

POLICY PAPER ON THE INTEGRATION OF PUPILS WITH MIGRANT BACKGROUND TO THE CYPRUS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) as detailed in this policy paper, declares its commitment to the smooth integration of pupils with a migrant background¹ into the Cyprus educational system. The policy paper aims at providing a framework for every action and activity which falls within the Cyprus educational system in respect to the issue of the integration of pupils with migrant background. The ultimate aim is to utilise this document as a reference framework in the decision-making process concerning the integration of the specific pupils.

The policy paper includes the following: 1) introduction, 2) description of the current situation in the public schools in Cyprus, 3) the new proposal on the reception of children with migrant background to the Cyprus educational system and teaching of Greek as a second language², and 4) concluding remarks.

1. Introduction

In March 2011 - and upon instructions from the Minister of Education and Culture - an Interdepartmental Committee for the integration of children with migrant background was established in the Cypriot education system, comprising representatives of the Directorates / Services of the MoEC, academics and representatives of educational organizations. This Committee has been mandated to study the existing programmes for the integration of children with migrant background in Cypriot education and to submit recommendations for short and long term management of the issue and to improve integration programmes within the context of the philosophy and planning for new curricula.

During the period of July 2011-May 2012, subgroups of the Committee submitted their proposals to the Minister of Education and Culture, and a relevant Report from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI). During the years 2012-2014, official meetings were held for individual issues concerning pupils with migrant background (diagnostic tests, Secondary Education teacher training, operation of a data recording platform, etc.). In December 2014 the final report on the participation of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute in the SIRIUS European Network (2012-2014), on the education of children with migrant background³ was submitted to the MoEC

¹ Children with migrant background are defined as children who are immigrants themselves or have immigrant parents. Usually these children have particular educational needs, which may include difficulties in overcoming barriers – such as low performance in the language of the host country – or are submitted to discrimination. In such cases it may be required to take actions for their integration in the educational system, in accordance to the strategies set out by the EU. (Education and Training Strategy (ET 2020) to reduce school failure and dropout in member states. (Cooke O' Dowd, S. (2014) SIRIUS Policy Briefs: Recommendations for successful policies on migrant education. Reference: migrationeducation.org/implementing-policies-and-networking/ (02/11/16).

² The term “second language” is used to describe the language acquired by a person, after having already developed or completed learning his/her first language, and which is taught under certain circumstances (e.g. following migration). Acquisition of the second language is achieved mainly through contact of the person with native speakers of such language in a natural environment, regardless of the fact that it is also enhanced by attending an organised lesson, in order to satisfy the immediate requirements of his/her current environment (Triarchi/Hermann, 2000; Skourtou, 1997). It is worth noting that the respective term used in the Anglo-Saxon countries after the 90's (England, Australia, Ireland) is “additional language” (it describes the non-mother tongue speakers of the English language within the natural environment of the English language speaking, which have at least one other mother tongue in the natural English speaking environment) while in North America the term “language learners” to describe the same population, has prevailed (Leung, 2013).

³ SIRIUS “European Policy Network on the education of children and young people with a migrant background”
<http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org>

In January 2015 instructions⁴ were given to the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute by the Director General of the Ministry of Education and Culture to discuss the issues included in the final SIRIUS report with the Directorates of the MoEC, under the coordination of the CPI. To this end, the Director of the CPI convened an Interdepartmental Committee with representatives of all Directorates / Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture and their terms of reference were to draw up an action plan aimed at coordinating the individual actions and developing a single education policy on the subject. The work basis for the Commission members - which held three sessions in the year 2015 - were the recommendations of the SIRIUS Network on the education of children with a migrant background, in accordance with the instructions of the Director General. The Commission's work has mapped-out the current situation in Primary and Secondary Education and has prepared an action plan for the management of issues related to the integration of children with migrant background in the schools of Cyprus through a holistic approach.

The Chart for the proposed Action Plan was submitted to the MoEC in November 2015, while the fourth meeting of the Commission in January 2016 was launched in the presence of the Minister of Education and Culture. Within the context of this session, it was decided to prepare a Policy Paper covering all aspects of the subject with regard to the integration of pupils with migrant background into the Cypriot education system. The Policy Paper was adopted in May 2016 by the Minister of Education and Culture and on this basis the Directorates of the ministry were called upon to:

- a. adopt the content of the Policy Paper on the integration of children with a migrant background into the Cypriot education system;
- b. develop a concrete action plan which will respond to the needs and particularities of each level, provided that this falls within the core principles of the text; and
- c. Submit the proposed action plans for discussion within the Interdepartmental Committee, until 30 June 2016.

2. Current situation in the public schools of Cyprus

In accordance to the officially recorded policy,⁵ the usual finding on which the debate on the necessity on intercultural education is based, is that modern societies are now becoming multicultural. In essence, however, this debate arises not because of the fact that so far the character of societies has been monoculturalistic, but because their multicultural character is now recognized, due to the generalized phenomena of immigration and population movements in Europe⁶. The basic theory is that all children - regardless of the special circumstances of their lives - can learn, act and influence their surroundings and themselves⁷. Children are neither defined nor trapped in their national or ethnic 'belonging', gender or their needs, but instead contribute to the constant change of social and cultural data. The goal is to realize the limits of each one, to understand other ways of interpreting the world, to reduce xenophobia and racism, and to create a culture of harmonious cohabitation. A starting point for managing diversity is that interest is focused on what children "gain" from school. Diversity is of interest to us to the extent that it can be a cultural domain to be exploited in the form of functional tools and qualifications for life⁸. For this purpose, we are called upon to use the curriculum, hidden curriculum, teachers' skills, the specific pupils, and the school and social context.

⁴ File No. M.E.. 7.1.10.3.4, dated 7/1/2015

⁵ See "Intercultural Education for the smooth integration of pupils with migrant background into the schools and the society of Cyprus" http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/tekmiriosi/ekdoseis/diapolitismiki/omali_entaxi/greek_diapolitismiki_2010.pdf

⁶ Govaris, C. (2000) Intercultural Education and the dilemma of intercultural diversity. Pedagogical recourse, 3, 23-30

⁷ Schmidtke, P. (2007) The concept of culture. Paper presented at the Council of Europe Pestalozzi Module B workshop on Intercultural education Training for trainers, Oslo, Norway. 10-13 October 2007

⁸ Gotovos A.E. (2002) Education and heterogeneity. Athens. Metechmio Publications

Cypriot schools receive pupils from other countries, and society expects education to play an important role in successfully integrating them, enabling them to contribute creatively to society. Education and migration are elements that have supported the social and economic development and competitiveness of the European Union. Pupils with migrant background residing in the Republic of Cyprus have the right to enroll and receive free education in public schools in Cyprus, at all levels, from pre-school to higher education. Our education system makes no distinction as to race, community, language, colour, religion, political or other beliefs, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin of the pupils. This is safeguarded by Article 20 of the Constitution of Cyprus. The school also respects the right of freedom of thought, political or other beliefs and religion. The general aim of the policy of integrating pupils with migrant background into the educational system and consequently to Cypriot society, is to create the conditions which will ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to access and success in education. Based on the above, the right to education is guaranteed for all without exception.

More specifically, the following are pursued:

- Development and implementation of coordinated intervention measures that promote the smooth integration of pupils with migrant background into the education system.
- Creation and integration of institutions into the educational system, which will ensure the quality and effective education of pupils with migrant background.
- Raising awareness among teachers, pupils and parents about the principles that should govern a multicultural society and educating teachers and educators on issues related to the theoretical and practical dimensions of the intercultural approach to the educational work.
- Development and appropriate use of special teaching, supervision and training material, as well as the implementation of new teaching approaches that broaden the capabilities of the Cypriot education system.
- Development and implementation of specific measures and procedures for adaptation of newly arrived children with migrant background.

The policy framework of the MoEC for the integration of pupils with migrant background into the Cypriot society falls within the following five priority axes:

A. Greek Language Learning

Competency in the language of instruction is an essential prerequisite - although not unique - to ensure that migrant pupils get the maximum benefit from the right to education. As a matter of top priority, programmes for learning of Greek as a second language are offered to these pupils in Primary and Secondary Education. In recent years, various models have been adopted in the Cypriot education system for the linguistic support of pupils with migrant background:

- Providing reinforced teaching and offering intensive Learning Programme of Greek as a second language in Primary schools.
- Intensive Learning Programme for Greek as second language in Secondary Education Schools (established since 2008).
- Providing language support in schools where the institution of the Zones of Priority Education was operating. (Zones of Educational Priority (Z.E.P) - from 2004 to 2015) and in schools applying Activities of Social and School Inclusion, from 2016.
- Offering Greek language courses - in the afternoon - from the Adult Education Centres (A.E.C) and the State Institutes of Further Education (S.I.F.E) of the MoEC

B. Reception of newly-arrived children with migrant background

The goals of implementing the reception programmes and activities are to adapt and familiarize newly-arrived children with the new school and social environment and to support their studies, as well as to inform the pupils and their families of their obligations and rights as a result of their

participation in the education system. To this end, the MoEC has published detailed information leaflets in various languages:

- *Reception Guide in Cypriot Education* - A comprehensive guide to the Cypriot education system, specific support provisions for pupils with migrant background, and prospects and study options. Published in nine languages: English, Arabic, Bulgarian, Georgian, Greek, Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian and Turkish.
- *Welcome to Cyprus Welcome to school.* A Reception guide to schools in Cyprus. It includes answers to questions about the rights and obligations of pupils in schools in Cyprus, specific provisions for pupils with migrant background, as well as information on the educational system and prospects and choice of studies. Published in five languages: Arabic, Georgian, Ukrainian, Russian and Turkish.

C. Training of Teachers

Education and training of teachers in intercultural education and teaching of Greek as a second language is necessary in order to provide them with the tools to respond adequately to the ever-increasing challenges of their profession. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, in cooperation with the Directorates of the MoEC has in recent years organized a variety of training activities (workshops, conferences, seminars – experiential learning workshops, optional seminars, school seminars, etc.), with the aim of raising awareness and for supporting primary and secondary education teachers on matters regarding the integration of pupils with migrant background. In particular, emphasis was placed on issues of addressing diversity and the implementation of an anti-racist policy, as well as on teaching Greek as a second language. Additionally, in the case of secondary education, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute provides - on an annual basis since 2008 - school-level support to teachers participating in the 'Learning Greek as a Second Language Programme'. In addition, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute created a website, which is hosted on the website of the Hellenic Institute, which includes informative, educational and support material for the teaching of Greek as a second language, as well as material for the implementation of the anti-racist policy of the MoEC

D. Collection and analysis of data on the needs of pupils with migrant background.

For the purpose of more effective intervention, it is necessary to collect and analyze data on the needs of pupils with migrant background and the compulsory distribution at school - at the beginning of their studies - of Greek language competence tests as well as their classification at levels based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)⁹.

The Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE) has prepared in recent years Greek language competence tests for the induction of students of secondary and primary education into specialized programmes of learning the Greek language. Specifically, for Secondary Education, in the context of the Greek Language Learning Programme, during the school year 2009-2010, CERE developed a test for Greek language competence, aiming at verifying the level of Greek language knowledge of students with Greek as a second language and a revised short test during the school year 2010-2011. These tests include a written essay (listening comprehension, writing comprehension, production of written language) and interview (verbal production). Diagnostic tests are provided on a mandatory basis by the teachers in this Programme, according to the instructions of the Directorate for Secondary Education. From the school year 2011-2012 and onwards the tests were prepared based on the specification lists and the types of exercises of the previous tests without the involvement of CERE. In addition, a new Lyceum test was prepared in a way similar to what was done for the gymnasium.

⁹ The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) includes a set of indicators that identify linguistic competence and needs, so that people use a language for communication purposes, but also to be able to act effectively within a specific context. Unlike the language criteria developed in Australia and the United States, the Cyprus Productivity Centre is not related to any specific language and a specific learning environment, but it is mainly addressed to adults. Consequently, common criteria have been set in the European area for the definition of language skills.

In respect to Primary Education, CERE validated the diagnostic tests for Greek language proficiency, "I speak Greek I" in respect to the Cyprus context (Editions A' and B'), during the school year 2014-2015. The said tests were developed in Greece within the context of the Programme "Education of Aliens and Greeks of Diaspora" and aimed at children aged 7-11, and they evaluate the first three levels of Greek language proficiency (A1, A2, B1) at the levels established by the Cyprus Productivity Centre. During the current school year (2016-2017) these tests - after their adaptation based on a validation survey - will be provided by CERE on a pilot basis to pupils attending elementary schools in Larnaca and needing support for learning the Greek language. The results of the diagnostic evaluation will be recorded on an electronic platform developed for this purpose by CERE

E. Intercultural approach of new curricula

Intercultural education is not addressed solely for children with migrant background but also for the majority of children. Hence, the MoEC recognizes that the development of a comprehensive strategy for intercultural education also requires additional measures, such as the adoption of the intercultural approach to new curricula.

3. New proposal for the reception of children with migrant background to the Cyprus educational system and for teaching of Greek as a second language.

In line with the recommendations of the SIRIUS Network for the education of children with migrant background, the European Union has set as its primary objective the examination, promotion and implementation of policies for the integration of children with migrant background at all levels of actions within the educational system:

- at the macro-level of society and the educational system (formulation of educational policy).
- at the average level of the school unit, as an interface between the individual and society
- at the micro-level of the school class and the teacher-student-parents connection.

The priorities set are the implementation rather than simply the formulation of policies, with emphasis on access, learning and integration of migrants into the school, and emphasis on supporting the education systems from the surrounding community. The basic principles are to ensure the quality of the education system, utilise diversity and heterogeneity in the school, and taking targeted measures for children with migrant background combined with integration strategies.

However, research carried out under the SIRIUS Programme has demonstrated the difficulty of the education system to reshape practices and situations in order to facilitate the integration of children with migrant background. Based on the above, both the MoEC and the schools realized that they need to focus on the systematic support of the integration of children with migrant background from Kindergarten to Secondary Education within a broader and holistic context. This goal is not a short-term change, but rather a long-term investment, and therefore a change in the approach to this issue ought to cover both the level of national policy and the level of the school unit as well as the level of the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students.

In line with the above, the new proposal for the smooth integration of pupils with migrant background into the Cypriot education system is presented below, and is demonstrated in the form of a chart in the Appendix.

- A. It is necessary to map-out the migrant population by school unit (e.g. school units with a continuous flow of refugees/migrants and schools with resident migrants) in a uniform way to make possible the differentiation of the measures applied, with common axes for all levels. In this context, it is useful to gather information about the pupils' profile (communication with parent/guardian, social welfare services, exploration of the country's socio-political context), regarding their living conditions in the host country and their progress in a variety of skills.
- B. The successful integration of pupils with migrant background into the Cypriot education system also depends on combating any racist incidents they may be subjected to as victims, through the anti-racist policy of the MoEC "Code of Conduct against Racism and a Guide to the Management and Recording of Racist Incidents".¹⁰ Since the school is a state policy institution, the implementation of the anti-racist policy is in line with international and European conventions ratified by Cyprus and is an official state's stance against racism. Based on research data from the international literature¹¹, the implementation of anti-racist policy in schools with stability and consistency, is an appropriate measure to combat racist incidents. This measure is even more appropriate in contexts such as the Cypriot context, which is characterized by specific historical and political particularities of the past, as well as by the present efforts to solve the Cyprus problem. The implementation of anti-racist policies on a general level contributes to fostering a culture of peace, non-violence and social justice in Cyprus, while responding to the objectives of education for human rights, education on citizenship and intercultural education.

Evaluation of the implementation of the anti-racist policy in schools, during the school years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, has shown positive results as regards raising awareness in all members of the school community on issues of racism and discrimination, in reporting racist incidents by victims and witnesses and the effectiveness of the pedagogical measures provided as penalties in the Code and the Guide.

- C. Within the above context, it is also necessary to revise the terms used in the official rhetoric of the MoEC concerning pupils with migrant background. In particular, the adoption of the term "foreign -language speaking" has been criticized in publications in the international literature on the Greek Cypriot educational context during the last decade. Indicatively, Zembylas (2010)¹² notes that unlike the terms "bilingual" or "multilingual", the terms "foreign-language" and "other-language" silence the cultural and linguistic background of the students, focusing on their "deviation" from the cultural and linguistic norm. In general, the use of the prefix "allo (other)-" and "xeno (foreign)" in the terms "other-language speaker" and "foreign-language speaker" respectively, define a person's status as a member of a group which is either "in" or

¹⁰ http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/epimorfosi/antiratsistiki/kodikas_jan2016.pdf

¹¹ Pollock, M. (Ed.) (2008) *Everyday Antiracism*, The New Press, New York and London· Commission for Racial Equality (2002) *Framework for a Race Equality Policy for Schools*, London· Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers (2000) *Racism. No way! A guide for Australian schools*, NSW Department of Education and Training, Australia (available at <http://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/school-planning/guide.pdf>)· Connolly, P., & Troyna, B. (Eds.) (1998) *Researching racism in education: politics, theory and practice*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press· Gillborn, D. (1995) *Racism and antiracism in real schools: Theory, policy, practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press· Gillborn, D. (2001) Racism, policy and the (mis)education of Black children. In R. Majors (Ed.), *Educating our Black children: New directions and radical approaches* (pp. 13-27). London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer· Gillborn, D. (2004) Anti-Racism: From Policy to Praxis. In G. Ladson-Billings & D. Gillborn (Eds.), *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Multicultural Education* (pp. 35-48). London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer· Gillborn, D. (2008) *Racism and Education: Coincidence or Conspiracy?* London and New York: Routledge.

¹² Zembylas, M. (2010) Critical discourse analysis of multiculturalism and intercultural education policies in the Republic of Cyprus. *The Cyprus Review*, 22(1), 39-59.

“out”, establishes language as a dividing device and presenting the Greek language and the Greek Cypriot identity as the absolute norm.

As Theodorou explains (2014)¹³, the term "other-language speaker" refers to a rhetorical deficit associated with a rhetoric of pathologisation and risk, as shown in the way the language is used to classify bilingual children at different levels of attainment of the language. At the same time, the use of the term casts bilingualism as a problem of the children themselves, rather than as a source of enrichment whose benefits extend not only to bilingual children but to the entire school community.

Replacing the term "other-language speaker" is not a simple matter due to the complexity of bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as the many forms of immigration and the arrival time of children in Cyprus. Terms such as "children with a migrant background" have been adopted by European programmes in the field of intercultural education, while in the United Kingdom, for example, the term "EAL-English as an Additional Language for Children and Students" (EAL students) has been adopted and for adults, the term (T) ESOL - (Teaching) English for speakers of other languages is used. Complexity also occurs in terms of translating relevant terms from English into Greek, e.g. Bilingualism - Diglossia (Eurydice, 2009).¹⁴

In conclusion, and based on the above brief review, there appears to be a need for a change in the use of the term "other-language speaker", as well as for adoption by the MoEC of a uniform terminology across the whole range of education. Therefore, it is proposed to adopt the term "children with migrant background", which does not restrict the management of migrant identity to the question of language alone. The next step is to determine the extent to which a child needs support in learning Greek as a second language.

- D. The combination of the preparatory, transition and induction-support phases, as well as the implementation of a system combining intensive teaching and language learning support, seems to be working positively (as in the case of Sweden and regions of Australia, according to Christensen and Stanat, 2007¹⁵). However, this effort should be based on the diversification of actions for teaching Greek as a second language between Kindergarten - Primary School - High School - Evening Gymnasium. Needs, experiences and inconsistencies are different and it is therefore necessary to diversify the methodology, manuals and the curriculum.

It is recommended that a preparatory phase is established, which will last 1 to 3 months and can take place within and/or outside school premises and school hours (e.g. summer schools covering levels A1 and A2 according to specifications of the Cyprus Productivity Centre).

The transition phase is proposed to take place within school hours and premises and to last one school year. This phase will include the integration of children with a migrant background in the mainstream class combined with intensive teaching of Greek as a second language, with special arrangements in the school curriculum depending on the level of education. It is necessary to

¹³ Theodorou, E. (2014) *Constructing the Other: Politics and Policies of Intercultural Education in Cyprus*, in Vega, L. (Ed.) *Empires, Post-Coloniality and Interculturality*, Sense Publishers, 251-272.

¹⁴ Efforts to demarcate bilingualism and the formulation of a definition that concentrates the various qualities and sides are long, numerous and conflicting. In the bibliography (e.g. Damanakis and Skourtou, 2001; Dragona, Skourtou and Frangoudaki, 2001; Triarch - Hermann, 2000), a person can be defined as a bilingual, even if he can pronounce only a few words in the second language, Person who possesses two languages to an excellent degree. There is no definition that could have general validity. The many definitions that have been given over time reveal a different assessment of the characteristics of bilingualism, which may refer to linguistic or social elements.

¹⁵ Christensen, G., & Stanat, P. (2007) *Language policies and practices for helping immigrants and Second-generation students succeed*. Migration Policy Institute.

continuously monitor the progress of children in language using a portfolio of achievements. The transition phase will result in language assessment to ensure and certify the children's' ability to follow the content of the subjects of the school curriculum.

The induction phase can last up to two school years. At this stage, it is suggested that children are placed in the mainstream class on an equal basis with their peers and receive support of up to 5 teaching periods per week, within and/or outside school hours. If necessary, additional reinforced teaching may be offered for individual cognitive objects/ lessons, within and/or after school hours (e.g. after the end of the course).

In order to promote the above arrangements, the time and funds available for the provision of Greek language courses to pupils could be utilized, within the framework of full-time school, the State Institutes of Further Education and Adult Education Centres.

Diagnosis and evaluation of the level Greek language competence¹⁶.

In the available literature, the contribution of language tests for the learning of a second language is indisputable, as they provide valuable information, both for the course of learning and for the teaching of the second language¹⁷. Specifically, the tests provide information to the teachers on the potential, weaknesses and shortcomings of the pupils in order to provide targeted support, which corresponds to the level of the Greek language competence and the needs of the pupils. At the same time, they allow the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Greek language teaching programmes as well as the teaching methods applied.

Recognizing the importance of systematic evaluation, several countries with a large number of children with migrant background (e.g. Australia, Canada, USA) developed their own tools, defining language proficiency criteria (such as ESL Scales in the USA, ESL Bandscales in Australia) to monitor and evaluate second language learning in the school environment¹⁸. These language criteria provide a comprehensive description of what students know and what they can do at different levels of language competence or classroom, or both. For the European area the Cyprus Productivity Centre was established and each European country is responsible for building tools to evaluate the language criteria defined by the Cyprus Productivity Centre. In this context, various tests have been developed in Greece to evaluate Greek as a second language, based on the Cyprus Productivity specifications. Most are aimed at adults, while only a relatively small number of tests are addressed to pupils. Among the Greek language tests developed specifically for children are the tests "I speak Greek" which have been developed within the framework of the Programme "Education of repatriated Greeks and foreign students" (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), based on the CPC specifications¹⁹.

In the context of the official education policy in Cyprus, it is important that the Cypriot education system systematically proceeds in diagnosing the level of Greek-language proficiency of children with migrant background, based on weighted and validated diagnostic tests at all levels. It is proposed that CERE undertakes the assessment of the proficiency level of Greek-language pupils with Greek as a second language, both by developing /validating such tests and by granting and verifying the level of Greek-language proficiency of these children so that they can be monitored.

¹⁶ See Petridou, A., & Neophytou, E. (2015) Report on the results of the validation the diagnostic tests for Greek Knowledge, "I speak Greek I" in respect to the Cyprus context, Nicosia, Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation. .

¹⁷ Varlokosta, S., & Triantaphyllidou, L. (2003) Levels of proficiency in the Greek language as a second language, Athens: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Tzevelekos, M., Kantzou V, Stamouli, S., Chondroyianni, V. Varlokosta, S. Iakovou, M., Lytra, V. & Papageorgakopoulos, G. Ιακώβου, Μ., Λύτρα, Β.,. (2004) Greek as a second language: Evaluation Scale and measurement of the level of knowledge in minority primary schools of Thrace. Reference: : http://www.ilsp.gr/files/web_erevna.pdf.

To this end the CERE, as it has already been referred to above, has proceeded with the validation of the Greek language proficiency level tests "I Speak Greek I" during the school year 2014-2015 and intends to provide them, on a pilot phase, this year (2016-2017) to all primary schools of the Larnaca District for the evaluation of proficiency level of Greek-language students and students who need support for the learning of the Greek language.

- E. Providing a bilingual programme for each migrant is an unattainable and unrealistic target, so attention focuses on high-quality programmes that enhance the acquisition of the language of instruction. However, this does not preclude the creation of opportunities within and outside the school curriculum for utilizing and teaching mother tongues. This could be achieved by introducing language options into Adult Education courses or in an expanded curriculum of a full-day school in Primary Education, as well as in Institutes for Further Education in the case of secondary education.

It is important that the programmes are governed by rules, objectives, principles and constant monitoring, as well as initial and constant evaluation of the participants. The implementation of methods and practices should be constantly monitored through the use of research tools.

- F. Finally, it is important to have specialised teachers who will assume the role of teaching the Greek language so that they can strengthen and be strengthened through and from teaching together with the class teacher. This entails institutionalizing the training on issues of teaching Greek as a second language and its formal integration into basic education/pre-service and in-service training and vocational learning programmes. Specifically the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute - in cooperation with other academic institutions - could take on the role of educating teachers. Such training could be supplementary for teachers who have already attended the Pre-service Training Programme, with the aim of creating a team of teachers who have gained additional expertise in the subject. The training will be of a specific duration and will include theoretical and practical instruction issues (methodological approaches, integration of technology, teaching diversification, group work, utilisation of language room, etc.) as well as basic linguistics. These programmes - in addition to the general framework of cultural diversity management - can focus on the language issue and in particular on specific methodological approaches within the classroom, but also within the school itself, which promote the linguistic development of the particular children in general. They could include various themes, such as analysis of the needs of children with migrant background, management of linguistic diversity, teaching Greek as a second language, effective communication, evaluation issues etc.

In addition, all teachers (not only those who are called upon to teach Greek as a second language) need to be trained on issues of management of the otherness, but also in the promotion of Greek language knowledge in the mainstream class, by learning techniques and action frameworks to better approach students with a different linguistic background.

- G. Ensuring conditions for smooth operation and functional integration of actions related to the implementation of a language policy at school, covers a series of minor or more important issues related to improving the general quality of the school, such as: good and efficient management²⁰ for the provision, for instance, of facilities for the use of special rooms, the cooperation of mainstream class teachers with teachers teaching Greek as a second language, high expectations

²⁰ NESSE. (2008). Education and Migration. European Commission – NESSE.

of teachers, discipline, effective use of equipment, and school-family collaboration both within and outside the classroom. The implementation of a linguistic policy - which will not only concern pupils with migrant background - should be seen in the light of a holistic and ecosystem-based approach which is guided by the principles of intercultural education.

The implementation of the Ministry's antiracist policy "Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents" is necessary to be broadened and implemented in all schools in which preparatory/transition departments will operate.

At school level, it is important to define the group and the lead educator to host pupils with migrant background and to develop a network of "mentors" (mentor-classmate, mentor-educator, community mentor who can be involved, mainly during the first preparatory phase). It has been shown that involvement of parents or members of the minority groups as mediators or mentors can have a positive effect on the performance of children²¹. Thus, the issue also moves on the level of the school unit and on how to implement the framework that will be shaped as a national policy for children with migrant background.

The cooperation of the school unit with the local government to open the school to the community, with the aim of educating and involving parents, welcoming people (e.g. refugees) and participating in training programmes is fundamental, and is essentially expected to be activated by the school. All the above determine to a great extent the quality of the interpersonal relationships between teachers and children with migrant background.

It is specifically proposed to employ adults who come from the countries of the particular student population, who can work with specific work hours and tasks in school units at all levels of education which comprise a large number of children of migrant background. They will be able to work with schools to facilitate children in different areas. Most of their tasks will be related to translation. This may involve the translation of various forms, guides and circulars to pupils and parents, communication between school and parents, involvement in the learning process in the classroom and the support of pupils in general. They will be able to act as liaisons, providing information both on subjects that concern the individual, but also on general cultural issues, which should be taken into account by the school and the educational system. The translators' institution in supporting children with migrant background has many interpretations and variations in the different education systems of the various European countries, depending on the existing requirements, but also on the possibilities offered at school and community level as well as at a general educational policy level²².

4. Concluding Remarks

The adaptation of people to a new environment after the experience of moving to a different place and linguistic, geographic and cultural discontinuity is an expected process, and criminalisation of adjustment a utopia or naïveté. The MoEC has already set the five priority axes for migrant education (Learning Greek language, Reception of newly arrived pupils, Education and training of teachers, Collection and analysis of data on the needs of pupils with migrant background,

²¹ DfES.(2002) Removing the Barriers. DfES.

²² Eurydice. (2009) *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe. Measures to foster: Communication with immigrant families, heritage language teaching for immigrant children*. European Commission, Gobbo, F., Ricucci, R., & Galloni, F. (2009) Inclusion and education in European countries. INTMEAS Report for contract - 2007-2094/001 TRA-TRSPO. DOCA Bureaus.

Intercultural approach to new curricula), which should be strengthened and enriched by new actions, but mainly be linked together as aspects that contribute to the integration of immigrants and the social and learning their development.

Improving educational opportunities for children with migrant biography follows the same path with improving the respective opportunities of pupils of the general population. The aim is to increase social mobility through the acquisition of qualifications and a merit-based policy. The emphasis is on developing general codes to regulate the expectations and the requirements and the response of the individual, with the basic prerequisite that each person demands that he or she is respected as an equal member of the social and educational process, free of exclusions and compromises.

The new policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture is expected to contribute to the attainment of the above objects and it pursues to cover the individual aspects of the whole issue, aiming at the same time at a holistic approach of the issues related to the integration of children with migrant background into the Cypriot teaching system.

APPENDIX

Chart of the new proposal for the integration of pupils with migrant background into the Cyprus educational system

PARAMETERS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Mapping-out the migrant student population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a joint platform for recording of data from all levels.
Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of uniform terminology at all levels of education. • Formulate a relevant paper to be released with the instructions of the Director-General.
Phases of induction of pupils with migrant background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying a holistic approach to integrating pupils with migrant background, adapted to the needs of each level of education. • Furthering the implementation of an anti-racist policy. • Systematisation of learning Greek as a second language.
<u>I. Reception Phase – Preparatory phase</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation among schools for organising intensive 1-3 month-long reception and Greek language learning programmes. • Collaboration with embassies /communities to provide interpreters at an early stage. Financial support for interpreters can also be provided through the Home Affairs Fund (Asylum Migration and Integration Fund). • Operation of summer schools. • Review of Host Guides in the Cypriot education system. • Appointment of a migrant host-teacher coordinator for each school. • Establishment of a peer-mentor group and teacher-mentor group for the reception and integration of children with migrant background. • Establishment of community-mentor group – involvement of parents. • Defining the degree of competence in the Greek language with Greek language proficiency tests.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation of diagnostic tests for Greek language proficiency.
II. <u>Transit phase</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation of transition classes with intensive teaching of Greek as a second language, for one school year. • Establishing a basic teaching manual for the teaching of Greek as a second language. • Monitoring and evaluating the progress of students in transition classes – Use of a student achievement portfolio. • Validation of Greek language certification tests.
III. <u>Induction phase</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction of pupils with migrant background into the mainstream class, on an equal basis with other classmates. • Provide support for the language used at school, up to 5 teaching periods per week (for up to two school years), within and /or outside school premises and school hours. • Additional support for individual subjects / lessons, within and /or out of school premises and school hours (e.g. after the end of the course, within the context of an extended school hours / full-time school / State Institutes of Further Education/ Adult Education Centres). • Integration of mother tongue instruction within an extended day-time school / State Institutes of Further Education/ Adult Education Centres. • Fostering the intercultural dimension in the school curriculum.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of the teaching of Greek as a second language in basic education / pre-service and in-service training and education programmes. • Systematic training of Teachers (teaching Greek as a second language, teachers in mainstream class, reception coordinators, educational staff) and their support at school level. • Implementation of programmes for distant learning of Greek as a second language, on a wide scale.