

The Voting Right of the Immigrants in Greece - The Case of the Municipality of Korydallos -

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Abstract Greece from the beginning of the decade 1990 and afterwards has become a country of reception of refugees and economic immigrants, mainly from countries of Eastern and southern-eastern Europe. Such kind of incidents resulted to the fear for the foreigner, the xenophobia towards populations that were considered as underdeveloped due to the arrangements that had prevailed in them after the end of Second World War and their weakness of communication with the remainder world. During the last period a big discussion has arisen concerning the subject of citizenship concession among immigrants and their families, specifically in the space of local self-government.

Keywords : *Immigrants, Municipality of Korydallos, voting right, racism, globalisation*

The elections are perhaps the day where reminds us more that we are foreigner, that we do not belong nowhere.
Fadel, Passport, vol. 3, Nov 2007

1. Introduction

In the modern globalized world the significance of citizenship maintains various aspects, without being completely disconnected with the ideological determination of “nationality” of the national state. Therefore, we distinguish the importance of the message of the Greek President for the World Day of Refugees (20 June 2008), when Mr **Karolos Papoulias**, mentioned that “*the epicentre of narration of each refugee remains the same. You are given birth in a certain part of the world, age in another and you also feel a foreigner in both parts*”. The refugees, the immigrants and the resettlers are persons that were forced to abandon their homeland and to suffer all kinds of disaster.

The anniversary events, such as the World Refugee Day or the nomination of 2001 as “*International year of mobilisation against racism, racial discriminations and xenophobia*”, or even movements of impressiveness simply remind us mainly what we have not made and why problems are still unsolved. It is essential to remember our own refugees and take care of the immigrants we receive in our country each year. We exist and we live with other people, who are coming from all over the world.¹ Greece was sending immigrants until 1980's (Agrafiotis)², but

¹Webpage <http://www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday> (accessed 18/2/2011).

²According to the mythology as first Greek immigrant - refugee that visited America is considered **Odysseus** who reached in the bay of Mexico where colony of Ancient Greeks, was found. The first historical recorded immigrant in America was **Theodoros** or **Dorotheos**, who took part in expeditionary mission of Spanish in America. The first Greek that visited Australia was **Damianos Gkikas**, as convict in 1802. The first immigrant was a seaman named John Peters in 1838. The importance of immigration of Greeks is attributed eloquently also in the Theatre of

from the beginning of 1990's and afterwards it became a country which received refugees and economic immigrants, mainly from the countries of Eastern and south-eastern Europe³. Such types of incidents resulted to the consolidation of the fear for the foreigner, xenophobia towards populations that were considered as underdeveloped because of the arrangements that had prevailed in them after the end of 2nd World War and their inability to communicate with the rest of the world (NCSR, 2007).

Studying the Greek reality we owe to observe that the efforts of most Greeks for the national completion and materialisation of Big Idea of **I. Koletti** (Clogg, 1984) for the integration of all Greek provinces, that had remained outside of the Greek territory, resulted to the configuration of the national conscience, which led to the elation of nationalism. However, the completion of this effort had as a consequence the creation of conflicts with the neighbouring populations, which at that period shaped also their own national conscience. The process of national completion was marked by a line of conflicts and intensities, as the conflict of residents of old and new countries.⁴

The article acquires also a particular importance because of the big discussion that has been developed both in the EU and Greece for the immigration phenomenon. The experience of this period showed us that we are excessively optimistic. We are referring to the voting and being elected right for citizens who participate in Greek education, have grown in Greece, feel Greek, but still do not have complete rights. The last month the subject came once again in the surface because the occupation of old building of Law School from 400 immigrants which asking authorisation of permanent eve in Greece.

2. The Social Integration and the Civil Rights of Immigrants in Greece

2.1. The role of the U.N. and the E.U

On World Refugee Day, let us reaffirm the importance of solidarity and burden-sharing by the international community. Refugees have been deprived of their homes, but they must not be deprived of their futures.

Ban Ki-moon, Message for World Refugee Day 2010

The social integration (Kaplan, 2006)⁵ means “*the process of incorporation with which a society allows in its members to be holders of positions and role carriers, also the process with which the individual accepts the positions and the roles that are attributed to him in the frame of social organisation*”, while the term incorporation is used “*with the meaning of conjunction of parts and their fitting in a system, social integration and the socialization of these individuals*” (Vasileiou et al, 2000).

Shades, the famous **Karagkiozis**. It is characteristic that exists recorded representation titled “*Karagkiozis in Kastigari*”, in that are described the adventures of hero in the island of Kastigari in USA.

³The metics (33.000 metics at 431 B.C. - year of beginning of Peloponnesian war) in Ancient Athens, had limited or not at all political rights, which they could acquire them only in special cases at which they offered important services in the city and could not become equal citizens. With that way the system protected itself while the foreigner could not participate in the decisions of Municipality or claim some type of political power. From them the Community program Equal took its name which objective is the confrontation of phenomena of racism and xenophobia but also the creation of conditions for the configuration of multicultural society.

⁴No one can forget the way with which received the old residents of Greece, the refugees from Asia Minor in the decade of 1920.

⁵According to a French definition integration means “*a concrete process that allows the active attendance in the national community of different elements and influences, in a frame of equal rights of also obligations*”. For Greeks the term integration describes the possession of language of country of reception or the demand for the acquisition of Greek citizenship. This term should include also the means that our society uses, in local but also national level and should not constitute the clue that the immigrant has accepted the rules of Greek society. But also it is not presented as the final stage of the economic and cultural evolution of immigrant in the Greek society.

In article 7 of the Ecumenical Statement of Human Rights of U.N. it is reported that “*all are equal towards the law and have right in the protection of law, without any discrimination*”. The International Agreement on Individual and Political Rights (N.Y. 16/12/1966) mentioned that “*Each country which is a member of the present convention, undertakes to respect and to ensure the rights of all individuals and subjects under its sovereignty, without any discrimination, such as race, colour, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other situation...*” (article 2.1.). Greece has not signed the Convention of United Nations on the Protection of rights of Immigrant Workers and Members of their Families neither has it submitted statement of Article of 14th Convention of United Nations on the obliteration of racial discriminations, which allows the examination of individual reports from the Committee on the Obliteration of Racial Discriminations.⁶ The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. The 1967 Protocol removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention.⁷

The effort for the confrontation of xenophobia and racism puzzles henceforth all states of developed Europe and for this reason a special report exists in the Treaty on the Establishment of Constitution in Europe, which is reported in article III - 257, § 3 that “*the Union’s overwhelming effort in order to ensure high level of safety with the establishment of measures and fighting of... racism and xenophobia*”. So it was an effort for the consolidation of the basic individual and political rights of immigrants in Europe (*equality against the law, human rights, respect of human dignity and democratic freedom and other*).

In the Unified Attribution of the Treaty on the EU and the Treaty on the Operation of EU (2008/C 115/01) issues of citizenship and prohibition of discriminations are reported in the articles 18 - 25. More concretely, article 20 fixes that the citizens of Union have the right of voting and being elected in the elections of the European Parliament and in the municipal elections in the member state of their residence having the same terms with the citizens of the state of their residence. Article 22 fixes that the citizens of EU have the right of voting and being elected in the municipal and Community elections in the member of state of their residence, under the same terms with the citizens of the state⁸.

In the Chart of Fundamental Rights of European Union [(official newspaper No C364 the 18/12/2000, p. 0001 - 0022) from the web page europa.eu.int] reports for the protection of rights of immigrants can be found. More specifically (Chapter II “Freedom” and chapter III - “Equality”) the article 18 for the “*Right of asylum*” refers to the right of asylum, article 19 “*Protection in the event of removal, deportation and publication*” protects foreigners in the event of removal, deportation and publication. Article 21 “*Prohibition of discriminations*”, among others, prohibits any discrimination owing to colour, nationality origin or social origin, genetic characteristics, language, religion, attribute of member of national minority and other factors.

From the beginning of 1980’s the EU aimed to shape a Common Immigration Policy, even if the European Committee has not yet undertaken completed initiative for the confrontation of this phenomenon, because the particularities that each country has

⁶http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/55/76 (accessed 18/2/2011). 55/76. See also (a) 15th anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and World Refugee Day, (b) Centre of European Constitutional Right, Legal, institutional and administrative dimensions of arrangement of entry and status of immigrants in Greece. Challenges and prospects of improvement - Study of compatibility the Greek and European Institutional frame, Athens 2004 and (c) 55/76, 15th anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and World Refugee Day.

⁷See the webpage <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html> (accessed 18/2/2011).

⁸The treaty on the Establishment of Constitution of Europe in article I-5, paragraph 1, reported that the “*Union respects the equality of member states according to the Constitution as well as their national identity that is found in accordance with their fundamental political and constitutional structure, in which the regional and local self-government is included*”.

(Varvitsiotis).⁹ The Common Immigratory Policy aims to combine strict restrictions in the distribution of work in the exterior borders of EU with the almost free distribution in the Community space of legal citizens of third countries. In this effort Treaty of Sengen, was incorporated in the Community, agreement of Dublin (1990) is applied more effectively which forecasts the observation of human rights for foreigners, independent from their legal situation. Also, the collaboration of many bodies of EU was achieved with big number of NGO's which activated in all countries. Last but not least, a various program with regard to the immigrants has been organised which will help them to return to their homelands¹⁰.

The Council of Europe adopted on 5/2/1992 the "*Convention on the attendance of foreigners in the public life in local level*". Convention which Greece did not sign and it is not willing to do so in the close future.¹¹ The European Parliament (March 2000) adopted a resolution in which formulates the wish "*for reasons of respect of fundamental democratic values of EU, to adapt the member states as soon as possible their legislation, so that the is right of voting and being elected in the municipal and European elections extended will be expanded in the all non-community citizens that have permanent stay in their ground for interval of more than a five-year period*" (article 19). On July 2006 the European Parliament mentioned that "*the Committee to proceed in legal revision of the existing provisions with regard to the attribute of European citizen in the various member states, as well as the proceeding that follow today's member states concerning the right for the long time residing immigrants to vote in the local and municipal elections*".

2.2. Greece

The basic reflection of Greek community is the way of integration and incorporation of immigrants in a society. Especially in a conservative society like Greece. From a sociological point of view, the nation is defined as the independent social and political community that its activity is developed in a specified space and with the national borders to determine the space into where its members are unbreakable connected with each other. That connection is based on certain common symbols, such as language, origin, religious convictions, cultural traditions and other. National conscience is shaped and forms the basic factor for the completion of social cohesion. The national conscience contributes to the shaping of patriotism, which is the configuration of powerful sentimental bonds that determine the national identity of a total, its values and its ideals (Mardas, 1998). Even if it is reduced, patriotism in the antiquity, has accepted political, cultural and social effects that shaped a new conscience in the residents of a region, which undermined the significance of patriotism (Almpanis, 1998). By using the term "*nationalism*", Greeks mean at the same time the refusal and the exclusion of foreigner and the no acceptance of diversity. With that way the term of "*we*" is shaped, which is opposite to the term of "*others*", in other words they are found in continuous conflict and segregation, so differences are shaped between the native lands and the foreigners as much as between the teams of foreigners (Baylis and Smith).¹²

⁹In the city of Portlaoise of Ireland an immigrant from Nigeria **Rotimi Antempari** was elected mayor in a city that the number of immigrants does not exceed the 4% of residents. In Denmark citizens of third countries that reside in the country legally for three years have the voting right in the municipal elections. Equivalent right, after five years of legal stay, acquire the citizens of third countries in Holland. In Sweden and in Finland the voting right allocate all that are found legally in the country.

¹⁰The program "*Aineias*", from the hero of Troy, is inter-country with Albania and its objective is to convince Albanians to return in their country and it deters their escape in other countries.

¹¹In the beginnings 2003 the European Parliament adopted resolution (*which is based on the report of Sbimpel*) with which calls certain member states to sign and ratify the European Convention on the attendance of foreigners in the public life in local level. We distinguish a selectivity in the way of acceptance but also application of common policies of EU in Greece, according to the Centre of European Constitutional Right.

¹²Some examples of nationalistic ideology is the depreciatory characterizations that are attributed in big teams of populations, as "*black*" or "*coloured*", "*the undisciplined and incompetent black*", with which the chromatic variant of

A very important step, is the participation of immigrants in the local social networks, such as municipal institutions, cultural associations and applications of strategy that will offer immigrants the possibility of contributing in the local societies and in their administration equally, aiming at the encouragement of attendance in their entirety activities of local society (Aspridis, 2006).

The Greek Constitution faces the population as an entity and it concerns those who have right of vote, even if they are economic immigrants or their descendants, that have acquired the Greek citizenship. Article 5, § 2 reports that “*all persons living within the Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life, honour and liberty irrespective of nationality, race or language and of religious or political beliefs*” (Sakkelaropoulos, 1999 : 29 – 31). Exceptions shall be permitted only in cases provided by international law. “*The extradition of aliens prosecuted for their action as freedom-fighters shall be prohibited*”. Besides, some political parties that show particular interest for the economic immigrants, which live for many years in Greece and in particular it has been proposed to acquire, as a first stage, right of vote in the elections of local government (Albanis, 1998).

The extension of the right of vote in the referendum that concerns some social question but no in one that concerns question of national safety (*of course in Greece referenda are not held for no reason*). Afterwards it will be forecasted the extension of right of vote in local elections too and specifically for those who reside in Greece for big periods of time and in particular in a certain Municipality or Community. And if it is not established for the immigrants of first generation it owes to be established for the immigrants one and a half or second generation, that is to say for that children that came very small in Greece or been born in our country and they know their country only from narrations of their parents or they consider it as a place of tourist destination. These children grow in Greece and become participants of Greek education. Unfortunately the Greek legislator, from 1975 up today, could not or he did not want to forecast the development and the needs of modern multicultural society (Aspridis, 2006).

The Law 3386/2005 “*Entry, stay and social integration of nationals of third countries in the Greek Territory*”, (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 212[A]'-23/8/2005) tries to cover the gaps of residency of immigrants in Greece. This Law regulates subjects that concern residency, work, insurance, legalisation and other subjects of the immigrants. The disadvantage is that these provisions contribute in the creation of complex bureaucratic structures that many times discourages the immigrants to collaborate with the authorities, so that they prefer to stay illegal¹³. It owes to create favourable regulations for those who remain in the country for big intervals and create families, that constitute their first stage of legalisation and finally to shape the suitable policy for the children of economic immigrants, that is to say for the second generation of immigrants (Aspridis, 2006).¹⁴

3. Statistical Elements for the Immigrants in Greece

In Greece more than 1.000.000 immigrants are residing, the majority of whom are in a

certain citizens is declared. Even the destruction in the N. Orleans (October 2005) was not only class but also racial, from the moment that most affected were poor blacks.

¹³It has created the Ombudsman of immigrant, refugee and fellow countryman that aims to protect and to advise the immigrants that reside in Greece.

¹⁴L. 2910/2001 “*Entry and eve of foreigners in the Greek Territory. Possession of Greek citizenship with counting of citizens and other provisions*” (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 91[A]'-2/5/2001), Law 3284/2004 “*For ratification of Code of Greek Citizenship*” (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 217[A]'-10/11/2004) and the P.D. 150/2006 “*Adaptation of Greek legislation in Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003, relative with the status of nationals of third countries which is for a long time residing*” (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 160[A]'-31/7/2006) mentioned that for acquiring by the foreigner the status of a long time residing he should “*reside in Greece, legally and ceaseless, for the five years right before the date of submission of relative application*” allocates sufficient annual income, complete insurance of illness, sufficient knowledge of Greek and the Greek history and the culture.

productive age. According to official elements (2001) 761.813 recorded immigrants, men and women, reside officially in Greece. They are coming from various countries of the world and mainly from the Balkan's, countries of the former real socialism and finally Africa and Asia, as well as Greeks that were repatriated by America, Australia and elsewhere. According to the elements of the Greek National Statistics for the second quarter of 2007, 580.709 legal immigrants from all around the world are found in Greece. More than half of them are from Albania and immigrants that emanate from the countries of former Socialist group follow. According to the same source in Greece 304.169 immigrants are working. Based on sources of the UN at the end of the first 20 years of the 21st century in Greece it is likely to have between 3 and 3,5 million immigrants in a total of 14 million residents (<http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>).

The results of a research of the National Centre for Social Research do not cause particular surprise, presenting Greeks as one of the most xenophobic and racist populations in the EU. Moreover, roughly 53% of the Greek population considers that when the foreigners commit any offence, independent with the weight (*fault or felony*), evacuation is necessary. Also, 22,1% argue that the economic immigrants “*take our jobs*”, while the 78,6% of Greeks assume that the foreigners contribute in the reduction of wage and daily labour cost. Xenophobia of Greeks is also proved by the fact that they believe (59,5%) it seems useful citizens which emanate from poorer countries of EU should enter the country. Feelings of racism and xenophobia are also clear from the fact that Greek citizens believe that economic immigrants and foreigners in general, deteriorate the national economy, even if it is sure that they support a lot of sectors that Greeks do not have as a first choice to deal with, such as agriculture and auxiliary domestic work¹⁵.

In another research, that was conducted for Equal's program purposes, 70% of Greeks believe that foreigners are the crowd to blame for the increase of criminality (*hence it is reasonably the 28% that declares that it has faced safety problems*), 69% consider that the immigrants are accountable for the increase of unemployment and 75% believe that children of immigrants should go to the same schools with the native citizens - even if that 55% consider that special classes should operate. Moreover, from the various nationalities, firstly they prefer the Citizens of EU member states, secondly the Latin-Americans, thirdly the Serbs while the smaller sympathy is shown to the Albanians, Rumanians, Bulgarian and the citizens of USA.

According to a research of the European Committee (Special Eurobarometre 2008 Discrimination in the European Union 2008, period 20/2/2008 - 11/3/2008 - for Greece) discrimination that is based on the origin have the greatest percentage amongst the residents of EU, even if they have been decreased relatively in EU level (*from 64% which was been the Community average percentage, it receded in 62%*). Percentages differ between the member states of EU. As a paradigm, Dutch, French, Italians, Swedes and Greeks are considered as the most racists while in the antipode Lithuanians, Latvians and Poles are found. In general Europeans feel relatively comfortable with the fact that certain foreigners are neighbours. Greeks exceed the average of EU, since 76% of them declare themselves racists and xenophobic. In the same research, 15% declared they became receptors of racist discrimination during the last period. While questioning the way of confronting immigrants and national minorities we come to the conclusion that they are more often than in EU.

4. Positions of Greek Political Parties and N.G.Os

i. **NEW DEMOCRACY:** It is proposing the shaping of a constituted migration policy and mainly in subjects that concern work and safety of immigrants. It has formulated proposals that

¹⁵This research was realised by the National Centre of Social Research and it was realised between 29/1/2003 - 15/3/2004.

concern the right of vote of Greek immigrants in other countries but not the right of vote of immigrants that reside permanently in Greece. The ex Minister of Interior Mr **Pr. Pavlopoulos**, declared in August 2006 in his interview at the radio station SKAI that “*the Greek Constitution does not allow adoption of complete political rights to non Greeks. But it allows, even if they are immigrants, the right to emanate from countries that do not belong in the EU, the concession of right regarding the municipal and prefectural elections. We hope on this because now we don’t have to anticipate... in next municipal and prefectural elections (2010) would be in position to grant the rights that belong to them*” (Manousakis, 2005)¹⁶. Even if in the recent Revision of Constitution the governing party did not even propose the consolidation of political rights, partly to, the immigrants.¹⁶

ii. **PANHELLENIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (PA.SO.K.):** It proposes the enactment of voting right and being elected in the local elections (*even in the European elections*) for the foreigners that have supplemented five years of legal stay in Greece. PA.SO.K. considers that the space of local self-government is an exceptionally important space for the integration of immigrants. Integration that concerns safety, the attendance in social, educational and economic life and other. For this reason they believe that immigrants should have complete rights in the trade unions of working organisations. PA.SO.K. realised also the first step for the complete incorporation of immigrants in Greece, when it granted to them the right of vote in recent party internal processes (2007) and the possibility of participating in the bodies of the party or even in the national Networks (*as are the Networks of Immigrants, Rom, Resettler from N. Epirus and European Citizens*). With this policy it tries to incorporate the immigrants in the local societies¹⁷. The axiomatic Opposition proposes the creation of committees for the immigrants in the Local Self-government and the participation of the immigrants in the Municipal elections, even if they have not yet acquired the Greek citizenship. To have the possibility of electing in order to select their advisers and to be elected in the Municipal Council. Finally, PA.SO.K. proposed also the creation of ministry of Immigration with specialised personnel that will practice the central policy for immigration. Opposite voices in the interior of the Movement support that the right of vote should be recognized, with terms and conditions. In his proposal for the Revision of the constitution PA.SO.K. proposed the forecast of clause on legal residence that will provide equal rights with the aborigines (*article 5, paragraph 20*) (Chatzioannidou, 2005).¹⁸

iii. **COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE (K.K.E.):** It proposes the defence and the enlargement of democratic rights of immigrants and political refugees. It considers that the initial incorporation will be achieved via the organisation of immigrants in the trade unions and afterwards they should acquire equal rights and freedoms with the aborigines. It accuses the remainder parties that contribute to the guidance of immigrants and to the lack of concession of policy rights in them. K.K.E. in the recent revision of Constitution proposed, (*article 5, paragraph 2*) among others, the institutional consolidation of equal rights for those who reside in Greece, without political, religious, national, racial, linguistic, cultural and social discrimination. Claiming the guarantee of equal rights for those who are found in our country and guarantee of participation of immigrants in the local elections. While to an annex of the same article it asked the constitutional consolidation of a right of foreigners seeking political asylum in our country.¹⁹

¹⁶ See the webpage <http://www.nd.gr> (accessed 19/2/2011).

¹⁷ According to Mrs **M. Koppa**, member of Political Council of PA.SO.K. and the webpage <http://www.pasok.gr/portal> (accessed 19/2/2011).

¹⁸ See newspaper Eleftherotyphia, Proposal for voting the immigrants in municipal elections, 16/11/2005 <http://www.enet.gr/> (accessed 17/2/2011).

¹⁹ See newspaper Rizospastis, Equal rights and special help in the immigrants, 16/9/2005, webpage <http://www1.rizospastis.gr/> (accessed 18/2/2011).

iv. **COALITION RADICAL LEFT (SYRIZA):** Proposes the complete benefit of social and political rights to refugees and to immigrants (*independent legalisation from the actuarial conditions, the publication of testimonial birth in the children of immigrants and the integration of immigrants in the organised trade-union movement*) the right of voting and being elected in the local elections for all the immigrants. Also, it proposes the complete legalisation of immigrants. SY.RIZ.A. and in the frame of revision of Constitution asks the reinforcement of the individual and social rights, the recognition of young persons that have given birth the new conditions and the guarantee for effective application²⁰.

v. **POPULAR ORTHODOX ALARM (LAOS):** It does not have proposals that would concern political rights of immigrants, because of the existing fear for locomotion of its voters to the left parties (*as it happened as an example in Belgium*). On the contrary it proposes measures for the confrontation of immigration. Concerning the proposals of LAOS. it seems to be enough to report a part of the speech of a member of Central Committee of LAOS., 4/3/2006, (www.metopo.gr) in which he reports “*Due to the fact that in the democracy impasses do not exist, ballots give the answer in the multicultural fixations of LAOS in the elections of local self-government. The election of patriots in the public schools - prefectural councils will allow the resistance in anything that undermines the cohesion of Greek society and will restore politics in the public dialogue, placing to the citizen political choices*”²¹.

vi. **ECOGREEN PARTY:** It asks the concession of Greek citizenship to the children of immigrants that have been born in Greece and at the same time is granted the double citizenship²² in all who reside in our country for years and to have the right of voting and being elected in all levels.²³

vii. **NGOs: B. Chronopoulos,** a representative of the Greek-Albanian NGO “*Sokratis*”, mentioned “*the attendance of immigrants in the local elections will not degrade no national or other cleanliness, will not constitute danger for our country, will not create problems of anyone of texture... in the percentage the 10% (on the total of Greek population) are included also the children of immigrants that live in our country above one decade or have been born in Greece and have not travelled despite minimal times in the homeland of their parents. They do not say that these persons could already for years have acquired the attributes of a Greek citizen*”²⁴.

Greece is the only country internationally in which the immigrants do not have political rights while they do not participate nor in the National Committee of Integration (Botopoulos, 2007).²⁵

²⁰ According to newspaper Eleftherotypia, Vote for the immigrants, 22/4/2005, webpage <http://www.enet.gr/> (accessed 18/2/2011).

²¹ See the webpage <http://www.laos.gr/> (accessed 19/2/2011).

²² At the present moment dominates the right of blood and not the right of place on the concession of citizenship.

²³ See the webpage <http://www.ecogreens-gr.org/cms> (accessed 19/2/2011).

²⁴ See the newspaper Eleytherotypia «*Immigrants are excluded from the local elections – Racism behind the voting curtains*», 15/10/2006, webpage <http://www.iospress.gr/ios2006/ios20061015.htm> (accessed 19/2/2011).

²⁵ The benefits of voting right without existing also the equivalents economic and social obligations place serious question of democracy and they change the political balances. In the frame of events for the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007) was published report on the subject “*Right of immigrants and proposals of migratory policy*”, in which existed a lot of proposals for subjects as the process of entry of - expense from the country, the hospital and medico-pharmaceutical care, the education and the employment of immigrants. Regarding the institutional interventions simply exists a report - wish for the direct signature or ratification of conditions that is reported in the citizenship and other.

Table 1. Political parties towards to the immigrants

	NEW DEMOCRACY	PA.SO.K.	K.K.E.	SY.RIZ.A.
Legalisation	There is no process.	Widening of legalisation conditions.	Legalisation of the immigrants that are in Greece.	Continuous process of legalisation aiming to their integration.
Social & working rights	Only the long stay residence. All the others are hostages of the employers since their stay permit is depending on revenue stamps.	Protection of the social and working rights, stop of the non-claimed work and the tax evader of the employers.	Equal rights of Greeks and Immigrants, social security for everyone, fight with non-insured work.	Detachment of permit stay from the certain number of revenue stamps, unlimited possibility of change of aim of permit stay.
Second generation, immigrants' children who were born or brought up in Greece	5 years stay permit for the children that they were born here, they have completed their necessary education, if their parents stay legally in Greece (900 € fee).	Issuing of citizenship in all children they are given birth and grow in Greece and automatic acquisition after the expiry of three-year period for the all rests that are students in our country.	Equal rights for all immigrants and their children without certain regulation.	Greek citizenship to the children of the immigrants that are given birth in Greece or they have completed 3 years education in any level of the Greek education system.
Teaching of mother tongue	It does not exist apart from very few inter-cultural schools.	Teaching of the mother tongue of the main countries of their origin.	Teaching of their mother language and their history.	Teaching of mother tongue in public schools.
Participation right in local elections	It does not exist.	Right of electing and being elected for those that have already completed 5 years of legal stay.	Widening of democratic rights without any particular comment on that subject.	Voting right for municipal and regional elections to all the immigrants that have completed 5 years of legal stay.

Source: Newspaper *Eleftherotypia* (22/4/2005)

5. The Case of Municipality of Korydallos

The municipality of Korydallos²⁶ belongs geographically and administratively in the Prefecture of Piraeus. It has an extent of 4.324 acres with a population of 70.710 residents (*inventory 2001*). The first elected Mayor was **Hippocrates Odampasogloy** [1951 – 1954]. From the dues of the decade 1970 and the beginning of 1980, big building orgasms acquired and formed a modern city. The irony up until today has the dreary privilege “to entertain” the prison.

²⁶Korydallos is a Municipality that it is presented so much in their prehistoric years as in the Greek mythology. In the antiquity it was one from the 100 Municipalities of Attica that **Kleisthenis** set up and belonged in Ipphoontida race. The Municipality was known from Stravona. The history of Municipality is lost for one interval until is reported again by the scholar and clergyman **Theofilos Korydalloys** (1563 - 1646). Two hundred years later it constitutes the centre of one of big property that belonged in **Emmanouil Koutsikaris**. In 1923 the region takes again the name that it had in the antiquity and in 1928 are developed the first settlements from 2.500 residents. In 1946 is recognized as Municipality. See the webpage <http://www.korydallos.gr/> (accessed 19/2/2011).

According to the available elements²⁷ in the Municipality of Korydallos reside about 4.500 immigrants. From them 58.15% are men and 41.85 are women. 52% of those are married, 44% bachelors, 3% divorced and 1% are widowed. With regard to education level, we observe that 4% roughly are holders of academic degree or even postgraduate titles. 38,5% are graduates of secondary education and finally 21,5% are of first degree education while 3,5% declared illiterate. With regard to their ages most belong in the most productive ages of 25 - 50 years. More concretely, until 25 years are 31,2%, 25 - 35 30,5% and 35 - 50 28,7%. From 50 and over the 9% of them are roughly immigrants. In their overwhelming majority the immigrants emanate from Albania, 52,6% and remainder from the countries of former Eastern Bloc and several from Asiatic countries. According religion in their overwhelming majority they are Christian (*Orthodox, Catholics, Evangelists etc*), roughly 38%, 17% Muslim women and the remainder percentage belong to various religious sects (*Buddhist, Sikh, Atheists etc*). Finally, according profession, 21% declare unemployed, 11% are builders, 10,8% workers and the remainder percentage are occupied in various professions (*as tailors, domestic, waiters etc*).

5.1. The Policy of Municipality of Korydallos for the Immigrants

The importance that the legislator gives to the social incorporation of immigrants is also proved by the specific report of the Municipal Code²⁸, where in article 75 mentioned that “*the planning and application of programs or attendance in programs and action for the integration of Gypsies, resettle fellow countrymen, immigrants and refugees in social, economic and cultural life of local society*” constitute competence of Local authority of first degree. Therefore, the importance of local self-government is stressed out in the incorporation of immigrants, in the arrangement of their residency, but also in all relative processes that should be realised. In this frame, the creation of Centres of Service of Foreigners in the Municipalities (*in the municipal apartments*) and in the Communities of country is also proposed, aiming at the promotion of their social integration. In the event of weakness of operation from the Municipalities, competences that they can undertake in the Centres of Service of Citizens and the Offices of Foreigners of Municipalities. The Municipalities support the legal frame in which they are moved in, by Laws 2910/1991 and 3386/2005. In 2006 the Mayor announced the creation of the Council of Immigrants, which will have a consultative character and will propose in the Municipal council subjects that occupy the immigrants in the Municipality.

After the Municipal elections of 2006, the new administration of Municipality, under the Mayor Mr **Stavros Kasimatis**, tried to upgrade the Office of Immigrants, aiming at a new policy of integration of foreigners, that is to say the arrangement of their stay, their work and the acquisition of substantives right. With that way he will avoid the marginalisation of foreigners and immigrants (L. 3443/2006). Most of them that will vote for him will be voting for the first time, not only in Greece but also in their life. Candidates can place those who wish to be elected in the Administrative Council nine members and the results of these elections are ratified by the Municipal Council. The chairman of Council of Immigrants will have the right to participate in the Municipal Council, without right of vote, representing the Council. He will deposit its opinions and proposals for subjects that concern the immigrants. Members cannot become

²⁷We would like to thank the Mayor of Korydallos mr **St. Kasimatis** for the polite concession of available elements for the economic immigrants in the Municipality.

²⁸L. 3463/2006 “*Ratification of Code of Municipalities and Communities*”, (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 114A'-8/6/2006). The article 84 “*Local Councils of Prevention Breaching*”, mentioned that with decision of the Municipality Council will function Local Councils of Breaching Prevention aiming at the recording and the study of infringing behaviour in local level, so that is consolidated the safety of residents and is created climate of confidence. Finally, article 214 “*Attendance in the Local Affairs*” mentioned that “*the municipal and Community authorities ensure the right of access of all citizens and residents, without discrimination, in the use of services that provides, independent nationality, religion, sex, language, racial or social team in which they belong*”.

those who possess the attribute of a mayor or other rank in to Municipality. Objective of institution is the encouragement of attendance of immigrants in the publics of Municipality. Elected in this body it constitutes a contact between municipal beginnings and immigrants, they recommend the platform via which the municipal beginnings can promote in the local society problems of immigrants. They are the ambassadors of local community of immigrants in Greek society and finally they will encourage the friends and the acquaintances to participate actively in local events in progress. In that way immigrants will be given the possibility of expressing themselves institutional, by formulating and exchanging opinions for their demands and finally by contributing in the growth of local society. Right of attendance in the process of voting and being elected claim those who are registered in the situations of immigrants of Municipalities and Communities (*after relative application*). It has already been realised in the first meeting of representatives of Municipality and representatives of immigrants, in which a line of problems were discussed, concerning the way of organisation and operation of the Council.

From a line of cultural events of Lark, with the festival of National Communities sent and sends a message. That, this is to say, art and culture are powerful institutions of social incorporation, because they elect cultural diversity and decrease social exclusion. It is characteristic that the festival was dedicated in the world of diversity and cultural coexistence and included a line of events in the area of theatre, dance, music, photography and graffiti. Korydallos also existed as one of the first Local authorities with resolution of Municipal Council supported the campaign “*No to racism from the crib*”. All these events and the activities of Municipality, aim in the smooth integration of immigrants in the local society and in the creation of climate of dialogue, acceptance and confidence appeared through the periodical publication of Municipality “*Dimoskopio*”.

6. Conclusions

The Fourth Department of the Council of State judged L. 3838/2010 anti-constitutional while at the same time it pronounced that the right of voting and being elected in the prefectural and municipal elections have only Greek citizens, that is to say “*the right voting and being elected are held only in the Greek citizens and cannot extend itself also in not having this attribute, without revision of relative provision of Constitution*”. L. 3838/2010 imports a new way of possession of Greek nationality : “*Counting of citizens becomes with base purely formal conditions (time of “legal” stay of applicant foreigner or his family, study in Greek school on certain time, non-existence of condemnation for certain serious penal offences), without individualised crisis about the subscription of essential condition of bond to Greek nation applicant counting of citizens of foreigner, that is to say on behalf of voluntary acceptance of values that is contracted to the Greek consciousness*”.²⁹

Media should also contribute substantially in this effort. Until now they cover subjects on immigrants when overpower has taken place – a police sweep or phenomena of criminality from the point of view of immigrants or immigration. Unfortunately they do not cover the essential problems of immigrants. A very small part of them air the subjects that concern the complete distribution of political and social rights, xenophobia and racism. Minorities occupied the media only in cases when the political heads visited minority regions or teams of population that emanate from countries except the EU. Result of all these are the SME of denying contribution to dialogue and in the deposit of proposals that will specifically concern the improvement of life of immigrants and concerning individually their rights. Unfortunately, most newspapers cover subjects that concern immigration, the internationalisation of immigration, the economy, labour rights, racism and xenophobia and cover subjects that concern political rights of these persons. It is characteristic that they occasionally forget they are reported in events and dates that concern

²⁹In Belgium, voting right in national level has been granted, provided that they have acquired citizenship and have lived in the country for two or three years.

the immigrants (*exception are newspapers of outside the parliament Left*). Also, one of the most important magazines that is activated in the space of immigrants is also “*Passport*”, which is published under the supervision of Greek-Albanian Contact of Friendship “*Sokratis*” (Aspridis, 2006).

Press does not deal particularly with the subject of policy rights and this is reasonable because even for the same immigrants the basic problem is their reception and their integration in Greek society. Afterwards press has dealt with annotation and criticism of L. 3386/2005, the attitude of parties towards this (*before and afterwards his voting*), the charge of bureaucratic processes and discomfort that the immigrants have suffered at their stay in our country (*special reports exist for the role of Advocate of Citizen*). This is stressed also by weakness of immigrants to have access, as journalists, in Greek newspapers. Finally, internet has a particular growth and is used mostly for interpersonal communication including search and exchange of information.

The effort of confrontation of phenomenon of xenophobia and racism will be also promoted with the effort of the media that its role is exceptionally important. They will contribute so much in the information of immigrants with regard to life in the EU, within the information of citizens of EU which regard morals, customs of countries of origin of immigrants. In that way they will contribute to the improvement of comprehension, ignorance, in the confrontation of biases, the non tolerance and other. In conclusion, as much as Europe does, Greece should manage intelligently the capital of immigrants and take advantage of immigration in order to avoid demographic shrinkage, rescue their actuarial systems and create a more competitive economy, an open and pluralist society, tolerant to plethora of difference.

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