

Economic and humanitarian crisis in urban neighbourhoods

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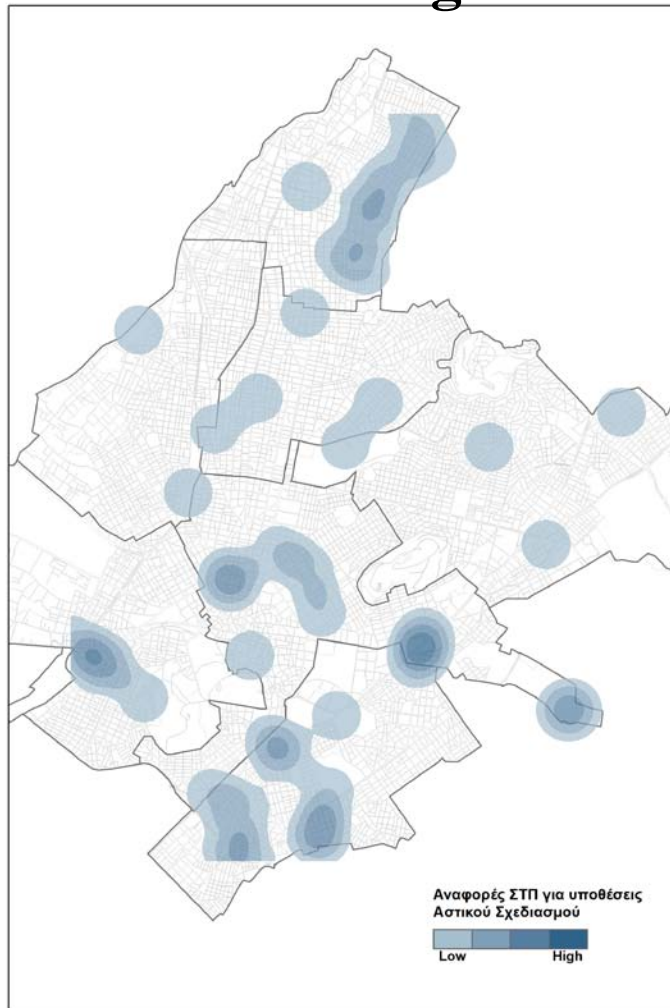


Introduction

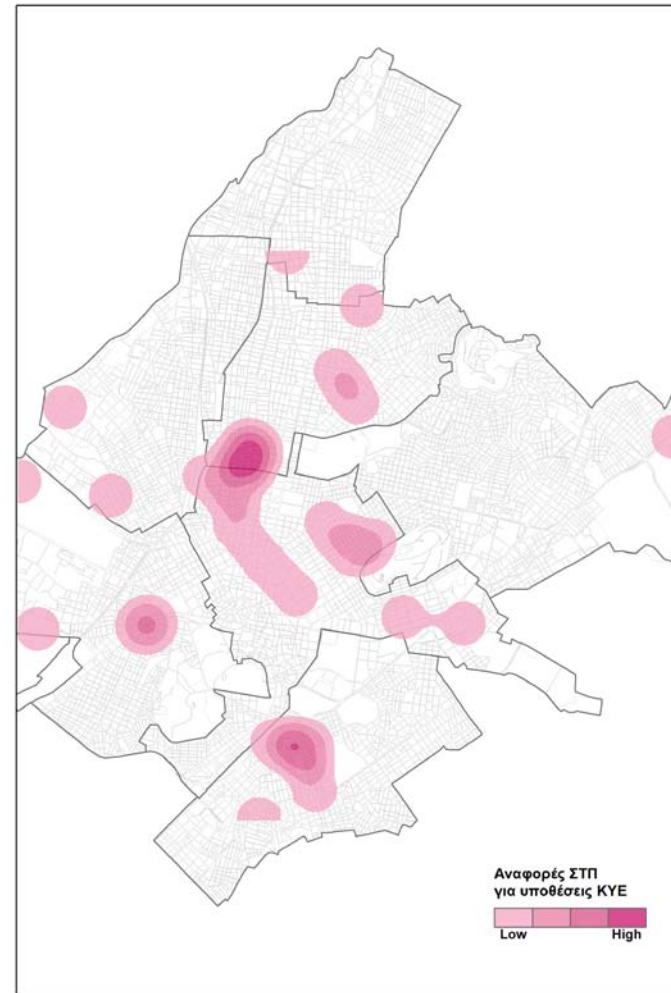
- ◆ The Greek Ombudsman (GO) has participated in the Program “GR08 Solidarity and Social Inclusion in Greece”, which has been financed by the EEA Grants (Norway). The aim of the project was to examine the impact of urban and social planning policy and measures in ameliorating the social exclusion of vulnerable groups.
- ◆ GO investigated in 2015 social exclusion and multiple deprivation problems which have arisen due to the economic and humanitarian crisis in Greece. The case study areas were hot-spots of multiple deprivation in Athens.
- ◆ The main issues investigated included quality of life problems and in particular housing conditions, housing loss, access to public spaces and services as well as availability of information regarding social policies aimed at vulnerable groups.
- ◆ The presentation will focus on the results of the spatial analysis of the survey and a comparison to the data of total Ombudsman complaints in those areas.

Complaints to the GO-Municipality of Athens, 2010-2014

Urban Planning issues



Leisure establishment issues



Research on vulnerable social groups in specific regions of Athens

Description of the project

- ◆ A case study survey was carried out in selected neighborhoods/municipalities of Athens, and included a number of complaints addressed to the Ombudsman as well specially targeted questionnaires.
- ◆ An *in situ* research was conducted, by distributing a questionnaire through which citizens had the opportunity to submit their complaints, at the Municipalities of Nikaia – Agios Ioannis Renti, Perama and in specific areas (Kypseli - Agios Panteleimoinas - Ano Patisia) of Athens Municipality.
- ◆ The research was held, during February until April 2015 by approximately 50 senior investigators of GO.

Research on vulnerable social groups in specific regions of Athens

Description of the project

Totally, 651 questionnaires have been collected, which are distributed as following:

- ◆ Municipality of Agios Ioannis Rentis: **14**
- ◆ Municipality of Nikaia: **134**
- ◆ Municipality of Perama: **34**
- ◆ Municipality of Athens: - Area of Agios Panteleimoinas **15**
- Area Ano Patisia **77**
- Area of Kypseli **377**

Research on vulnerable social groups in specific regions of Athens

Survey preparation, implementation, and dissemination of findings

- ◆ Design of a questionnaire related to complaints and issues investigated by the Ombudsman.
- ◆ Conducting field research by Ombudsman staff.
- ◆ Analysis of the complaints and questionnaires as well as submission of conclusions by the Ombudsman staff and statistics specialists.
- ◆ Presentation of the project and its findings at a conference held in Athens (January 2016).
- ◆ A radio spot addressing vulnerable groups and their related problems (July and September 2016).

Research on vulnerable social groups in specific regions of Athens

Structure of the questionnaire

The methodology applied for the structure and length of the questionnaire, as well as for the type, form, content and order of questions has as follows:

- ◆ questions distributed in axes related to the scope of the research.
- ◆ questions on demographic characteristics and attitudes/opinions.
- ◆ more closed-ended questions (YES/NO), which are easily processed both during the survey and at the stage of analysis, and few open questions.
- ◆ complete, short and unambiguous formulation of questions.
- ◆ questions concerning the object of research precede demographic questions; then follow questions of knowledge and critical comments.
- ◆ the duration of each interview should not exceed 15-20 minutes.

Research on vulnerable social groups in specific regions of Athens

Content of the questionnaire

As far as the collection of data from the field is concerned, our aim was to answer all questions. The questionnaire included the following units:

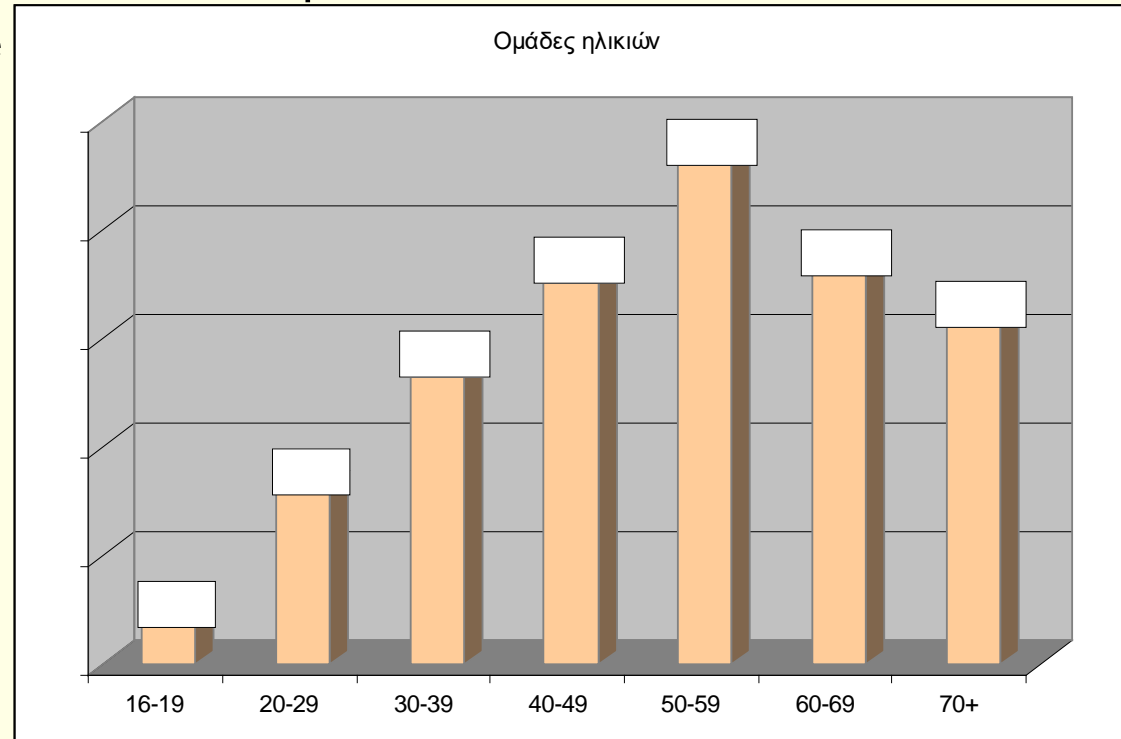
- ◆ Problems concerning the region of residence.
- ◆ Safety in the region.
- ◆ Illegal constructions.
- ◆ Incorporation in social policy – conditions of living.
- ◆ Demographic characteristics.
- ◆ Questions of knowledge, attitudes and opinion

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

Demographic characteristics of the sample

- ◆ Women constitute 50,7% of the total sample, while men 49,3%.
- ◆ The age-related distribution of the sample is as follows:

Age	Percentage
16-19	2,16%
20-29	8,32%
30-39	13,71%
40-49	18,03%
50-59	23,42%
60-69	18,34%
70+	16,02%



Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

Demographic characteristics of the sample- educational level

- ◆ high school graduates **37,3%**,
- ◆ University graduates was **22,9%**,
- ◆ primary school graduates 12,2%,
- ◆ junior high school graduates 11,5%,
- ◆ higher technical education graduates 7,6%,
- ◆ Master's degree graduates 6%.
- ◆ doctoral degree graduates 0,5%.
- ◆ they have attended several classes of primary school 1,5%,
- ◆ they have never gone to school (0,2%).

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

Demographic characteristics of the sample- working status

- ◆ The respondents are salaried **workers 39,5%**, **unemployed 29,8%** and **pensioners 26,5%**.
- ◆ **The total aggregate of unemployed and pensioners overpasses 50% of the sample (56,3%).**

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

Aggregate ranking of problems related to the area of residence

- ◆ Public spaces (availability/access-condition): 24,2%
- ◆ Roma, immigrants, homeless: 23,1%
- ◆ Transport infrastructure and road network : 18,9%
- ◆ Traffic conditions: 9,2%
- ◆ Noise pollution: 7,0%
- ◆ People with disabilities: 5,3%
- ◆ Waste management: 3,1%
- ◆ Closed shops/abandoned-empty buildings: 5,0%

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

- ◆ Citizens consider as the most serious problem for their area **urban planning issues**, such as the availability/condition of **free public spaces**.
- ◆ The presence of Roma, immigrants and homeless persons follows, and last comes the issue of transport infrastructures.
- ◆ To sum up the results from the research reveal that issues of the **urban environment and its infrastructures constitute the main problem in the neighbourhoods of Athens and Western Attica**.

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

- ◆ Citizens consider that due to the last five-year period of the **economic crisis, issues such as the presence of immigrants and homeless people, the availability/condition of public spaces have worsened.**
- ◆ The vast majority of citizens are little or not satisfied at all from the living conditions in the areas of residence.
- ◆ **Energy poverty:** An important percentage (29,2%) answered that their needs to heating/cooling, cooking, hot water, refrigerator and electricity are not covered. 80,2% of the above mentioned percentage reported that they cannot meet their basic needs of refrigeration-heating due, primarily, to financial reasons (75%).

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

- ◆ A considerable percentage (17%) is deprived of land telephone connection, while a significant percentage does not have a computer, nor access to the internet (23, 2% and 27,7% respectively).
- ◆ **The majority of the respondents (78,87%) have never sought the help of NGOs or other non-state institution for social welfare issues.** Those who did (21,13%) used the following social solidarity networks:
 - Food allowance for the poor by churches (25,53%)
 - Social groceries (19,15%)
 - Social medical centres (6,78%)
 - The Doctors of the World (6,78%)
 - Social pharmacy stores (4,26%)

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

Most of the participants placed their confidence to:

- ◆ Citizens' Service Centres (KEP) 83,43%,
- ◆ G.O 77,29%,
- ◆ the Armed Forces 70,81%,
- ◆ Municipalities 54,26%,
- ◆ the Manpower Employment Organization 53,76%,
- ◆ Security Forces 57,72%,
- ◆ Church 51,31%,
- ◆ other independent institutions 49,02%.
- ◆ Government 47,51%,
- ◆ Social Security Organizations 46,81%,

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

- ◆ Health Services 45,91%,
- ◆ Courts of Justice 44,21%,
- ◆ NGOs 42,08%,
- ◆ Sports Clubs 41,71%,
- ◆ public tax offices 41,10%,
- ◆ services of Ministries 36,71%,
- ◆ Banks 34,32%,
- ◆ European Union 32,41%,
- ◆ Greek Parliament 29,75%.
- ◆ Mass Media 25,19%,
- ◆ Political parties 18,02%.

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

Citizens and public services

- ◆ As the most important problem in their contact with public services the respondents indicated the unreasonable bureaucracy and redtape they encounter at a percentage of 36,7%.
- ◆ Serious problems also constitute the long queues at a percentage of 29,7% and insufficient information and poor service at a percentage of 24,7%.
- ◆ **To sum up, citizens have still the feeling that they are not fully and adequately served, dealing with a bureaucratic system of administration and facing dismissive behavior on the part of civil servants.**

Conclusions

- ◆ The Greek Ombudsman has for the first time in its history conducted a research of that kind.
- ◆ The GO has observed that the problems described in the complaints are similar to those mentioned in the questionnaire.
- ◆ An important percentage of the participants is unable to cover basic needs of refrigeration-cooling due to economic crisis.
- ◆ The vast majority of citizens are little or not satisfied at all from the conditions of their living.
- ◆ In conclusion, it is encouraging that initiatives of solidarity have been developed by several institutions (both public and NGO) with the creation or use of specific networks, although unfortunately the majority of citizens do not make use of their services.