



**Multilingualism in Asylum Procedures: The Case of Greece.
The Project, Political Challenges and Opportunities (missed?) for a
more Inclusive Society**

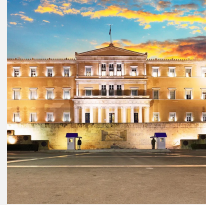
Effrossyni Fragkou

Plan of Presentation



- Legal and Linguistic Context
- The Question of Migration
- Languages as Access Points to Rights and Services: The case of Interpreting in the Language of the Asylum Seeker and the Refugee
- The Public Service Interpreting Landscape in Greece
- The Greek Public Service Interpreting Register Project
- The Day After in PSI

Legal Context



Greek Constitution (revised 2019) – Article 5/Article 3(3)



Exceptions stated in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923)



Criticism and Controversy

The Case of Migration

- Migratory Flows during Greece Modern History
- Recent Migratory Flows 2009-2025
- Linguistic Landscape as a Result of Migrator Flows
- *Greek Code of Migration and Social Integration* (Law 4251/2014, as amended in 2024)

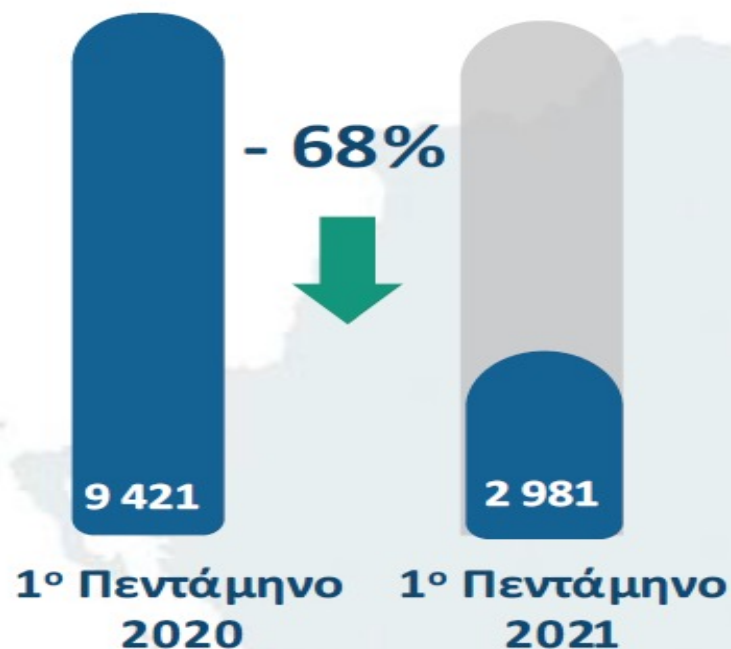




Some Statistics



Ροές αφίξεων



4 951
Αποχωρήσεις
Το 1^ο Πεντάμηνο
του 2021

Διαμένοντες



Συνολικά
Διαμένοντες

- 42%

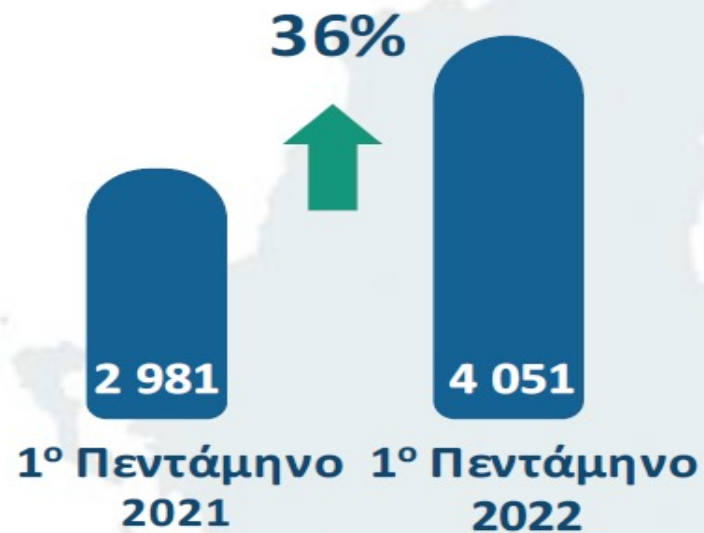
- 71%

Διαμένοντες
στα νησιά

2 981 Αφίξεις
Το 1^ο Πεντάμηνο
του 2021



Ροές αφίξεων



3 364
Αποχωρήσεις
Το 1^ο Πεντάμηνο
του 2022

Διαμένοντες



- 60%
↓
Συνολικά
Διαμένοντες

- 80%
↓
Διαμένοντες
στα νησιά

4 051 Αφίξεις
Το 1^ο Πεντάμηνο
του 2022

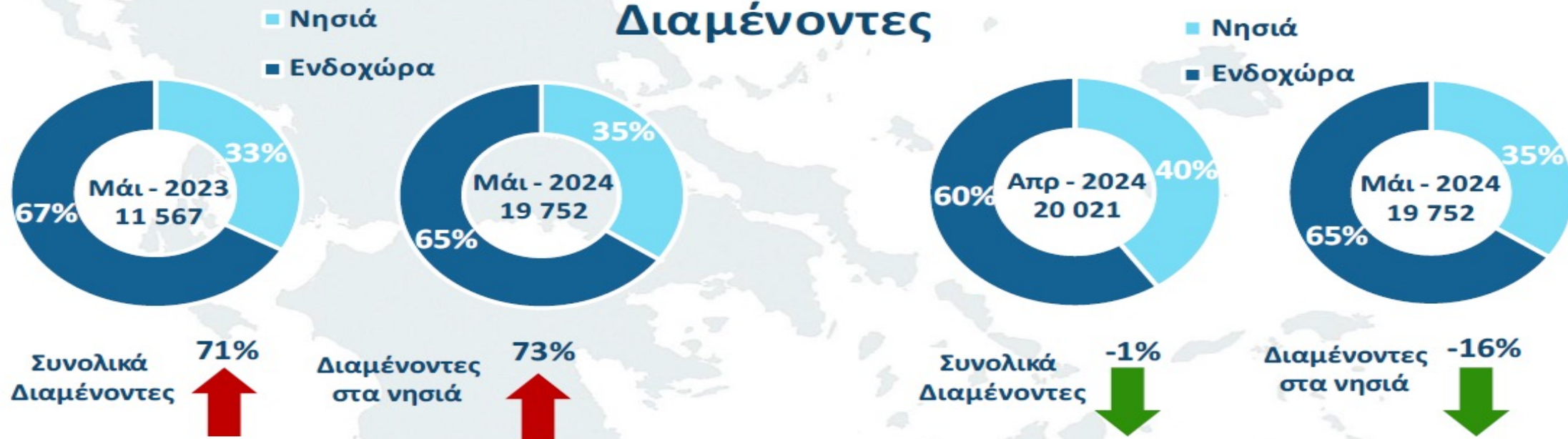




Ροές αφίξεων

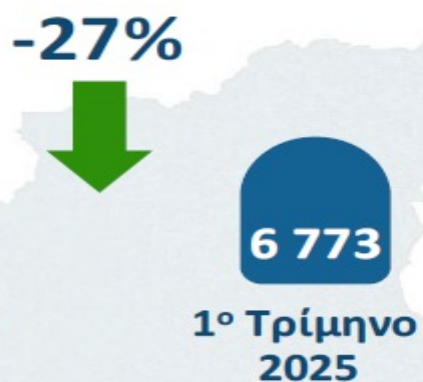
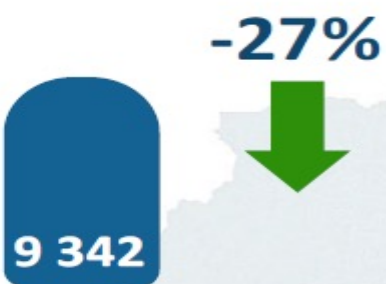


Διαμέμοντες



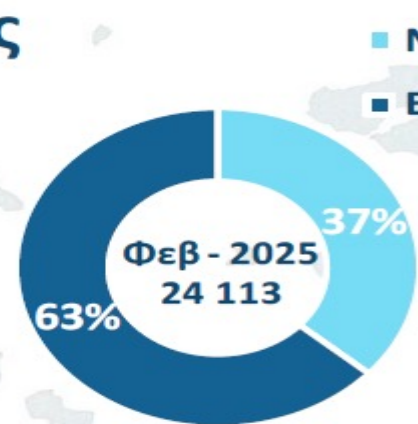
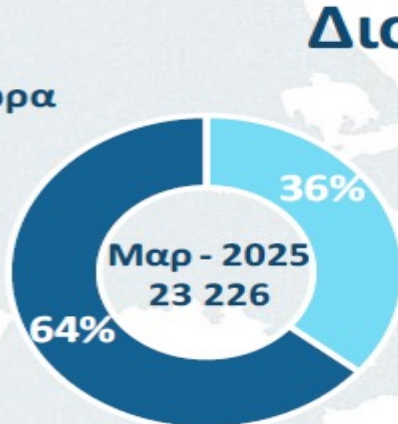
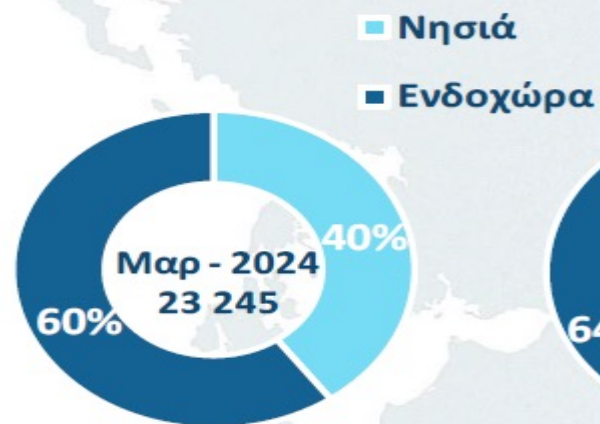


Ροές αφίξεων



22%

Διαμέμοντες





The Language Aspect of Migratory Flows

ΓΛΩΣΣΑ	Αριθμός	Ποσοστό %
ΑΡΑΒΙΚΑ	4860	28,7%
ΠΑΝΤΖΑΜΠΙ	1776	10,5%
ΝΤΑΡΙ	1617	9,6%
ΦΑΡΣΙ	1128	6,7%
ΑΛΒΑΝΙΚΑ	856	5,1%
ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	852	5,0%
ΜΠΕΓΚΑΛΙ	806	4,8%
ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ	743	4,4%
ΠΑΣΤΟ	627	3,7%
ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑΝΑ	437	2,6%
ΡΩΣΙΚΑ	350	2,1%
ΟΥΡΝΤΟΥ	337	2,0%

**Projection of Language Needs for Interpretation
Services in 2021 (statistics based on 2014)**

2025 Language Needs



- Farsi, Dari, Pashto (Afghanistan)
- Arabic (Egypt, Syria & Sudan)
- Urdu, Panjabi (Pakistan)
- Turkish, Kurmanji (Kurdish – Turkey)
- English (Sierra Leone)
- Bengali (Bangladesh)
- Tigrinya (Eritrea)

The Public Service Interpreting Landscape



- Legal Framework
- Translation or Interpretation (?)
- Court Interpreting Registry (?)
- Interpreting Services in the Context of Asylum & Migration

PSI Register - Milestones

Milestone No.	Milestone	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1.	Legal framing	01/04/2023 (18/05/2023)	30/08/2023 (17/10/2023)
2.	Design of training and accreditation system	01/04/2023 (18/05/2023)	30/08/2023 (17/10/2023)
3.	Code of Ethics	01/04/2023 (18/05/2023)	30/08/2023 (17/10/2023)
4.	Bilingual lexical test	01/09/2023	29/02/2024
5.	Administration of bilingual lexical test	01/02/2024	31/03/2024
6.	Interpreter training	01/02/2024	30/04/2024



Field Research



to determine
language needs and
interpreting issues



Surveys



and interviews with
MOMA
operatives/agents



Consultation



with our stakeholders
and partners at
MOMA

Survey (Target Audience) (1)

Greek Asylum Service

Appeals Authority

Reception and Identification Service

Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors

Survey (Methodology) (1)

Questionnaire: 31 closed- and open-ended questions

Questionnaire distributed online

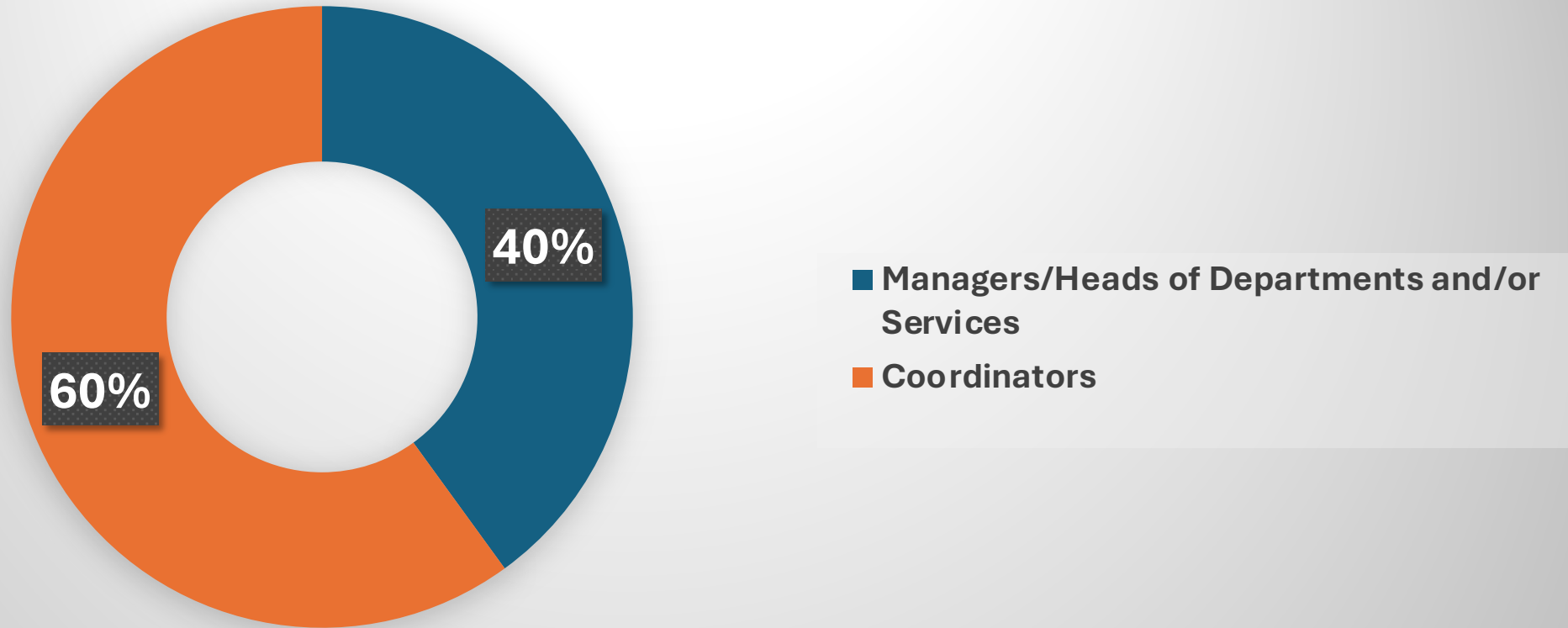
Total respondents: 16

Interview with selected stakeholders within the Ministry

Survey (Methodology) (3)

- 1 professionalism
- 2 qualifications
- 3 duties and responsibilities
- 4 interpreter's role
- 5 modes of interpreting
- 6 working conditions
- 7 issues of trust and level of satisfaction

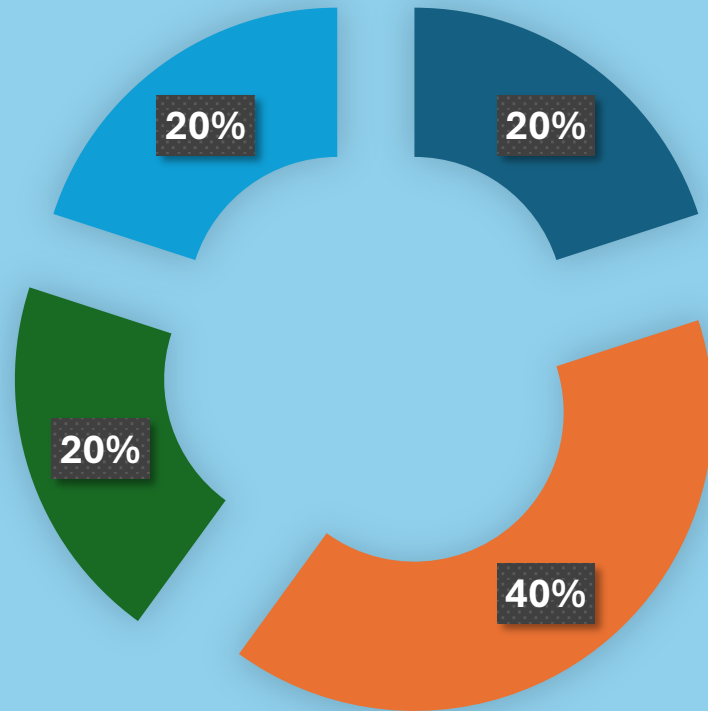
Interviews: 4 Interviews and 5 Interviewees



All interviewees had prior fieldwork experience in dealing with refugees in various capacities

Interviews: 4 Interviews and 5 Interviewees

of Interviewees



- Special Secretariat for Unaccompanied Minors
- Asylum Service Department (Joint Interview)
- Appeals Authority Department
- Closed Controlled Access Center of Kos

Interview Methodology (I)



Authorization/access provided by the Special Secretariat of Coordination with Stakeholders



Use of one-to-one interviews with agents who agreed to participate



Preparation of discussion points which aimed at expanding some of the most salient questions of the questionnaire distributed to agents of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum

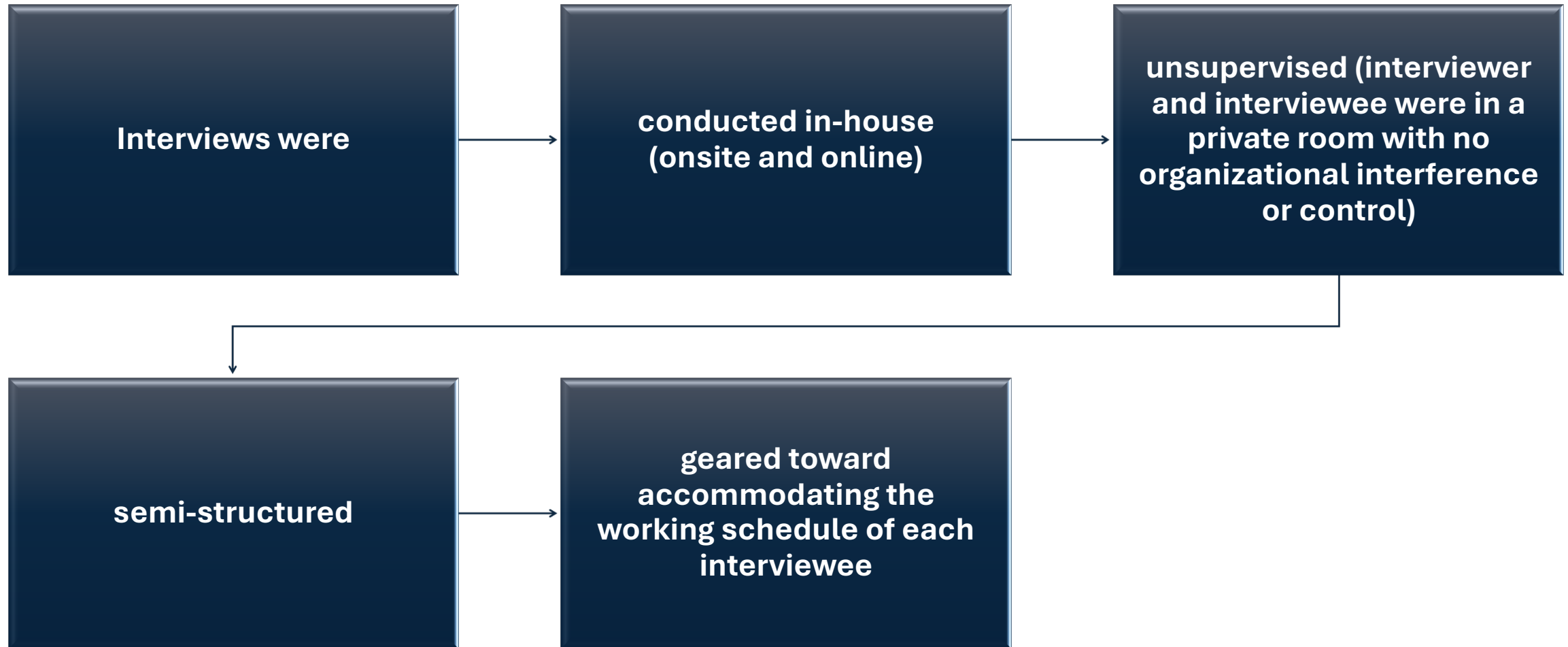


Coordination with the contact person in the Ministry to ensure that interviewees would represent all key services where interpreting is required



Scheduling of a follow-up focus group discussion on points of convergence and divergence emerged during the interviews

Interview Methodology (II)



The Interview Process




Major Outcomes (I)


The presence of interpreters is deemed crucial in the context of asylum/migration



Interpreters are generally viewed as 'colleagues' in the sense that they are co-constructors of the communicative event



Interpreters are and should be available to deal with matters of urgency (i.e., ensure communication with over-the-phone interpreting when a minor in distress places a call for help)



Interpreters are generally trusted professionals, and agents rely on the former's sense of *professionalism* to carry out their day-to-day work



Depending on the context, interpreters may have a more active role in the communicative event [*cultural mediator?*]

Major Outcomes (II)

Availability of interpreters depends on the languages on demand and the number of trained professionals

Outsourcing of interpreters to agencies outside the country has led to interpreting shifting from onsite to online (depending on the setting and the urgency of the request)

Flexibility in the use of interpreters is often required to fill in gaps, advance cases and ensure timely file processing (interdepartmental borrowing of interpreters)

Geographical proximity with the interpreting service provider facilitates prompt response, availability of qualified interpreters (online or onsite) by ensuring the assignment comes first.

And some unexpected results



Although, among agents, the prevailing view of interpreter's profile is that of the 'conduit', the interpreter is often asked, among other things, to provide cultural expertise to facilitate communication, and resolve or prevent misunderstandings.



Expertise is prevalent in two contexts, namely in the Appeals Authority Department and in Controlled Access Centers where the conduit mode seems to be the prevailing/preferred one



The need to put in place an effective, flexible, and adaptable system for assessing interpreters and where users of interpretation (i.e., ministry agents) will have a say

PSI Register for Greece (I)



The register comprises categories and aims at guaranteeing minimum quality standards for Public Service Interpreting

It is founded on the following principles:

structural simplicity and flexibility,

inclusion of different professionals who work as interpreters without having studied interpreting,

professionalization of public service interpreting (PSI) and

possibility for ascending through the ranks of the register and reaching the highest category through continuous improvement and lifelong learning.

PSI Register for Greece (II)

Category	Educational qualifications	Professional experience
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> language proficiency test and short seminar on ethics in PSI; or a university degree in translation, foreign or applied languages with Greek as the mandatory language and short seminar on ethics in PSI; 	no prerequisites for proof of work experience
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> such as Category D and general seminar on public service interpreting (30 ECTS) 	at least 40 hours of public service interpreting gained within the context of the Register
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> such as Category C and specialized seminar on interpreting techniques (30 ECTS) 	at least 160 hours of public service interpreting gained within the context of the Register
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in public service interpreting and language proficiency test in case of a degree issued in a country other than Greece; or an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in conference interpreting with Greek as the mandatory language and a short seminar on ethics in PSI; or any bachelor's degree, language proficiency test in case of a degree issued in a country other than Greece and a short seminar on ethics in PSI; or such as category B (not at the initial stage) 	no prerequisites for proof of work experience no prerequisites for proof of work experience at least 150 days of conference interpreting at least 320 hours of public service interpreting within the framework of the Register and/or 40 days of conference interpreting or combination

The Profile of Greek Public Service Interpreters (I)

Register Level	Linguistic Competence				Interpreting Competence					Interpersonal Competence			
	Speaking		Writing		Simultaneous	Consecutive	Sight translation	Mixed modality	Active listening	Types of Skills			
	Comprehension	Production	Comprehension	Production						Communication	Crisis Management	Empathy	Positive attitude
D	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	N/A	R	R	N/A	R	R	R	R	R
C					N/A	R	R	D	R	R	R	R	R
B					R/D	R	R	D	R	R	R	R	R
A					R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R

TBD	To Be Determined by the test
N/A	Not Applicable

The Profile of Greek Public Service Interpreters (II)

Loci, Tools, Mediums and/or Infrastructure				
	Telephone Interpreting	Teleconferencing Interpreting	On-site Interpreting	Modality
D	R	R	R	Consecutive
	N/A	N/R	N/R	Simultaneous
	N/A	R	R	Sight-translation
	N/A	N/R	D	Mixed
C	R	R	R	Consecutive
	N/A	N/R	N/R	Simultaneous
	N/A	R	R	Sight-translation
	N/A	D	D	Mixed
B	R	R	R	Consecutive
	N/A	D	D	Simultaneous
	N/A	R	R	Sight-translation
	N/A	D	R	Mixed
A	R	R	R	Consecutive
	N/A	R	R	Simultaneous
	N/A	R	R	Sight-translation
	N/A	R	R	Mixed

Promoting, Enhancing and Sustaining a Conducive and Ethical Environment for PSI: Code of Ethics



Promote, enhance, and sustain a conducive and ethical environment leading to trust, transparency, and respect across the Organization.



Consider legal aspects



Study and analyze Codes of Ethics from all over the world



Consult the National Code of Conference Interpreters

Code of Ethics



Protects the rights of allophone users, the citizens and public servants who rely on the interpreter's expertise but who are not in a position to assess it



Safeguards the process and promotes social equality and transparency



Protects the interests of members of the profession



Ensures quality standards in the practice of interpreting and promotes the profession in a broad sense

PSI Register: Legislative Framework

Consultation with the legal firm Machas & Partners



Material on the terminology concerning PSI, translation , etc. has been handed over.



The design of the register has been handed over.



In person meetings between Machas&Partners and Ionian University.



Language Testing



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης & Ασύλου

Χρηματοδοτικός Μηχανισμός Ευρωπαϊκού
Οικονομικού Χώρου (EEA Grants) 2014-2021

Iceland 
Liechtenstein
Norway grants

Why language testing

Check language competence in all working languages as the basis for interpreting in the Public Service Interpreting sector.

Test pragmatic aspects of the receiving culture.

Test solely receptive skills.

Ensure consistency in testing across all languages tested.

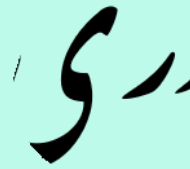
Create measurable, tangible, and reliable benchmarks for all language tests.

Introduce multimodality for languages on demand in the Greek Public Service Interpreting sphere for which a standardized written form does not exist.

Tests in 10 languages



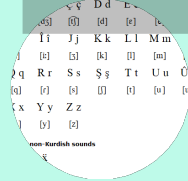
Arabic



Dari



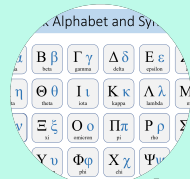
Farsi



Kurmanji



Sorani



Greek



English



French



Punjabi



Somali

Basic Features

1

Closed-ended questions.

2

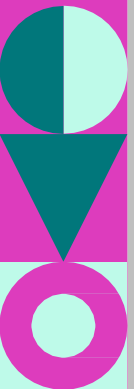
Same number of items per test (50 + 50).

3

Standardized sequence of activities that test language as well as pragmatic knowledge.

4

Passing rate: 40/50 for each test (in Greek and in the foreign language).



Sustainability



Professionalizing PSI in Greece



Developing the field of PSI in Greece both in public administration and in the academia



Producing a knowledge base on PSI in Greece



Initiating a process of exchange between authorities and academia



Initiating a process of organizational learning and change management for the Public Sector in terms of defining and assessing linguistic needs, appreciating multilingualism and otherness



Changing the narrative: a top-down approach



Ensuring multilingualism and plurality of voices in practice – Giving voice to the voiceless

Anticipated Challenges



Promotion of Register



Implementing a Monitoring Mechanism for Identifying Changing Needs



Training



Interpreting Test Development



Quality Assessment



Identifying and Integrating Cultural Mediation within the Context of PSI

The Current State of Affairs

- PSI Register not implemented
- May 2024 interpreting crisis
- New political leadership at the head of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum
- Covert nationalist ideology
- Violation of EU Standards



How to move forward

1

Institutionalize the PSI Register through alternative means of legitimization:

Push for formal adoption of the Register by embedding it in national law and aligning with EU directives.

2

Multilingual Preparedness Planning:

Integrate language forecasting models into migration policy to anticipate future needs.

3

Stakeholder Engagement:

Reengage with civil society, international organizations, ministries and the academia to reframe the discourse on language rights and human rights as guaranteed via interpreting services.

4

Advocacy & Public Awareness:

Highlight the importance of multilingualism in state accountability and human rights compliance.

Our Team of Experts +



Prof. Sotiros Livas



**Ass. Prof. Maria
Tsigou**



**Assist. Prof.
Anastasios Ioannidis**



**Assist. Prof.
Theodoros Vyzas**



Dr. Effrossyni Fragkou



Dr. Stavros Kozobolis



Dr. Maria Petrocheilou



**Prof. Stefanos
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The Partners