

=====SESSION OF RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA AN EUROPEAN DILEMMA
Convenor Masoud Kamal=====

PERSPECTIVES AND REALITIES OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN GREECE. THE ROLE OF THE GREEK YOUTH.

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As a part of a six countries research programme on future multicultural educators training, the moral and cognitive empowerment of 100 Greek students has been analysed by semi-constructed interview and structured questionnaires. Of these students, 20 had participated in a four months intense on-line communication with their foreign homologues on topics of multicultural education. The analysis of data of this communication focused on five directions.: Class organisation, assessment, conflict resolution, curriculum and communication. In a society of cultural plurality where integration is the demanded issue instead of assimilation, moral and emotional empowerment was revealed to be the most intensive need besides cognitive empowerment in order to attain the students' attitudinal engagement with cultural diversity and plurality. Instead of conflicts of interest as a long ethical tradition in western Europe, the state of affairs in Greece turned to reveal a conflict of values proving that traditional ethics are no longer sufficient in a pluralistic society. A new "values know-how" emerged out of our questionnaires and interviews to the 20 students trained and engaged to the programme, in the opposite of the rest 80 anonymous students who participated as a sample group. Racist stereotypes and xenophobic tensions were surpassed by new international values acting as remedy to old traditional fears. Further research on the national policy concerning multicultural education in Greece revealed the double role played by the state. In conclusion Greek youth is ready to accept the new multicultural reality not under violent terms of financial globalisation but rather under "soft" cultural terms of educational and cultural cosmopolitanism that was a historical ethical tradition in the ancient times and especially in Balkans since 1000 A.D.