

ANNUAL REPORT  
1/1/2008 – 31/12/2008

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A) Regarding GCR**

GCR constantly continued its operation during the entire year.  
The new data base started its pilot use with very positive results.

**B) Refugees in Greece**

1. The policies of foreigners' entrance in Greece remain dissuasive. Major lacks exist in accommodation and the confrontation of the problem seems to be based on hasty and fragmentary solutions
2. The number of asylum seekers in Greece was 19.884 in relation to 12.267 requests made in 2006, something that was expected since the procedure had become less time consuming. Main countries of origin were Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iraq, while the arrival of large number of unaccompanied minors remained a major problem. 358 asylum requests were approved (1,8%), mostly to Iraqis, 75 cases were under tolerance stay and 22.188 requests were rejected
3. The number of persons supported by GCR reached 18.000
4. The main development, in European level, was signing the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum

**II. Legal Service Activities**

**1. Legal Aid and Consultancy**

- ✚ **Legal consultancy** and support **was provided to 18.240 persons** on asylum issues
- ✚ **Interventions were made before Greek Authorities for 3.417 persons** concerning requests on access to asylum and the majority of them were vulnerable cases
- ✚ Interventions were made to the **Police for 69** detainees (27 of them expressed their will to apply for asylum and many of them were minors)
- ✚ Interventions were made for immediate asylum request and the provision of relevant documents for the Police Services for **1.176 persons**
- ✚ Interventions were made for **2.095 newly arrived** in entry points.
- ✚ **10.614 persons received legal support** on asylum issues, in the premises of GCR
- ✚ Interventions were made through visits, telephone calls, faxes and emails to competent Services, were proved necessary for **8027 persons**. Indicatively, **6814 persons** received assistance on their appeal submission for the examination of their asylum request in second degree
- ✚ **52 persons** were assisted on their request submission and/or the renewal of humanitarian status.
- ✚ Successful meetings were held between executives and member of the Governing Board of GCR with the Director of the Directorate for Foreigners of the Hellenic Ministry of Public Order, as well as with the Head of the Asylum Department of the aforementioned Ministry, for exceptionally vulnerable cases of asylum seekers

- ✚ A representative of the Legal Service attended **40 regular sessions of the Refugee Committee of the Hellenic Ministry of Interior**, in order to support **303 asylum seekers**
- ✚ **77 cancelation appeals were submitted to the Council of State** for cases of asylum seekers, whose requests were rejected by the Minister of Interior. **25 cases were discussed.**
- ✚ Finally, there was collaboration with jurists from many European countries for cases of asylum seekers which fall within the Dublin Regulation, as well as with Greek citizens, lawyers and other NGOs.

## 2. Interviews with asylum seekers and potential asylum seekers

Interviews were taken from **2587 persons (2375 persons** in GCR's premises, 21 unaccompanied women (1 of them victim of trafficking) and 24 unaccompanied minors, **78 persons** in detention places and **433 persons** in entry points.

## 3. Legal Service missions

- ✚ During the year **8 missions** were made in entry points: Lesvos (three times), Kos, Leros, Evros (two times), Samos, Komotini.
- ✚ Also during the year **8 missions** were made at Igoumenitsa (three times), Evros ( six times), Patra (two times), Leros (two times), Komotini, Patmos, Simi/Rhodes, Kos (UNHCR/Border Monitoring).

## 4. Legal Support for Integration Issues

Legal support was provided for the solution of legal problems that **303 persons** faced while integrating in the Greek society. The support included information on their rights and obligations to Greece, legal advice for executing their rights, representation before Greek authorities, naturalization procedures, support on cases of civil, criminal, labor, administrative and tax law, as well as interventions to Public Services and Organizations.

## 5. Project for the Support of Victims of Trafficking

In 2008, special importance was given to the support of victims of trafficking, mainly from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Nigeria. Apart from the legal representation of the victims the members of the Legal Service participated in meetings in the Ministry, they submitted written recommendations and proposals and they visited the Anti-trafficking Department of the Police and prisons. Finally, they participated with recommendations in numerous meetings for trafficking, which were organized from various institutions.

## 6. Participation in educational, informative and other activities in Greece and abroad

**During 2008 there were many participations as well as presentations of members of the Legal Service in Seminars, Conferences, Press Conferences etc, which were organized by GCR and other organizations.**

### Members of the Legal Service participated, as trainers or speakers, in

- ✚ 15-16/12/2008 Seminar organized by Hellenic Ministry of Interior (ARGO II)
- ✚ 3-5/6/2008 Biannual General Meeting of ECRE (Brussels)
- ✚ 9-10/10/2009 seminar organized by CIR (Rome).

while they participated in numerous conferences and seminars in Greece and abroad.

### III. Social Service Activities

The goal of the Social Service is to facilitate the adjustment and the integration of Asylum Seekers, Refugees and of all those who are accepted to stay in Greece under Humanitarian Status. During 2008 the Social Service served, in total, **5200 persons**.

#### 1. Reception of Newly Arrived Asylum Seekers

- ✚ **1189** persons in total were helped, from which **407** were accommodated (**246** persons in **Reception Centers**, **140** in **hotels** and **21** in **guest houses and other frameworks of hospitality**). During this procedure also extremely vulnerable cases were assisted, such as **148** unaccompanied minors, **4** persons with special abilities, **27** women without supporting environment, **18** persons with serious medical problems, **25** families of a single parent and **16** with newborns, **73** families with many children, **18** pregnant, **5** victims of torture, **13** persons with psychological problems etc
- ✚ **859** interventions were made for health issues, **769** meetings for supportive consulting and **792** interventions for entrance issues

#### 2. Central Social Service

The Central Social Service provides consulting and information and intervenes to institutions and services for the benefit of the refugees and the asylum seekers

- ✚ Consultancy and help was provided to **906 persons**, while the support to refugees and asylum seekers who haven't solved the major problems that concern them continued
- ✚ With the assistance of volunteers clothing, food and other goods, coming from donations, were distributed to **400** persons, while financial support was given to **71** cases. This support was given also due to private donations and donations from organizations

#### 3. Intercultural Centre "PYXIS"

The executives of "PYXIS" along with the 73 volunteers helped **2450** persons, with the following activities:

- ✚ For adults, **31** courses on the Greek language ran and were attended by **452** persons, **2** English courses which were attended by **18** persons and **1** Greek course which were attended by **16** persons.
- ✚ Courses of supportive teaching ran for **172** students, courses on the Greek language for **28** children and adolescences and courses on foreign languages for **12** children
- ✚ Groups of music, dance, doll theatre, Many of them participated in events where they presented their work. Indicatively mentioned:
  - ✚ Doll theatre performance "The Little Prince"
  - ✚ Christmas event in the Cultural Centre "Melina" of the Municipality of Athens
  - ✚ Visits in museums, attendance of events and football games, participation in events of other organizations
  - ✚ Excursion at Nafplion. (104 persons)

Many contacts were made with the target population in order to inform them on training programs, health issues, contacts with hospitals etc. **96 children** were registered in schools, while another **6** went to the children's camps of the Municipality of Athens and the Prefecture of East Attica. Finally, **158** children were vaccinated and **5** women made the pap test.

#### **4. Provision of Supportive Services**

The goal of these Services is for the participants to learn Greek, an art, to claim an employment or to be able to hold the one they already have, to be informed on the relations between employers and employees in Greece and to familiarize with the insurance providers. Within this framework, and in collaboration with the Hellenic Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 370 were aided, 253 out of them found a job, 85 attended training courses on the Greek language and 8 attended training programs. Also, a radio spot was created and other informative material, while a book was published entitled "Guide of Intercultural Consultancy".

#### **5. Recruitment Offices (Peristeri-Athens)**

The Recruitment Offices offer consultancy and information on labor issues, support for the development of social and professional skills, help in practical issues, contact with employers and support, references and support of the beneficiaries during their occupation.

The Office of Peristeri provided services in 750 unemployed, while it accommodated an intern. Its executives participated in several meetings, events and researches.

The Office of Athens offered services in 435 unemployed. Their main request, apart from employment, was to obtain a job permit, especially for the newly arrived in Greece.

#### **6. Participation in training, informative and other activities in Greece and abroad**

Members of the Social Service actively participated with speeches in numerous conferences and seminars in Greece and abroad

#### **7. Networking**

During 2007 networking with institutions like Hospitals, Doctors and Medical Associations, Hellenic Anticancer Association, Paster Institute, Medecins du Monde, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Public Clinic of the Municipality of Athens, World Pharmacists, Dental School of Athens, and Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims, Pharmaceutical Companies was established and supported. Also, with the Modern Greek Language Teaching Center of the University of Athens, Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Center of Greek Civilization, Hellenic Red Cross, ARSIS, CARITAS, CLIMAKA, Association for Minors Care, church and other guest houses, parishes for the support or the nutrition poor refugees, athletic associations etc. Finally, with Municipalities, Communities, Prefectures, Social Services, Public Services as well as the Public Prosecutor's Office for Minors of Athens and the Greek Ombudsman, for unaccompanied minors issues (constant collaboration).

#### **IV. Project "IOLAOS" for the Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Refugees with Mental Disorders**

During 2008 GCR continued its effort to support the rehabilitation of refugees with mental disorders. The special Unit "IOLAOS" consists of the Guest House (here 12 persons were hosted), the Daily Center (were 633 appointments were made) and the Protected Apartment (were 3 persons were hosted).

GCR remains a main institution of reference while there were many cases where Social Services of Psychiatric Departments of Hospitals contacted IOLAOS Services. In 2008:

- ✚ The in service training, of persons with little experience in structures which concern mentally ill or of persons who are not experts on mental health, was continued
- ✚ The collaboration with the Greek Red Cross' volunteers continued for Greek lessons, while English lessons from volunteers started
- ✚ The curative program ran based on the special needs of each guest, while the effort to assist and encourage the most functional of them in order to enter the labor market continued. Three guests found a job for a few months. Two guests of the Protected Apartment attended the workshop of pre-professional training of Eginition Hospital, four times a week
- ✚ During 2008 2 serious recurrences were faced, while hospitalization was proved necessary due to suicidal predispositions and self-destructive behavior

All personnel participated in series of conferences and seminars on mental health.

## **V. Other Projects**

Additionally, within the framework of its operation and in collaboration with Greek and international institutions, GCR implemented the following Projects:

- ✚ “Guide of Humanitarian Protection”, aiming at the support of foreigners in Greece through the contact of a guide on their rights and obligations. Due to changes in the legislative framework its finalization was delayed
- ✚ «Identifying and Promoting Good Practices for Unaccompanied Minors in the EU Asylum Legislation», aiming at the elevation, analysis and study of the implementation of the schemes of the European Legislation on Asylum and Refugees for unaccompanied minors
- ✚ “Services at borders: a practical co-operation”: Study on the asylum procedures as well as in the access of asylum seekers to it in collaboration with other European countries
- ✚ «SynPraxis-Collaboration for Employment”, aiming at promoting policies which will make more effective the procedure of access in employment, giving for the first time emphasis in the collaboration with the employers. 189 persons were helped
- ✚ «Observatory and Network for the Empowerment of Economic Migrants and Refugees in the Labor Market”, with emphasis to intercultural operation and intervention
- ✚ “Network for the arsis of Social Exclusion of women”, aiming at the provision of consultative support to extremely vulnerable refugee and asylum seekers families and at the implementation of creative workshops for the children of refugees and migrants. Within the framework of this project a)creative workshops for the children of refugees and migrants ran, b) through special consultancy at home 21 vulnerable refugee families were assisted, c) a leaflet with basic information was prepared and d) a study entitled ‘Migrant and Refugee Women in Greece’ was elaborated

## **VI. Collaboration of GCR with wider Associations**

During 2008 the collaboration of GCR with the National Committee for Human Rights continued, having as a result two recommendations of the Committee, one on issues of trafficking and one for the implementation of the refugee and asylum law.

Within the framework of GCR's participation in the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), issues concerning mostly research and rescue in the sea (access to Europe), return to the countries where the first asylum request was submitted, conditions of detention of the asylum seekers, as well as unfair implementation of the community directives concerning asylum, were discussed.

In 2008 the participation of GCR in the National Consulting Committee of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the Governmental Initiative "Citizens Work" and in the Federation of Non Governmental Organizations continued. GCR, also, remained an implementing partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Greece.

## **VII. Promotion of GCR's Work**

Basic actions for 2008

- Send of press releases, which had as a result at least 50 references to GCR in the Mass Media
- Consolidation of new collaborations which led to the promotion of GCR's activities and to the circulation of newsletters

## **VIII. Fund Raising from Private Donors**

The efforts for fund raising from private donors in 2008 focused on appeals, via telephone and written, on radio and television spots and on appeals to newspapers-magazines during holiday. Also, a telephone line for donations operated and two big events for fund raising were organized. One of the two events was a singing concert of the famous artist Ms. Barbara Hendricks.

A very important donation was the job offer for four refugees in Prefecture of Ilia, for the reconstruction of the areas destroyed from the fire. Big donations were, also, made for buying electronic and other equipment for GCR's premises.

Many donations in kind were, also, offered. The offer of services, such as free creation of invitations for the events and of leaflets, free transfer when needed etc, was also of great importance.

The Governing Board of GCR expresses its appreciation to all those who assisted its work during 2008, as well as all the members of its personnel, who worked with ardency and loyalty, for the better support of refugees.

Athens, 1st of March 2009