

ECER KEYNOTE

European and Intercultural Dimension in Greek Education

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Introduction

Negotiations concerning Greece's accession into the European Union began as early as 1961, when a cooperation agreement was signed between Greece and the European Economic Community (EEC). These negotiations were concluded 20 years later, on 1 January 1981, when Greece became the tenth full member of the EU.[1] The next major step in Greece's progress within Europe was integration into the Economic and Monetary Union in 2002. Greece has a 23-year history as a full member of the EU, and thus can be expected to have adopted many EU structures and regulations.

One of the major parameters in the paper will be the transformation of Greece, over the last decade, from a migrant sender country into a host country. Indeed, migrant arrivals have come about largely against the backdrop of recent uncontrolled population movement following the collapse of the communist system in 1989, as well as that of the new world order and economic globalisation. The presence of approximately one million foreigners accounts for 10% of the population and has brought about a significant change in the country's demographic makeup. Furthermore, the fact that almost 11% of the pupils in primary education come from 46 countries (IPODE, 2003) has forced Greek governments to take specific steps in education policy, which, as we shall see below, fall within the general term of 'intercultural education'. These steps were taken, for the most part, in the 1990s, thus adding a third intercultural dimension to national and European counterparts.

With the above data in hand, there will be an attempt to analyse and discuss the European and intercultural dimension comparatively, working on two levels: the political-institutional (educational policy) and the theoretical (pedagogical discourse).

In particular, the major steps taken thus far by Greek governments regarding the European and intercultural dimension in education will be presented and commented on by comparison. Thereafter an outline will be offered of the theoretical discourse on the above two dimensions, as it has unfolded over the last two decades in Greece. Finally, an attempt will be made to arrive at some interim conclusions as to developments thus far and prospects for the two dimensions.

1. Analysis on the Political-institutional Level

European Dimension

The EU texts most frequently discussed in Greece are the following:

- The Single European Act (1986);
- The Resolution of 24 May 1988 on the European dimension in education;
- The Maastricht Treaty, specifically articles 126 and 127 (1992);

- The Green Paper on the European dimension in education (1993);
- The White Paper on education and training (1995).

The above texts contain principia relating to the European dimension, language proficiency, pupil and teacher mobility, cooperation between schools, etc. These are to be incorporated into the Member States' educational systems, in the spirit of articles 126 and 127 of the European Union Treaty.[2]

The first question to be addressed is whether and to what degree these principia have been taken into consideration or incorporated into Greek education legislation. With the aim of investigating this issue, we have examined the recent curriculum (Government Gazette vol. ii, 303/13-3-03) on the compulsory nine-year education in Greece. The curriculum is based on eight main principles, the fourth of which is entitled: 'Strengthening of cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society'.

The most significant points of this general principle are as follows:

- Mutual understanding and cooperation with other European peoples, so as to promote development in all sectors.
- Enrichment of Greek society and other European societies with individuals and groups that are bearers of other cultures, so as to broaden cultural diversity.
- Respect for and acceptance of cultural difference among others, and harmonious coexistence in multicultural environments.
- Development of social and communicative skills necessary for participation in contemporary social developments.
- Cultivation of national and cultural identity in the spirit of cultural and linguistic diversity provided for in article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty. (Government Gazette vol. ii, 303/13-3-03, pp. 3735, see also Pantides & Pasias, 2003, pp. 333ff.)

Moving on to look at educational practice in Greece, the following can be concluded: primary and secondary school participation in European exchange programmes is at a satisfactory level. Of high preference are mainly Mediterranean countries: Italy, France and Spain (Grollios, 1999, p. 118 and Mattheou, 2003).[3] Participation by Greek universities in student and staff mobility programmes is also satisfactory. Countries of preference among Greek students are Britain, France and Germany. Participation in inter-university study programmes is likewise satisfactory (see Moschonias, 1998, Table 7a).[4] Nevertheless, there are difficulties that can be directly attributed to the centralised nature of the Greek education system, the lack of supplementary financial support for programmes on the Greek side, the lack of information, the way in which the various levels of the education system operate the objectives of the Bologna Process, etc. (European Commission Eurydice, 2003; Mattheou, 2003).[5]

Intercultural Dimension

In the second half of the 1970s, relevant educational policy was characterised by a criteria reduction for return – repatriated and foreign students, and granting of time to them, i.e. in the first two years of study pupils are marked with leniency (with a pass mark of 8 rather 10), particularly with regard to language subjects. In the early 1980s the rationale behind time grants and reduction in demands was further supplemented with one providing for compensatory measures. In 1983 reception classes and tutorial courses were legislated for (Law 1404/83, article 45). Reception classes and tutorial courses aimed at allowing 'return migrant pupils who are the children of Greek migrants' (Law 1404/83, article 45), or 'the children of repatriating Greeks' (Law 1894/90), to 'adapt smoothly to the country's education system'. The projected aim of reception classes and tutorial courses for repatriated and foreign pupils is the adjustment and mainstreaming into the Greek educational system. The educational capital that pupils bring with them from their families and their countries of origin is ignored.

In stark contrast to this situation, teaching of the mother tongue is expressly provided for in the reception classes for pupils from Member States of the European Union, founded the same year

on the basis of the EEC Directive of 25 July 1977 (77/486/EEC), which refers to the education of children of relocating workers from European countries.

Evaluating the institutional framework and educational practice in total up until the early 1990s, we can conclude that at the level of both educational policy and practice, the dominant rationale is one of a 'deficit hypothesis' and compensatory measures. On both levels *sameness of identity* is advanced, others being required to adapt to it and adopt it while sacrificing their *diversity*.

A New Era?

In the early 1990s, criticism directed against the above educational policy and emerging impasses led to intense debate, which in turn led to the enactment of new legislation. Law 2413/96 designated the aim of 'intercultural education' for repatriated and foreign pupils, and legislated for the foundation of 'Intercultural Education Schools' with a curriculum adapted to the educational needs of these pupils. Article 34 of the Law determines that 'The aim of intercultural education is to organise and run primary and secondary schools to provide education to young people who are educationally, socially, culturally or instructionally distinct'. The main feature of this projected aim is that it legitimises the foundation of Intercultural Education Schools by invoking 'cultural distinctiveness'.

In addition to the state, Intercultural Education Schools may be founded 'in the name of local government organisations, church foundations and other non-profit charitable associations' (Law 2413, article 35, paragraph 4). The opening of Private Intercultural Education Schools by private organisations would amount to the foundation of minority schools and would lead to segregated education; this particular point of the law thus came in for strong criticism.

The Law contains inconsistencies which time limitations do not permit us to refer to, yet at the same time it is a milestone that may open up new prospects for education common to 'indigenous' and 'foreign' pupils in Greece

Financed projects constitute one important index of the policy adopted by Greek governments regarding education for Greeks abroad and 'culturally distinct' groups at home. Table I offers an overview of projects previously or currently being financed.

Duration	At home	Abroad
1982-1984	School integration of repatriated pupils	
1986-1992		Project for the preparation of Greek-language primary education teaching materials for the Federal Republic of Germany.
1997-2001	(a) Education for Roma children (b) Education for Muslim children (c) Education for return and foreign pupils	Project for the preparation of Greek-language primary education teaching materials for the USA. (d) Education for Greeks Abroad (= Greek-language education abroad)
2002-	Continuation of projects a, b and c above.	Continuation of project d above

Table I. Previously or currently financed projects for Greeks abroad and for 'culturally distinct' groups within the country.

It should be stressed that the currently financed projects for the education of Roma, Muslims and foreign pupils form a group under the general title 'Intercultural Education Programmes'.

Evaluating the efforts made by the Ministry of Education thus far, one can conclude that eight years after the enactment of Law 2413/96, and the attempt by the Ministry to change course from the 'deficit hypothesis' to the 'difference hypothesis', or from 'foreigners education' to 'intercultural education', we have reached a *contradictory situation*. While the Ministry insists in its attempts, both by legislating and financing programmes, educational practice continues to resist. The agents of resistance in educational practice are parents, teachers and educational administrators. The obviously given for the majority of the Greek citizens remains to be national homogeneity.[6] The

conservative stance taken by the Greek society has led to the paradoxical situation, in which the Ministry of Education is more forward thinking than society.

The question arising, which will concern us below, is how this contradictory situation is analysed and rationalised by social science. In other words, we shall attempt to show how academic discussion, and pedagogical discussion in particular, analyse and interpret the contradictions and problems resulting from the transformation of Greek society into a multicultural society.

2. Analysis on the Level of Pedagogical Theory

Pedagogical Discourse on the European Dimension

Examination of the pedagogical discussion relating to the European dimension reveals the following tendencies.

The first, which could be termed *political-institutional and normative*, limits itself to analysing a range of European texts, as if these texts reflected reality. At the same time, the wish is expressed that the contents of these texts rapidly become reality (see, for example, Kakavoulis, 1993).

The second, which is close to the first, further examines the European dimension in education within the terms and rationale of '*multiple identities*' and '*European citizen*', focusing on the texts and restricting the European dimension to the education system (see, for example, Pasiás, 1995, pp. 587ff., Rousakis, 1995, pp. 658ff.) Multiple identities (local, regional, national, European) can coexist on both the individual and group level. Quite naturally, analysts subscribing to this tendency discern a contraction or the need for a contraction of national identities in favour of a European one. The fact that European citizens can only be those who are already citizens of a national Member State (Maastricht Treaty, article 8) leads to the bipolar opposition: *We Europeans and the others*.

A further tendency places the European dimension within the term '*global education*', setting out from various global problems that are at the same time European (see Makrakis, 1996, pp. 20ff.) That being said, *globalism* is also discussed in relation to the issue of universal values, as these emerge in '*European cultural heritage*' – values which may form the basis for humanistic education in the European Union (see, for example, Calogiannakis, 1995, pp. 77ff., 2004, pp. 127ff. and Flouris-Calogiannakis, 1996, pp. 364ff.) In other words, on the one hand we have a '*technocratic globalism*' and on the other hand a '*value-based universalism*'.

A fourth tendency (see, for example, Kazamias, 1995, pp. 350ff.) approaches European education in a critical spirit, analysing it within the terms of the European tradition for *modernisation* and *liberalism*. Education is overshadowed by neo-liberal European modernisation and, at least for the present, its role is focused on the technical vocational sector, thus serving both the needs of the European markets and the interests of the powerful Member States in the Community. For example, the younger generations of Europeans are supposed to learn their mother tongue and two further European languages (see White Paper, 4th general objective). Yet which ones? Europe has only one language, as the present conference (ECER CRETE 2004) is about to show.

At present we face a paradox whereby conferences organised on multiculturalism and multilingualism are themselves monolingual. The reason is obvious: a monolingual conference costs far less than a multilingual one. In other words, we have a Europe determined, mainly, by economic coefficients rather than cultural parameters. Modern liberalism and European modernisation serve the economy and the market, rather than the culture. Proponents of this last tendency seek a way out via neo-humanist education.

Pedagogical Discussion on the Intercultural Dimension

Prior to Law 2413/96. In the 1980s and up to the mid-1990s there was a theoretical gap in Greece. The common characteristic of studies in this period is that they remain trapped within the '*deficit hypothesis*' rationale (about this period, see Damanakis, 1997a and 2000).

Attempts to change the paradigm. We shall now attempt to point out the main characteristics of the dialogue that has taken place in Greece since the mid-1990s as part of the intercultural approach. As is well known, the intercultural approach to education began in Europe in the 1960s as 'Education for foreigners' (*Ausländerpädagogik*). In the second half of the 1970s attempts were made to move from the 'deficit hypothesis' to the 'difference hypothesis', or from 'Education for foreigners' to 'Intercultural education' (see Niekrawitz, 1990 and Reich, 1994).

To a great extent the same path was taken in Greece, the dividing line being in the mid-1990s. Just as in other European countries, there are many different versions of intercultural theory in Greece [7] which we shall comment on, using, as a criterion, *the ways of approaching the other*.

According to a first tendency, which could be described as the *ethnocentric, normative approach to other*, the ethnocentric categories of 'Us' are considered correct and valid categories for analysis; they serve as a template against which the diversity of 'Other' is analysed and interpreted. A second tendency comprising two sub-tendencies lies between *latent ethnocentrism* and an equally *latent cultural relativism*.

The first sub-tendency could be described as a *well-intended yet naive normative approach*. Invoking the right to be different, its proponents actively support foreigners and act as their advocates, yet do not comprehend that (a) they thus act in a patronising manner and (b) they run the risk of transforming the '*right to be different*' into the '*obligation to be different*'. The second sub-tendency is to a great extent responsible for the rationale behind Law 2413/96, according to which the founding of special separate Intercultural Education Schools is legitimised by invoking 'cultural diversity'. Yet this diversity is neither defined nor analysed; it is regarded as *a priori given and maintainable*.

To a greater or lesser extent, all these tendencies remain trapped within the *national exemplum*, in the sense that in actual fact they understand diversity on the basis of their own ethnocentric categories. One would expect there to be a counterbalance to *ethnocentricity* and *universalism* in the form of thinking based on *cultural relativism*, yet this is not the case in Greece. Opinions that are related to it are disguised in the *well-intended naive normative approach*. In this sense, cultural relativism in Greece is latent.

A fourth tendency is based on the rationale of *cultural enrichment*, which arises from free encounter on equal terms, and from cultural exchanges between individuals and groups of differing ethno-cultural backgrounds (see Hohmann, 1989, p. 16). According to this fourth tendency, which appears to be gaining the upper hand, if cultural encounter and mutual influence are to have meaning for all parties and lead to cultural exchanges and enrichment, they must take place on the basis of equality and reciprocity. That being said, cultural encounters on such a basis are not always easy to achieve, on account of intervening internal and external obstacles. It thus follows that the primary concern of intercultural instruction and education should be to remove these same obstacles, and indeed to do so both on the *individual* and the *social level*.

3. Comparison of European and Intercultural Dimension

Comparison on the Political-institutional Level

Concerning the institutional measures on European and intercultural education, there are the following points of reference.

At the beginning of the 1980s the Ministry of Education imposed separate legislation measures for repatriated and foreign students and for the ones coming from EU-member countries. The transformation of Greece into a host country in the 1990s led to the enactment of Law 2413 in 1996, which refers to the education of culturally different pupils. In the 1990s European and intercultural education seemed to run in parallel, the one alongside the other, though they were not 'compatible'. In 2003, criticism of this situation led the Ministry of Education to link and incorporate the European and intercultural dimensions into the new curriculum, under the general principle of 'strengthening cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society' (see Table II).

Period	European dimension	Intercultural dimension
1983	EEC Council Directive in 77/486/EEC incorporated into Greek law. The Directive concerns education of relocating workers' children (Presidential Decree 494/83).	Law 1404/83 setting up Reception Classes and Tutorial Courses for return and foreign pupils
1986	Single European Act	
1988	Resolution of 24 May 1988 on the European dimension in education.	
1990		Amendments and improvements to Law 1404/83, so as to render Reception Classes and Tutorial Classes more flexible and productive.
1992	Maastricht Treaty	
1993	Green Paper	
1995	White Paper	
1996		Law 2413/1996 on intercultural education in Greece.
2003	Incorporation of the European and intercultural dimension into the official new curriculum for compulsory nine-year education, following the general principle of ' <i>Strengthening of cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society</i> '.	
Programmes(projects)		
	Participation in Socrates, Leonardo Da Vinci, Youth for Europe and other European programmes, which are funded by the European Union, but do not receive supplementary financial support from Greece.	From 1997 to the present day, additional funding from national and European resources for three intercultural education programmes aimed at school integration of Roma and Muslim children and foreign pupils (Budget approximately 2.5 million Euros per programme per annum).

Table II. Comparison of the European and intercultural dimensions on the political and institutional level.

Comparison on the Theoretical Level

To summarise and simplify the various theoretical tendencies within theoretical dialogue on the European and intercultural dimension in Greece, we could reach a series of statements and provisional conclusions.

If we looked thoroughly into the Greek scientific literature, we could see that the arguments that appear quite often there are also cited in the texts of other European scientists. Therefore the thoughts that follow concern not only Greece and the Greek literature. More specifically, the intercultural debate focuses on the individual or the group with its own cultural characteristics. The debate also refers to the relation between individuals and groups with different cultural backgrounds. In other words this is a purely pedagogical approach, as the person is both the starting point and the objective of it.

In contrast to the above, institutions and the market, together with their rules and demands, lie at the centre of the European debate. This fundamental difference is mainly due to the origin and projected aim of the two educational programmes.

With regard to the projected aim, we would agree with Professor Hans H. Reich (1997, pp. 68ff.) that the two programmes target different types of persons and different identities.

The individual at the centre of the European programme is a mobile, highly qualified worker, equipped with rights and self-confidence – a European citizen whose national identity is not affected, but complemented. On the other hand, the person at the centre of the intercultural programme is a person sensitised to cultural differences and sociocultural inconsistencies, who efficaciously moves among civilisations, negotiates and manipulates rules for living together with others and learns through these processes how to bring them about of their own accord.

In other words, in the first case, priority is given to individuals with professional qualifications, while in the second it is accorded to individuals with intercultural communicative skills. To be more *comprehensive, homo economicus vs homo interculturalis et communicativus*.

As to their origins, the European programme is imposed *de ex supero*, i.e. from EU bureaucracy. In contrast, the intercultural programme comes from grass roots level, i.e. from the social and educational needs that have arisen following the movement of economic migrants. European politics, economic power and support lie behind the first programme, while the second depends on the social involvement of individuals and groups, as well as on the goodwill of governments in each national state. The European programme is not only predefined, but also geographically, institutionally and politically confined, whereas its intercultural counterpart is more open and flexible. The European programme is in essence political, while the intercultural one is a pedagogical proposal. In the former case politicians set the projected aim and contents, and call upon teachers to put them into practice. In contrast, in the latter, educators formulate the projected aim and contents in the expectation that politicians will adopt them. Lastly, the intercultural programme is more critical and keeps a distance from the national model, whereas its European equivalent is more affirmative.

On the theoretical level there are of course numerous similarities, such as the pluralistic character of the programmes, their stance to ethnocentrism etc. *Yet* time limitations do not permit us to offer further theoretical analysis. Nevertheless, we shall address one final question: *Can the two programmes be linked and integrated into a more general theoretical framework?*

Prospects

If we are to answer the above question we must first have a clear idea of the situation in hand. The first fact is that contemporary Europe is multicultural, multilingual and is becoming ever more so, due to the cultural and linguistic diversities of its own peoples and the mass influx of migrants from non-European countries. We are thus dealing with a classic case of encounter and exchange of cultures, not all of which are European in origin. If we agree that a common European cultural tradition and a potential *European identity* exist, then the *European dimension* refers to them and is restricted to them. Combined with the legal dimension of European nationality, to which only citizens of Member States are entitled, the European nationality and identity can lead to the exclusion and marginalisation or assimilation of individuals coming from non-European countries.

It is obvious that a European dimension framed in these terms goes against the principles of democracy and human rights as they have evolved and become established within the European cultural tradition itself. The intercultural education promises to offer a way out of this impasse. The intercultural education addresses all cultures represented within a given society without exception, its aim being to remove obstacles in the way of cultural encounter and thus to facilitate cultural exchange and enrichment, as well as the peaceful coexistence of individuals and groups of differing cultural origin. If the ultimate goal of a multicultural society is to achieve mutual understanding and the peaceful coexistence of all of its members, then each individual must develop skills and abilities that contribute to the achievement of this goal.

If we were to summarise these skills and abilities under the general term '*intercultural communicative competence*', we would arrive at a general principle or *general educational tenet* common to all members of society, regardless of sociocultural, religious or racial origin. Such reasoning does of course point towards the European educational tradition known as '*general education*', '*culture generale*' in France, '*Allgemeine Bildung*' in German, '*Γενική Παιδεία*' in Greek. In other words, if European and intercultural education are dimensions of education (in the wider sense), then their projected pedagogical aim must be incorporated into the framework of a more general projected aim for education in Europe and be discussed within it, under the multicultural and supra-national circumstances now arising.

The above proposal could be criticised as being Eurocentric. Yet such criticism would only be valid with regard to its epistemological and methodological dimension. Inclusion of the European and intercultural dimensions in the discussion on *General Education* in contemporary Europe is proposed for epistemological and methodological reasons, but does not touch on the content of *General Education*.

On the epistemological and methodological level, linking the European and intercultural dimension with the European pedagogical tradition under the terminus *General Education* may give

new impetus to pedagogical theory in Europe. As to the educational content, *General Education* implies, among other things, the creation of a *common code*, which at least rudimentarily guarantees communication among the members of a society, a minimum of social consensus and, of course, social cohesion.

Yet what should the contents of this common code be? With regard to education, what should the *norm* of curricula and school life in general be, in the multiethnic, multilingual and religiously diverse societies now arising? Could it be the *pre-existing norm*, which aimed at *national homogeneity*, or should it perhaps be a new one, which will arise through cultural encounter and intercultural dialogue in the spirit of cultural exchange and mutual cultural enrichment?

These fundamental political questions remain to be answered on the political level.

Notes

- [1] For the sake of convenience the term European Union (EU), is used, even though it has been officially used since 1992.
- [2] The main points of the principia are as follows:
- to reinforce a sense of European identity among young people and promote awareness of the advantages offered by European integration;
 - learning and dissemination of Member State languages;
 - mutual recognition of academic qualifications;
 - student and teacher mobility;
 - co-operation between educational institutions;
 - introduction of the European dimension into school curricula, teaching materials and the further education and training of teachers.
- [3] From 1995 to 1998 there were 959 partnerships between schools, the majority of which were with Mediterranean countries: Italy ($n = 215$), France ($n = 118$) and Spain ($n = 117$) (Grollios, 1999, p. 118).
- [4] According to a relevant study (see Tsaousis, 2003, pp. 335 ff.), from 1988 to 1995 the number of both undergraduate and postgraduate students participating in the Erasmus programme has increased. Nevertheless, in recent years student mobility has stagnated. This has led some universities to subsidise exchange students with their own funds. For example, the University of Crete allocates approximately 45,000 Euros per academic year to subsidise needy exchange students.
- [5] At the primary level, for example, the operation of day-long school and the flexible activity zone favour the introduction of the European dimension into the curriculum. On the other hand, this is rendered extremely difficult at the upper secondary level by pupil preparation for university entrance (Mattheou, 2003).
- [6] Pertaining to Greek's ethnocentric stance compared with other European peoples, see EKKE, 2003, pp 36-50. As for the national education given in other European countries, see Gogolin (1994).
- [7] The multiple manifestations of intercultural theory can to a great extent be attributed to the fact that it is a cross-disciplinary theory that draws its theoretical arguments and analytical tools from ethnology and the sociology of education and culture; from the philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment and humanism (Borrelli, 1986, Ruhloff, 1982, 1986); from anthropological theories such as that of Kohlberg (Dickopp, 1986) and, finally, from discussion of human rights (Götze & Pommerin, 1986).

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