falls in love with an Italian boy who will change her life. Author’s self-biographical details start from this point of the book

Marina Sorina was invited to partake into the Athens workshop not to present her book but to witness with her presence all the problems she encountered as a migrant and as a foreign writer. During the meeting she illustrated all the stereotyped ideas she



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had to face to let her book be published without the prejudices often suggested by the Italian publisher to make her book more winning. The cover image was selected without Ms. Sorina's authorisation and although it is into opposition with the content of the book the publisher's intent was to use a stereotyped image to capture possible readers' attention. The main stereotypes on the Ukrainian girls that the author tries to make collapse are: the Ukrainian women are more beautiful than the Italian ones and such an advantage is used as a strategic weapon to cheat an Italian husband; they are interested only into money and rich Italian men; they try to emigrate at any cost because they escape from misery and they use the wedding deceit to take their plan into action; Ukrainian women are sweet, attentive and housewives.

As the author well explains into her speech, all the above-mentioned stereotypes have not any historic basis or concrete confirmation data from real life. Unfortunately all the mass media usually re-enforce such stereotypes or use them for sensationalism. Sorina's book is an attempt to free the migrants from the tyranny of cultural prejudices and depict foreign women as they really are.

↪ “French channels and the taking into account of diversity”: **Catherine Humblot**, Journalist for le Monde and Member of Panos Institute

Mrs Humblot started her communication saying that France is late compared to the UK regarding the question of the taking into account of the diversity in the Medias. She also insisted on the necessity not to mix up two words: diversity and immigration. Diversity is used for people whose parents and grand parents came to France and who have the French nationality.

The starting point of the taking into account of the diversity of the French society is a pressure from members of the civil society: for instance Collectif Egalité (association of black artists) or Club Averroès (group of media professionals)...They lobbied TV managers for a better representation of minorities. Then, public institutions succeeded to civil society in this approach. A few laws were passed from 2000 to 2006 (cf M. Pellet's speech).

Unfortunately, the process did not evolve naturally but as a result of the feeling of fear, after the riots in the suburbs, in November 2005. Indeed, after those riots, President Chirac convened all the TV channels managers.

Mrs Humblot conducted a study with all the channels managers (except Arte) and asked them 3 questions:

- *When did you become aware of the responsibility of the TV in the lack of representation of minorities?*
- *What measures and steps did you take in order to improve the situation?*
- *What do you think of the idea of establishing quotas for the representation of minorities?*

All the channels were against the quotas but they took different steps to improve the situation:

- **TF1**: They became aware of the problem in 1998 with the winning of the Football World Cup by the “*black, blanc, beur*” French team. They discussed with some associations and decided to act sector by sector

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(TV games, reality TV, sport, fiction...). They sent letters to the producers to encourage them to represent the minorities in their programmes. As for the information sector, they spotted presenters from local radios and proposed them a 3-year-training contract. Some of them were recruited at TF1 at the end of their contract. But the amazing feat was the recruitment of Harry Roselmack, a black journalist, to present the 8 pm news during last summer.

- **France Televisions** (5 public channels): Mr Pellet has already talked about the PAPI and the Equal *Pluriel Media* project they are carrying out. They also have recruited immigrant journalists: Rachid Arhab (France 2) who presented the 1 pm news in the late 90's and Audrey Pulvar (France 3). France Televisions is the only group which has put in place a position of 'Representative for Integration and Diversity'. So far, the actions were implemented with great discretion. Regarding the programmes, letters were also sent to series producers to ask them to create first roles and positive roles for immigrant actors.
- **Canal Plus** (4<sup>th</sup> channel): They have always considered extremely important to be on the same wavelength with the youth. And youth is diverse. A lot of comic actors stemmed from minorities became famous thanks to Canal Plus. Castings are organized twice a year and after the meeting with President Chirac, the channel conducted a HR audit. They decided to recruit journalists stemmed from the minorities via their news channel: I Télé. However, Canal Plus refused to give instructions to its producers.
- **M6** (6<sup>th</sup> channel): Nobody is in charge of the dossier but M6 is the first channel which broadcasted American series with black actors (*Cosby show*) and French series written by north African authors (*Famille Ramdam*, in the 90's). This channel gives often first roles to actors stemmed from minorities and it has recently recruited 11 presenters and journalists. Moreover, the channel managers are focusing, as TF1, on reality TV programmes which give a picture of the French society.

In conclusion, the process of taking into account the diversity within French TV is in progress and things evolve quickly but TV remains quite "white". Progress is sporadic according to the last reports of Club Averroès and CSA (High Council for Audiovisuel). Indeed, they observed that a lot of things are to be done, at several levels:

- programme content
- fiction field
- employment and especially management positions
- "silent" minorities (Asian people)

***The workshop had concluded with a general debate among the participants.***