Human Rights and Democracy in Action

Pilot Projects on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Addressing Violence in Schools
through Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Policies on combatting violence in Greek schools
(Draft report)

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1. Introduction

Violence in schools has been an issue of growing concern in Greece during the past decade. Public awareness on violence has been raised following alarming evidence both at national and international level, such as the 2006 UN *World Report on Violence against Children* and the 2011 General Comment no. 13 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the *Right of the Child to freedom from all forms of violence*. In the UN report it is stated that violence against children is 'a global problem', 'hidden', 'unreported' and 'under-recorded'. It takes various forms from physical and psychological punishment, bullying to sexual and gender based violence. It can be the effect of external violence related to gangs, conflict situations, weapon use and fighting. It takes place in various settings: families, schools, care and residential institutions, detention facilities and prisons, work situations, communities or on the streets (UN: 2006).

Schools are not excluded from the potential sites of violence against children. The major shift in the conceptualization of childhood made with the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* had tremendous impacts in the definition of children's rightsin that it perceives children as rights bearing individuals rather than as subjects in need of protection. In this context prevention of all forms of violence against children has been considered of paramount importance for safeguarding children's welfare and human dignity. The standing Committee on the Rights of the Child states:

> "The Committee is also aware of widespread and intense violence applied against children in State institutions and by State actors including in schools, care centres, residential homes, police custody and justice institutions which may amount to torture and killing of children, as well as violence against children frequently used by armed groups and State military forces". (UNCRC: 2013, § 3).

Alarming incidents of school violence have been recorded in the Greek context as well: an immigrant student was raped within her school in Euboea in 2006,another immigrant student disappeared in Veriain the same year (publicly known as the "Alex case"). Both these cases have been considered as incidents of xenophobia, which in the later case was manifested as lethal violence. Recently, in 2015, the Greek society was shocked after a

suicide of a vocational school student, a case that has been associated with homophobic attitudes.

School violence has been addressed in the Greek political agenda both by governmental bodies and civil society activism resulting at provisions and amendments of the legal framework and the development of policies and institutions on raising awareness for the identification and elimination of the phenomenon.

However, the fact that school violence is addressed in the political agenda by no means implies that there is a general consensus either on the definition of violence and the forms that it takes at schools or on the measures to be adopted for its elimination.

This report, firstly, summarises the legal framework regarding violence against children and school violence;

secondly, presents state policy and activities on school violence;

thirdly, examines civil society activism on the issue;

fourthly, discusses policy reception on the part of the most significant social actors in education, especially that of the teacher unions;

fifthly, presents the basic available official statistics on school violence;

sixthly, discusses the conceptualization of school violence as a debated issue in the political discourse.

2. General Institutional Framework

2.1. Legal Framework

Corporal punishment (1998, 2005)

Corporal punishment of children is explicitly prohibited by law, in both primary[1] and secondary education[2],since 1998 and 2005 respectively, while other means are suggested for promoting good conduct of students within the school environment.

In paragraph 8 of Article 13 of Presidential Decree 201/1998, under the title 'Pedagogical control of elementary students' conduct', is explicitly cited that "corporal punishment is not permitted". It also provides a framework for pedagogical treatment of a

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[1] Par.8c, Article 13 of Presidential Decree 201/1998: (Government Gazette 161A /13.7.1998)
[2] Par.1, Article 21 of Law 3328/2005: (Government Gazette 80A/1.4.2005)

students' problematic behaviour and makes explicit reference to the need of respect to the child's personality and children's rights as a basic principle.

Respectively, Paragraph 1 of Article 21 of Law 3328/2005, under the title 'Secondary education issues', cites that imposition of any form of corporal punishment to secondary education students who deviate from the appropriate behavior is prohibited.

School violence (2011)

On February 2011, the Ministry of Education in collaborationwith theChildren's Ombudsman, issued a circularproposing good practices and measures that may contribute in the prevention and elimination of violence among students. Some of the proposed guidelines are:the development of a positive school climate, utilization of the institution of students' councils for the promotion of school dialogue, surveillance and protection of all the school community members, respect of everyone's rights, hearings on reported incidents of violence and provision on punishment for violent behaviour, deployment of conflict resolution strategies in school communities and communication with parents.

In this document school violence is conceptualized as aggressive interaction among students, and it is eventually equated to bullying. There is no specification of different forms of violence.

Continuous cruel behaviour and Juvenile delinquency (2015)

In 2015 an amendment on Penal Code[3]regarding juvenile delinquency took place. According to the new amendment a person can be held criminally liable from the age of 15. The age of criminal responsibility in the past was 13. The article 312 under the title "Infliction of damage by continuous cruel behaviour" stipulates that the infliction of damage to the victim's physical or mental health by continuous cruel behaviour, except if manifested amongchildren, is punishable by imprisonment. When the victim is younger than 18 and is under the offender's care of teaching, supervision or custody, the offender also faces the penalty of imprisonment. The same penalty applies to the person who by systematically neglecting one's duties towards the offended is held liable for the infliction of said damages.

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[3] Par. 1 & 2, Article 312 of Law 4322/2015: (Government Gazette 42A/27.04.2015)

Although the aforementioned clause does not specifically concern the educational framework, it has various implications for the school communityand has been used in cases of implied violent incidents at schools.

2.2 Institutions and activities undertaken by governmental bodies

Observatoryfor the Preventionof SchoolViolence andBullying (2013)

In 2013, the Ministryof Education establishedthe Observatoryfor the Preventionof SchoolViolence andBullying which works for the designationand implementation ofmeasures to preventsuch phenomena.It operates at regional and national level. The role of the Coordinating Scientific Committee of the Observatory is scientific, supportive and consultative.

The Coordinating Committee (Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary education), in which a teacher (primary or vocational) is appointed as a regional coordinator, works towards the collaboration of school principals, counselors, Scientific and Educational Guidance Managers and Directors of Primary and Secondary Education.

The main activities of the Observatory are

- Policy Design/ Implementation for School Violence Prevention and

- Research/ Delivery of research data to certified stakeholders.

The Observatory works in the direction of achieving cooperation among Directors of Primary and Secondary Education, counsellors, teachers [Teachers' Board], school principals, parent-teacher associations and students [Students' Board].

Network on Information, Training, Prevention and Combatting of School Violence and Bullying (2013)

During 2013-2015, the Ministry of Education has been implementing the Action "Development and Operation of a Network on Information, Training, Prevention and Combatting of School Violence and Bullying"[4], which is co-funded by the European Social

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[4] http://stop-bullying.sch.gr/thesmiko-plaisio

Fund, in the framework of the Business Programme "Education and Lifelong Learning". The network is coordinated by the Central Scientific Committee, which in collaboration with the Observatory and other bodies monitor the implementation of the programme in regional and school level. The objectives of the Action are:

A) Development of a permanent prevention and response network

B) Teacher and education actors training

C) Recording, prevention, early diagnosis and addressing of school violence and bullying phenomena

D) Raising awareness and active participation of educational community, family and local community

Children's Ombudsman (2003) (http://www.0-18.gr/)

The Children's Ombudsman works for the promotion of children's rights, and has implemented multifarious activities for the prevention and intervention of school violence, specifically **school violence and aggression among students**. These activities include mediation activities in schools which have been implemented in secondary education (mostly in northern Greece), meetings and (teacher training) seminars in (secondary) schools on school violence and bullying, promotion of good practices in prevention and intervention of school violence, and the development of a helpline ("Support", ΥποΣΤΗΡΙΖΩ) for teenagers (focus on harassment, addiction, harmful content, pedophilia in internet, mobile phones and video games). Moreover, Children's Ombudsman closely collaborates with the Ministry of Education in the **Network against Violence in Schools.**

Network against Violence in Schools (2010)

The Greek Ministry of Education as well as the General Secretariat for Youth and the Children's Ombudsman are of the founding members of the Network against Violence in Schools which was set up on October 2010 under the initiative of the Association for the Psychosocial Health of Children and Adolescents (A.P.H.C.A., NGO). The main objectives of the Network are:

- Effective prevention and treatment of violence among pupils at school or in other places associated with school life and daily routine

- Creating a framework of scientific and social dialogue on the understanding of the phenomenon and intervention techniques

- Promotion of scientific research on the identification, prevention and treatment of the phenomenon

- Training and support of teachers and other general and special education professionals, dealing with children and adolescents

- Awareness-raising among students, parents and the whole society on the phenomenon

- To encourage the establishment and operation of the relevant networks in local communities

Some of the actions of the Network include:

a) the operation oftelephonecounselingline for teachers andparents' support,

b) the operation of amobileinterventionunitincases of violenceand intimidation,

c) the onlinecounselingsupport service forteachers, children, adolescents, studentsand young people.

Network for the Prevention and Combatting of Corporal Punishment of Children (2005)

The Ministry of Education is a founding member, together with non-governmental bodies, of the Network for the Prevention and Combatting of Corporal Punishment of Children, since 2005. It has worked towards the elimination of any vestiges of physical punishment of children in Greece and its rationale is that children should be raised by means of dialogue and participation as well as by means of methods, which accord with the principles of contemporary pedagogical sciences. One of the most significant contributions of the Network was the Law 3500/2006 on Combatting of Intra-family Violence, under which corporal punishment of children within the family is prohibited.

The Network is now inactive, but during its active years it aimed at the sensitization of the people involved in children and family issues, but also of the broader public. Through collaboration with several official bodies there had been a series of coordinated actions for the exchange of information, the facilitation of institutional changes as well as for informing

and sensitizing children, parents and professionals who work with children or are involved into family issues.

Health Education Programmes (1992)

The Ministry of Education has been carrying out different Health Education programmes at schools since 1992, focusing, inter alia, on the core theme of "Interpersonal Relations – Mental Health". The programmes implemented deal with issues such as: violence prevention, conflict management, racism, interpersonal relations (with teachers, parents, peer groups), gender equality, gender relations, "relations" with unknown people – "learning to say no", sexual harassment, sexual abuse, physical abuse, internet violence, children exploitation and domestic violence.

The purpose of the Health Education programmes is to protect, improve and promote the students' physical and mental health, by developing their personal and social skills on the one hand, and by upgrading their social and natural environment on the other. In this direction, special educational material has been developed by the Ministry under the titles "Mental health – Interpersonal relations", "I stand on my own feet", "Promoting mental and emotional health" and "Health Education and Promotion Guide", which have been approved by the Institute of Education Policy as a supporting tool for teachers and students who participate in prevention programmes.

Addressing Cyber-Bullying (since 2006)

There have been several initiatives and special provisions by the Ministry of Education for safe internet surfing. For instance, within the framework of the Safer Internet[5] programme, school units were informed of the bodies which children, teenagers, parents and teachers could contact both for educational reasons and for urgent issues accruing from any difficult situations encountered by students online. The site of the Greek Saferinternet Awareness Center (Saferinternet.gr) aims at the awareness-raising and informing of parents, teachersand the broad public on ways to protect children from the potential dangers lying in the improper use of online technologies, like the Internet and the mobile phone.

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[5] http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/self-regulation-better-internet-kids

The Adolescent Health Unit[6](National &KapodistrianUniversity of Athens "P&A Kyriakou" Children's Hospital) operates the Helpline "YpoSTIRIZO" 800 11 800 15 of the Greek Safer Internet Centre. The helpline is targeted to kids, adolescents, and their families, providing support on issues related to Internet use, mobile phone use and video games (abuse, addiction, harmful content, gambling, pornography, pedophilia, etc.). "YpoSTIRIZO" is free of charge for calls inside the Greek territory. The helpline's staff consists of pedopsychologists specialized on Internet addiction related issues.

Finally, the hotline Safeline.gr can be used by users to report material they come across on the Internet that appears to be illegal or objectionable.

Pan-Hellenic Day against Violence at School (2012)

The 6th of March is established as the Pan-Hellenic Day against Violence at School, with the aim to raise awareness in schools, through relevant activities that take place in schools across the country. Every yearschools are requsted by the Ministry of Education to devote two or more teaching hours (by decision of the Teachers' Board) in actions- discussions- events (e.g. book reviews, film screenings, art workshops, interactive lectures, experiential workshops etc.) to raise awareness on issues of violence and bullying.

2.3 Policy reception

While, in general, the above projects have been well received by school communities, there seems to be some resistance expressed on the part of teacher unions, especially with regard to the EU funded large scale project on combatting school violence. More specifically, the Primary Teachers' Federation of Greece (Δ.O.E.) in a public statement expressed their opposition, asking teachers not to participate in the Ministry's project regarding the recording of bullying through on-line questionnaires.Several regional primary teachers' unions and two regional secondary teachers' unions (in the prefectures of Achaia andKefalonia) expressed opposition in the same line[7].

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[6] http://youth-health.gr/
[7]The main arguments of the teachers' unions are:

The objections expressed by teachers' unions are basically ideological and political, stemming from a wider skepticism towards forms of education governance promoted by European projects (Lindblad, Ozga, Zambeta: 2002), as well as reservations in identifying school violence as an educational problem of prior importance in comparison with other problems, such as underfunding. Reservations are also related to fears for a growing

- They claim that official policy focusing on school violence aims to establish a "new narrative" about the educational process, "disconnected from the social, political and pedagogical characteristics, from collective processes and social relations, and from the hierarchical structures and power relations that prevail in school and society" (sic).

- They claim that there is an effort to transform the school and the local community in a "surveillance jungle" (sic).

- They imply that there is a deliberate attempt to construct the issue of "school violence", which is connected to European funding, thus the policy on "school violence" has financial, methodological, conceptual and ideological targets. At the same time, many schools operate under very difficult circumstances, with teachers' shortages, low infrastructure, minimal funding, no cleaning services and no libraries.

- They object to the involvement of private companies in public education issues (as subcontractors for the implementation of the EU funded project).

- Regarding the tools used for the recording and reporting of certain incidents of violence, they argue that there is no way to check if the incidents are facts or false statements and that the children are not familiar with the conceptual references of the researchers and may classify as bullying behaviours which are not.

- They object to the content of the training seminars, which, as they cite "reflects a specific, neoliberal, unsubstantiated, minority perception, which stems from the assumption that violence is an inherent human characteristic and refers to a Hobbesian framework of individuality in a world where "a man to a man is a wolf", dominated by a merciless war of all against all". Also, they oppose to the framework's tendency to identify "behaviour" rather than its cause.

- Moreover, they denounce the psychological/ psychopathological approach and the process of psychiatrization – psychologicalisation of the social problems that disconnects the individual from the collective, where the individual becomes implicated, by being shrunk into a 'case'.

- They oppose to the hierarchical structure of the Network because it abolishes the school and the Teachers' Board as an essential and highly trained body of teachers responsible for solving the pedagogical and relational aspects of the educational process.

- They assume that the Network is likely to be used as an instrument of control and evaluation of the teachers and indirect categorization of schools (e.g. through parent-student complaints in cases of conflict with teachers).

development of scrutiny techniques in the school environment. Claims for underestimation and disregarding of the social conditions that produce violent behaviour are also raised.

However, this loud opposition expressed by the organized teacher unions should not be interpreted as a rejection on the part of the teachers in general to address the issue of school violence. What is of paramount importance in Greece is the elaboration of the means that would encourage teachers to identify, interpret and effectively eliminate violence at schools. Although there are institutional forms aiming at combatting school violence (such as the Observatory and the Network against violence in schools), as well as interesting relevant material produced, the teachers are hardly making use of them. Existing forms of teachers' training have been eventually insufficient in multiplying the effect within the school communities.

3 Civil society activism

Homophobia and Transphobia in Education **(http://omofovia.gr/):**

The group's work covers a wide range of activities, such as raising public awareness on homophobic and transphobic bullying in education through meetings (yearly, implemented in 2014 and 2015), teacher trainings and collaboration with other social groups.

Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality and Diversity (http://g2red.org/):

The group's initiatives combine social activism with research, but do not directly engage with school violence. Activities include implementation of educational programs at schools which aim at the promotion of human rights, equality and otherness, combat of xenophobia, racism and discrimination (e.g. Diversity Volcano, a floor game, aiming at raising awareness on citizenship issues and also challenges that derive from multicultural society).

The Smile of The Child (NGO) (http://www.hamogelo.gr/) :

The Smile of the Child is a non-profit voluntary organisation. It has coordinated the European Antibullying Network (EAN) (http://www.antibullying.eu/), funded by the EU DAPHNE III programme, The project aimed at raising public awareness on school bullying and at the establishment of a network for unified action at European level. EAN created a toolkit, which consisted of:

- A European Guide on Antibullying Good Practices.

- Smart phones application, used as interactive tools.

- TV documentaries in 7 languages (Greek, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, English, German and French).

- EAN Strategy Position Paper (recommendations aiming at the development of a common European strategy against bullying based on national legislation and studies on the phenomenon at national and European level).

Cell of Alternative Youth Activities (C.A.Y.A.)(Κύτταρο Εναλλακτικών Αναζητήσεων Νέων)(**http://www.kean.gr/**):

C.A.Y.A., a non-profit organisation that promotes democracy, freedom and equity, is currently implementing (August 2015- January 2016) the *Bullying-free: Promotion of a democratic school without school violence* program. As an intervention programme its aims are:

A) Implementation of experiential workshops.

B) Development of educational materials using innovative media (comic, animation spots).

C) Development of KEAN structures through networking with other organizations active in democratic school and combatting school violence.

D) Transfer of good practices at the local level, creating a parallel form of support to the participating schools.

It is funded by European Economic Area (EEA) Grants[8], in the framework of the Programme "We are all citizens", administrated by Bodossaki Foundation.

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[8] http://eeagrants.org/

Human Rights Defence Center (H.R.D.C., ΚέντροΠροάσπισηςΑνθρωπίνωνΔικαιωμάτων, Κ.Ε.Π.Α.Δ.) (NGO) **(http://www.kepad.gr/) :**

During 2015-2016, H.R.D.C. in collaboration with WergelandCenter is implementing "BREAK THE BONDS OF FEAR – SAY NO TO HATE" project aiming at combatting hate speech by promoting respect for human rights and strengthening democratic values through trainings of non-formal education (to primary school students, primary school teachers and university students of primary education departments) with the use of training tools created by the Council of Europe. The project is taking place in 9 Greek cities: Athens, Patras, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Rhodes, Alexandroupoli, Florina, Volos, Florina, and Rethymno.

It is funded by European Economic Area (EEA) Grants, in the framework of the Programme "We are all citizens", administrated by Bodossaki Foundation.

Center for Research and Action for Peace (ΚέντροΈρευνας και Δράσηςγια τηνΕιρήνη, ΚΕΔΕ) **(http://www.kede.org/) :**

Non-profit organization*. Center for Research and Action for Peace*has implemented "Communication without Violence for Schools free of Violence" program which promotes non-violent communication through teacher training. Main aim of the project is to enhance communication between teachers and students in a peaceful and approachable manner. A great focus was given on the ways in which teachers communicate with students in a violence free manner, as existing ways of teacher-student communication create a vicious circle of violence (e.g. expulsion from school as means of preventing and intervening in school violence). Moreover, this project –based on team work- aims to promote anger and violence management and strategies to treat racism and difference. The project was funded during 2011-2012 by the Hellenic Postbank under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. During 2012-2013 the programme received no funding and was being implemented in American Community Schools in Chalandri, Athens. Last, it was part of UNHCR's

programme"Symbiosi: Action plan for the promotion of tolerance and the prevention of racism on schools", funded by Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

World Without Wars and Violence(ΚόσμοςΧωρίςΠολέμουςκαιΒία), (http://www.kosmosxorispolemous.gr/):

International Humanist Organisation, with a branch in Greece. Part of W.W.W.V.'s actions in Greece is *School Network for Non-Violence*[9] (a network first implemented in Canada in 2000) which organizes activities for non-violence promotion to school communities (teachers, students, parents) through artistic and sport events (to students), self-improvement trainings (to teachers and parents)*. The project receives no funding and is being implemented with the kind contribution of its own members. *School Network for Non-Violence* was firstly created in Greece during 2012 and has members in Athens, Thiva, Livadia, and Chalkida.

Antigoni, Information and Documentation Center on racism, ecology, peace and non-violence **(http://www.antigone.gr/):**

Antigoni is non-profit organization in Thessaloniki, Greece (with a branch also in Athens) and is implementing *Schools for Change*[10] program since 2012, funded by Heinrich BoellStiftung Foundation. *School for Change's* aim is the implementation of educational programs in schools for the promotion of human rights. Specifically, the programme's main themes are: stereotypes/racism/prejudice, school violence/school bullying, rights and disability, human rights, children's rights, ecology and society)**.**

Genathlon **(http://www.genathlon.gr/) :**

Genathlon- Interdisciplinary Approached Center of Human and Natural Systems, is a non-profit organization. During 2007-2009 it implemented *Artsafe& Conflict Transformation*

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[9]http://www.kosmosxorispolemous.gr/draseis/education/school-network-for nonviolence/
[10]http://www.antigone.gr/files/announcements/SFC_GR.pdf

programme [Διαχείριση συγκρούσεων μέσωτηςΤέχνης] (programme's partner countries: Greece, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Ireland) aiming at addressing hate violence and particularly school bullying among young people, mainly by the method of peer education. It was funded by Daphne II European Programme.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

During 2013-2014, the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece implemented the educational program"Symbiosi: Action plan for the promotion of tolerance and the prevention of racism on schools"[11]. *Symbiosi*aimed at educating young people through learning by doing activities on human rights' protection (including refugee's and migrants' rights), promotion of tolerance and democratic dialogue, and prevention of racism, racist violence and exclusion. The program consisted of three action levels:

a) Teacher training and raising awareness (primary and secondary education)

b) Students' raising awareness, through educational programs implemented during class.

c) Activities, such as the Panhellenic Student Competition for Refugees 2012-2013 ("Is Silence tolerance?"), theatrical play, recreational activities for unaccompanied refugee minors.

d) Development of "Textbook of Learning By Doing Activities on human rights and refugee rights"

4 Official statistics

The following statistics refer to the Action "Development and Operation of a Network on Information, Training, Prevention and Combatting of School Violence and Bullying", as cited in the Ministry of Education official documents.

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[11]http://www.unhcr.gr/ekpaideysi/ekpaideytika-programmata/symbiosi-schedio-drasis-gia-tin-proothisi-tis-anektikotitas-kai-tin-prolipsi-toy-ratsismoy-sto-scholeio-2013-2014.html?L=tuivtaec

According to a Ministry of Education press release (on August 25th, 2015)regarding a research that took place earlier in the same year and based on 25 interviews to teachers and 23 interviews to parents, differentiation of bullying phenomena is noted between different levels of education and ages. In pre-school education, violence takes the form of early aggressive behaviours that may later evolve to bullying. In primary schools, the most frequent forms are verbal violence, exclusion, and blackmailing. In Gymnasium (junior high school) the main incidents of bullying are related to issues of appearance and gender and/or sexual identity, often with the use of physical violence and some cyber bullying incidents. In Lykeio (upper secondary education), bullying is more intense and is manifested with teasing and even physical violence.

In the aforementioned report it is also highlighted that safe school environment functions in a restraining manner in school violence's emergence. School-family cooperation is considered to act positively in school bullying phenomena.

Good practices in preventing school violence include children's awareness raising and active participation in school violence combatting, teacher training, creation of counselling centres and support structures, extra-curricular activities such as film nights, chess groups, theatrical activities/workshops, and development of common means of coping with violence and bullying in schools.

According to the Ministry of Education press release on the 16[th]of October, 2015,regarding the Action's evaluation seminar that took place, **9,000** teachers and education actors were trained in total.**3,682** primary education students and **31,602** secondary education students answered the online questionnaires provided bythe Ministry of Education. The results show that **70%** of students feel safe at school, while **5,5%** do not. **65%**of the respondents declare that they have witnessed the victimization of other students, while **28%**report that they have not. **66%** of the students state that they have never been violent to other students, while **29%** have been violent (answers ranging from rarely to very often).

5. Reflective commentary

In Greece the issue of school violence is being literally addressed both by the official state policy and civil society. A wide variety of initiatives and institutional interventions on school violence are taking place and various projects are running throughout the country aiming at raising awareness, elimination and prevention of the phenomenon.

The terminology used in the Greek political discourse is "school violence and bullying" (ΕνδοσχολικήΒίακαιΣχολικόςεκφοβισμός). In the political discourse, as it is expressed in the legal framework, action programmes under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, official statistics as well as civil society activism in general, school violence is perceived as aggressive behaviour among children and it is equated to bullying.Exceptions to that are some NGO initiatives (such as Antigoni). However, the 2015 amendment in the Penal Code makes a reference to the concept of "continuous cruel behaviour" on the part of adults against children that produces harm and it is considered as a crime. Although this concept is not further developed in the educational legislation the above clause could be used as a legal basis for claims regarding school violence incidents that involve adults and are not bullying among children.

Among the various initiatives in the field it should be noted that a large action programme on school violence is running in Greece funded by the EU. It develops institutions for permanent observation, early diagnosis and preventionof "school violence and bullying" at a national basis.

Although there is a rising social awareness of school violence, leading to various funded projects and civil society initiatives, there is also scepticism towards the relevant importance of the phenomenon and the means for its elimination expressed on the part of, mainly primary, teacher unions. The rationale and reasons of this scepticism, that in some cases led to teachers' denial for cooperation, worth further study and investigation. Even more importantly though there is a growing concern that existing measures, teacher-training schemes and institutions are insufficient in empowering school communities to cope with the phenomenon and effectively prevent violence at school.

While in relevant research[12]there is an emphasis on individualistic and psychological approaches of bullying (focussing on the scheme: the bully vs the victim) in the action programmes there is space for interpreting school violence as the outcome of socially constructed hierarchies and power relations.

This pilot project, by focussing on the importance of EDC/HRE, perceives violence as a social phenomenon that can be eliminated through social awareness. It will attempt to address violence in its socio-economic and cultural context and engage in its activities both education actors and civil society stakeholders affected by discriminatory social practices.

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[12] See also the report on Research review conducted in Greece (Leontsini, et al. 2015).