

ETUDES HELLENIQUES

HELLENIC STUDIES

LA CRISE GRECQUE THE GREEK CRISIS

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Educational Policy During Economic Crisis

The Case of the Greek-Language Education Abroad

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RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude portera sur les comportements de l'élite politique relatifs à l'éducation grecque dans la diaspora. Plus précisément, il s'agit d'une étude de cas de la législation de «l'Enseignement de la langue grecque à l'étranger», qui devint par la suite une loi de l'Etat et a été publiée au Journal officiel (Loi 4027, l'Enseignement de la langue grecque à l'étranger, et autres dispositions, Fiche No. 233, 4 novembre 2011).

Le but de cette étude est double: a) sur la base de données existantes, analyser et mettre en évidence la logique politique sous-jacente en ce qui concerne la loi 4027/2011, et b) de déterminer si, et dans quelle mesure, la crise économique peut être utilisée comme un argument en faveur de la légitimation des politiques éducatives.

ABSTRACT

This study will focus on the behaviors of the political elite on Greek education in the Diaspora. Specifically, this study is a case study examination of the Legislation of "Greek Language Education Abroad" which, subsequently became a state law and was published in the Official Gazette (Law 4027, Greek-Language Education Abroad, and other provisions, Sheet No. 233, November 4th, 2011).

The aim of this study is twofold: a) based on existing data, one aim is to analyze and highlight the underlying policy rationale as regards to the 4027/2011 law and b) the second aim is to investigate whether, and to what degree the economic crisis can be used as an argument for the legitimatization of educational policies.

Introduction

Following a close observation of the debate regarding the greek economic crisis, the complexity of this issue becomes apparent.

What emerges through various articles, journalists' reports, television

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programs, political positions and economic analysis is not only the collapse of the Greek Economy and its implications for the Eurozone but also the obvious corruption, nepotism, deficient public service provision, exploitation, and the failure of the political elite.

Essentially, the function of the political elite should be to influence the spirit of integrity and have the power to fight against nepotism, corruption etc. since they are fundamentally the policy makers and policy establishers.

For these reasons, this study will focus on the behaviors of the political elite. Specifically, this study is a case study examination, of the Legislation of “Greek–Language Education Abroad” which, subsequently became a state law and was published in the Official Gazette (Law 4027, Greek–Language Education Abroad, and other provisions, Sheet No. 233, November, 4th 2011).

The revision Law 2413/96 (Greek Education Abroad, Intercultural Education and other provisions, Official Gazette (FEK), 124/17-6-1996) proved to be suitable in 2011 for two reasons. Initially, fifteen years had passed since its implementation, and as a consequence its strengths and weaknesses had been clearly highlighted. The second reason stems from the fact that since the initial time period when it was constructed, it had not received explicit provision for the Greek–Language Education in the “Historic Diaspora”, i.e. the countries of the former Soviet Union.¹

On the other hand, as it will be further on depicted, the modification of the institutional framework for Greek Language Education Abroad, which was deemed necessary, was undertaken for economic reasons, though, under time constraints. It should be further noted, that the bill became a law of the State a few days following the collapse of the government of G. Papandreou.²

The aim of this study is twofold: a) based on existing data, one aim is to analyze and highlight the underlying policy rationale as regards to the 4027/2011 law and b) the second aim is to investigate whether, and to what degree the economic crisis can be used as an argument for the legitimatization of educational policies.

However, a law essentially comes to provide solutions to problems that arise through issues stemming from the same problems. Thus, it is deemed necessary to provide an outline of the present situation, and of any problems in Greek Language Education Abroad during the time of the establishment of the legislation. This outline is primarily based on the report prepared for the Ministry of Education and presented in September 2010.³

1. The State of Greek-Language Education Abroad in the year 2010 - Brief description

The Law 2413/96 came to replace the junta Legislative Decree 695/70, which essentially attempted to extend the Greek educational system as well as the ideology of the time period abroad.

With the inauguration by the law 2413/1996 of an educational policy that was based on the tenet of a “mutual and equal relationship” between the Centre (Greece) and Education Abroad was established which, attempted to transform the “national education policy” to one which could be considered an “intercultural” educational policy. During the inception of the law 2413/96 it was explicitly stated, that the spirit of the law is “Hellino-centric” rather than “Greece-centric.”

The Metropolitan Center, in the late 1980’s and especially during the first half of the 1990’s, felt the need, and simultaneously had the strength to culturally support Greek Education Abroad.

This factor was not only attempted through by-law 2413/96, but with other laws and measures as well, such as:

- *The establishment of the “Council of Hellenes Abroad” (SAE) (1995),*
- *The establishment of the “Special Secretariat for Greeks Abroad and Intercultural Education” (1996),*
- *The establishment of the “Institute of Education Abroad and Intercultural Education”(1996),*
- *The enactment of Law 2790/2000 on the “Repatriation of former Soviet Union Residents”.*

The above-mentioned institutional measures were deemed necessary so as to transform the political volition of the Centre and to solidly support Greeks Abroad. The transformation of by-law 2413/96 in educational practice, was attempted particularly by:

- *Administration executives (Educational Coordinators), with a task to provide support regarding organization, administration and counseling for Greek Language Education Abroad,*
- *Educator postings engaged in teaching duties,*
- *The provision of educational material,*
- *The creation of educational material prepared according to the framework of the Program “Paideia Omogenon” (Παιδεία Ομογενών) funded for this purpose.*

Each respective application of by-law 2413/96, in accordance with the specific country conditions of each individual country, subsequently led to various developments. In particular from the time the legislation was voted into law and applied, up until the year 2010.

In European countries an interventionist government policy was established. Private Greek Schools particularly in Germany were established and their numbers increased. What's more, of the 2,300 posted teachers in 2010, 1,633 were working in Europe and particularly in Germany (n =1086). Consequently, the funding and in part the supervision of Greek-language education in Europe became a matter of the Greek state.

In Anglo-Saxon countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia the organization, supervision and financing of Greek-language education remained under the supervision of local community administrators and the educational authorities of each host country. This was reinforced, mainly from Greece, through the supply of educational material and posting of teachers. During 1997-2010 an increase of posted teachers was observed in these countries for two main reasons. Firstly, a great percentage of educational staff in these countries resigned from service due to age, but they were not replaced, as these countries no longer certified educators to teach Greek. Posted educators subsequently filled this gap of staff. The second reason was economic. That is, administrators were not seeking local educators - while sometimes educators were even laid off - as the Greek state undertook the payment of salaries and bonuses of posted educators.

In regards to countries of the former Soviet Union, Greek-language Education generally remained under the supervision of educational authorities and partly under the supervision of local community administrators. The number of posted teachers in these countries remained low, not only due to the educational policy of those countries, but also because Greek educators favored a posting in a European country.

In the countries of the former Soviet Union and particularly in Russia, the Ukraine and Georgia, an exceptional historic opportunity was lost. That is, for the Greek state to reach an intergovernmental agreement, so as to initiate the teaching of Greek as a foreign language in the public education system of the aforementioned countries.

The case of the Ukraine is distinct because it was willing to implement the curriculum and relevant educational material of the program "Paideia Omogenon", so as to adapt it to their own needs and to apply it into their

system. The Greek Ministry of Education failed to reach intergovernmental agreement despite recommendations of the then Educational Coordinator (1998-2002), the subsequent Coordinator, and our own recommendations, in terms of "*Paideia Omogenon*".

The Educational policy of the Ministry of Education throughout the time period of 1997-2010 mainly focused on, and was expressed through educator postings on a worldwide scale. The proportion of posted educators-worldwide is the principal key indicator depicting the "care" provided by the Greek state in terms of Greek Education Abroad. This factor, essentially, is the driving force of the focus for this study.

2. How the Crisis Emerged

Following an evaluation regarding the application of by-law 2413/96, and with the posting of educators as a benchmark, one reaches the conclusion that the application of the by-law gradually evolved into a one-sided intervention of the Greek State (Center) abroad.

Primary and secondary education teachers and Greek trade unions viewed Greek Language Education Abroad as a well paid, second labor market, due to the continuous Greek wage payment in addition to the bonus payment abroad.

Therefore, hundreds of educators were posted abroad who, fundamentally, not only cooperated with, but also shared an ideological-political consensus with the Political Leadership of the Ministry of Education of the time. What's more, unfortunately, educators whose background was irrelevant to the teaching of Greek language and history (subjects invariably taught in Greek-Language Education Abroad) were posted.

Furthermore, Greek-Language Education administrators abroad regarded the posting of Greek educators as a significant financial relief, which, in certain cases served to improve their profits, as parents abroad customarily paid additional fees.

In many cases, the evident benefits and incentives of both parties (educators and administrators abroad) led to the creation of "networks of common interests" in which, Greek politicians were usually involved.⁴ These networks have significantly contributed to the continued increase in the number of posted educators abroad, whose, responsibilities in many cases were not of an educational nature.⁵

According to statistics from the Ministry of Education (DIPODE) during the years 2005-2009, 1,678 educators were posted abroad, and distributed in five years as follows:

2005	294	2007	361	2009	344	
2006	295	2008	384			Total: 1.678

It is noteworthy that from the 2236 educators posted in 2010, 1633 (73%) were posted in Europe and particularly in Germany (n = 1,086 or 48.6%). Thus, it becomes apparent that from a budget perspective the lion's share was given to Germany, not only due to the high number of posted educators, but also because the country is entirely run by Greek Schools that are funded by the Greek state.

According to the same source (DIPODE) in January 2010, a total of 2,418 Greek educators worked abroad. This is an extremely high number considering the fact that during the same period the same approximately number of omogeneis (issued from the local communities) Greek educators served in the diaspora who were paid by the communities and other organisations of Omogeneia. What's more, according to statistics from DIPODE the number of students in one case, reached 64,215, and in a second case 76,856. These students were enrolled in both primary and secondary education.

The ratio between students and educators during the school year 2009/10, even in the Greek Schools in Germany was in many cases of a single digit.

In other words, this situation proved to be completely unorthodox and from an economical perspective an unsustainable situation. By the same token, one could argue that in education, what principally matters is overall quality, and students rather than financial figures. However, the ideal ratio of students:educators failed to be accompanied by student success. This failure became obvious when Greek students abroad attempted to sit entrance exams to Greek Universities (see Damanakis, 2011).

The situation described above did not arise through the realistic needs of Greek-language Education Abroad, but through the needs, interests and demands of "client networks".

The political leadership of the time, including the Ministry of Education was familiar with this ongoing situation, however, the ministers, deputy ministers

and other political agents, feigned any knowledge of this situation due to the fact that politicians were essentially accomplices, co-creators as well as jointly responsible for the situation under discussion.

3. The Moment of “Truth”

Politicians, trade unionists and political leading figures assertively contributed towards the creation of the “posting system” for Greek Education Abroad, which fundamentally was neither rational, nor fruitful or sustainable in the long term.

For these reasons, when the imminent economic crisis arose, during the school year of 2009/10, the system began to collapse. It was during that time period that the political leadership of the Ministry of Education and the government in general, realized that:

- From the 106 million euro that the Greek state spent per year, for Greek Language Education Abroad, almost half (48 million) was spent on posted teachers’ bonuses,
- A high percentage (15%) of educators were not posted as teachers, but were utilized in other positions,
- An even larger, but unspecified, amount, was employed part-time (i.e. only every Wednesday afternoon and every Saturday morning),
- Especially in European countries posted teachers “monopolized” Greek Language Education Abroad and conveyed their trade union body ideologies, the Helladic mentality and fundamentally “shadow education” (φροντιστήριο).

Based on the aforementioned brief depictions of the situation, as well as additional data and empirical research, it is obvious that Greek Language Education Abroad significantly varies from continent to continent and from country to country. Greek Language Education in European countries - especially in Germany absorbs more than half of the budget per year – and is considered the most problematic, primarily due to strong operational “client networks” and the strong presence of the Greek state.

The massive presence of posted educators in Europe and especially in Germany is not a new phenomenon. That is, in the mid 1990’s, 1,201 posted educators were serving in Germany (Annual Report, K.Karpenisiotis, Coordinator of Greek Education in Germany, 1996).

Furthermore, from the middle of the decade 2000 a new element became apparent regarding the posting of educators. That is, the number of postings was not of a quantitative nature but the posting of educators in overseas countries and countries of the former Soviet Union.

This new situation is remarkable in the history of Modern Greek Diaspora, since for centuries in the “Historical Diaspora” and for more than a century in the “Migratory Diaspora”,⁶ the administrators and promoters of the Greek-Language Education Abroad were mainly community organizations in collaboration with educational authorities of each country of residence. The Greek state essentially functioned only as an aide.

This verified model threatened to be reversed in late 2000. This was a strategic mistake the consequences of which emerge through the current economic crisis. Specifically, this does not enable Greece to bear the financial responsibility for the Greek language education in the Diaspora or to finance the posting of thousands of educators around the world.

4. Redesigning Educational Policy for Greek Education in the Diaspora

Taking into consideration the sketchy condition of the Greek language educational system abroad as well as the economic crisis in Greece, the Ministry of Education was asked, or more succinctly was forced, in 2010 to re-examine and redesign its educational policy for schools abroad.

Taking into further consideration that the condition of the educational system was markedly different from country to country, and that the individual client networks of each country were the main cause of problems in European countries, one would assume that the Ministry of Education would consider:

- Abolishing all client networks
- Taking immediate measures within countries or continents
- Cooperating with and taking advantage of local educators in each country
- Designing a common framework regarding educational policy so as to be flexible and adaptable in terms of the needs of each country abroad

Guided by the four points mentioned above, an attempt will be made to analyze and interpret the educational policy as it is stated in the latest law 4027/2011 “Greek Language Education Abroad and other Provisions.”

4.1. Immediate Measures and the Posting of Educators

The inability of the government to continue financing Greek-Language Education Abroad led to immediate measures being taken, literally meaning immediate “horizontal budget cuts” on a par with the drastic “horizontal cuts in wages and pensions in Greece”.

More specifically, the Ministry of Education decided not to post any new educators to any country abroad for the 2010/2011 school years. In contrast, the Ministry actually put into motion procedures to recall educators who had already completed or were about to complete their three year postings abroad.

The bureaucratic and economic orientation of the government and the Ministry of Education was obvious from the beginning and was later confirmed during the voting of the legislation. The Ministry of Education did not approach the subject of educator postings abroad in a diversified way within various countries nor did it attempt to abolish client networks, or to limit the surplus of educational staff for two reasons. The first, but by no means most important, was in our opinion, that the Ministry of Education did not offer sufficient diversified data from which one could glean where surplus educational staff existed or from where educational staff could be reduced by using a quick re-organization of the Greek language educational system abroad. The second, and more important reason, in our opinion, was that the Ministry did not want to confront the unions nor the existing “client networks”.

As a result, in the spring of 2010, the Ministry, supporting the argument that “there is no more money,” decided not to post any educators in the summer of that year, regardless of the fact that a severe lack in staff existed in various schools. These obvious gaps were created because of the mandatory return of many educators to Greece who had already completed their five-year contracts abroad.

What is interesting is that the economic standpoint was accepted by school administrators and parents abroad, though less so by state-run Greek language education systems in Europe, and more so in other countries abroad.

Administrators in other (non-European) countries were essentially asking the Ministry of Education not to immediately recall educators. Administrators also requested that extra time be given to them in order to re-design their programs.

One characteristic request was that of the SAE Coordinator in the United States and the President of the Education Board of the SAE in the USA, who

made proposals to the Ministry of Education and to us, on the 21st of June 2010. They wrote:

Regarding the situation in the United States, the Ministry of Education is requested to extend the contract of the majority of educators who already happen to be in the country, following their redistribution to other school units so as to better utilize their skills.

It is obvious that the economic crisis in Greece legitimized the “budget cuts” of posted educators abroad along with the “horizontal cuts in spending.” Unfortunately, neither of these drastic measures affected the client networks, which led to the massive swell in expenses. Nor did these dramatic measures do anything in terms of differentiating the needs of individual countries.

Following the “motto” of the Papandreou government “change everything,” the Ministry of Education tried making changes in education both within and outside Greece.

It attempted this by working simultaneously in two axes: a) by taking immediate short-term measures, such as those already mentioned, and b) by initiating interim and long-term institutional changes.

In terms of the second axis:

- *In June of 2010 a study was conducted at a university research centre titled “Assessment of Greek Language Education Abroad until 2010 and its Prospects”.*
- *In January of 2011 an open dialogue was initiated among administrators of Greek language education abroad.*
- *In March of the same year, a Working Group was formed in order to draft legislation regarding Greek-Language Education Abroad.*
- *In October of 2011 a discussion was held in Parliament regarding the new legislation, leading to its being voted into law on the 4th of November 2011.*

4.2. The Drafting of the Legislation for Greek-Language Education Abroad

4.2.1. The Political-Economic Framework

The fact that economic issues were to influence new educational policy for schools abroad was more or less expected, and the economic goals of the Ministry of Education were more than clear. The Substitute Minister of

Education, clearly expressed her views regarding the economic factors involved, both publicly and in parliamentary meetings of the Committee of Educational Affairs as well as in the plenary session of the Greek Parliament:

I am here to state specifically, as I prefer to focus on facts, that: During the school year 2009-2010: There were 2,350 educators posted abroad, whose overall cost for Greek language dissemination abroad came to 106,00,000 euros, of which 48,000,000 euros consisted of salaries.

During the school year 2010-2011: There were approximately 1,830 educators posted abroad, a reduction of 22%. The overall cost for salaries of such educators was 38,000,000 euros, a reduction of 21%.

During the school year 2011-2012: There were approximately 1,420 educators posted abroad, a reduction of 40% compared to the figures of 2009-2010. The overall cost of Greek language education abroad came to 73,000,000 euros, a reduction of 31% compared to the figures of 2009-2010. Specifically, 30,000,000 euros were spent on educators' salaries, a reduction of 38%, compared to 2009.

Should the new legislation be fully applied, the number of posted educators abroad will not exceed 1,000-1,100. That is to say, the overall reduction will reach the level of approximately 50% compared to that of 2009. The overall required cost of Greek language education abroad would not exceed 55,000,000 euros.

I am normally submitting these results as much has been said and heard regarding the issue which, is totally unfair, especially in terms of the consistent attempts being made for more than two years now which, have already had concrete results. (From the minutes of Parliament, Session IH, 25th of October, 2011).

The short-term reduction of 50% in overall costs of Greek language education abroad required immediate and drastic measures to be taken, that needed economic legitimization and political as well.

The political strategy of the Ministry of Education and that of the government in general, could be succinctly expressed as "Integration."

b. The of Ministry Education Lifelong Learning and Religion promotes Greek language education abroad (educational units/schools) at all levels which, have been integrated in educational systems either in Greece, or in other host countries through the use of its resources regarding staff and funding (...) c) as a general rule, through the aforementioned framework,

the Ministry of Education Lifelong Learning and Religion has the priority to promote Greek language educational units at all levels which, have been integrated in schools or in the educational system of host countries. The Ministry thusly ensures that Greek language education will in no way be transformed isolated or marginalized and exclude Greeks abroad from the educational system of the host country (Explanatory Report on the bill).

The focus of the following section is fundamentally how the Members of the Working Group, who are also responsible for the drafting of the legislation, perceive the term “integration”, and above all, how it is perceived by the political leadership of the Ministry of Education. Essentially, it is necessary to specify (i) what is included within this term, (ii) with what specific measures they have transformed this term into educational policy and (iii) how they have planned to combine the political and strategic aim of this “Integration” with the economic target of “Reducing costs”.

Bill 4027/2011, article 2, considers cases a, and b (sub-cases aa, bb, cc) c, d, e, f, but not g, as integrated types of education.

As cases c, d, e and f apply respectively to European Schools, to university level education, to professional training and to the realm of adult education, we will not be referring to them. We will in turn persist regarding the remaining cases, which, refer to primary and secondary education.

Case a) of paragraph 1 of article 2 of by-law 4027/2011 refers to Private Greek Schools, which were founded by the Greek government and are funded and supervised by the Greek Ministry of Education (i.e. The Greek Schools in Germany). These are predominately a non-integrated form of Greek language education, regardless of their recognition by the Greek government, due to the fact that the Greek state founded these schools.

Case b) refers to schools which fall into the category of bi-lingual schools (i.e. Day Schools, Charter Schools, Europaschulen in Berlin etc.) and bi-lingual classes and Greek Language Courses (Τμήματα Ελληνικής Γλώσσας) which are funded by host countries and are recognized by those same countries.

Case g) refers to Greek Language Courses, which are mainly funded by Greek communities, Churches, Parents Associations and other local organizations.

The strategic choice of The Ministry of Education to henceforth only fund *integrated forms of education* and to promote the integration of Greek language education in educational systems of host countries is useful for students, their families, and the local communities in general. However, the divisional forms of education, such as the exclusive Greek Schools lead to isolation and marginalization and fail to serve the benefits of students.

This philosophy was also included in law 2413/96. In law 2413/96 all forms of education, mentioned also in law 4027/2011, were recognized and supported. The form of education that remained a problem and had to be solved according to law 2413/96 was the one referring to Private Greek Schools. Through the new law 4027/11 another problem was discovered, that of the non-integrated Greek Language Courses, i.e the Afternoon and Saturday Courses (case g).

The following section will focus on the rationale and methods being used to solve these two problems. The fact that the exclusive Greek Schools lead the majority of graduates to an academic and professional impasse was already known when by-law 2413/96 was being voted into law. This situation was confirmed and substantiated through empirical studies undertaken within the framework of the Program “Paideia Omogenon”. The Ministry of Education was acquainted with the results of this study, as well as the members of the Working Group responsible for the drafting of the new legislation.⁷

The Law 2413/96 attempted to offer a solution to Private Greek Schools, the administrators of which were “Greek diplomatic authorities”, by gradually eliminating them. Article 8, paragraph 14 of Law 2413/96 anticipates, “*Greek language educational units or schools whose administrators consist of Greek diplomatic authorities will be gradually eliminated starting from the school year of 1997-1998. No new student registration will be allowed in schools or an educational unit.*”

The aforementioned provision was never enforced due to existing “lobbies” and the fact that the “political cost” of taking such action was greater than the political resolution of the government in power at that time. The combined forces of parental groups, claiming that Greek Schools pave the way to Greek universities, managed to impose their will and thus succeed in repealing paragraph 14 of article 8 of by-law 22413/96 through by-law 2621/98, article 3.

However, what needs to be highlighted is that by-law 2413/96 anticipated the gradual elimination of the aforementioned schools over a period of eleven years because “initial registration” for students was considered to be the first grade of elementary school.

In contrast to Law 2413/96, which starts with the first grade of elementary school, Law 4027/11 starts by eliminating high school level institutions. Specifically, paragraph 4 of article 5 anticipated that: *“4. The schools of case a, of paragraph 1, of article 2: a) High Schools which were founded or recognized by the provision of Legislative Decree 695/1970 (A’ 221) of The German Federation, whose administrators are Greek diplomatic authorities, shall be gradually eliminated starting from the school year 2012-2013. From the beginning of such school year, student registration will no longer be accepted for any grade. The only exception to be made for the previously mentioned High Schools during the school year 2012-2013 regards only those students who were enrolled in the final year of Junior High School during the school year of 2011-2012, so long as these Junior High Schools were founded or recognized according to the provisions of Legislative Decree 695/1970 and the administrators of such institutions were Greek diplomatic authorities and that students of the aforementioned Junior High Schools were located in the same city as the respective High School. The present provisions shall support the aforementioned High Schools until their definitive closure. b) Pre-schools, Elementary Schools and Junior High Schools which were founded or recognized according to the provisions of by-law 695/1970 (A’ 221) in The German Federation, whose administrators are Greek diplomatic authorities and which apply a bi-lingual educational format, which allows for the placement of students in all levels of education within the host country shall be supported by the present provisions. c) Other schools, which are either located in other countries or do not have administrators from the Greek diplomatic authority, which apply bi-lingual programs can be supported by the present provisions.”*

It is our opinion that the abolishment of High Schools in Germany was brought about by economic factors. The high cost of Greek Language Education in Germany, was mainly necessitated by the large number of High Schools operating in the country (during the 1970’s and 1980’s a total of 32 High Schools were founded following the decisions of the respective Ministers of Education in Greece (Markou, in Damanakis, 2011).

The abolishment of High Schools would result in three specific economic results in a three-year time period. This assessment of ours is reinforced by the fact that initially, according to the bill the abolishment of high schools was not planned. Fundamentally, it was a last minute measure, which was probably based on economic motives. This measure, however, has led to Junior High School students being academically trapped. It has also led to intense reactions from the part of the collective bodies of parents, and the “Federation of Greek Communities in Germany”, which in a cruel written statement (in 21-9 - 2011) addressed the “Uncontrolled collapse of Greek-language education abroad.”

In an attempt to ease this situation, the Ministry of Education, guaranteed

to provide “supportive teaching” whose aim was a “smooth adaptation of the students in the Second and Third Grade of Junior High School in the German educational system.”

However, this was an unrealistic promise, primarily due to pedagogical and educational factors but also due to economic factors. Thus, for the aforementioned reasons, changes were not implemented during the school year 2011/12, and we hold the belief that the provision to abolish High Schools will not be applied either.⁸ To be more precise, the abolishment of High School means a deadlock not only for Junior High Schools, but also for all six grades throughout elementary school. This as a consequence would mean an indirect abolishment of them as well. In all probability, this ultimately was the objective of the Ministry of Education, that is, the abolition of Private Greek Schools in Germany and the consequent significant “cost reduction” of Greek-language education.

4.2.2. The Ideological Framework of the Bill

The abolition or transformation of Greek Schools in Germany can be a difficult issue to tackle. However, it can be documented not only through economic terms, but also political and, above all, pedagogical terms.

Things are different compared to the Greek Language Courses abroad. The Greek Language Courses is the most widespread and complex form of Greek Language Education Abroad. It is estimated that more than three quarters of the school population studies Greek through these Courses.

Having as a reference point the “integration” or “non-integration” of the Greek Language Courses in the educational system of the host country, one can classify them into the following categories:

- 1. Supervised and funded by the host country and integrated into the standard (morning) program of a school.*
- 2. Supervised and funded by the host country but operating in the afternoon.*
- 3. Partially funded and supervised by the host country - for example in Ontario, Canada, where 2.5 out of the five hours of Greek per week are financially covered by the province of Ontario and the remaining 2.5 by parents.*
- 4. Greek Language Courses funded and supervised by community bodies and parents - the commonest form.*
- 5. Greek Language Courses funded and supervised by the Greek state - this applies to European countries.*

The first three categories can be classified as directly or indirectly integrated in the system of the host country. The other two are not integrated according to by-law 4027/11. It should be stressed that the boundaries between what is integrated and what is not are not clear and are, hence, in all practical terms still in limbo; that is, because an integrated department can be easily “disintegrated” when the number of students decreases and falls below the specified limit.

The case of Ontario, Canada (3rd category) illustrates that the criteria of “supervision” and “finance” are relative. In addition the criterion that determines the granting of degrees is unreasonable. The aforementioned is recurrent in the “explanatory report of the Bill” and in public statements of the political leadership of the Ministry of Education.

The Greek Language Courses are a form of “supplementary education” and need not grant degrees, as students are granted those degrees from their mainstream-schools in which they are enrolled and are fulfilling their compulsory education.

The Greek Language Courses- in particular those organized and supported by local administrators, i.e. the institutionally non-integrated in the educational system of the host country - are the very essence of the community language education. From one perspective, they have been operating for decades or even centuries, even in the smallest communities and, from another perspective they serve a function in the minds of Greeks as the “Greek School” which is a place of both social and cultural importance.

This form of education is now in jeopardy by Law 4027/11, leaving it outside of the realm of the care of the Greek state. The Ministry of Education attempted to ideologically justify and legitimize this strategic choice by trying to link non-integrated Greek Language Courses with the “squandering of public funds,” the “inefficiency”, the “isolation” and “marginalization” of students (see report). Thus, non-integrated Greek Language Courses are to put it simply, being belittled and slandered.

Essentially, the terms “integrated” and “non-integrated” forms of education are the cornerstones of the Ministry’s ideology, upon which the Ministry’s new policy seeks to be founded. That is, the choice to promote the integrated forms of education does not inevitably exclude or neglect non-integrated forms. The Ministry of Education aimed to undeniably achieve the weakening “of the scope of the Greek State” concerning the Greek language education in the Diaspora and the subsequent “cost reduction”. The aforementioned were

attempted in two ways: with the “abolition” of Greek Schools in Germany and the “exclusion” of the Greek Language Courses from the “provision” of the Greek State. What legitimized such an action was the “inefficiency” of the Courses.

This argument is not based on research data⁹, and is only partially true. This is the fundamental reason that it cannot form the basis of a design or implementation of an educational policy. The Greek Language Courses should not all be deemed ineffective, just as organized schools (schools that grant degrees) should not always be deemed effective. In any case, this is what our recent research focusing on Greek Schools in Germany has depicted, although the objective of our research was of a broader perspective. In particular it included the success or failure of expatriate candidates regarding admission to Greek universities, through the institution of special examinations, and their subsequent progress in Greek universities (see Gotovos in Damanakis, 2011).

The results of this survey, which reflect a current trend in our case, can be summarized as follows:

- *Best exam performance is achieved by children of Greek civil servants, (mainly educators), who are serving abroad,*
- *Following are school graduates from their host country (i.e. those acquiring the American, Canadian, German, etc. Degree Credential Baccalaureate),*
- *Last on the list are Greek School graduates such as those found in Germany, Belgium, and England,*
- *Based on a country differentiation the lowest achievers are from Germany. In this case, also, German school graduates outnumber the Private Greek Schools graduates in success rates (see Damanakis, 2011).*

It should be noted that Secondary Education School graduates, of the country of residence, who are successfully admitted and attend Greek Universities, normally learn Greek in afternoon and Saturday classes. It could be therefore concluded that these Courses are effective. Of course, their effectiveness is closely linked to the level of performance and student efficiency, which, in turn, rests on the effectiveness of schools in the country of residence in which they are enrolled and are taught Greek in non-integrated forms of Greek Language Education, i.e in the Afternoon and Saturday Courses

We should therefore differentiate between the “*integrated and non-integrated*

forms of education” and the “*integrated and non-integrated students*”.¹⁰ We should also keep in mind that the integrated forms of Greek-Language Education are not always effective. An example in favor of this argument is the integrated Greek Primary and Secondary Education Schools in Bavaria, Germany. There is no evidence whatsoever, to substantiate that they are better than those non-integrated schools of the state of North Rhine Westphalia, Germany.

A further example is the Greek Language Courses in Ontario Canada and the State Schools in Australia. In Ontario, for example, parents consider the 2.5 hours per-week funded by the Board of Education to be insufficient. For this reason, the Toronto Community urged to augment the timetable with an additional 2.5 hours.

The question then remains: Should the success or failure of these Courses be attributed to the integrated Courses of 2.5 hours or the non-integrated ones?

We could employ additional examples so as to highlight that basically “successfully integrated” Schools and Courses do not exist by the same token nor do “unsuccessful non-integrated” Schools and Courses exist.

Large organizations that provide “efficient” Day Schools also provide Courses of Modern Greek; for example, the Community of Melbourne, the Community of Montreal, the Greek-American Academy of Chicago, the Archimedean Academy in Miami, the Archdiocese of America in New York etc.

These aforementioned analyses depict that the “idealization” of one form of Greek Language Education and the “belittlement” of another cannot and must not form the basis to design educational policy. In other words, the ideology may well act as a political tool in the hands of politicians, but not as a worthy advisor for policies that meet the actual needs of education - and especially those of children.

4.2.3. Reduction of the Scope of the Greek State in Greek- Language Education Abroad

The “*reduction of the scope of the Greek State*” regarding Greek language education abroad and the subsequent “*budget cuts*” are the unsaid, yet true goals of the new Law 4027/11.

This dual objective was achieved through the abolition” of the Private Greek Schools in Germany and the “belittling” of the Greek Afternoon- and Saturday-Courses in all countries.

This “weakening” of the Greek Afternoon- and Saturday-Courses dissatisfied the stakeholders of Greek Language Education abroad. A statement by the

leadership of the Ministry of Education, declaring that the Greek state can no longer support them through the posting of educators or provision of educational material would have been sufficient for these Stakeholders.

The fact that the Greek government legislatively adopted a position to provide no support whatsoever to these Afternoon- and Saturday-Courses was unnecessary. However, since the decision had already been taken, its political legitimization had to follow. This legitimization was attempted through the “belittling” and “degrading” of the Greek Language Courses. The Ministry applied this tactic to other legislations, as well; for example, in the Greek Higher Education Bill which also dealt with challenging difficulties regarding its implementation.

The “degrading” of Greek Language Courses has created a negative atmosphere in all countries and has been the cause of outrage for Greeks residing in Germany. In particular, in the case of Germany not only are Greek Schools being abolished but fundamentally the Greek Language Courses as well, the reason being that these are typically organized and financed by the Greek state.

The Ministry’s pledge, to foster “supportive teaching” to Greek Junior High School students so as to facilitate their admission to the German educational system, is of a utopian nature. On the other hand, the political will of the Ministry to persuade the German administrators to integrate all the Greek Language Courses in its system is unrealistic.

Basically, in this case, the only solution for Greek parents in Germany is to organize “charitable non-profit organizations”, which will act as Greek Language Education institutions, as is the case in other Diaspora communities. Such a development would lead directly to the administrative, organizational and economic disengagement of the Ministry of Education and thus the “cost reduction”, of Law 4027/11, would become feasible.

The administrative-organizational and economic disengagement does not imply political abdication. That is, that the Ministry may still be present through its political representatives, i.e. Educational Coordinators and appointed posted public-school educators, which in fact will be the only category of personnel that will staff Greek language education abroad, in the future (see Article 17 Law 4027/11).

In contrast to Law 2413/96 and the draft law which provided for the recruitment of local staff (expatriate teachers), the new Law 4027/11 provides only for a single category: that of the appointed, posted “public education

educators”. Following this course, trade unions and client networks are unfortunately not being combated, but, on the contrary, are being strengthened.

5. Epilogue

Law 4027/11 contains additional measures and provisions, which were not part of the aforementioned. For example, it contains individual positive provisions such as the one regarding the funding of Greek Studies Departments in Universities of countries of residence. According to Article 28, paragraph 2, the funding of these Departments is directly related to the “education and training of educators for teaching the Greek language in educational units abroad.”

On the other hand, although the so-called “Centers-Logos” (Article 3) and their goals remain unclear, these potentially include, a positive perspective, that may ultimately bring about cooperation and utilization of local educational institutions.

To be succinct, we have not expanded on the overall analysis of the law, but confined to those points out of which a “new strategy” from the part of the Ministry of Education emerges.

Comparing the philosophy of Law 2413/1996 with that of Law 4027/2011, while taking into account the development of Greek-Language Education in that period, one can almost certainly support the following:

Law 2413/1996 paved an “extroverted” and, yet positively, “aggressive” educational policy of the Centre for the Diaspora. The Greek state, probably for the first time in its history, felt the need and the strength to support culturally the Diaspora, without manipulating it. The cornerstone of the law 2413/96 was “mutuality” “reciprocity” and “equality”.

Putting Law 2413/1996 into educational practice was followed by a series of distortions, which are more prevalent in European countries and much less in non-European ones. This is because European countries have been largely infused with the Greek educational system, bearing of course, its adversities. The new law could be confined to correcting the distortions and revising the old law. But this was not the case; it came to inaugurate a new policy, the policy of “introversion” and “withdrawal”. The main concern of the leadership of the Ministry of Education and the government was the “reduction of areas of action” of the Greek state in the Diaspora.

This “reduction” could be accomplished in practice without being legislated. The fact, however, that it was indeed legislated, allows us to formulate the

position that the introspective and conservative policy of the Center for the Diaspora should be interpreted in a broader framework. That is one of a broader “fear syndrome” that basically characterizes the present Greek state.

The Greek state in the early 1990s had a “vision” which, unfortunately during the second decade of the 21st century, failed and inevitably became the victim of the debt crisis. Greek society became decidedly unsettled and consequently the Greek youth of today has chosen the path of migration, albeit one of “academic migration”, which may fortuitously enrich the Greek elite in the Diaspora.

Can we thus assume that the new and old elite will take the responsibility for Greek-Language Education in the Diaspora and, that in the near future will assist the Centre, as they have done historically in the past?

This is a bold assumption that will be addressed in the future.

NOTES

1. Although the law 2413/96 was introduced six years following the collapse of socialism, specific policies were not included for the countries of the former Soviet Union, that consisted of inhabitants of Greek origin. This oversight is due to the fact that the 2413 Act was established as a bill and submitted to Parliament in 1989 by the then Education Minister of PASOK. However, due to “political passions” of the era the bill was never discussed. In 1996, through rapid procedures, the same minister “revised” the bill and promoted it in Parliament so as to establish it as a state law.
2. As a reminder it should be noted that following consultations between November the 6th and the 11th of 2011, G. Papandreou resigned from the position of Prime Minister on November 11th, and L. Papademos was sworn in as Prime Minister of a “cooperative government”. The Act was passed by a majority vote at the K meeting (IC’ Period, Session III, Monday, October the 31st, 2011). At the same meeting the Prime Minister requested “a vote of confidence” from the House of Representatives and essentially navigated procedures towards the resignation of his government.
3. The report under discussion entitled “*Assessment of Greek-Language Education Abroad until 2010 and its Prospects*” was prepared for the Ministry of Education and funded by ESPA. Posted on websites www.ediamme.edc.uoc.gr and www.ediamme.edc.uoc.gr/diaspora, Μελέτες (Studies).
4. On the phenomenon of networks see M. Damanakis 2003, 2005 and 2007 chap. 3, 5 and 8.

5. See our report to the Ministry in September 2010, Damanakis M. (2010), “Assessment of Greek Language Education Abroad until 2010 and its Prospects” in the website www.ediamme.edc.uoc.gr/diaspora, Μελέτες (Studies).
6. In regards to the terms “Historical” and “Migratory” Diaspora, see Damanakis, 2007, chap. 2.
7. The impasse in which Greek Schools of Germany are led are mainly substantiated by the following empirical studies: Damanakis M., 1993, Damanakis M., 2003 and, mostly, Damanakis M. (ed.) 2011.
8. However, according to Law 4076/2012, article 8, paragraph 1, Lyceums' abolition is postponed for the school year 2013/14.
9. The leadership of the Ministry of Education knew the fact that this argument cannot be based on research and that it is largely contrary to existing research data. However, the leadership of the Ministry ignored the research data and instead supported an ideological argument. Such attitudes are common in the drawing up of bills, and can be attributed to the fact that the Greek political elite does not put into practice scientific and political discourse.
10. The criteria for “non-integrated form of education” and “non-integrated students” only apply in the case of exclusive Greek schools, founded and supervised by the Greek State.

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