

5TH TRAMIG STAKEHOLDER FORUM – THESSALONIKI, 2ND OCTOBER 2020

STAKEHOLDER FORUM

The Thessaloniki stakeholder forum was meant to be held at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki at the end of June 2020. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic it was cancelled and rescheduled as an online event few months later, on the 2nd October 2020 between 10.00 a.m. and 14.00 pm. Nevertheless, the Stakeholder forum was attended by more than 40 people including the project partners representatives, volunteer-trainees. Furthermore, the videoconference was attended by representatives of interpreters' professional associations. The aim of the Thessaloniki stakeholder forum was to share with the representatives of local institutions the objectives and activities of the TRAMIG project, in particular it had a dual objective, on the one hand to promote what the TRAMIG project had been able to achieve and on the other to give voice to the stakeholders, who through the story of their experience were able to highlight those aspects of the profession of community interpreter and/or intercultural mediator that they considered fundamental in the context of their activities and services. Eight local stakeholders were invited: a Law Professor from the University of Macedonia and Infectious Disease specialist from the University Hospital AHEPA, the head of the International Organization for Migration Office in Thessaloniki and one community interpreter working in IOM, a representative of an NGO's supporting migrants in Northern Greece, and an interpreter-trainer of community interpreters of the same organisation, and finally an Asylum Lawyer of Thessaloniki. Following the introductory remarks by the TRAMIG project coordinator and the local organizer, the eight stakeholders gave their presentations addressing interpreting and intercultural mediation from their own perspectives and focusing on needs, challenges and opportunities regarding both professional skills development and effective utilization of interpreters and intercultural mediators employed in public service settings of Thessaloniki. The presentations were followed by a Q&A session and a productive discussion.

EVALUATION BY STAKEHOLDERS

Five out of the eight external stakeholders completed the Evaluation Form and expressed their satisfaction in relation to the event. Scores of 4 or 5 were assigned to all items. The answers to the open questions stressed the usefulness of the discussion and welcomed the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with people working in different fields. Most of the participants also expressed their pleasure as speakers were interesting and very relevant to the topic. One of the respondents stated that "The stakeholder's forum was very interesting because several issues related to CI and IM were presented by people that work in the field. Furthermore, the needs in terms of training were presented, fact that gave us the opportunity to discuss with the participants to the forum the possibility of collaboration"; one stakeholder argued that *"more participation of persons having practical experience from the important field of intercultural mediation is needed"* but this opinion is not shared by other participants. Finally, one participant was unsatisfied by the fact that the Stakeholders Forum was conducted on-line.

EVALUATION BY THE ORGANIZERS

Although some sound problems occurred due to the need of simultaneous interpretation from Greek into English, given the necessity to contain the event online, the local organizers were very satisfied with the result of the Forum. All participants showed true interest to the activities of TRAMIG and new bridges were built between practitioners and the Academia. It should be stressed that the quality of the presentations was very high and the discussion that followed each presentation was vivid. In that sense, the main objective of the Forum was achieved, confirming the importance of establishing effective forms of dialogue and collaboration between the world of research, education and practice, as the actual situation in Greece is difficult and the lack of organization is more than real. Thus, for better integration of community interpreters and/ or intercultural mediators in public services this kind of actions are almost necessary.