



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
JUSTICE FREEDOM AND SECURITY

Minutes of the Second Greek Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: 21 November 2008

Location: Hellenic Migration Policy Institute, Athens, Greece

Participants:

- Ms. Vasiliki Sfyri, Agkaliazo – Volunteer Network Against Cancer, Psychologist
- Mr. Georgios Neratzis, Ministry of Labour, Directorate of Employment
- Mr. Theodoros Katsas, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute, National Coordinator
- Mr. Dimitris Parsanoglou, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute, Researcher/Sociologist
- Ms. Fyllio Avramidi, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute
- Ms. Zoi Balomenou, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute

Greek Partner:



TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION:

Discussion on the specific characteristics of a potential one-stop-shop in Greece

I. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

Discussion on the main issues related to the establishment and operation of a one-stop-shop in Greece:

- Examples of existing similar to one-stop-shop structures in Greece.
- OSS target groups.
- Need for the simplification of procedures and for the coordination between different service providers.
- Type of services provided by OSSs.
- Potential obstacles in the collaboration of different stakeholders.
- Ways of communication between different concerned parties.
- Need for central state support.
- Collaboration with NGOs.
- Involvement of migrants in planning process.
- Location.
- Office hours.
- Intercultural mediators.
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II. MAIN OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The IMEPO team presented examples of similar to the OSS structures that exist in Greece to examine the possibility for the development of OSSs in Greece, using them as case studies. The examples put forward is the Foreigners' Centre

run by the Municipality of Athens, and the Citizen Service Centres operating throughout Greece. IMEPO's proposal was that future OSSs are structured based on the structure of the current Citizen Service Centres that have had large success.

2. The issue of whether the OSS services would target new or older immigrants was raised by the IMEPO team, as it is linked to integration policy issues, whereas one could argue that immigrants should use the currently offered services, without differentiating between them and Greek citizens, as this could pose an obstacle to their integration. The proposal of IMEPO is that no differentiation should be made in OSSs between new and older immigrants, and that OSSs should focus on the provision of targeted and specialised services to those in need, as older immigrants are very often also in need. The target group is therefore immigrants in need of specific services, which they cannot receive through ordinary Citizen Service Centres, something that is often the case especially when it comes to information needs.
3. It was agreed amongst participants that OSSs could assist towards the simplification of procedures that immigrants need to follow, as it would mean the coordination of different services provided currently by different structures (Prefectures, Municipalities, Ministries, NGOs), thus offering a joint and all-encompassing approach to the needs of immigrants. Furthermore, OSSs would assist towards easing the workload of the current Citizen Service Centres.
4. Immigrants very often have specific needs that cannot be addressed by ordinary Citizen Service Centres, and need to follow different and more time-consuming procedures. The IMEPO team used the Portuguese experience to argue that the OSS services could meet these needs through the provision of specialised information, that can extend to further services related to language, employment, health, consulting, housing. As a first step, however, the OSS in Greece can focus on the provision of information, something that is more realistic to achieve at start, and later on, it is hoped that it can extend its activities to offering further direct types of services as well. Provision of such information on various issues still necessitates the coordination between different stakeholders but not their physical presence under its premises.

5. In order for an OSS in Greece to be successful, it requires the efficient collaboration by different stakeholders, especially by Municipalities and Prefectures. Certain obstacles could arise, related mainly to lengthy bureaucracy, their lack of resources and relevant training, and understaffing, which would mean that their employees might not be able to respond to the OSS requests and therefore to the immigrants' needs in time. IMEPO already has established relations with the Municipality of Athens through another project they are setting up, and stressed that such efforts for the establishment of working relationships with Municipalities and Prefectures need to continue. The Ministry representative stressed that it is very important for the development of an OSS handbook, that concerned parties give their feedback on practical issues, in order to prepare something that can be implemented.
6. The Ministry representative argued that it might be necessary for the communication between all concerned parties (OSS with Municipalities, Prefectures etc.) not to be limited to telephone calls, but other ways of communication might need to be used, such as electronic mail. Of foremost importance is to have speedy interaction, in order to respond to the immigrant's needs in a timely manner.
7. The IMEPO team argued that any such initiative for the development of OSSs in Greece, needs to have the support of the central government, in order to guarantee its long-term sustainability.
8. Especially as regards the provision of consulting services, the participants argued that there can also be a collaboration with non-governmental organizations, as currently they are very often trying to close gaps of insufficient state services provision and have accumulated extensive know how. It is important that current, separate NGO efforts are coordinated.
9. The IMEPO team argued that in parallel to examining the need for collaboration with Municipalities and Prefectures, as well as with NGOs, one should also examine the need for involvement of migrants in the OSS planning process, and for their representation.
10. The location of the OSS that migrants can access, can be in existing currently operating structures, in Municipalities or Prefectures.

11. The OSS time of operations can be in line with those of the Citizen Service Centres (9.00 – 20.00).
12. The role of intercultural mediators was also stressed as extremely important, and one would need to examine the nationalities more in need of intercultural mediators in each region.