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ANNOUNCEMENT

DIALOGOS: Public services without language barriers

Thessaloniki, 29/12/2025

With the aim of addressing the communication difficulties experienced by migrants—especially speakers of Languages of Lesser Diffusion—when interacting with public services, the three-year European project DIALOGOS is being completed in 2025.

The project “DIALOGOS: Communication in Public Service Interpreting and Translating with Languages of Lesser Diffusion” relied, on the one hand, on field research into communication conditions in public institutions and, on the other hand, on the development of interactive educational material on issues of interpreting and translation in Public Administration.

Research findings

During the spring semester of the 2022–2023 academic year, the DIALOGOS research team conducted extensive research using questionnaires and structured interviews, with the aim of investigating and mapping the communication conditions prevailing in public institutions during interactions with speakers of Languages of Lesser Diffusion.

The research highlighted the complex and often demanding communication conditions faced by professionals from different sectors who come into direct contact with linguistically and culturally diverse populations. A total of 45 individuals from the fields of Justice, Health, Social Care, and Public Administration participated in the questionnaire, including judicial officers and clerks, mental health professionals, social workers, physicians, lawyers, administrative staff, and nurses.

A significant proportion of respondents stated that they frequently encounter communication problems, while organized language support within their services appeared fragmented. Although some institutions employed permanent or external interpreter and translator collaborators, in many cases their absence remains evident,

burdening both the quality of services provided and the effectiveness of communication.

The participants' views on ways to overcome language barriers are of particular interest. The overwhelming majority consider the presence of professional interpreters and translators—either on site or remotely—the most appropriate and reliable solution. By contrast, participants ranked the use of automatic translation tools, such as Google Translate, as the worst communication method, followed by translation through untrained relatives or friends, the exclusive use of body language, and, finally, attempts to communicate using simplified Greek.

From problem diagnosis to targeted educational intervention

The project created a comprehensive course cycle and educational material primarily addressed to native speakers of Languages of Lesser Diffusion, aiming to help them acquire basic interlingual and intercultural skills.

In this way, participants can assume the role of intercultural interpreters and translators in public services. The main beneficiaries of DIALOGOS are young adults aged 18–35, as well as professionals working in fields such as health, legal support, and asylum.

The material is interactive, open access, and available through the project platform in four languages—English, Spanish, Italian, and Greek—with the possibility of adaptation into other languages depending on users' needs.

“Access to health care and justice is a fundamental right. However, the inability to communicate can lead to serious consequences, ranging from public health issues to increased administrative burden. DIALOGOS seeks to bridge this gap by raising awareness among both service users and public servants about the importance of professional interpreting and translation,” states the project's Scientific Coordinator, Associate Professor at the School of French Language and Literature of Aristotle University, Elpida Loupaki.

Project partners include Universidad de Alcalá and Fundación Abrazando Ilusiones (NGO) from Spain; Università degli Studi di Genova and Associazione San Marcellino (NGO) from Italy; and, from Greece, Aristotle University and MATH S.A. – AOTA (Development Agency of the Greater Urban Area of Thessaloniki). The project was implemented within the framework of Erasmus+ KA220-HED (Cooperation Partnerships in Higher Education).

More information about the DIALOGOS project is available on the website: dialogoserasmus.eu

Attached photos: (1) Training of migrants and refugees on Interpreting and Translation in Public Services, Thessaloniki, April 2024 (2) Presentation of educational modules

and research results, Thessaloniki, July 2025 (3) Closing ceremony of the DIALOGOS program, Aristotle University, July 2025

We kindly request that this event be published, broadcast, and covered by the media.