



## NEWS REPORT

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| <b>Date:</b>                     | 29 October 2014  |
| <b>Expert:</b>                   | Athanasios Theodoridis   |
| <b>Title:</b>                    | Publication of a new Report entitled " <i>Racism and Discriminations in Greece today</i> " |
| <b>Country:</b>                  | Greece   |
| <b><u>Context</u></b>            |  |
| <b>Issue at stake:</b>           | Academic contribution to the fight against discrimination, racism and racist violence      |
| <b>Ground of discrimination:</b> | All grounds  |
| <b>Source:</b>                   | Presentation of a book published by the Foundation Henrich Boll                            |
| <b>Field:</b>                    | All fields with focus on education   |
| <b>Legislative provisions:</b>   | Anti-discrimination Law 3304/2005 and anti-racist Law 4285/2014                            |

### Content

**Political development:** On 29 October 2014, the Report "*Racism and Discrimination in Greece today*" written by a professor of Law, a school teacher and a political scientist (Andreas Takis, Despoina Syrri and Antonis Gazakis) published by the Foundation Henrich Boll was presented in Athens as part of the campaign "*Select Respect*", an initiative of organizations active in the field of protection of human rights and the fight against discrimination and racism in Greece. It aims to contribute to a better understanding of the diffusion of discrimination, racism and racist violence in the context of the current multifaceted crisis experienced in the Greek society. The authors analyse both the national policies against discrimination and racist discourse and the social processes and reactions of the society. During the public presentation of the Report, which for the moment exists only in Greek language, the authors emphasised the necessity for combating the phenomenon of racism and discrimination. Based on material and investigations published during the last two years, the report presents the institutional framework for combating racism, describes the phenomenon in everyday social practices and examines the challenges and perspectives of antiracist action.

At the same time it assesses the Greek legal system's ability to tackle racist phenomena and concludes with a series of recommendations in order to address them.

According to Olga Drossou, Director of the Heinrich Boll Foundation Delegation in Greece, who took part in the presentation, the reason for the publication of this report was the alarming rise of right-wing parties and movements of various expressions, which was visible during the period before the European Parliament Election in the spring of 2014 and clearly recorded in the results of the election in many European



countries. The recent adoption of the new antiracist legislation (Law 4285/2014) opened fruitful discussions concerning the State's actions for combating the phenomenon of racism.

However, according to Andreas Takis, one of the report's three authors, the antiracist legislation, unfortunately, not only seems insufficient, but, taking into account multiple viewpoints, it even generates further dangers and problems. The report also notes that one of the most troubling areas of racist speech articulation and racist practices appearance is Education. The authors of the report approach the issue of discrimination inside the school environment, analyzing practices of public bodies which contradict the law, the phenomenon of school violence, as well as Golden Dawn's actions of systematic nature concerning the education field. As another of the authors, Mr Antonis Gazakis, underlined, education constitutes in any society one of the core mechanisms of reproduction and regeneration of dominant ideology and government policies and as a result, racism in education cannot be dealt with by applying partial measures in the curriculum or in any other area, if racist, xenophobic, intolerant, nationalist attitudes and perceptions do not withdraw from society as a whole but also from government.

Moreover, the authors believe that the above attitudes and perceptions are not always or mainly diffused inside the school environment and the apparent and official curriculum, but through small -or major- details of school life, such as religious icons, the morning prayer, national school holidays, parades etc. Specifically, according to Mr. Gazakis, the State is required to fiercely protect teachers who fight against racism in schools, ensuring at the same time that none of their colleagues will do the opposite, and to put as a priority the elimination of discrimination and exclusion in school and not the strict adherence to the letter of the law.

Finally, the report notes that what must be clearly understood is that antiracist education cannot be exhausted in specific textbook chapters, national days' celebrations, school programs against racism or external programs in cooperation with NGOs, but it should be made a constant part of school routine and set as first priority. The report will be soon available also in English.

**Internet link source and additional information:**

<http://www.unhcr.gr/1againstracism/ratsismos-ke-diakrisis-stin-ellada-simera/>