

**OECD HIGH LEVEL POLICY FORUM ON MIGRATION
Paris, 1-2 December 2014**

**Intervention of the Minister of Interior of Greece, Mr Argyris Ntinopoulos,
in Parallel Session 4C:**

***DEVELOPING SKILLS:*
HOW TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND
SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS' CHILDREN INTO
THE SCHOOL SYSTEM?**

Dear President, dear Colleagues,

It is common knowledge that while European and western countries have well-established educational systems, there still exist strong inequalities in access to schooling and quality of education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups, in particular for migrant pupils from a low socioeconomic background.

According to EU data, 8,3 million youngsters residing in the Member-States were born abroad, while the number of the so-called “second generation migrants” is estimated to be around 4 million people. As a result, the percentage of youth unemployment and non-participation of youngsters in any education or training courses is significantly higher for first and second generation migrants in most EU countries.

The EU Migrants’ integration indicators show that early school drop out among foreign born learners is nearly twice as high as among the total population. The same holds true for pupils with migrant parents.

It is evident that young people with migrant background have specific education needs that are still not met.

Updating the agenda on the education of migrant learners is a critical pre condition for all our EU Partners in order to reach our common goals, set up in the EU 2020 growth and competitiveness strategy, which sets ambitious targets, such as the reduction of school drop-out rate to 10 per cent and the increase of the share of the population aged from 30 to 34 who have completed tertiary education to at least 40 per cent by 2020.

The Greek Ministry of Interior has financed, through the European Integration Fund a number of projects aiming at enhancing the parental involvement in migrant children schooling, organising language course for parents. Other projects involve mingling among migrants and native children through sport events and the creation of mixed youth centres.

In Greece, children whose parents' residence status is not yet regulated, have equal rights to education as a means to stimulate social inclusion and development.

Projects financed through the European Integration Fund are provided for the organisation of debates in the Greek language aiming at promoting fluency and mastering of the language of instruction for migrant pupils.

Greece has financed, through the Fund, pre-school education for migrant children combined with free meals and free transportation with a view to encouraging the early linguistic and social integration of migrant minors and to create a friendly environment for learning.

There is no doubt that more could be done to promote successful integration of migrant children in the school system as for example increasing the representation of educational professionals with a migrant background or/and promoting diversity in teacher training.

In times of economic crisis, one can argue that these policies are not affordable for many EU countries and not only. Although it might seem not feasible at the present economic situation, a more generous investment for a more inclusive school for all children could be a cost effectiveness based solution for achieving the EU growth and competitiveness strategy 2020, as well as for enhancing social cohesion in our societies.
