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## **PROJECT 'IMMENSITY'**

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# **IMMIGRANT'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR SOCIO- ECONOMIC COHESION AND IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING STANDARDS**

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## **CONTENTS**

<b><i>Part 1: IDENTIFICATION SHEET.....</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>Part 2: RETURN PLAN FOR ECONOMIC MIGRANTS .....</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>
<b>2.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.2 SCOPE OF THE PLAN .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.3 RETURN MODEL(S) .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.4 RETURN SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.4.1 RETURN MIGRATION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.4.2 RETURN MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.5 PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS.....</b>	<b>20</b>

**Part 1:**  
**IDENTIFICATION SHEET**

## Part 1: IDENTIFICATION SHEET

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<b>Abstract (for dissemination)</b>	Return Plans have been formulated so as to enhance immigrants to return to their homelands and re-establish their businesses. The returning immigrants will transfer the knowledge and business expertise they have gained in the destination countries to their countries of origin and will continue the economic cooperation with the former destination countries. This report aims at formulating a concrete Return Plan for the immigrant entrepreneurs living in the Region of Central Macedonia and who wish to return to their countries of origin.

**Part 2:**  
**RETURN PLAN FOR ECONOMIC MIGRANTS**

## **Part 2: RETURN PLAN FOR ECONOMIC MIGRANTS**

### **2.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

One of the most important aspects of the IMMENSITY project is that it deals not only with the social and economic inclusion of immigrants in the destination countries, but also with the improvement of living standards in the origin countries. IMMENSITY proceeds with the formulation of concrete Plans for the Return of Immigrants and repatriates in their homelands and the re-establishment of their businesses to the countries of origin. The returning immigrants will transfer the knowledge, experience and business expertise they have gained in the destination countries and will continue the economic cooperation with the former destination countries, promoting thus socio-economic development to both destination and origin countries. For the IMMENSITY project, five out of nine partners have been committed to prepare a concrete Return Plan for their region. The formulation of the Greek return plan has been a responsibility of the Region of Central Macedonia (LP of the project).

The main aim of this return Plan is to formulate a background through which migrants living in the RCM or Greece in general and repatriates, who are willing to return in the country, will be in position to transfer their businesses to their countries of origin in order to raise productivity at home without, however, losing their cooperation and chained bonds with the destination countries.

Generally speaking, the returning of immigrants to their homelands can affect both countries of origin and destination countries. Countries of origin can take advantage of the experience and knowledge of the new human capital enters the country, in order for the latter to increase its productivity and enhancing both of its social and economic development. Social development can be reached through the transfer of new habits and way of life of people coming from destination countries. Training, skills and knowledge has been gained in the destination countries can bring new initiatives to the home countries. Economic development for the origin country can be achieved through financial transfers. Immigrant entrepreneurs, who will re-establish their businesses in their homelands, through the trade relationships with suppliers coming either from the destination or other countries could positively affect the Foreign Trade Balance of the country (imports against exports), Foreign Trade Investments, savings, loans purchase of

real estate etc. On the other hand, economic development can be also achieved as far as the hosting countries are concerned. The trade relationships that is to be increased can affect the trade balance (exports will be higher than imports) of the hosting region / country as well as its Foreign Direct Investments, start-up of business investments and humanitarian support. As a result, the possibility of returning of immigrants to affect and establish the bilateral trade between home and host countries is essential.

Apart from the aforementioned analysis, the Pilot Structure that has been developed for the Region of Central Macedonia under the framework of the implementation of the IMMENSITY project aims at enhancing bilateral trade and cooperation between host and home countries. Through the new structure, immigrant entrepreneurs or groups of people dealing with migration issues and formulating policies on migration and bilateral cooperation can not only find information on migration and entrepreneurship issues but also ask for consulting on the same subjects. The electronic pilot structure has been developed in correlation to the establishment of Reception Offices for Immigrant Entrepreneurs so as to foster entrepreneurship / self-employment of the target groups. This structure aims at offering online and off-line services to the beneficiaries by taking into account that the latter need consultation and support and respecting the possible difficulties they might face in accessing and using the ICT tools.

As a result, the main aim of the formulation of this Return Plan is to suggest a number of actions that can be adopted by the host and home countries and the immigrants, too, so as for the latter to improve their living standards in the home countries and support their socio-economic integration especially in the home regions / countries.

## 2.2 SCOPE OF THE PLAN

This part aims at introducing the target groups for whom the Return Plan is being formulated as well as to describe the geographical coverage for which the return plan is being formulated.

- Target Groups

The following points highlight the target groups and beneficiaries of the Return Plan and IMMENSITY project in general.

- Legal Immigrants from the CADSES area who live in one of the EU regions participating in the project and left their country of origin in pursuit of better economic and security conditions. Immigrant women can be further distinguished as a separate target group because of the compound nature of the problems they encounter in the receiving country.
- Repatriating nationals of the participating regions, most of who were born and raised in the country of origin.
- Communities from the immigrants' origin country that will engage in bilateral trade with destination countries, adding value to their economic activity. In the long run, they will benefit from the return of their workforce and the establishment of viable & profitable enterprises.
- Local businesses in the receiving countries, since new opportunities for business collaborations and trade will open up.
- Local/regional authorities and business support agencies that will be better equipped to deal with socio-economic development issues of immigrants who settle in their regions and wish to be self-employed.

A recent survey (2005) performed by the Mediterranean Migration Observatory has indicated that the data concerning legal immigrants in Greece is held by several ministries, with poor communication between them and there is no synthesis made of the different datasets. There is a particular problem of homogeneity with migrants, who appear as illegal immigrants on a statistical level until 2001 and for which category data is considered to be 'undisclosable' by the Ministry of Public Order. Ethnic Greeks without Greek citizenship do not appear in the 2001 Census data; in addition, there is not any adequate data on the grants of Greek citizenship to them. Using crude estimates of missing datasets, the number of immigrants in Greece is estimated (end of 2004) at

950.000, including homogeneous making a total of 1,15 million and constituting some 10,3% of adjusted total population. These figures contrast with an estimated total of 270.000 immigrants in 1991, showing a quadrupling of immigrant stocks over a period of 13 years.

Nationalities of immigrants with residence permits show a marked increase of almost all groups compared with the Census data, especially Bulgarians, Albanians and Romanians. Comparison of Census and residence permit data for national groups by broad geographical region, shows a marked increase in nationals from South Eastern Europe (mainly Albania and Bulgaria), along with small increases in the numbers of migrants coming from European New Independent States and Asia. Reasons for the award of permission to stay include employment, followed by family reunification and self-employment. 92% of permits are of duration 1 or 2 years, 3% are given under EU rules to family members of EU nationals, and only 0,1% (364 persons) have indefinite permits out of the 700.000 awarded. Moreover, the gender balance of immigrant groups varies widely: for the Asian countries (Middle East) (e.g. Pakistan, Bangladesh and India) and the Arab countries almost exclusively male immigrants appear in Greece. For Syria and Egypt, there is an 80% male presence in Greece, while for other nationalities such as Ukraine, Philippines and Moldavia there is a predominantly female presence, at around 70%. Albania and Romania shows some 60% male presence and for other leading nationalities (Bulgaria, Georgia, USA, Cyprus, Russia, UK, Germany, Poland) there is 50-60% female, until we reach Pakistanis at 1,4% of foreign population. Furthermore, almost 80% of immigrants are of working age (15-64).

For the Region of Central Macedonia according to the last Census (2001) the total number of immigrants was estimated at about 100.178 people (about 5,6% of the regional population); most of them came mostly from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Asian countries. Within the time period 1998-2003 the immigrants' number was reduced by 3%. As regards gender, it is estimated that the proportion is 52% male immigrants against 48% female. The average time of residence in the area is about 2 years.

- Status of Immigrants

In continuation to the aforementioned analysis, attention should be also paid to the current status of the migrants and the legislation determines it. Thus, the following paragraphs aim at highlighting the main framework of the relevant status.

In principle, the entrance, residence, employment and deportation of immigrants in Greece is a responsibility regulated at national level, as long as it does not contradict European provisions and respects fundamental human rights. Several documents (Laws, Presidential Decrees, Laws' enforcements etc) have been prepared and published since 1929. During 2001 the Law 2910/2001 was approved and signed by the Parliament including a number of innovations which are presented in the points given:

- The Planning and coordination of immigration policy is a competence of Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration.
- The immigrants come only with guidelines provided by employment services in origin country, facilitated by Greek Consular Authorities there.
- Issuing a residence permit is a responsibility of General Secretary of the Region.
- Each Regional Authority constitutes Immigration Committees to manage residence permits.
- The time limit for legal residence in the country before acquiring an indefinite residence permit was reduced.
- Fundamental rights' and social inclusion issues were included.
- Family reunification terms were amended.
- There were provisions for racism and xenophobia phenomena.
- The procedure for acquiring Greek citizenship was amended.
- The term 'immigrant' was distinguished from the 'refugee' one.
- Equal insurance rights were established for immigrants and refugees.
- The access of minor foreigners to Greek education was established.
- Other ministries were assigned as well with immigration competences (Min. of Public Order and Min. of Employment).

Moreover, up to 2005 some additional legislative texts for migration were adopted. Few examples are given below:

- a. Law 3386/2005 for "Entry, residence, and integration of third-country nationals in the Greek Territory",
- b. Law 3304/2005 for "Application of principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other benefits, disability, age or sexual orientation",

- c. Decision for abolition of the obligation of submitting documents for the renewal of the residence permit for dependent employment and the supply of independent services or work etc.

So far, several initiatives have been undertaken on both a regional and national level for the improvement of migrants' living standards. Few examples of these initiatives are presented in the following points:

- *Athens Migration Policy Initiative* aiming at introducing thoughtful, innovative ideas on migration into the European policy debate.
- *The Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO)* which is legal entity under private law whose mission is to research and understand the phenomenon of migration and conduct studies which contribute to the design and implementation of the viable and realistic immigration policy within the European Union's framework.
- *Greek language courses from Center of Vocational Training "Research and Communication Society"*
- *Greek language training for immigrants etc*

Moreover, it should be noted that the Greek Consular Authorities in origin countries provide guidelines to the immigrants who want to come to Greece, while issuing a residence permit is a responsibility of General Secretary of the Region. For this purpose each Regional Authority constitutes Immigration Committees to manage residence permits and monitor the overall procedures. The central government also considers important to give access to Greek education system for minor foreigners, which is a significant effort to promote social inclusion of the target groups. However, as regards Regional authorities in Greece, they have little power in terms of making policy decisions and strategic planning as this is centrally done by national government. The only instrument that can be used by regional authorities is the Regional Development Plan under the Community Support Frameworks, which in most cases addresses immigration issues only indirectly.

Even though, several problems exist on national/ regional/ local level regarding the presence of migrants in Greek communities, such as xenophobia, discrimination, pressures on employment and real estate etc, the concentration of migrants in urban –mostly- areas generates some important opportunities, such as: participate in the local product, increase consumers' demand, change the demographic relation, provide services to households etc.

- Geographical Coverage

The Return Plan is formulated not only for the migrants living in the Region of Central Macedonia but also for those living in the wider CADSES area (Central, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern European Space). On the one hand, the Pilot Structures have been established in the Region of Central Macedonia aim at offering support and counselling to migrants who wish to become entrepreneurs and self-employed in the area. On the other hand, due to the fact that- as it was mentioned in the aforementioned paragraphs- a great number of migrants living in the region and the country in general is coming from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, FYROM etc which are identified as border regions and neighbours of the Europe, the formulation of the Return Plan and the establishment of the pilot Structures can simply affect the wider CADSES area.

As it is commonly known, the CADSES programme is, among the 13 transnational cooperation areas in Europe, the largest and most complex. From the coasts of the Baltic Sea, through the mountains of the Central Europe and the Hungarian plains, through the Austrian and Slovenian Alpine landscapes, CADSES stretches down to western Italy and Greece, thus grouping the Balkan regions including Moldova and part of Ukraine and Belarus. It comprises regions belonging to 18 countries: 12 of them are member states and 6 non-member states.

Consequently, due to the fact that migrants of Central Macedonia are coming from regions and countries being part of the CADSES area, the Return Plan can also affect its relationship with these countries. For instance, if migrants originated from Albania or Romania have established their businesses in the Region of Central Macedonia and they would like to re-establish them in their homeland or move to their countries of origin and transfer the knowledge they have gained, then communication and cooperation bonds could be started between two countries / regions.

## 2.3 RETURN MODEL(S)

This part aims at introducing the return model or models that is considered as the most suitable for the target group, which consists of the beneficiaries of the IMMENSITY project and could be included in the formulation of the Return Plan for the Region of Central Macedonia.

Several migration models have been identified in the European literature. Voluntary return, circular return etc are just to name a few of them. The return models have been used so as to promote and support the development of countries of origin through bilateral trade and facilitating the return of migrant's resources. The main aim is the formulation of a sustainable return and/or circular migration movement, which will mutually contribute to the development of the countries of origin as well as the host country.

For the Region of Central Macedonia, repetitive or circular migration could be regarded as the most appropriate model for the target group of the project. The promotion and enhancement of seasonal and / or permanent migration can positively affect bilateral relationships between countries of origin and host countries. The fact that a number of migrants leave the country, especially during summer vacations or religious holidays such as Christmas, and move to their countries of origin could enhance initiatives for seasonal business development in the home countries. On the one hand, men and women migrant workers can contribute to the development of origin countries by re-establishing their businesses or creating trade co-operations by importing products from their countries to the host country and vice versa; while on the other hand, the bonds, which have been created with the host country, can augment the successful development of the latter (e.g. increasing Trade relationships, affecting trade balance and Foreign Trade Investments etc). As it is of common truth, the majority of the migrants, living in the Region of Central Macedonia -and country in general-, is coming from third countries (e.g. Balkan Peninsula and / or Eastern European borders). Those persons have settled in the EU and have gained high skills can use their skills for enhancing the development of their homelands without abandoning hosting country. For instance, a migrant living in the Region of Central Macedonia, having studied and been a doctor or a businessperson can transfer his or her knowledge to the country of origin and start a business contributing to the social and economic development of his origin country and perhaps through the development of ICTs to sustain the contact with the network of the destination country.

Seasonal migration can be regarded as a privilege for both countries. For those migrants, who have chosen to return to their countries of origin, European Commission proposes to ensure circularity by giving them the opportunity to travel and commute without boundaries in the receiving countries as well as privileges on the insurance and medical system, pension, dual-citizenship, permit to stay etc. The fact that a hosting country is about to identify a number of privileges to the migrants supports its trade and development as well. Moreover, it enhances the social inclusion of the migrants in the country since the latter no matter their movement to their countries of origin will not lose their contact with the relevant country. Through this opportunity, migrants at all skill levels will gain more flexibility to tailor their migration experience to their particular needs and preferences.

Taking into account the aforementioned analysis on circular migration, it could be stated that the Region of Central Macedonia could establish a well-structured network of cooperation with the countries of origin of its migrants so as to connect repatriates with projects, jobs and other opportunities (e.g. funding opportunities, investment opportunities etc). For instance, the fact that the Greek Government aims at promoting and establishing portable benefits (e.g. to repatriates and Greek migrants to European countries, Australia and America could enhance the development of the country of origin. Repatriates will be able to either re-establish their businesses in the country or to work in both countries and assist in the economic development and their social inclusion. Nevertheless, even in the adoption of such a plan either by the country or the Region, the formulation and establishment of inter-governmental planning and negotiation is crucial.

With seasonal or temporary migration movements, both the region and the country could take advantage of them both on social and economic matter. The receiving country or Region i.e. Region of Central Macedonia could offer a more flexible framework for those migrants want to move back and forth while countries of origin such as Albania and Asia can increase their institutional and legislation capacities through the development of technical and financial assistance so as to be benefited from these movements.

## 2.4 RETURN SUPPORT

### 2.4.1 RETURN MIGRATION

This part is divided in two sub-parts. The first part aims at identifying existing structures established in the Region of Central Macedonia or on a national level which provide return counseling to migrants that want to return to their home countries. The second part focuses on identifying ways for the stimulation and preparation of the return migrant entrepreneurship in the homelands. In this part, the identification of existing structures is also required.

A number of counseling organizations qualified in migration issues have been identified both on a national and a regional level. Due to the fact that the majority of the migrants is concentrated in the urban centers or near to them, most of the organizations (as it has already been mentioned in the formulation of the Strategic and Operational Plan) have been established in the capital or in major cities.

Most of the identified organizations established in Greece offer consulting to migrants not only for the improvement of their living standards in the country but also for preparing their return to their homelands.

In the Region of Central Macedonia, the General department of Migration Policy being established in the Region aims at enhancing, promoting and supporting migrants' social inclusion. The Department is responsible for giving information on issues relevant to permit license, work licenses and workers' obligations and duties, information for the insurance and medical system etc in the host country. Moreover, other governmental organizations that can be identified as identified structures are: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Employment, Greek embassies in the origin countries which can inform the migrants for issues relevant to their countries of origin policies, National center of Social research which provide researches and studies on the social and economic inclusion of migrants in both the origin and host countries accompanied with data and other statistical information, National Statistical Service of Greece (Northern Directorate of Greece), University of Macedonia and Aristotle University which offer important information on migration issues due to the studies and the projects they undertake, Trade Unions and Exporter's associations which inform their members (natives or migrants) on exporting and investing opportunities, support bilateral trade, boost exports and support the development of both the hosting and the origin country,

diffuse information through workshops and seminars etc. Furthermore, the contribution of all Local authorities should also be part of this analysis. Local authorities (Municipalities, Prefectures etc) address migration issues in their areas, contribute to the dissemination of the results, are best informed on the skills of their migrants, have direct contact with immigrant groups towards Pilot Structures etc. In addition, other structures such as the Centre for European Constitutional Law and the Centre for Gender Equality can also play an important role on counseling migrants as far as their return to their homelands is concerned.

Very important is also the role of NGOs and International Organizations of Migration, which sometimes have a clearer view on the facts and figures, trends and needs of the origin countries. The networks that have been created among Non Governmental Organizations and International Organizations of Migration play an important role as multipliers for information dissemination.

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that the migrants themselves with their sustained social and family bonds in the country of origin as well as the migrant communities are the most appropriate groups for providing counseling information to other migrants who would like to take advantage either of voluntary return or circular migration model in order to re-establish their business in the origin country and enhance bilateral trade.

All aforementioned structures offer either specific country information or tailored according to the needs and demands of the return migrants. Information for laws, investment and funding opportunities are just to name a few. Moreover, these organizations due to the established network of cooperation and communication that they have developed with other organizations from the origin countries can also provide information for needs and trends on the development of bilateral trade as well as information on the benefits and boundaries of the logistical and financial support for migrants who wish to return to their homelands. The logistical trends refer to the means that a person (businessperson) should use in order to transfer the products to a distant area by achieving the minimum cost of transfer. For instance, organizations specialized in logistics could be able to support with consulting those migrants would like to return and re-establish their businesses to their homelands without abandoning the relationships and networks of co-operations (merchants) that they have developed in the receiving country.

On the other hand, organizations like the aforementioned can also provide financial information to the migrants wishing for direct investments opportunities, funding opportunities for gaining subsidizing support either from the State and /or regional, local authorities or through the banking system of the origin country or opportunities for establishing their own business in order to link and enhance the nexus with the receiving country.

Actors like the Department of Migration Policy established in the Region of Central Macedonia, the International Organization of Migration, Universities, the International Migration Policy Organization (IMEPO), Centres of immigration research and several NGOs related to migration issues can contribute to the formulation of the Return Plan of Economic Migrants to their countries of origin for the Region of Central Macedonia since they can provide useful consulting information on the subject. Moreover, the Pilot Structures that have been developed during the implementation of the IMMENSITY project (Immigrant Entrepreneurs' Reception Offices and Online portal for consulting on migration and entrepreneurship issues) can be used as initiative tools for consulting. The main Addressee of the Region dealing with migration policies can establish a network with national and international organizations so as to promote and support transnational and interregional cooperation with origin countries and enhance both the social and economic development of the host and origin countries and the improvement of living standards and social integration of migrants wishing to return to their homelands.

Organizations according to the gained knowledge and experience could be specialized on specific return models and offer standard and updated information on migration movements and flows including statistical data for both the host and origin countries. Moreover, since the project enhances immigrants' entrepreneurship, organizations like Chambers and Trade Unions should also be included in the consulting scheme. In addition, it should be taken into account that also the repatriates apart from women and other migrants wishing to re-establish their businesses in their origin countries are included in the beneficiaries of the project. As a result, due to the already established bonds with the origin country (social and family, relatives, language, common religion, habits and customs, mentality, friends etc), high and low skilled repatriates should be enhanced to re-establish their businesses in the Region or Greece in general. Incentives and flexibility to their movements and goods commuting should be offered so as for the origin country to take advantage of the gained skills and knowledge. Consequently, specialized in repatriates' return addresses in public organizations or NGOs and other communities are promoted by the Return Plan. Organizations must offer information on funding and investing opportunities, real estate information, information for the medical

and insurance system, pension etc to Greeks living abroad and who are wishing to return to their born country.

## **2.4.2 RETURN MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Migrants have been remitting significant sums of money to the countries of origin. In many cases this action has been used to acquire land and premises and some other to ensure that in the years to come one could return relatively comfortable to the country of origin. Migrant residents in Europe actually live in two societies: with one foot in their country of origin and with the other in their home country. In both cases they have seen new opportunities while they were in the host country; either in their actual work or as active participants in society. Transfer of ideas, methods of work and technology from one country to another become possible through the migrant entrepreneur. It then serves as a basis for development of the private sector. New markets in two societies are linked with each other. Products are not only sold in the country of origin, the market in the host country offers new opportunities as well. The resident migrant entrepreneur thus becomes a traveling migrant entrepreneur.

It is evident that promoting the creation of business by migrant entrepreneurs is relevant, albeit a relatively difficult process. Technical assistance and business support is needed to minimize the risks of failing. Cooperation between chambers of commerce and trade unions could assist on the promotion of a migrant entrepreneur to establish his business in the origin country. Three steps have to be followed by a potential return migrant entrepreneur before (re)-establishing his/ her business in the country of origin. First of all, the potential entrepreneur has to be in touch with public or private enterprises such as consulting enterprises and offices, which could stand with preparation of a draft business plan for their client by taking into account all market risks, spatial identification, a future strategic and operational plan etc for the development of the potential enterprise. When the plan will be ready, the potential entrepreneur should move on the second step. He through a consulting office or a Regional Development Agency specialized in migration and entrepreneurship has to find information for offering opportunities in the origin country related to strengthening skills, use of remittances, micro-credits, grants, loans and co-financing for new entrepreneurs (men and women) and especially for return migrant entrepreneurs. On the third and final stage, the potential migrant entrepreneur has –perhaps with the assistance of a specialized and qualified consulting office- to start-up business.

Each of the potential return migrant entrepreneurs could be also supported by national organizations established on local/ regional level and International organizations. Access to ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) should be highly offered to all new return migrant entrepreneurs in order for the latter to promote their businesses on a better way and gain better access to all kinds of given information.

On a national level, special departments established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Employment, National Organization of Small Medium Enterprises are just to a name a few of the public entities of public law and public entity of private law respectively organizations to which an entrepreneur could ask for assistance on the start-up of his business.

Moreover, he or she could ask for information from European organizations specialized in migration and entrepreneurship so as to be aware of all new opportunities arisen in his country of origin regarding entrepreneurship.

## 2.5 PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- **Greek Ministry of Employment**

The Greek Ministry of Employment aims to support employment, boost employability and provide more and better opportunities for all people, combating discrimination and social exclusion. The ministry is responsible for decision-making and policy planning for capacity building and vocational training, in cooperation with the other ministries and in accordance with EU guidelines and legislation. It should be also noted that the ministry aims to provide social protection and support employment of various disadvantaged groups such as the legal economic immigrants. Within this context it monitors and controls the effective implementation of activities for the improvement of employment opportunities in the labour market, regardless of nationality.

The Ministry of Employment has a particular interest in the IMMENSITY project, since the immigration flow and the entrepreneurship of the target groups affects considerably the employment sector in Greece. As a Ministry, it cooperates formally with the Region of Central Macedonia to support the overall development of the Region and specifically to address employment and social issues in the area. Additionally, the ministry can formulate measures, which are tailor made to the needs of the area and therefore needs to collaborate with RCM for this purpose. Practically, this experience facilitates the communication and consultation with the national authority to achieve its contribution to the effective implementation of the foreseen actions and to the dissemination and sustainability of the whole project.

- **Greek Ministry of Macedonia – Thrace**

As regards, the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace it should be noted that it has, evidently, a particular interest in the IMMENSITY project, since the issue of immigration generates impacts in a wide variety of sectors, such as regional employment, development, social inclusion, external relations etc.

As a Ministry, it has the adequate financial and political capacity to promote actions and initiatives for the socio-economic benefit of its area of jurisdiction. Additionally, it cooperates with other ministries and departments, contributing to the formulation of cross-sector policies (such as immigration policy) and to the implementation of concrete actions that have an impact on immigration in Macedonia and Thrace. In order to acquire

necessary information, it develops wide frameworks of cooperation with the public authorities of the wider area, so as to keep track of the problems and needs faced by entities or groups (Immigrants) and to identify specific fields of intervention. Practically, this is translated in frequent communication and consultation between the Region of Central Macedonia and the Ministry, for the effective implementation of policies and measures, on the one hand and for collecting important information on problems, needs and weaknesses, on the other.

The regional authorities have, in general, limited ability to intervene to the Ministries and when this happens, it usually concerns the attempt to achieve specific improvements at the regional level. Therefore, the development and enhancement of cooperation between RCM and the ministry of Macedonia and Thrace is a key-element to the identification of proper solutions and the promotion of appropriate interventions for immigration management.

- **Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts the country's foreign policy and represents the country before other states and international organizations. Additionally, it participates on its behalf in international cooperation initiatives and mechanisms at the international, European and regional level and advocates Greek interests, both public and private, abroad. In overall, it is well known that the ministry manages the external relations of the country and has therefore the responsibility of establishing and maintaining favorable conditions for the interaction with other countries.

Apart from that, the ministry promotes international cooperation, security and peace, protecting also human and minority rights and world solidarity. Therefore, another field of activity for the MFA is the involvement in humanitarian issues, by participating in international initiatives and by providing humanitarian and development aid.

Taking into account that IMMENSITY foresees actions that concern both the destination as well as the origin countries, it is necessary that these countries have developed the appropriate relations, which will allow them to cooperate intensively for the benefit of both national societies. Towards this direction, the role of Greek embassies abroad is important as they can inform the origin countries about the possibilities for economic and business development for future immigrants in Greece, raising their awareness on the services offered by the Pilot Structures' and on the opportunity to return to their homelands later and start bilateral trade.

The Region of Central Macedonia as a public authority has established formal relations with the ministry, resulting from their cooperation in various fields and sectors, which interest both authorities. Nevertheless, RCM will have to address properly the participation / contribution of MFA to the whole effort, emphasizing the importance of establishing adequate bilateral relations with origin country, as this will provide multi-level benefits: on the one hand, it will ameliorate national external relations and will improve the image of the country in the international community. On the other, it will develop a useful system for managing migration in countries, reducing large immigration flows and strengthening the capacity of labour force in origin countries. Within this framework, it is necessary first that RCM addresses the ministry's participation by raising adequately its awareness on the objectives of IMMENSITY.

- **National Centre for Social Research**

The National Centre for Social Research (EKKE) is a legal public entity, with its headquarters in Athens, and is supervised by the Ministry of Development (GSRT). It is the most significant public agency in the field of social research. The objectives of EKKE are the systematic study of Greece's social-economic reality and the drawing of comparisons with other countries for the formulation and development of social policy.

The long-term goal of EKKE is the assessment of social needs and priorities in order to design development policy in key sectors of Greek society. Within this context it acknowledges the need for the deploying new technologies and innovative techniques. Nowadays the Centre researches the social and financial dimensions of development and their connection to the formulation of development policy. For the materialization of this strategy it recognizes the need for research, project development, and the need for the collaboration and networking of research agencies.

Taking into account of the role of the Centre, which is to monitor the social dimension of development, it can provide important input on social parameters of immigration flows. More specifically, the Institute of Urban and Rural Sociology (part of EKKE) is basic research agency in urban and rural sociology. It contributes positively towards the development of communication and collaboration between agencies and researchers in the field at the European international levels.

The relations of RCM with EKKE are informal, but can be further developed easily, taking also into account that EKKE is supervised by another public authority (the Ministry of Development). The Regional Authority can cooperate intensively with the research centre

so as to acquire its knowledge on social parameters of immigration in Greece and provide, in turn, useful feedback to the Center's research activity based on IMMENSITY results.

- **National Statistical Service of Greece – Directorate of Northern Greece (Thessaloniki)**

The National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG) is a General Secretariat of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. NSSG is the main statistical service at national level and designs, collects and processes data from a variety of studies, censuses and statistical surveys.

NSSG also comprises a library with statistical publications -current and older- and other statistical information contained in General and Thematic Publications. Statistical Data are offered in a variety of formats (printed and electronic matter) with only a minimum cost. Furthermore, library users have access to statistical data from various countries and international organizations (EUROSTAT, OECD, UN, ILO etc.) and can look up information in a great number of Greek and foreign prints and scientific publications.

The sources of data collection for NSSG comprise individuals, households, public and private enterprises of almost all the branches of economic activity (agricultural, industrial and commercial enterprises, enterprises providing services), state services, local government, public utility organizations, educational establishments, hospitals, social insurance organizations etc, are the sources from which the NSSG collects data. These data are then tabulated after the appropriate processing. The response rate of the above sources is considered satisfactory and facilitates the collection of data by the NSSG.

The State is the main user of statistics and indices compiled by the NSSG. On the basis of these data it materializes and follows-up its policies in various domains. Other users are the European Union, which needs the particular data of its Member – States in order to compile the European statistics, international organizations (UN, UNESCO, FAO, ILO, OECD etc), businessmen, scientists, researchers and analysts, as well as citizens.

It cannot be doubted that NSSG is the most significant organization in Greece regarding data collection and processing of surveys, acquiring unique knowledge and information in the majority of sectors and fields of interest. Even more, its Directorate of Statistics of Northern Greece comprises a Department of Statistics dedicated to the specific area. Within this context, RCM should ensure the cooperation and involvement of NSSG in

- **University of Macedonia**

The University of Macedonia (UOM) for Economic and Social Sciences was established in 1990. At the present time, the University of Macedonia has five departments:

- Department of Economics
- Department of Business Administration
- Department of International and European Economic and Political Studies
- Department of Accounting and Finance
- Department of Applied Informatics
- Department of Educational & Social Studies
- Department of Balkan, Slavonic & Oriental Studies
- Department of Music Science & Art

The Department of Balkan, Slavonic and Oriental Studies provides knowledge in the following fields:

- Basic knowledge on economy, law and social science.
- Good knowledge of Russian, Turkish and an additional language from the specific area.
- Knowledge for the socio-economic conditions of the countries in Balkan, East Europe and Near East.
- Capacities for working in international environment.
- Scientific developments and terminology for socio-economic conditions in the specific area.
- Special economic, bank and financial knowledge for entrepreneurial and investment activity in Balkans, East Europe and Near East.

The Department of Balkan, Slavonic and Oriental Studies of the UOM diffuse important knowledge regarding the socio-economic conditions in countries which seem to be major immigration providers towards Greece. Therefore, its participation should be necessarily ensured by RCM, as its contribution in terms of providing input will help shape appropriate strategic plans and systems for immigration management. Additionally, it will offer valuable contribution for the return of immigrants and socio-economic inclusion in origin countries.

On the other hand, the University is expected to benefit significantly from the Project, by collecting additional information and useful data concerning, which can be afterwards used in teaching courses.

- **Trade Unions Center of Thessaloniki**

The Trade Unions Center of Thessaloniki (TUCT) is an important connection between the regional organizations and the national centre. The aims of the Centre include the promotion of the social, financial and cultural position of the working person, the support of vocational training, the general progress and improvement of the Syndicalist Organization. Among others, TUCT was constituted to join the local organizations of workers in order to protect the financial, professional and social interests of their members, as well as to put pressure for the improvement of labour and social legislation and sort out special or more general problems faced by the working people they represent. The Trade Unions Centre of Thessaloniki is the second in magnitude in Greece.

The increased number of employees that the TUCT represents (Thessaloniki is the biggest city in the Region) signifies the level of cooperation between the Centre and the public authorities of the area. Sharing the same objectives with RCM in terms of providing more and better opportunities for employment and employability of labour force, these institutions should further enhance their cooperation in order to deal with employment problems and needs of the specific target groups and assist them to better fit into a new entrepreneurial environment. All interests of immigrant entrepreneurs should be protected, while information should be provided to the target groups so as to equip them with the necessary professional tools.

- **Exporters' Association of Northern Greece**

The Exporters' Association of Northern Greece (SEVE) is currently the largest association of exporting companies in Greece numbering more than 610 members - companies. These companies manufacture and trade a large amount of products with almost every country in the world. SEVE's mission is to consolidate, protect and promote the professional, economic, social and ethical interests of its members, to promote and support Greek products in foreign markets, to promote and support the development of international co-operation between Greek enterprises and those of other countries, to conduct market research in foreign countries, to collect and disseminate information and statistical data in order to inform its members, to cooperate with organizations worldwide and to implement European programmes that sustain the economic interests of its members.

In this context, SEVE cooperates with the Region of Central Macedonia, in order to coordinate and facilitate all efforts necessary for the support and promotion of exporters in the area. SEVE represents a large number of exporters from Macedonia and, thus, on-going consultations and cooperation with RCM is needed to achieve common goals: exchange of knowledge, facilitation of bilateral trade after the return of immigrants, increase of exports of the Region etc. The target is to promote the interests of both organizations (RCM and SEVE), providing benefits to economic immigrants and improving the conditions for bilateral trade after their return in origin country.

- **Local authorities of the Region**

Apart from the regional level, the local administration (prefectures), as a smaller unit, plays also a crucial role in the socio-economic development of the Region. Despite the fact that the prefectures develop a degree of interaction with the regional authority, however they have some independence regarding the design and implementation of initiatives in their own area. This means that they, themselves, undertake initiatives and actions –to the possible extent- to promote employability, foster entrepreneurship and minimize the socio-economic impacts and negative effects of certain phenomena such as the immigration flow.

Within this context, sharing the same objectives and goals, they cooperate with the Regional Authority in order to coordinate the actions necessary for boosting growth in the area and tackling jointly issues that concern both authorities. In most cases the Regional Authority is obliged to inform the Prefectures about the decisions that affect or have an impact on them. The results and services provided by IMMENSITY can be beneficial also for the Prefectures, triggering a vertical cooperation (among different administrative levels), as well as horizontal (among different stakeholders and actors of the same level) with the aim to improve immigration management in both levels. It should be mentioned that the Prefectures of the Region can offer their own valuable contribution (information, data, support etc.) to an integrated approach towards socio-economic inclusion of immigrants in Greece, by identifying problems, needs and difficulties at a local level.

- **Center for European Constitutional Law**

The Centre for European Constitutional Law (Themistocles and Dimitris Tsatsos Foundation) is an NGO operating under the supervision of the Greek Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Economics, Justice, National Education and Culture. It was founded in July 1995 and is located in Athens. The Foundation is directed by a Board of Trustees consists of twenty members (academics, politicians, members of the financial world) and a seven-member Executive Committee.

The Center's objective is to perform theoretical and applied scientific-research in the field of Greek, European and Comparative Public Law and in relative branches of the legal science. Enhancing public awareness and promoting scientific debate over institutional developments in the European Union and the member states are within the Center's priorities.

The recent developments spreading throughout Europe, including the areas of Central and Southeastern Europe and the New Independent States, constitute the most challenging motive for the establishment of the Centre for European Constitutional Law. It is within the Center's intentions to provide technical know-how and any possible scientific support to the institutional reform of the new legal order now being established in these countries.

For the accomplishment of the above-mentioned goals, the Centre implements a wide range of activities such as carrying out scientific research programmes and projects, consultation and evaluation, conferences and meetings. RCM relations with CECL should be developed with a view to address legal issues of immigrants' entry and establishment in the country, as well as to provide input on legal parameters of their entrepreneurship. Additionally, at a later stage, in the context of the return of immigrants in homelands, CECL can provide significant support to origin countries, helping them to formulate an improved legal framework, which will reduce immigration flows.

- **Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI)**

The main objectives of KETHI have a dual focus: to conduct social research on gender equality issues and to improve women's status and enable their advancement in all areas of political, economic and social life. KETHI places special emphasis on the promotion of female employment and through its activities it attempts to promote equal opportunities for women in order to integrate them into the labour market. It is estimated that the

majority of economic immigrants, bearing the consequences of socio-economic inclusion in destination countries, are women. The available job opportunities for immigrants in receiving communities usually concern men, leaving often women outside labour market. KETHI possesses long and useful experience in research, studies, events and projects in the field, which will prove to be valuable for the achievement of concrete results in the course IMMENSITY implementation. RCM is also interested in supporting gender equality in general; therefore it can cooperate with KETHI exchanging knowledge and practices as regards equal opportunities for immigrant men and women. The contribution of KETHI to IMMENSITY will be a key element to assist female immigrant workforce to exploit the opportunities offered by the project and promote, thus, their employability.

#### o **Migration Policy Group**

The Migration Policy Group (MPG) of Brussels (Belgium) is committed to policy development on migration and anti-discrimination, with the aim of generating innovative and effective responses to the challenges and opportunities of migration and diversity. MPG focuses on three core policy areas: a. diversity & integration, b. equality & anti-discrimination and c. migration & mobility and cooperates with stakeholders from all sectors of society: legal experts, governments, politicians, policy makers, businesses, independent agencies, the EU, lobbyists, academics, NGOs and policy experts.

In order to achieve its mission, MPG operates on two parallel fronts:

- It stimulates and informs policy debates by providing reliable information, robust analysis and a platform for dialogue
- It promotes and enhances co-operation by initiating links, facilitating exchange and nourishing common ideas

MPG designs and successfully promotes innovative policy measures for migration and anti-discrimination (the Starting Line proposals for European legislation against discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity and the Amsterdam Proposals for European migration policies). Additionally, it plans and conducts comparative policy research, makes relevant research for public debates, provides policy analysis and establishes best practices.

It is considered that the cooperation of MPG with the IMMENSITY partnership will provide added value to plans and structures to be developed, as MPG has extended experience in policy development for immigration at higher level. In addition, MPG can support horizontally the activities of the project and participate in the dissemination of results

and outcomes, facilitating, thus, the expansion and replicability of IMMENSITY. Finally, MPG can itself benefit from its contribution to the project, as the systems and methodologies that will be applied can serve as a useful guide or an innovative approach during the policy development for migration.

- **European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia**

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) is an independent body (agency) of the European Union based in Vienna whose goal is to provide the EU "with objective, reliable and comparable data at European level on the phenomena of racism and xenophobia in order to help them take measures or formulate courses of action within their respective spheres of competence."

Based on the collection of data, the EUMC studies the extent and development of the phenomena and manifestations of racism and xenophobia and analyses their causes, consequences and effects. It is also the task of the EUMC to work out strategies to combat racism and xenophobia and to highlight and disseminate examples of good practice regarding the integration of migrants and ethnic and religious minority groups in the EU Member States.

The very core of the EUMC's activities is the European Information Network on Racism and Xenophobia (RAXEN). RAXEN is one of the central tools for the EUMC to achieve its goal in providing the European Union and its Member States with objective, reliable and comparable data. It is designed to collect data and information at national as well as at the European level. This is accomplished via 25 National Focal Points, contracted by the EUMC to collect, coordinate and disseminate national and EU information in close cooperation with the EUMC.

In addition to establishing networks and collecting existing data, the EUMC initiates research projects to study and analyse the extent and consequences of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, as well as examining examples of good practice in dealing with them. Over the last years, the EUMC has initiated and financed several research projects.

Taking into account of the Centre's field of activity its contribution to IMMENSITY will provide considerable support in minimizing phenomena of xenophobia or racism towards the economic immigrants. Despite the fact that IMMENSITY will lead to the social and economic inclusion of the target groups, it should be ensured that the new entrepreneurs

would not face xenophobic behaviours from the society. RCM aims to address the participation of EUMC so as to exchange valuable relevant information and to acquire useful methodologies to be applied for the benefit of the immigrant entrepreneurs.